# LIVING THE LABYRINTH:

# A JOURNEY TOWARD NEW LIFE IN COMMUNITY

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Advisors: A. Christopher Hammon, D.Min.

and Vicki Hollon, D.Min.

Rosie Magee

Drew University

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To my companions on the journey.

I am thankful and blessed to travel with you.

*We make the road by walking . . .*

ABSTRACT

LIVING THE LABYRINTH:

A JOURNEY TOWARD NEW LIFE IN COMMUNITY

Rosie Magee

Wilson College

Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

*Our spiritual quest, I feel, can be summarized as this single obligation:*
*to switch from life-as-maze to life-as-labyrinth*

–Robert Ferré

The context of this project is that of a small liberal arts college, Wilson College, at a time of uncertainty and change. In a place where the perception of scarcity is the norm, the concept of abundance can seem beyond reach. This scarcity relates to spiritual as well as financial resources since living from one's spiritual center is more challenging when the system is under stress. In terms of practical ministry, the community had need of intentional support for fostering a safe environment where spirit could flourish. The project focused on building and strengthening social capital and community fabric by offering community members the experience of journeying together in new ways that counter and transcend the prevailing narratives.

The overarching image of the semester-long project was that of labyrinth. The labyrinth is an archetypal symbol that stands in stark contrast to that of a maze where there are forced choices, fear, confusion, dead ends, and a sense of being lost. The

labyrinth has a single path that leads inexorably, however circuitously, to the center: a metaphor for our spiritual pilgrimage.

Rather than explaining these themes in a didactic way, The Labyrinth Project was designed to engage imagination and expansive images to experience the concept of labyrinth at an individual and a community level. This involved shared table fellowship, workshops, worship, art making, and creative writing, retreat and, on World Labyrinth Day, creation of a temporary community labyrinth. This temporary labyrinth was a symbol of the ongoing nature of the project, which extends beyond building a labyrinth, or even walking a labyrinth, to living the labyrinth within the College setting.

The process involved appreciative inquiry and exploring the possibilities of preferred futures with a focus, at each step, on the well-being of the whole community. Evaluation involved an understanding that the campus *context* does not need to dictate the community *culture*. In the narrative landscape of the project, the researcher and the Local Advisory Committee discovered intersections between individual and community journeys that resulted in new possibilities and frames of reference.

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*Until the missing story of ourselves is told,*
*nothing besides told can suffice us.*
*We shall go on quietly craving it.*

*–Laura Riding*

## The Journey to Now

### Founding of the College

Wilson College was founded in 1869 as a college for women, one of the first in the United States, by two Presbyterian pastors. Sarah Wilson, a Presbyterian, for whom the College is named, provided the initial gift for its establishment. She was the first living woman in the United States to endow a college for women. The founding of Wilson College was both radical and utopian, asserting equal educational opportunity for women at a time when few believed this was important.

The College struggled for several years to attract students and faculty because "the College was new and the idea of education for women was new."[1] However, as the twentieth century began, the College was considered prosperous, without debt, its income

[1] Paul Swain Haven, "History of an Idea: Wilson College from 1869 to 1903," *Wilson College Bulletin* 32, 5 (April 1969): 9.

covering expenses.[2] A measure of the College's intellectual strength was the 1950 establishment of a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious academic honor society. But enrollment remained flat and the College lacked the money to renovate or repair buildings so, in 1979, the trustees voted to close the College, considering it to have no viable future. Students and alumnae sued to keep the College open and the trustees' vote was declared invalid on a technicality.

Spared from closure, the College set about increasing its enrollment by offering new programs. In 1982 it was one of the first colleges in the region to offer a Continuing Studies program to meet the needs of adults seeking a postsecondary education, by establishing a coeducational adult degree program (ADP) for students over the age of 24. Also, in 1996 an innovative Women with Children (WWC) program was introduced, which enabled single mothers to attend college and live on campus with their children.

The profile of Wilson students has changed over the years. A large number of students are now the first members of their family to attend college, and the majority receive financial aid and scholarships. The curriculum at Wilson College extends beyond that of a traditional liberal arts college. The majority of students at the College are enrolled in one of two majors: Veterinary Medical Technology or Equestrian Studies. This gives a distinctive flavor to the campus environment, noted for its pet-friendly residence halls where students can keep animals ranging from snakes and rats to chinchillas and frogs.

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[2] "Minutes of the Synod of Pennsylvania," October 1889, reprinted in Twentieth Annual Calendar of Wilson College, June 1890, 28.

Wilson has a strong history of traditions observed by students and the campus community at large. Most emblematic of these traditions is Sarah Wilson Week, when the first-year class receives its class colors and hats (dinks) from their Big Sisters (the junior class), sing at the President's House, and receive clues that reveal the identity of their sophomore buddies. At other colleges such traditions may be considered anachronistic, but at Wilson they represent a source of community building and college pride.

## Church Affiliation

Wilson College has maintained a relationship with the Presbyterian Church since its charter. The Presbyterian Church has long been deeply involved in the world of higher education. Ministry within universities and colleges stems from the conviction that God's loving concern encompasses the whole world: all persons, all institutions, and all areas of human activity. The highest aim of education is understood as to lead people into an encounter with the mystery of life and into the struggle to discern meaning. Life is not, therefore, a puzzle to be solved but a mystery to be confronted with awe and the trust that meaning will come through faith.

Currently there are more than sixty Presbyterian Church (USA) affiliated colleges in the country. These affiliations range in nature from a significant part of a college's identity to a historical artifact with little contemporary significance. In the case of Wilson College a covenant was drafted to describe the nature and scope of the relationship between Wilson College and the Synod of the Trinity of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The document outlines the responsibilities and commitments integral to the affiliation. Wilson College commits to selecting a certain number of members of the Board of Trustees who are members of the Presbyterian Church (USA). It pledges to provide a

positive, value-rich, faith-respecting campus atmosphere by challenging all members to live by the Honor Principle (Appendix I), by which members of the College community strive to live together in peace, honor, integrity, and mutual respect.[3] Also, there is commitment to provide a campus environment that is hospitable to the expression of many faiths and a commitment to justice and equity in all College policies and practices.

Faculty and staff are chosen without regard to their religious beliefs, and students are not selected by any religious criterion. Academic freedom is safeguarded and the covenant makes very clear that it "in no way represents a desire or intention to relinquish the College's commitment to a diverse college community and to academic freedom, or to alter its independence in any way."[4] This statement encompasses the creative tension inherent in maintaining religious affiliation at a liberal arts college in the twenty-first century.

## Faith in Academia

The covenant states that Wilson College will show particular concern for its students, faculty, staff, and alumnae as individuals and provide for spiritual nurture, worship, and service within the campus community. It ensures this by providing an active college chaplaincy with optional weekly chapel services. Such services are to be held at a

[3] http://www.wilson.edu/about-wilson-college/mission/index.aspx (accessed September 17, 2013).

[4] Covenant between Wilson College and the Synod of the Trinity. Approved by the Board of Trustees, May 15, 1999, Amended Feb 2003, 3.

time unopposed by classes, clubs, or meetings. Also, opportunities for pastoral care are to be provided.[5]

Having a college chaplain means that an institution recognizes that faith and learning can share a place at the table and that questions are to be encouraged, not silenced, no matter what one's worldview is on the deep questions of life. This helps make a liberal arts education all that it can be. A liberal arts college, however, is not always the most welcoming context for ministry. This is indicative of a sense among some that religious affiliation is neither desirable nor relevant. Others are proud of this important part of the College heritage and seek to nurture it while others are indifferent about the issue.

## The Role of the Chaplain

Wilson College's covenant agreement with the Synod of the Trinity states that the chaplain shall be an ordained Presbyterian pastor. There is an important distinction to be made between the role of a chaplain and that of a campus minister. A campus minister is employed by a particular organization or denomination other than the college. A college chaplain, in contrast, is employed by the educational institution and supports students, staff, and faculty of any, or no, faith.[6] This presents both challenges and opportunities.

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[5] Ibid., 4.

[6] "At its very best, a college community is a place of academic and cosmic discovery where time is spent in worthy intellectual pursuits. It is also true that such a community can foster deep spiritual growth, exploration and engagement. The Helen Carnell Eden Chaplain supports and encourages the spiritual growth and development of all members of the campus community in a manner that honors the diversity of religious beliefs present at Wilson College." *A Guide to the Services of the Chaplain's Office, Wilson College* (2012-13): 5.

The office of the chaplain is housed within the department of Student Development. In one of the original founding documents of the profession, "The Student Personnel Point of View," spiritual development is explicitly included with occupational, intellectual, and other forms of human development.[7] During the past two decades, Student Development programs have increasingly emphasized the creation of purposeful models that address the growth and development of students from a holistic perspective. Many student life programs use a wellness model for program design that includes a spiritual dimension.

To that end, the chaplain at Wilson College operates as part of the Wellness Center staff. The Wellness Center comprises the college counselors, the college nurse, and the college chaplain. That these three offices are situated in designated shared space indicates the intention to care for the community members in a holistic fashion: mind, body, and spirit. There is a difference in remits in that the chaplaincy is charged with the pastoral care of students, staff, and faculty whereas nursing and counseling resources are geared primarily to the student body.[8]

**My Handprint in the System**

I began chaplaincy ministry at Wilson College in July 2009 as my first ordained call. In the past four years I have learned to expect the unexpected: as Henri Nouwen

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[7] American Council on Education Studies, "The Student Personnel Point of View," A Report of a Conference on the Philosophy and Development of Student Personnel Work in College and University 1, no. 3 (June 1937): 4.

[8] "The chaplain works with student groups, faculty and staff to provide a variety of services to the community. These services encompass hospitality, inclusivity, compassion, relationship-building, creativity, integrity and community spirit." *A Guide to the Services of the Chaplain's Office, Wilson College* (2012-13): 2.

said, "ministry is what happens in the interruptions."[9] I am not at Wilson to show a prodigious display of volunteer activity and religious pageantry but to invite people by word and example into a personal relationship with the One who calls us by name and says, "You are mine" (Isa. 43:1). Mine is a ministry of presence and my sense is that people pay more attention to how I act rather than to what I actually say. There are conversations that can only happen in the long van ride home from Alternative Spring Break or in the spiritual intimacy of prayer. Who knows what a day might bring: a student considering leaving college who wants to talk, a student whose beloved pet has died, or perhaps a student who wants to know if it is possible to be both a feminist and a Christian. I once told someone flippantly that a chaplain spends a lot of time putting out chairs and providing snacks. The more I think about it, there is little more important I could be doing. That is, a chaplain is on campus to create space for conversations and encounters that might not otherwise happen (putting out chairs) and to provide opportunities to break bread together in as many different forums as possible (otherwise known as sacred snack time).

Willimon contends that people now in middle age are a product of the sixties, when the supreme value was freedom and students fought for the abolition of rules and structure. "Many of today's students are not obsessed with the search for freedom. They seem much more interested in the search for roots, stability, order and identity. Many of them are convinced that contemporary life is chaotic and essentially unmanageable."[10]

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[9] Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 52.

[10] William H. Willimon, "Reaching and Teaching the Abandoned Generation," *Christian Century* 110, no. 29 (1993): 1018.

Ministry today involves equipping the millennial generation for the journey of faith. Authenticity and lived experience have high value in the matrix of meaning for millennial students. Many students have dealt with issues of loss and abandonment at an early age. Personal relationships are key, although what is considered personal in the age of social media is constantly being renegotiated. Students seek to be *known* and, rather than more *information*, they seek to engage with a personal God who understands the difficulties they face. This can be a powerful departure point for spiritual formation.

Wilson College has fewer than four hundred traditional-age undergraduate students, and fewer than three hundred of these are residential students. This, along with the fact that the College is located in central Pennsylvania, means it is not a religiously diverse community. The twenty or so international students each year guarantee that we usually have one or two Buddhist, Hindu, or Muslim students. My role is to support and encourage students of minority religious traditions on campus in a way that does not make them the poster child for their religion. International students often feel a pressure to represent their entire country and religious tradition to the rest of the College community.

There is a very wide range of Christian beliefs on campus. I am reminded of the saying in Northern Ireland, where I grew up, that an interfaith event is one where there are Catholics and Protestants in the same room! It is vital that safe space be nurtured and cultivated so that community members feel able to observe and celebrate their own tradition while respecting others'. Many students at the College have no religious background and, as a result, have no faith model to even reject. Often students lack the language, or worldview, to articulate the questions with which they are struggling.

My interactions as chaplain with staff and faculty have increased dramatically over the past two years. Over time, employees have come to trust that I strive to create a safe, confidential space for all. Of course those seeking the pastoral services of the chaplain are self-selecting, and all formal one-on-one conversations are at the initiative of the staff, student, or faculty member concerned.

## Community Contexts

### Campus Constituents

The College has different constituents whose work at, and commitment to, the College take different forms: the students in the College for Women (CFW) or Adult Degree Program (ADP), the administration (President and six Vice-Presidents), faculty, staff, alumnae, and trustees. Each group has different responsibilities, leadership structure, levels of accountability, and representation. ADP students tend to be part-time and their relationship with Wilson is more akin to that of a community college.

A system of joint governance between students and faculty at the College is contained in a joint policy of faculty and students, and a joint honor council to adjudicate disciplinary cases involving students.[11] Small class size means that faculty and students develop close rapport and faculty are understood to go above and beyond in helping students succeed. Many students credit particular faculty members for their success at the College and in their subsequent career. Repeatedly, faculty and staff stress how much they enjoy their relationship with students and the low professor/student ratio that makes

[11] *Wilson College Blue Book* (Lafayette, IN: School Datebooks, 2013), 4.

for meaningful interactions and a creative learning environment. Underprepared students are supported in ways that might not always exist at a larger institution. Students at Wilson College have long been encouraged to find their voice and use it.

Wilson is commonly described as a "tiny college aspiring to be small" or as being "like a family." Certainly there is considerable loyalty to the ideals that Wilson represents, with both staff and faculty remaining to work at an institution where remuneration is below the norm. As one staff member told me, "No one stays at Wilson for the pay."[12] Perhaps the "family" feeling means that employees can complain freely yet would not wish to leave the family. A multiplicity of factors is at work, which can be categorized as intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Tanis Helliwell examines the work of psychologist Frederick Herzberg, who wrote that there are two reasons why people work: intrinsic motivators and extrinsic hygiene factors.[13]

> Intrinsic motivators are things that make us grow, feel productive, and learn. Extrinsic hygiene factors make our lives comfortable and safe. Herzberg discovered that no number of extrinsic factors would give us happiness or purpose in our life and work. Only intrinsic motivators can do that. However, without extrinsic factors, we may experience severe discomfort.[14]

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[12] Conversation with staff member, August 26, 2012.

[13] Frederick Herzberg, *One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees*? (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2008), quoted in "Overcoming Fear and Building Trust," by Tanis Helliwell, in *The Workplace and Spirituality: New Perspectives on Research and Practice* (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Publishers, 2009), edited by Joan Marques, Satinder Dhiman, and Richard King, 138.

[14] Tanis Helliwell, "Overcoming Fear and Building Trust" in *The Workplace and Spirituality: New Perspectives on Research and Practice* (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Publishers, 2009), edited by Joan Marques, Satinder Dhiman, and Richard King, 138.

At Wilson it would appear that there are strong intrinsic motivators at work. Most notably, people feel they are doing valuable work, which keeps them at the College despite challenging extrinsic factors (low pay, outdated amenities).

In the last ten years the largest capital project at the College was building a new science center, which opened to great acclaim in 2009. Unfortunately, this coincided with the global economic downturn and the debt repayments have been much more costly than originally envisioned. In a sense this has become a symbol of the tensions between humanities and science faculty in competition for resources. The immediate past president of Wilson College retired in June 2011. Her tenure was a complicated one, particularly in relation to the faculty. There is a history of suspicion and division among faculty and the administration.

The College has a history of committed and active alumnae. During the 1950s and 1960s, Wilson was the college of choice for many Presbyterian families in the region to send their daughters. This is no longer the case, but several of those students became alumnae of distinction who donated generously to the College. Several alumnae were active as students in the drive to keep the College open in 1979. In the community narrative, it is the students who are credited with keeping the College open and for some, this activism has continued in subsequent years through the Alumnae Association.

## Campus Narratives

An organization's way of articulating its life is encoded in mythic and metaphorical terms. When community members talk about Wilson College, often stories of perceived incompetence, missed opportunity, and frustration are the quickest to emerge. They exude immense power and usually relate to the administration of the

College. Parallel stories of a positive nature also emerge. These tend to be student related: the success of the Women with Children program, international students who have excelled at the College, alumnae who have gone on to prestigious graduate work. There is a shared sense of where success can easily be identified and universally celebrated, and that is in the realm of the students.

The world of Wilson College certainly has its approved stories and its dominant stories. Each constituent group in the system looks through a different lens and has its own perspective, which can result in a sense of selective storytelling. Several themes emerge when one taps into the ways many community members regard their association with the College. Wilson is perceived to have survived against the odds and consistently provided quality education in an environment committed to honorable behavior and civic engagement. The College mascot is the phoenix, to symbolize the fact that the College rose from the ashes of the 1979 vote to close. The College's survival is a source of pride, but that near-death experience has also bequeathed a mindset of scarcity, as if the College were on life support and someone could "pull the plug" at any moment. The act of remembering and forgetting is a weighted issue at Wilson College. Its traditions and its near closure remain the focus for many of its graduates. To others, this remembering is akin to being stuck in the past and not moving forward in the light of prevailing realities.

A mentality of scarcity maintains that there are not enough resources for everyone. This belief inevitably leads to the perception that there are winners and losers. At such a small college there is a sense of departments operating within their own "silos" with their own priorities, which may not take into account competing priorities of other

departments and the "big picture" perspective. One LAC member articulated this as follows:

> It almost seems that if someone succeeds it makes everyone else look bad instead of seeing each individual's success as part of the overall success of the college. Instead of working together so we can succeed as a whole, it seems to be the norm to compete against each other. Instead of succeeding as a body, many on campus wish to beat others down to be sure they are still a step above. This attitude presents a significant challenge to anyone embarking on a campus-wide project with the intent to create cohesiveness.[15]

One faculty member told me that "division meetings are called 'division' meetings for a reason."[16] In 2012, faculty meetings were so contentious that one staff member tearfully asked me to "pray the space" before each meeting. Chronic lack of resources has had a debilitating effect on students, staff, and faculty, with consequences for the quality of life and relationships within the organization. A professor shared that when he arrived at the College in the 1990s, it was not unusual to be asked, "What have you done for Mother Wilson recently?"[17] There was an air of sacrificial living and giving. Overwork was both advocated and applauded and it appears that legacy may be ongoing.

The emotional tone of the organization is one of exhaustion and overwork rather than a life-affirming milieu.[18] Several employees perceive work as a struggle, which requires them to prove their worth constantly. Among some there is a perception that if one is not working a twelve-hour day, one is not working hard enough. While scarcity as

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[15] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[16] Faculty member, conversation with author, March 24, 2012.

[17] Faculty member, conversation with author, April 30, 2013.

[18] Margaret Zipse Kornfeld, *Cultivating Wholeness: A Guide to Care and Counseling in Faith Communities* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 85.

a worldview is not necessarily accurate, in this particular case it may not be too far from the truth. The reality is that if all employees confined themselves to a forty-hour workweek, the College *would* likely close. Financially the College is in a precarious situation with an outdated infrastructure and low enrollment. Some staff positions have recently been terminated or outsourced. As one faculty member told me, "You live in a culture of austerity only so long before you adjust to it and stop aspiring to something better."[19] Some show symptoms of burnout, such as exhaustion and diminished personal accomplishment. It may be the case that "while people readily accept and acknowledge the frequent and unyielding domination of stress, they do not remember that the opposite exists – that is, their innate capacity to return to a calm and relaxed state of being, even within the pressure and demands of modern life."[20]

## Recent History

Wilson College had the dubious distinction of making headline news in the September 23, 2012, issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. The first sentence of the article reads, "Wilson College opened for the fall semester in what students and faculty members have come to accept as its usual conditions: threadbare." Under the heading "A Struggling College for Women Puts Everything on the Table,"[21] the article

[19] Faculty member, conversation with author, September 18, 2012.

[20] Ruth Sewell, Jan Sellers, and Di Williams, *Working with the Labyrinth* (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2012), 116.

[21] Lawrence Biemiller, "A Struggling College for Women Puts Everything on the Table," *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* September 23, 2012, 1,

goes on to quote statistics that make for grim reading. For fall 2012, Wilson College had an undergraduate program with 316 students, which is a far cry from fiscal breakeven. This is down from a high of 732 in 1967. Wilson started the fall 2012 semester with 695 (ADP and traditional undergraduate) students, expecting to run a $3 million deficit on a $20 million budget, with $10 million worth of deferred maintenance. The College has operated in the red for three of the previous four years. The library has been closed for over a year because of structural damage and there is a "ticking time bomb that is the debt that Wilson took on to build its new science center."[22] The article describes Wilson as a small-town, tuition-driven college with far too many empty dorm rooms, a library shuttered because of steam leaks, and a field house unimproved since 1966. These realities mean that there is a considerable amount of anxiety and uncertainty on campus in addition to all the usual stressors like exams, finances, illness, and family relationships.

## Commissioning Change

The current President started her tenure in July 2011. She has a strong business background and this is her first position as a college president. In spring 2012 she established the Commission on Shaping the Future of Wilson College. The President told its members to recommend anything they thought would put the College in a position to thrive. She said from the start that everything was on the table for consideration, including the possibility of Wilson College becoming a fully coeducational establishment. She also stressed that there was no silver bullet that would fix all of

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http://chronicle.com/article/A-Struggling-College-for-Women/134568/ (accessed October 26, 2012).

[22] Ibid., 3.

Wilson's problems. She articulated a pragmatic vision: "I want people to be passionate about what is the essence of Wilson. We really need to get to a sustainable financial model without losing who we are, without losing our legacy and traditions. There will be ups and downs—I fully expect that. I really feel that at the end of the day, we will get to consensus."[23]

## Action and Reaction

The commission's twenty three members and its subcommittees met regularly through summer 2012 and were charged to complete their report by December 2012. A number of forums were held on campus to gather opinions and feedback. Attitudes toward the commission process were diverse and arose out of people's existing worldview regarding the College. Contrasting themes of trust and suspicion, anxiety and confidence, energy and apathy surfaced.

There were differences of opinion about the future direction the College should take, which made for contentious relationships among administrators, trustees, and alumnae. Change was strongly resisted by some alumnae, namely those who remember the "good old days" as well as those who remain committed to the need for, and value of, women-only education. Some alumnae felt the proposed changes were misguided and that the Wilson they loved would die if it became coeducational. Others viewed the process itself as bogus in that major decisions had already been made. Some community members were seen as obstructionist and resistant to change while others were viewed as pushing an agenda through without due process. Neal reminds us that how people situate

[23] Ibid., 1.

themselves in relation to change is a continuum. "The relationship to change factor is a continuum between being closed to change and being open to change. Those who are closed to change help provide stability to the organization and can prevent change for the sake of change. They can also be a real block to innovation and to responding quickly to changes in technology."[24] There is no right or wrong about where someone is on either continuum.[25]

Some students did not feel adequately represented in the process. They staged a number of protests. On November 14, 2012, the campus was covered in posters, signs, and painted bedsheets. A number of messages adorned the signs, ranging from "You said we would have a voice, why is no one listening?" and "What Would Sarah Wilson Do?" to "Better Dead than Co-ed." This was the first major showing of a protest planned by members of the student body to gain attention from the administration. "The protest idea was sparked when students decided they had had enough and wanted to do something about it," said the president of the Wilson College Government Association, the student governing body. In November 2012 the student newspaper *The Billboard* published a declaration of student rights, including the right to "accurate representation in all decisions regarding the student body."[26]

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[24] Judy Neal, "Creating Edgewalker Organizations," in *The Workplace and Spirituality: New Perspectives on Research and Practice*. Joan Marques, Satinder Dhiman, and Richard King, (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2009), 207.

[25] Ibid, 208.

[26] *The Wilson Billboard*, November 16, 2012, Wilson College, Vol. 46, no. 3, 1.

The Chambersburg newspaper, the *Public Opinion*, published regular articles, letters, and editorials about the status of Wilson College during fall 2012 and spring 2013. An open letter from Trustees Emeriti to the newspaper stated, "The number of women who seek these educational advantages had diminished to the point where continuation of the College is in jeopardy. This cannot continue or Wilson will die. Without a healthy student enrollment, Wilson has no future, and few should be so disingenuous as to suggest 'better dead than coed.' Those who truly love Wilson would never wish this outcome."[27]

Commission members repeatedly stated that their recommendations would be data-driven, only to be accused of selecting the data to take into consideration. At one of the all-College forums in November, a senior read aloud a statement while she choked back tears. There are "some things that analyzing data cannot measure," she concluded to applause.[28] A college-wide essay competition asked students to imagine what the college founder would do in the present circumstances. One student wrote:

> Often I heard how Wilson College is poor at articulating its identity, even in its mission statement and strategic planning. It has been said that Wilson has no narrative; to those I say "How?" Wilson is steeped in traditions, stories, and family. If everyone has a story to tell, how can there be no story for this school? Wilson may have her halls flooded with students, but her halls will be empty for her spirit will be lost.[29]

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[27] Trustees Emeriti, "An Open Letter to the Wilson College Family," *Public Opinion*, Chambersburg, PA, February 23, 2013.

[28] Student speech, All College Forum, Wilson College, November 1, 2012.

[29] Lauren Burke, "What Would Sarah Wilson Do?" essay competition, November 2012.

Alumnae and students joined together to express their reservations about the assumptions and calculations used to determine that becoming coeducational was the only way to achieve a sustainable future. This included the use of social media to garner support and disseminate viewpoints. Alumnae saw Wilson College losing its niche identity and becoming just another very small liberal arts college.

Of course the degree of engagement and range of opinions varied across and within each constituency. There was as much disagreement within the student body as between the student body and the administration; seniors were the group most invested in maintaining the current status of the College for Women. Across the board, attitudes ranged from the highly invested, with different desired outcomes, to the disengaged, to the absent. One long-serving faculty member told me that it was difficult to get excited about the commission since she had experienced such cycles many times before.[30]

Some listening meetings dealt with the issue of quality of life on campus. Ironically one such meeting degenerated into recriminations and finger-pointing, with one vice-president reportedly stating that burnout was "just the way it is around here – get over it."[31] One staff member felt it was not safe for her to speak at the meeting after that outburst. She told me, "I can't change this place. I have to remember why I am hired and do that. If I got into the systems, it would drive me crazy. This place does not

[30] LAC meeting, September 4, 2012.

[31] Staff member, conversation with author, September 29, 2012.

appreciate valuable staff. I have watched it all the years I have been here. Good people leave, they get so frustrated."[32]

In some ways Wilson College acts as a pseudo-community. "A pseudo-community may seem friendly at first but it is really not a safe place in which to express an opinion that diverges from the group's stated values."[33] The official narrative states that Wilson College is a community that can "trust each other to be mature and responsible individuals" and that "the soundness of the community depends upon the concern for both individual freedom and the rights and welfare of others,"[34] yet that is not always the lived reality. This leads to a cognitive disconnect that is energy-sapping for those in the system.

Over the course of the semester, there was a stiffening of positions over and against one another. Social occasions would be dominated by the sharing and reinforcing of anxieties. Wilson College appeared to conform to the five recurring issues Steinke identified regarding troubled congregations: (1) high anxiety, (2) systematic impasse (two parties polarized), (3) lack of a clear sense of mission (even if a mission statement is in place, it does not inform action), (4) poor boundaries (including gossip, not confronting questionable behavior, indiscriminate firing of staff), and (5) avoidance of problems.[35]

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2008), 34.

[34] Wilson College Honor Principle, *Wilson College Blue Book,* 3.

[35] Peter L. Steinke, *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2006), 47.

Steinke goes on to state, "Anxiety is the automatic and natural reaction to anything that might threaten a person's safety. As anxiety increases in emotional systems, people's behavior is more automatic. That means people are less thoughtful and imaginative, resistant to whatever signals pain, and generally in an edgy mood."[36]

One staff member wrote me an email that encapsulates many of the themes I encountered:

> Like many or even most, I find myself uneasy grasping for a thread to hold for steadiness. Some people are angry, hurt, grieving, some are anxious, hopeful, excited. . . some are indifferent . . . some are fed up . . . some forward focused, some living in the past. On any given day or moment I am any and all of these emotions all wrapped together. In striving for my own self-care I force myself to pause, breathe, and check my own internal weather, if you will.[37]

## Turning Point: Change Agents and Change Process

The Commission on Shaping the Future of Wilson College presented its draft recommendations in November 2012 in time for the December meeting of the Board of Trustees. At that meeting the trustees voted to delay their voting on the recommendations for six weeks to absorb more information. This decision was interpreted by some as a wish to take the vote when classes were not in session. On January 13, 2013, the Board of Trustees approved the recommendations of the commission, which included reducing tuition, establishing a student debt buyback program, adding academic programs, making infrastructure improvements, and expanding coeducation across all programs. Four trustees resigned when the board made this decision. Accusations and counteraccusations

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[36] Ibid., 78.

[37] Staff member, email to author, March 1, 2014.

played out in the press and social media. Different narratives that seemed to be describing alternate realities played out in the aftermath:

> We engaged in a thorough, inclusive process that produced a plan with supporting data that the board backs, as is evident in two reaffirming votes of the board to move forward… This is fact. This is not 1979. Then, the administration and board refused to implement options, including coeducation, and instead chose to close the school. The common thread between now and then is the College's challenge to grow enrolment.[38]

This contrasts with an alumna's response printed in the *Public Opinion*:

> I refuse to quietly sit by while you and others in the Wilson administration continue to assert that the process was inclusive. It simply was not. The vast majority of stakeholders in Wilson found out about the potential vote to go co-educational through alums on Facebook. There was never correspondence sent regarding this from the College administration. How can this possibly be considered inclusive?[39]

Lawyers representing a group of Wilson College alumnae sent the trustees a letter demanding that the board rescind its January decision to admit men to all of the College's programs. The letter argues that the board based its decision on "inaccurate and incomplete data and invalid assumptions," that the decision was rushed, and that "there was never active engagement or open communication with the entire Wilson community, and no consensus was obtained."[40] The letter questions the process of decision making

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[38] John W. Gibb, "Work to Ensure Wilson College's Success Will Continue" *Public Opinion*, July 24, 2013, http://www.publicopiniononline.com/opinion/ci_23716295/work-ensure-wilson-colleges-sucess-will-continue-guest, (accessed July 31, 2013).

[39]Paula S. Tishok and Amy A. Boyce, "Wilson College Board Fracture Went Beyond the Personal" *Public Opinion*, July 30, 2013, http://www.publicopiniononline.com/opinion/ci_23754629/wilson-college-board-fracture-went-beyond-the-personal-guest, (accessed July 31, 2013).

[40] Lawrence Biemiller, "Coeducation Critics Demand That Wilson College Trustees Rescind Decision," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 24, 2013,

rather than the content of the decision. Through the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office the alumnae challenged the change to the school's charter. Ironically, this charge is being led by the alumna who was student president of the WCGA in 1979, the group that led the charge to save Wilson from closure.

## The Project

Wilson College is in a time of major transition with attendant anxiety and uncertainty over the prospect of major change. The current changes are taking place in an underlying context that has existed for considerable time and holds power over the different constituents at the College. In terms of practical ministry, at both a community and an individual level, the staff and faculty have a need for very intentional support in fostering a safe environment where "spirit" can flourish, a place where hospitality can be extended and received, a place where "life and faith, or work and faith constitute a unity."[41] In a context where the perception of scarcity is the norm, the concept of abundance can seem beyond reach. This can relate to spiritual resources as well as to financial ones.

The project design is in direct response to the narratives expressed. The project implementation will involve creating opportunities for new configurations and relationships through informal and structured gatherings both on and off campus that

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http://chronicle.com/blogs/ticker/coeducation-critics-demand-that-wilson-trustees-rescind-decision/59189 (accessed April 25, 2013).

[41] Elizabeth Newman, *Untamed Hospitality: Welcoming God and Other Strangers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007), 54.

cross departmental lines and create common ground and purpose. By tapping a deeper spiritual vein, a community can grow into the understanding that healthy community is not a zero-sum game where competition for resources means that one's gain is perceived as another's loss. Rather, as is written in 1 Corinthians 12:26, "if one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it" (NRSV).

The ancient concept of labyrinth will be reimagined throughout the spring 2013 semester at Wilson College. A labyrinth engages imagination, expansive images, symbols, and metaphors that are evocative of the Holy and retain some sense of mystery. The relevance of the image of labyrinth stands in stark contrast to that of a maze where there are forced choices, fear, confusion, dead ends, and a sense of being lost. In a labyrinth, by contrast, "on the circuitous path, people discover the sacred within themselves. Within the energy of the twists and turns, of the going into the center and the coming back out again, people find resources within themselves that they never before knew they had."[42]

The project will seek to address the narratives of concern expressed within the community. Rather than explaining these themes solely in a rational and didactic way, the focus will be on providing opportunities to experience the concept of labyrinth in campus life.

The project will allow for common experience, make connections, and look for signs, perhaps unexpected, of God's presence. We will let this experience work away within us, talk about it, write about it, make art from it, and share food through it. The

[42] Helen Curry, *The Way of the Labyrinth: A Powerful Meditation for Everyday Life* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), 8.

public culmination of the project will be the creation of a pop-up labyrinth on the main green of the College for World Labyrinth Day 2013. Many and varied journeyers will meet on that day in a way that will allow all present to journey together. World Labyrinth Day, an initiative of The Labyrinth Society, is a day designated to bring people from all over the world together to walk a labyrinth at 1 p.m. in their own time zone. It is celebrated every year on the first Saturday in May. This is a day when people all over the world are invited to "Walk as One at One" to promote unity and peace.

The project will be focused on the building of social capital and fabric through fostering spiritual journeying at Wilson College. The process will involve providing opportunities to move toward new insights and possibilities of preferred futures with the understanding that "the essence of creating an alternative future comes from citizen-to-citizen engagement that focuses at each step on the wellbeing of the whole."[43] As Block states, "shifting the context from retribution to restoration will occur through language that moves from problems to possibility; from fear and fault to gifts, generosity and abundance; from law and oversight to social fabric and chosen accountability; from corporations and systems to associated life; and from leaders to citizens."[44] With such a shift in consciousness the resources of generosity, grace, and forgiveness could be harnessed with transformative potential. Throughout the project, narratives will be listened to, gathered together, and held in trust. All aspects of the project will be conducted in a manner that seeks to be coherent, invitational, accessible, and respectful of

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[43] Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging,* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008), 11.

[44] Ibid., 47.

different religious traditions. The project takes as its departure point the understanding that "by trusting the process of the labyrinth, of putting one foot in front of the next, you can travel a long way."[45]

There is a road
that runs straight through your heart.
Walk on it.
To be a pilgrim means
to be on the move slowly
to notice your luggage becoming lighter
to be seeking for treasures that do not rust
to be comfortable with your heart's questions
to be moving toward the holy ground of home
with empty hands and bare feet. [46]

[45] Curry, *The Way of the Labyrinth*, 15.

[46] Macrina Wiederkehr, *Seasons of Your Heart: Prayers and Reflections*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 185.

CHAPTER TWO

# THE GROUND BENEATH OUR FEET

# THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

*Stories happen to people who can tell them.*

*–Henry James*

## Story

### Locating Our Story Within God's Story

The Bible has been described as "God's story." Tony Campolo and William Willimon suggest that "in reading the Bible we are asked to relinquish the tight grip of the world's officially approved stories in order to be embraced solely by God's story."[1] The narratives of God's presence, and God's promises, are the very bedrock of communal and personal identity, and hope. As we hear these stories, God invites us to find our place in the narrative. "Like Moses, when past failures haunt us we can come to realize that we stand on the holy ground of our lives, take off our shoes, and worship the God who never left us."[2] In Celtic churches a fire was kept burning continuously to represent God's Spirit in the midst of the community – reminiscent of the pillar of fire by

[1] Tony Campolo and William Willimon, *The Survival Guide for Christians on Campus: How to Be Students and Disciples at the Same Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 45.

[2] Elizabeth Canham, *A Table of Delight: Feasting with God in the Wilderness* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2005), xi.

night when the Hebrew people moved through the wilderness. They were a disparate group with diverse expectations and levels of faith (Exod. 13:21) not unlike many communities today.

How we experience God's presence is intimately related to the context of our lives. Sano writes that "where we 'sit,' or are situated, shapes what we read in the Bible as well as how we read it."[3] Our story and identity influence our interpretation of other stories. Our varying memories and experiences shape what we are particularly sensitive to and how we fill in the narrative gaps and make connections. "In interpreting, we blend, twist, and mix our own personal stories, biases, and memories with those in the text, creating a new other story. And by creating this new story, we learn to make sense of not only the ancient text, but also ourselves and the stories that form and shape us."[4]

As Hester and Walker-Jones remind us, there is always a gap between what happened and what we are able to tell ourselves and others about it. "This deep gap is the space where God may disclose God-self."[5] This awareness prevents us from claiming that we know with certainty God's activity; "we are left to stand humbly before this mystery as not-knowers. God breathes in this gap, and if we allow ourselves the full experience of waiting before it, we may experience God's presence."[6]

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[3] Roy Sano, "Shifts in Reading the Bible: Hermeneutical Moves among Asian Americans," *Semeia* 90/91 (2002): 105.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Richard L. Hester and Kelli Walker-Jones, *Know Your Story and Lead with It: The Power of Narrative in Clergy Leadership* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2009), 133.

[6] Ibid.

Nouwen maintains that it is especially during the challenging times in our lives that an active awareness of God's presence is vital. "Our life is full of brokenness – broken relationships, broken promises, broken expectations. How can we live that brokenness without becoming bitter and resentful except by returning again and again to God's faithful presence in our lives?"[7] As Branson states, "we all have plenty of stories to tell of blindness, blame, and banality. But the apostle Paul calls us to another conversation, a holy source of life. God has been present and continues to be active in the realms of truth, justice, goodness, and excellence."[8]

## "Re-membering" Our Story

Branson reminds us that our corporate work of remembering is intended to reconnect us to specific narratives, and that the activities of forgetting or remembering are "not generic; they are content-specific."[9] Memory embedded in place, however, involves more than simply any one personal story. "Each person effectively reshapes a place by making his or her story a thread in the meaning of the place and also has to come to terms with the many layers of story that already exist in a given location."[10] Place and story inform each other, since, "if place lends structure, context and vividness

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[7] Henri Nouwen, *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 45.

[8] Mark Lau Branson, *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2004), 64.

[9] Ibid., 48-49.

[10] Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 16.

to narratives, it is stories, whether fictional or biographical, which give shape to place."[11] Thus, how community memories are constructed cannot be disconnected from current realities.

Memories can become ossified. There are many accounts of people being "stuck in their story" in the Bible, as on the road to Emmaus, when the disciples were so caught up in their account of the crucifixion of Christ that they were unaware that the story had moved and that he was, in actuality, walking beside them. Thus there is a discernment process involved in the acts of remembering and forgetting. The biblical narratives note some benefits in forgetting, especially when they concern God forgetting our sins. Forgetting would help Israel move beyond the lures of the memories of Egypt. However, forgetting is not always a positive attribute. In the apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthians, the community at Corinth appear to have lost or forgotten the basic sense that the life of faith is a life of community. Paul's retelling of the story of the Supper narrative in 1 Corinthians is for the purpose of rectifying the situation at Corinth, changing the future of the community. Paul is not giving the Corinthians new information here; he is reminding them of their roots. This goes beyond retelling the story to reliving the story. Paul contends that it is in the act of remembering that the body of Christ is "re-membered," that is, put back together. The remembrance of Jesus was not to consist solely in pondering the circumstances surrounding his death. Readers were to see in Christ's death the shape their own discipleship would take. Remembering the past would help shape their future. "The gospel is not to remain in memories and images, but is to be embodied

[11] Ibid., 17.

in daily practices and lifelong pursuits."[12] This is an example of our memories transforming *current* events.

Scientists are becoming convinced that the same thing we call "memory" works both ways, helping us both to recall the past and to imagine the future. People who have lost their memories also lose their ability to imagine their future. "It's not surprising that we confuse memories and imagination, considering that they share so many processes."[13] This suggests that projecting the future is also a function of our memory. Memories help furnish our future. The biblical notion of remembrance extends far beyond nostalgic recall. *Reverence* for the past is merged with *relevance* in the present and *hope* for the future.

## The Rhythms of Life

### Time

There are more than eight hundred references to time in the Bible. It appears that it has always been an issue. We talk about time a lot these days and the relationship is often a troubled one. We talk about losing it and wasting it and spending it and killing it. We use the same verbs to talk about time as we do to talk about money. We save time and count time and invest time. We race against it and fight it. Time can sound like our enemy.

The Bible measures time in terms of occurrence and repetition – through a cyclical pattern of days, seasons, and years. The Bible's distinction is not between cyclic

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[12] Ibid., 62.

[13]David Robson, "Memory: The Ultimate Guide," *New Scientist* 216, no. 2885 (2012): 1.

and linear conceptions of time but between cyclic time as fallen and cyclical time as redeemed.[14] The best-known biblical commentary on time is found in Ecclesiastes 3, which catalogs various seasons of life, twenty-eight of them arranged in sharp contrast to one another. It begins with what is most fundamentally true: that we are born into this world, and inevitably, our life in this world comes to an end. The writer of Ecclesiastes is writing after the Babylonian Exile, an experience that had taught the Hebrew people that human experience was never going to be without challenges.

"The cycles of natural and human life are in themselves meaningless, leading nowhere and investing human life with a quality of utmost monotony (Eccles. 1:4-11). But it is possible to see these same cycles as positive, from both a human and a divine perspective."[15] Ecclesiastes 3 gives us a God's-eye view of time. We learn here that time is God's gift to the human race, that God has implanted within the human mind a capacity for transcendence of time (Eccles. 1:11).[16] Faith in God does not whisk us off into some spiritual realm – we still have a schedule and commitments. Belief in God does not raise us above the routines of life but brings the transcendent into these routines with the promise of redeeming them.

The multifaceted nature of the gift of time can be seen in the different Greek words used to refer to time in the Bible, *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos* (χρόνος) refers to chronological or linear time, the time that is measured by the ticking of the clock,

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[14] *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity,1998), *s.v.* "Time."

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

seconds, minutes, and hours, and marking of the calendar. *Kairos* time (καιρός) means the "right or opportune moment," "a time in between," a time in which something special happens.[17] *Kairos* time is harder to pin down since there is no exact English translation. It conveys notions of unboundness, fluidity, and opportunity. In the New Testament, *kairos* means the time when God acts: it is God's time zone.

My sense is that people think of these contrasting verses in Ecclesiastes 3 in the *chronos,* or linear, sense. Yet every time in the passage, the word used for time is *kairos,* not *chronos*. Even in the writer's pessimism and despair the writer is referring to the demanding, promising, appointed *kairos* time at work in the world. Ecclesiastes asks us to be aware of the time to do one thing and not to do another thing. Some hold on for dear life to that which is actually finished and done. So our task is to discern what time it is, and that has nothing to do with looking at our watches.

We can easily fall into the trap of thinking that *chronos* time is "bad" and *kairos* time is "good." It is possible to experience worship after worship, liturgy after liturgy, and experience only *chronos* time. *Kairos* time can occur in activity or stillness. That one is relaxing or at a retreat does not make it *kairos* time. Too often we believe we are entering a different type of time when in reality we are just using our time differently.

When Jesus came into our world, God entered our *chronos* time, our history, with *kairos* time. Jesus is the perfect meeting of *kairos* and *chronos*. He meets our linear history with God's transcendent time. One way to image this is through the shape of the cross. The central point where the horizontal and vertical lines intersect represents the

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[17] Ibid.

sacred meeting of *kairos* and *chronos.* This is where we are called to live, where *kairos* and *chronos* meet, in all the times of our lives. That is how we participate in God's eternal rhythm.

When Jesus says that the right hour has come, that the kingdom of God is at hand, the message is that the eternal is appearing in time and elevating time to eternity. The moment passes, the eternal remains. Whatever happens in this moment, in this hour, on this day, and in this short or long lifetime has infinite significance. "Its deepest meaning lies not ahead where vanity swallows it, but it lies above where eternity affirms it."[18] This is the seriousness of time and timing. Reality is the conversation between ourselves and the never-ending productions of time. The closer we are to the source of the productions of time—that is, to the eternal—the more easily we understand the particular currents we must navigate on any given day. The monastic rhythm of life cultivates just such an approach to time. Its daily rhythm requires persistence, repetition. It is a cycle of attention. Adams contends that this "has the power to release us from the tyranny of time-deficit . . . [so] why do we so often choose to live to inferior rhythms and faltering beats?"[19]

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[18] *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, *s.v.* "Work."

[19] Ian Adams, *Cave Refectory Road: Monastic Rhythms for Reshaping Christianity* (Norwich, England: Canterbury Press, 2010), 42.

**Work and Workers**

Minear wrote that the Bible is "an album of casual photographs of laborers. . . . A book by workers, about workers, for workers—that is the Bible."[20] This is an accurate summation. God's work of creation provides a model and sanction for human work. "The God of the Bible," Minear notes, "is preeminently a worker."[21]

Human work in the Bible stresses its perfection. Work existed in the time of human innocence in paradise. Human work is shown to have worth and dignity as a service to God and as something that gives purpose to human life. Work is a creation ordinance, a God-appointed necessity for human life. The second concept of human work that we encounter emerges from the very curse that God pronounces on Adam in Genesis 3:17-19. The image of thorns and thistles in Genesis suggests one dimension of the curse of work: that in a fallen world a lot of work consists of undoing rather than creating and constructing. Thus part of the curse of work in a fallen world is its frequent fruitlessness.[22]

The book of Ecclesiastes serves as a fitting summary for the paradox of work. If life is lived only at ground level ("under the sun"), work is a terrible toil, "vain" and empty, a mere striving after wind (Eccles. 2:18-23, 5:16-17, 6:7). "But in the God-

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[20] P. S. Minear, "Work and Vocation in Scripture," in *Work and Vocation*, ed. John Oliver Nelson (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 33.

[21] Ibid., 44.

[22] *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery, s.v.* "Work."

centered passages, which offer a blueprint for finding enjoyment in life, one of the repeated images of enjoyment is human work, accepted as a gift from God."[23]

In the New Testament, Jesus is a worker. He is a carpenter until the age of thirty. During his public ministry he speaks repeatedly of his work. He says, "We must work the works of him who sent me" (John 9:4). He tells the Jews, "My Father is still working, and I also am working" (John 5:17). The biblical concept of stewardship refers to someone who works with possessions that a master has entrusted to him or her. The classic passage on workers as stewards of God is Jesus' parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), and the image itself encapsulates the general tone of scriptural teaching about people as workers for God.[24]

As an extension of the picture of God as solitary worker, we have pictures of God as coworker with people. A key text is Psalm 127:1: "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain." Implied is that God works through the human worker. Related to this is the rejection of any sacred/secular dichotomy for work. "All work is potentially sacred in the sense that people can serve God through it, and not simply *in* it, incidentally."[25] I am reminded of daily morning worship at the Iona Community. Directly after the benediction is pronounced, worshippers are asked not to sit down but to move straight to their place of work. This is to symbolize the unity of worship and work. There is also a unity with a reality beyond our community labors: "Whatever our success at

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

work, we are all in the gift of much older work, we are all looked after by other eyes, and we are only preparing ourselves for an invitation to join something larger."[26]

**The Theology of Rest**

Finding balance is one of the greatest challenges in a workaholic culture that easily forgets the need for recreation and rest. Oates is accurate when he claims that "our most difficult work in forming spiritual community is to stop working so hard."[27] Stillness forces us to confront our reliance on activity. One modern midrash on Moses' story states, "The miracle may not be that Moses encountered a burning bush, but that he paused long enough to notice it was there."[28] Genesis 2:2 tells us that "God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from the work that he had done." Rest was built into the natural rhythms of life. The rest of God even includes an element that is crucial for humans who rest: refreshment. Exodus 31:17 tells us that God not only rested on the seventh day but also "was refreshed." Moses paints a picture of "the beloved of the LORD" as someone who "rests in safety" and "rests between [God's] shoulders" (Deut. 33:12). "Here is a picture of what rest ultimately involves in the Bible: a relinquishing of human self-assertion and a trust in God."[29] Bass reminds us that rest is a commandment, not a polite invitation. "Though we are made to do good work and to

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[26] David Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2001), 95.

[27] Wayne E. Oates, *Your Right to Rest* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 96.

[28] Larry Golemon, *Finding Our Story: Narrative Leadership and Congregational Change* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2010), 49.

[29] *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, *s.v.* "Rest."

enjoy consecrated rest, we can be makers of neither commandments nor days. These we receive."[30]

Pictures of rest as a cessation of work emerge from the life of Jesus. Despite his busyness, Jesus took time for retreats from his active life (Mark 6:45-47; Luke 6:12, 9:28). He prescribed a similar pattern for his disciples, telling them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves, and rest a while. For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat" (Mark 6:31).[31] In our work we are called to listen to Jesus' counsel to be free of anxiety, to not worry about clothing and feeding ourselves, to trust God's providence.

Taken a step further, rest as trust in God's providence becomes symbolic of salvation itself. Isaiah quotes God as reprimanding people for trusting in their own resources instead of accepting God's invitation: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15). Thus Jesus offers more than emotional rest when he utters the invitation "Come to me, you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

## God's Economy of Wholeness

### Cultivating Spiritual Community

Our faith affirms that God calls us into community and that personal fulfillment is found only within a society where all members are encouraged and equipped toward

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[30] Dorothy C. Bass, *Receiving the Day: Christian Practices for Opening the Gift of Time* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000), 48.

[31] Oates, *Your Right to Rest*, 96.

well-being. As the saying goes, nothing exists without community, not even God. From a Christian standpoint, people are created in the image of a *Trinitarian* God, and Sheldrake claims that Trinitarian faith has a particular capacity to hold unity and multiplicity together. "The Christian revelation of God suggests a dialectical relationship between particularity and universality, or between what is personal and what is interdependent . . . The portrayal of God as persons-in-communion can be translated into an image of human well-being as 'personal space' that is indistinguishably 'space for the other'."[32] At the heart of this understanding is the belief that God is intrinsically relational. If God is love (1 John), then love, in its depth, is the deepest relational concept of all. If God is love, relational love, then we are empowered to become fully relational, both with God and with each other.[33] If we imagine God to be distant, all-knowing, and almighty our human relationships are thus constructed. If we imagine God to be responsive to us and affected by our responses, up close and personal, our relationships with others reflect that understanding.

"Most, if not all, biblical authors share one common concern—the formation and reformation of communities of believers who live with receptivity and responsiveness to God's presence and initiatives."[34] Yet the spiritual dimension of community life is often not nurtured and goes unnamed. O'Donohue contends that we must rediscover our power to bless one another through our words and our actions. "When a blessing is invoked, it

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[32] Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred,*167.

[33] Sallie McFague, *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 52.

[34] Branson, *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations*, 44.

changes the atmosphere. . . . It is ironic that so often we continue to live like paupers though our inheritance of spirit is so vast."[35]

> We settle for an unspiritual community of congenial relationships, cooperative relationships, and consoling relationships, all counterfeits of spiritual friendship. When these can no longer manage the conflict and handle the ugly passions arising within us, we turn to counseling relationships or conforming relationships as substitutes for spiritual direction. We do this partly because we can find no one capable to spiritually direct us, and partly because we don't see spiritual direction as our real need.[36]

The concept of community can seem simple and attractive enough so long as it remains in the abstract. The challenge is to actually live out the concept with others. A community is not an abstract ideal. Community is not an ideal; it is people. The book of Acts tells the story of the early church and it seems that the first-century church was no more free from strife than are churches today. The apostle James contends that conflict is a problem that can be solved only within a spiritual community (James 1:17-20). "Once one has a spiritual center from which to work, no work (provided it is good work) is alienating; no work is just a job."[37] A certain level of conflict is inevitable, and the manner in which conflict is handled indicates the health of a community.

Scarcity of spiritual community is directly related to anxiety. Anxiety as constraint is reflected in the Old Testament. The psalmist frequently uses the word *zarar*, "human distress." "In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help"

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[35] John O'Donohue, *To Bless the Space Between Us* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), xv.

[36] Lawrence J. Crabb, *The Safest Place on Earth: Where People Connect and Are Forever Changed* (Nashville, TN: Word Publications, 1999), 41.

[37] Matthew Fox, *The Reinvention of Work: A New Vision of Livelihood for Our Time* (San Francisco: Harper SanFrancisco, 1994), 23.

(Ps. 18:6). *Zarar* is literally translated as "narrow space." Anxiety tightens: we think in a narrow-minded way or behave in a predictable pattern. The antonym of *zarar* is *yasha*, signifying "open space." In fact *yasha* can also be translated as "salvation," the base word for Yeshua or Jesus. "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" (Ps. 27:1). "Being less anxious, we have room to breathe, and have a more expansive world view."[38] Thus freedom from anxiety can be seen as a sign of commitment to God.

The New Testament is filled with stories of the negative consequences of lives driven by a mentality of scarcity, especially because such an attitude impacts the entire community and its mission.

> Sorrow apart from God's grace can lead to despair; guilt realized apart from God is debilitating. If lament defines the totality of existence, if tears and sorrow and death and loss are all there is, then we feel we must deny reality, narrow our lives, and try empty means of self-protection. . . .We often live with mutual recriminations, lose trust in each other, and live without trust in God.[39]

Jesus' discourse against anxiety uses a barrage of persuasive strategies urging people to cease their anxious striving as they trust in God to supply their needs (Matt. 6:25-34). Paul takes up the theme, saying, "Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you" (Phil. 4:9). "The peace is not primarily an inner, emotional tranquility, but a holistic social formation of the congregation that counters affliction, discord, conflict, lostness."[40] This is the qualitatively distinctive nature of the spiritual peace that Jesus leaves with us.

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[38] Peter L. Steinke, *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2006), 8.

[39] Branson, *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations*, 52.

[40] Ibid., 64.

We live in a world in which body and soul are often viewed in isolation from each other. The ancient Near Eastern people knew differently. According to the Hebrew concept of *corporate personality*, the properties of mind and soul are encoded in the Hebrew names of body parts. So *ruah*, "breath," also meant "spirit"—including the Spirit of Yahweh. And *leb*, "heart," also meant "understanding." Thus, one *thought* with one's heart.[41] The interrelatedness of mind, body, and spirit is often forgotten in traditions where the emphasis is on the intellect and on the acquisition of knowledge. Perhaps thinking of Christianity primarily as a belief system has led us to lose sight of religion as a discovery of balance.

Jesus offers a restorative approach to conflict and violence that heals brokenness back to wholeness (Matt. 5:38-47). He also calls disciples to live with what we might term an economic wholeness: do not live in anxiety but in deep trust of grace and providence (Matt. 6:19-34, 7:9-12). Many people struggle with Jesus' directive in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt.5:48). The Greek word used in Matthew 5:48 is *teleios*. It can be translated as "perfect" but there are a range of other translations just as accurate: brought to its end, finished; complete, full-grown, or mature. One interpretation of the word *perfect* emphasizes a cultivation of wholeness, rather than the more common emphasis on an elimination of all faults. The emphasis here is on harmony between our internal dispositions and our external actions (Matt. 5:21-22, 27-30). The intent is to strive toward

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[41] Margaret Zipse Kornfeld, *Cultivating Wholeness: A Guide to Care and Counseling in Faith Communities* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 9.

wholeness, just as God is whole and complete. The specific counsels of the Sermon on the Mount are not so much unachievable ideals of perfection as they are a road-map to human wholeness and integrity. "Wholeness" is what Jesus is talking about when he says to the Samaritan leper who returns to him, "Your faith has made you well." A more literal translation of Jesus' words might be "Your faith has made you whole." The type of faith that Jesus is commending, that of thanks-giver and praise-giver, contributes to his wholeness. If we take this seriously, our very wholeness depends on gratitude to God that emerges from a deep place within us and changes us: it helps make us whole.

"There is no way we can become aware of our wholeness without God's grace."[42] Jesus is calling us to wholeness, to the fullness of who we are meant to be by the God who stamped us with the divine image. God's grace is expressed through the Incarnation, through coming to Earth as a human being. As Saliers says, "Jesus Christ was humanity and divinity at full stretch."[43] Orthodox Christian teaching permanently connects the body with the soul through its emphasis on the Incarnation. Sheldrake writes, "The only spirituality that is accessible is incarnational – that is mediated through the cultural and contextual overlays we inevitably bring to nature and to our understandings of the sacred."[44] The reality of this story of movement and encounter is made real in everyday

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[42] Ibid., 41.

[43] Don Saliers, "Sanctifying Time, Place, and People," in *The Weavings Reader: Living with God in the Word*, edited by John S. Mogabgab (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1993), 237.

[44] Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred*, 1.

life. In the light of Incarnation, spirituality is undoubtedly concerned with how to live within the complex world of events throughout our lives.

God is not only in our interior life but in the middle and muddle of everyday life. Fox reminds us that mystical philosophers like Hildegard of Bingen, Thomas Aquinas, and Meister Eckhart all state that the soul is not in the body but the body is in the soul. "This implies that our inner work is not an inward work but a deep work."[45]

## Hospitality

Images of God as gracious and generous host pervade the biblical materials. God provides manna and quail daily in the wilderness for a hungry and often ungrateful people. God offers shelter in a hot and dry land, and refreshment through living water. "Israel's covenant identity includes being a stranger, an alien, a tenant in God's land– both dependent on God for welcome and provision and answerable to God for its own treatment of aliens and strangers.[46]

The Indo-European root of the words *host*, *hospice*, *hospitality*, and *hospital* is *ghosti;* it is also the root of the word *guest*. Moreover the meaning of this root includes another word: *ghosti* meant "stranger" as well as "guest" and "host," properly, "someone with whom one has reciprocal duties of hospitality."[47] In ancient Hebrew tradition a meal

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[45] Fox, *The Reinvention of Work,* 23.

[46] Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 16-17.

[47] Helen M. Luke, "The Stranger Within," *Parabola* 15, no. 4 (1990): 17.

in the presence of God established a covenant between God and the dinner guests and a covenant among the guests themselves.[48]

Jesus is portrayed as a vulnerable guest and a needy stranger, one who "came to what was his own" and received no welcome (John 1:11). In his life, "Jesus experienced the vulnerability of the homeless infant, the child refugee, the adult with no place to lay his head, the despised convict."[49] Writers of the New Testament also portray Jesus as a gracious host, welcoming children and prostitutes, tax collectors and sinners into his presence. In first-century Palestine, Jesus created transformational space by inviting people to a radically inclusive table fellowship. This community offered space in which people related to one another in ways radically different from those dictated by the dominant systems of the time.[50] Thus, the practice of Christian hospitality has always been located within the larger image of Jesus' sacrificial welcome to all who come to him.

An important transformation occurs when people without power or status have the opportunity to be more than guests, when they, too, can be hosts. In the guest-host relationship, the guest often becomes the host. In the Gospels, Jesus, the guest, reverses roles and becomes the blesser and server who enriches all who are present.[51] This

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[48] Ibid., 19.

[49] Pohl, *Making Room*, 16-17.

[50] Hester and Walker-Jones, *Know Your Story and Lead with It*, 67.

[51] Alexander Strauch, *The Hospitality Commands: Building Loving Christian Community: Building Bridges to Friends and Neighbors* (Colorado Springs, CO: Lewis and Roth, 1993), 41.

intermingling of guest and host roles in the person of Jesus is part of what makes the story of hospitality so compelling for Christians. Jesus both welcomes and needs welcome; Jesus requires that followers both depend on and provide hospitality.

There is yet another meaning: from this root word also comes the English *hostile*, via the second meaning of *host* as a multitude–often of enemies. "This, again, is connected to the fear of the unknown, which leads to the frequent projection of suspicion and hostility onto anything or any person that is strange to us."[52] The stranger is at the heart of the Emmaus story. Had the two disciples failed to make room for him in their journey, the New Testament would be missing one of its most illuminating stories. Even when they sat down to eat, the stranger was still nameless and unrecognized, yet it was Jesus who presided at the table, taking bread, blessing it, breaking it, and giving it to them. It is at this point that "their eyes were opened, and they recognized him" (Luke 24:31). This is an example of the sense of mutual hospitality in the biblical witness. The challenge is not to miss seeing Jesus along the way. Life is a series of meetings. The only question is how deep we allow the meetings to be. Associated with Jewish thinker Martin Buber, the I-Thou encounter speaks of a spirituality that passes between people. "Unlike its counterpart, I-It, I-Thou respects every person—supervisor, employee, boss—for who they are."[53] Both parties have an equal investment. In the I-Thou relationship the "I" exists *only* in communion with others.

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[52] Luke, "The Stranger Within," *Parabola* 15, 17.

[53] Joan Marques, Satinder Dhiman, and Richard King, *The Workplace and Spirituality: New Perspectives on Research and Practice* (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2009), 93.

Hospitable places allow room for relationships to grow. In such environments, weary and lonely persons can be restored to life. Jean Vanier writes that when people sense "that they are wanted and loved as they are and that they have a place, then we witness a real transformation – I would even say 'resurrection.'"[54] Obviously, hospitality was very important to the early Christians. In fact, New Testament writers Paul, Peter, and John and the author of Hebrews made hospitality a scriptural command, a duty. Hospitality became for the early Christian community a way of being the sacrament of God's love in the world. There is a call to willingly accept the inconvenience, labor, and cost of hospitality. Thus "to be a part of a community of living memory is to be a recipient of that community's own ministry. How rare is such a mutuality in service and such a rendering holy of time, place and people."[55] Chittister reflects on this mutuality, "When we go outside of ourselves to make a connection with the other, we not only attend to the needs of the other, we become more than we were when we began."[56]

Almost all religious orders see the provision of hospitality as one of their core characteristics and a key way to serve the world. It is much more than a vague nod in the direction of welcome. When I go to Iona and walk into the abbey, I look for the vague outlines of faces and animals carved into the walls of the chancel. To me they represent

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[54] Jean Vanier quoted in Pohl, *Making Room,* 153.

[55] Don Saliers, "Sanctifying Time, Place, and People" in *The Weavings Reader: Living with God in the Word*, edited by John S. Mogabgab (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1993), 237.

[56] Joan Chittister, *Aspects of the Heart: The Many Paths to a Good Life* (New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2012), 46.

an invitation to step into the powerful flow among prayer, activity, stillness, and action. The hospitality of the place reshapes me.

**Journey**

"The Bible can be considered an anthology of travel stories."[57] Wherever we turn in the narrative sections of the Bible, we are likely to observe characters in transit, either locally or internationally. Jesus is also the archetypal traveler during his three-year earthly ministry. "His itinerant life is a continual movement from one locale to another."[58]

In the Gospels, Jesus is often pictured on the road with his followers. Some of his most interesting encounters happen there. Home may seem so much safer but there is something vital about the human experience of stepping out into the unknown. We may learn something about the companionship of Jesus, our fellow traveler, something about the guidance of God drawing us on.

The path is a primary metaphor in the Bible. In the Gospels, Christ speaks of choosing the narrow path rather than the broad highway (Matt. 7:13). Early Christians called themselves the followers of "the Way" (Acts 9:2). Paths take us toward each other, and when we need time to be apart, they lead us to solitude. Learning on the path can happen in any direction to those who are open to the experience.

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[57] *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery, s.v.* "Travel Stories."

[58] Ibid.

The topography of our pathways has special significance in Celtic Christianity, in which there is a reverence for crossing places and thresholds of all kinds. Pathways are considered a physical metaphor for our inner world that may offer ways across reservoirs of fear, solid ground through uncertainty, and opening into new stages of becoming who we really are. Silf reports that three symbols of transition are especially potent:

> *Bridges and gateways* express a determined refusal to be stopped by what blocks our way. Bridges cross rivers and chasms in the physical landscape. They reconnect what is divided. Gateways open up new paths for us and invite us to enter (connecting our inner and outer worlds).
>
> *Causeways* open up pathways to places that have been inaccessible. Geographically, causeways often provide the means of travelling to tidal islands. On our inner pilgrimage, they might be invitations to move forward towards what is new and unknown. . . .
>
> *Burial grounds* mark the crossing place from life to death, from "this world" to an "other world", from time and space to eternity and infinity.[59]

Silf cites the work of John Paul Lederach, who issues a challenge to his colleagues to root their work in discerning "the soul of place." He describes this as a journey to "locate *who* I am in the particular place and *what* is the nature of this place *where* I am located."[60] Celtic monks believed a life made new through devotion to God could be discovered and sealed by setting down roots in a new setting, at a site of God's choosing, a place of "resurrection."[61] Pilgrimage has a destination, and Celtic pilgrimage

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[59] Margaret Silf, *Sacred Spaces: Stations on a Celtic Way* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2001), 136.

[60] Golemon, *Finding Our Story*, 63.

[61] John Paul Lederach, quoted in Silf, *Sacred Spaces,* 93.

historically names its destination as "the place of resurrection."[62] This is not about celebrating hardship for its own sake, but rather recognizing that challenging times often open up into a new phase of growth and maturing. George MacLeod founded the Iona Community in the 1930s as a resurrection of community life and the way of the monastics in Scotland during a time of economic depression. He described Iona as "a thin place." He was trying to put words to his experience of Iona as a place where the gap that we usually sense between Earth and mystery, between us and others, between now and always, is somehow diminished.[63] Time and place are connected in the understanding of thin places and thin time (where *chronos* and *kairos* meet). This is where we are called to put down our roots.

## Journeys of Withdrawal and Return

A circular pattern of withdrawal and return is common in literature and is also present in many of the journeys recounted in the Bible. Jacob leaves his parental home and returns after a twenty-year exile. His descendants leave Canaan for Egypt but eventually return. The tribes of Judah are carried into exile but a remnant returns. The prodigal leaves home and returns repentant. Christ came from heaven to Earth and at the close of his earthly ministry returned to heaven.

The theme is a recurring one in Western literature. Dante's work, *The Divine Comedy*, charts the soul's descent and eventual ascent to God. As expressed in Housden's words:

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[62] Silf, *Sacred Spaces*, 93.

[63] Adams, *Cave Refectory Road,* 88.

> There, at his lowest ebb, when he acknowledges how lost he feels, something prompts Dante to look up. He raises his head and sees the dawn, the sun rising over a mountain, perennial symbol of the light of consciousness as well as of Christ. His heart is put at ease, and he continues on his way, ready to meet what comes.[64]

It can be said that "the history of the human race is a U-shaped metaphoric journey descending from the perfection of paradise into fallen history but reascending into a heavenly paradise at the end. In all these stories there is an inner momentum toward wholeness, completion and closure."[65]

## Pilgrims and Pilgrimage

"Although the word *pilgrimage* is absent from most English translations of the Bible, the image is a recurrent one, encompassing some of the deepest meanings of being a follower and worshipper of God."[66] The earliest recorded pilgrimage is that of Abraham, who left Ur four thousand years ago, seeking the presence of God in the vast desert.[67] The story of the Exodus reveals a people in transition. The people were learning, often with reluctance, to be on pilgrimage. The stories of God's people, ancient and contemporary, remind us that pilgrimage is a way of life. "On the life journey we undertake as God's people we do not wander aimlessly like nomads but walk toward the

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[64] Roger Housden, *For Lovers of God Everywhere: Poems of the Christian Mystics* (Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2009), 33.

[65] *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, *s.v.* "Journey."

[66] *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, *s.v.* "Pilgrimage."

[67] Phil Cousineau, *The Art of Pilgrimage: The Seeker's Guide to Making Travel Sacred* xxiv.

Holy One as pilgrims."[68] The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures make it clear that spiritual formation often takes place in the desert, where stark emptiness strips us of pretense, and silence wraps itself around us. "In the desert, we find motivations revealed; we relinquish baggage; we receive fresh vision."[69]

The image of the pilgrimage is also latent in the Gospels, all of which underscore Jesus' final pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The Gospels wind their way toward Jerusalem. Thus a story of geographical travel becomes a journey of salvation. As Niebuhr writes, "Pilgrims are people in motion, passing through territories not their own – seeking a goal to which only the spirit's compass points the way."[70] Pilgrimage is a conscious act of seeking a more vital awareness of God's living presence. "To set out on a pilgrimage is to throw down a challenge to everyday life."[71]

Christianity's most famous pilgrim is perhaps the apostle Paul, who crisscrossed the Roman Empire as a tireless missionary and wrote a series of letters that became a major part of the New Testament. It was Paul who first saw Christians as pilgrims simply by virtue of their conversion and its implications for our ultimate destination (Heb. 11:16).

As early as the fourth and fifth centuries, people left their villages to journey along the "glory road" to the Holy Land so that they might tread in the footsteps of

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[68] Canham, *A Table of Delight,* 23.

[69] Ibid., 6.

[70] Richard Niebuhr, "Pilgrims and Pioneers," quoted in *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Practice* by Lauren Artress (New York: Riverhead, 2006), 33.

[71] Cousineau, *The Art of Pilgrimage*, xxiv.

Christ.[72] Christians in the Middle Ages made a vow to make a pilgrimage to the Holy City of Jerusalem once during their life. However, by the twelfth century, when the Crusades swept across Europe, and Jerusalem became the center of religious struggle, travel was dangerous and expensive. In response the Roman church appointed seven pilgrimage cathedrals to become the "Jerusalem" for pilgrims.[73]

Going on pilgrimage to a holy site became an immensely popular practice. One such ancient destination was to the supposed tomb of Saint James at Santiago de Compostela Cathedral in Galicia, Spain, which attracted hundreds of thousands of pilgrims every year from the eleventh to eighteenth centuries. There are different routes for El Camino de Santiago, the most popular being the French route, which is about eight hundred kilometers long. Wherever the routes originate, they all end at the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral. Just as with the scallop shell, the symbol of the pilgrimage, all points lead to a central point.

## The Labyrinth Journey

While the image of the journey is a predominantly positive one, it is not inherently so. People can journey away from God as well as toward God. We know all too well that few journeys are linear and predictable. Instead they swerve and turn, twist and double back, until we don't know if we're coming or going. The image of the labyrinth is an ancient symbol for the meandering path of the soul that goes from light into darkness and emerges once again into light.

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Sally Welch, *Walking the Labyrinth: A Spiritual and Practical Guide* (Norwich, England: Canterbury Press, 2010), 24.

> The labyrinth provides the sacred space where inner and outer worlds can commune, where the thinking mind and imaginative heart can flow together. Troubled communities can come to the labyrinth to discover and synchronize their vision. It gives us a glimpse of other realms and other ways of knowing.[74]

**History of Labyrinths**

Mazes and a range of labyrinth designs are found all over the world, in many cultures and civilizations. They are carved into rock, ceramics, clay tablets, mosaics, manuscripts, stone patterns, turf, hedges, and cathedral pavements. The labyrinth experience has roots that stretch back thousands of years. Archeologists believe the first were in Egypt and Etruria (now central Italy), c. 4500 BC. The same basic design began to appear across Asia, the Americas, and southern Africa in an assortment of forms, including rock carvings, sand games, wall paintings, wooden sculptures, coins, and woven baskets.[75] Some form of labyrinth pattern is found in almost every religious tradition. The significance of labyrinths for the various cultures they were part of and the stories of how they developed from one location to another, or simultaneously appeared in several locations, are not fully understood, yet the relevance of the labyrinth in different cultures speaks to its archetypal qualities.

The earliest extant Christian labyrinth dates from AD 325 at a church in Algeria.[76] Between c. 165 BC and 400 AD the classical design transformed into the more complex

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[74] Lauren Artress, *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Practice* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2006) 71.

[75] Di Williams, *Labyrinth: Landscape of the Soul* (Glasgow, Scotland: Wild Goose Publications, 2011), 18.

[76] Welch, *Walking the Labyrinth*, 19.

Roman one. The Roman labyrinths were mainly mosaic pavement patterns laid in the floors of bathhouses, villas, and tombs throughout the Roman Empire.[77]

Toward the end of the ninth century the Classical seven circuit labyrinth was developed by adding four extra circuits, creating the eleven circuit labyrinth. The medieval period marked a new wave of labyrinth building and design. By the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the major cathedrals in France had incorporated church labyrinths, with new designs and uses of geometry. These cathedrals include Auxerre, Sens, Chartres, Rouen, and Amiens. The labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral in France, laid into the cathedral floor sometime between the Great Fire of 1194 and 1220, is the largest and most intact of those remaining from this period and has come to be the "quintessential example" of the medieval labyrinth.[78]

There is a great deal of speculation about the actual uses of the labyrinth during the Middle Ages. One common belief is that pavement labyrinths in France and Italy provided the context for both secular and ecclesiastical ceremonial dances. The walk into the labyrinth in many of the cathedrals marked the ritual ending of the physical journey across the countryside. In the tradition of pilgrimage, the path of the labyrinth is called the Chemin de Jerusalem, or road to Jerusalem, and the center of the labyrinth, the New Jerusalem.

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[77] Ibid., 20.

[78] Ingrid D. Bloos and Thomas St. James O'Connor, "Ancient and Medieval Labyrinth and Contemporary Narrative Therapy: How Do They Fit?" *Pastoral Psychology* 50, no. 4 (March 2002): 223.

After medieval times, the spiritual uses of labyrinths were largely forgotten, and many fell into disuse. Many labyrinths were destroyed from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. However, there has been a resurgence of interest in labyrinths in the past thirty years among many communities throughout the world. They are now being built at churches, hospitals, hospices, retreat centers, schools, and even corporate headquarters. It is against this long history of shifting design and use that the contemporary revival of interest in labyrinths has occurred. Labyrinths seem to have emerged again at a time when we need help in recovering a more balanced, reflective, and inclusive way of living our lives.

**Labyrinth or Maze?**

The labyrinth has since ancient times been associated with the Greek myth of the clever serpentine structure on the island of Crete, designed by Daedalus to be virtually impossible to exit. At the center resides the Minotaur, a half-man, half-bull monster whose intention is to entrap any human who dares to enter. Theseus was able to reach the center of the labyrinth, slay the Minotaur, and find his way out again, with the help of Ariadne, who gave him a thread that he trailed behind him on his way in. The myth served, and continues to serve, as an allegorical reflection of the human existential struggle.

The story has also caused considerable confusion, for clearly the Minotaur's lair was a maze rather than a labyrinth. A labyrinth, however confusing it looks, has only one path that weaves its way to the center and back out again. There are only one entrance and one exit, no dead ends, and no crossing paths offering different ways to turn. With no

choices or intersections, the path leads unfailingly, though circuitously, to the center. A mazes, on the other hand, has multiple paths and offers myriad choices, most of which lead nowhere. As a literary motif and an allegory, the labyrinth is almost universally confused with the maze as a symbol for difficult entry or exit, for disorientation and complexity, or as a metaphor for the human condition. This confusion between labyrinths and mazes is evident in many dictionaries. "There is, in fact, a big difference experientially. Life-as-maze and life-as-labyrinth are opposite concepts, mutually exclusive, with vastly different metaphysical premises. In a maze we lose ourselves, in a labyrinth we find ourselves."[79] The design of the maze is intended to confuse, puzzle, and obstruct while the open form of the labyrinth is intended to facilitate. Most scholars agree that only a form that is unicursal in design can be called a labyrinth.[80]

Perhaps the ultimate distinction between a maze and a labyrinth is bound by intention:

> Although most of us acknowledge the desirability of labyrinths, when it comes down to it, we generally see our lives as mazes, not labyrinths. It is easy to feel that we are off the path, that success is not assured, or that it comes only with luck or struggle. We see many of the decisions or events in our lives not as turns but as dead ends, times wasted, money lost or opportunities missed. We reprimand ourselves when we are divorced, or downsized, or if we fail as parents. Our rational minds work overtime. These are all traits of a maze, not a labyrinth.[81]

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[79] Robert Ferré, "Foreword," in *Living the Labyrinth,* by Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2000), x.

[80] Bloos and O'Connor, "Ancient and Medieval Labyrinth and Contemporary Narrative Therapy," 221.

[81] Ferré, "Foreword" in *Living the Labyrinth,* x.

**The Spirituality of the Labyrinth**

The labyrinth involves a physical journey or walk, which reflects our inner spiritual journey. The labyrinth experience embodies many theological themes: creation, the Incarnation, relationships, journey, redemption, transcendence and immanence, encountering God, being transformed. But rather than explaining these in a rational and didactic way, the labyrinth experience retains a sense of mystery that is evocative of the God who cannot be fully explained. "In spiritual care the focus is upon the whole person upon the humanity of the person, upon their story. Where there is a 'mind in a maze' and a sense of self obscured the labyrinth experience offers a gentle way to assist the discovery or uncovering of that self which is lost."[82] As Ferré states, "Our quest, I feel, can be summarized as this single obligation: to switch from life-as-maze to life-as-labyrinth. The transformation from maze to labyrinth requires us to dismiss much of our conditioning, to reevaluate our identity, and to apply a new context to our lives."[83]

Schaper and Camp remind us that labyrinths model a holistic theology:

> One of the big words in modern theology is *embodiment*. People want to know if we can walk the walk as well as talk the talk: labyrinths answer that question yes, if in ever so modest a way. Labyrinths encourage embodiment rather than discourage it; that is a strong reason for their popularity among the new seekers.[84]

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[82] Ruth Sewell, Jan Sellers, and Di Williams, *Working with the Labyrinth: Paths for Exploration* (Glasgow, Scotland: Wild Goose Publications, 2012), 113.

[83] Robert Ferré, "Foreword," in *Living the Labyrinth,* by Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2000), x.

[84] Donna Schaper and Carole Ann Camp, *Labyrinths from the Outside In: Walking to Spiritual Insight: A Beginner's Guide* (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2000), 40.

As a circle, the labyrinth is a universal symbol of unity and wholeness. Just as different people are at different places on the labyrinth, so they are at different places in their spiritual journey. "The labyrinth is nonjudgmental: there is no right or wrong about it; it requires only the one decision, to walk or not; it leaves us free to move as we choose and to think what we will; it welcomes us as we are and asks no questions. In that sense it offers a place of hospitality."[85] The labyrinth is a place where all can explore meanings and the motivations of their inner resources and find resources for their journey. Many today would claim no religious connection but are aware of their own need to nourish their soul as well as their mind and body. The labyrinth is a unique place where people of diverse beliefs and lifestyles walk a common path together.

In Western Christianity the mystical path of the labyrinthine spiral is traditionally the Threefold Path, or three stages, based on the sixteenth-century teachings of Saint Teresa of Ávila. Stage one, *Purgation*, represents moving from the entrance of the labyrinth to its center. The experience is one of release. The second stage is *Illumination,* which may be found in the center of the labyrinth, a place for resting and stillness. The final stage, *Union*, captures the process of leaving the center, retracing the path out of the labyrinth, and finally the integration of any new awareness arising from the experience.[86]

This sense of integration is key to the wholeness the labyrinth is meant to cultivate. "When we walk a labyrinth, or indulge any spirituality, we need to think about doing so from the inside out. That is, we need to be ready to go back to the big world

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[85] Sewell, Sellers and Williams, *Working with the Labyrinth*, 113.

[86] Artress, *Walking a Sacred Path,* 28-30.

where big issues are discussed. We do not use the labyrinth as a refuge as much as we use it as preparation for our way in the real world."[87] Schaper and Camp claim that ultimately, walking the labyrinth is a metaphysical, not a physical, practice; but it cannot be *meta-* until it is *physical*. This relates to the issue of embodiment. "What is wonderful about the embodied spirituality of the labyrinth is that it uses our bodies. Bodies tell limited stories well because bodies are limited. Bodies tell little stories, not big ones. Labyrinths circle these small stories into something we can call a piety or a spirituality. We just have to keep on walking. We will get somewhere."[88]

[87] Schaper and Camp, *Labyrinths from the Outside In,* 41-42.

[88] Ibid., 44.

# CHAPTER THREE

# PREPARING THE WAY: THE METHODOLOGY

*A playground awaits:*
*its form – a labyrinth.*
*Serious work can happen anywhere*
*–Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion*

## Research Methodologies

Much of the research on spirituality in the workplace stems from the corporate setting (for-profit business/financial organizations) with, perhaps, an unspoken expectation that a focus on spirituality will enhance performance and profitability. Spirituality can sometimes be viewed as one more marketable product. Literature on spirituality in the campus setting focuses on the spirituality of the students; little mention is made of staff or faculty. Of course, college staff and faculty share commonalities with other workplace contexts but the college is distinctive by virtue of the nature of governance, tenure, and the liberal arts model of higher education. Listening to distinctive narratives in this particular context and responding to them are outlined in the methodology of narrative inquiry.

### Narrative Inquiry

We live by our stories. Stories can empower, and also disable, individuals and community. "Narrative is a critical key to our identity, for we all need a story to live by in order to make sense of the otherwise unrelated events of life and to find a sense of

dignity."[1] Organizations have multiple ongoing narratives, particularly in times of transition or controversy. A confluence of many streams of reality makes up any context: "Our map is drawn as an interpretive narrative matrix in which reside the personal and faith stories of the researcher, the intersecting stories of the faith community's praxis, their religious traditions, and research stories."[2]

Narrative therapy arises from a postmodern worldview based largely on the work of French social theorist Michel Foucault. Stories lay out the norms for how a community operates and, as such, awareness of the nature and impact of such stories is key to fostering a new way of narrating, and creating, community life. "The narratives we live by, handed down by culture and tradition, are so internalized that we may not see an alternative to them. The interest we have in problems can be so intense that at some point we take our identity from those problems."[3] Narrative theory views "problems as separate from people and assumes that people have many skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments and abilities that will assist them to reduce the influence of problems in their lives."[4] Helping all parties give voice to their story is a necessary step to beginning

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[1] Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 19.

[2] Carl E. Savage, William B. Presnell, Leonard I. Sweet, and Michael J. Christensen, *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Research Approach for Faith Communities* (Louisville, KY: Wayne E. Oates Institute, 2008), 30.

[3] Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008), 33.

[4] Larry A. Golemon, *Finding Our Story: Narrative Leadership and Congregational Change* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2010), 6.

the work of externalizing issues. Only then can the problem be separated from personalities and be replaced by formation of a new alliance against the problem.

> To create new stories, we first need to come to terms with the current ones. This begins by naming them. Received narratives can be reconstructed or replaced by re-storying our lives according to newfound strengths and capacities for change. Basic to this framework is the assumption that each of us, and each community or organization we work with, is a coauthor in shaping the narratives that provide frameworks of meaning and practice for our lives.[5]

Block refers to "limiting stories," which present themselves as if they were true. "Our stories of our own past are heartfelt and yet are fiction . . . our version of all of them, the meaning and memory that we narrate to all who will listen, is our creation. Made up. Fiction. And this is good news, for it means that a new story can be concocted any time we choose."[6] The gap between what actually takes place and what people can tell of it is the space where a narrative approach does its primary work. God is at work in the gaps.

At Wilson College there is a sense of certain narratives as set in stone. Scarcity in many forms has existed for so long that the dominant narrative has not evolved. The story of the stuck community can be heard both in the dominant public debate and in the hidden agenda in shadow stories. "This agenda is a point to be made, a political belief about what is important, that stays constant regardless of the events of the day."[7] Golemon maintains that the story told about being stuck contains the clues for getting

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[5] Golemon, *Finding Our Story*, 11.

[6] Block, *Community*, 35.

[7] Ibid., 36.

unstuck. He notes three problematic story types that often sit at the heart of stuck congregations:

1. The story that illustrates where things went wrong in the past and how the congregation will never recover from that event.
2. The story that illustrates a triumphant moment in the past, but memorializes that event in such a way that it limits the congregation's future.
3. The story about being stuck in the present, casting the teller in a noble role and finding someone else to blame for the congregation's problems.[8]

Clandinin and Connelly outline the following terms in narrative inquiry: *personal* and *social* (interaction) and *past present and future* (continuity), combined with the notion of *place* (situation). This set of terms creates a metaphorical narrative inquiry space, with temporality along one dimension, the personal and the social along the second dimension, and place along the third. "Using this set of terms, an inquiry is defined by this three-dimensional space: studies have temporal dimensions and address temporal matters; they focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry; and they occur in specific places or sequences of places."[9] This three-dimensional image is one that will be foundational to me as I seek to create safe, creative spaces in a particular context at a particular time in the college's history. All dimensions are held within the sacred. And sacred stories can shake up our tightly held perspectives. The power of sacred stories and symbols, intersecting with our particular human stories, makes room for the imagination of new, alternative visions and actions.

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[8] Golemon, *Finding Our Story*, 93.

[9] D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 50.

## Narrative Therapy and the Labyrinth

Bloos and O'Connor affirm the use of the labyrinth within a narrative therapy context. Narrative therapy is distinct from narrative inquiry but the fields share underlying precepts. The task of narrative therapy is to discover unique outcomes underlying the alternate story of success. The dominant story tends to reinforce the problem and disempower the persons involved, robbing them of personal agency. The alternate story, on the other hand, builds personal agency. Narrative therapists believe that this shift brings success in reducing the problem.[10]

According to Bloos and O'Connor, there are both similarities and differences between the labyrinth and contemporary narrative therapy. The first similarity is that they share the same goal of building the alternate story. In narrative therapy the alternate story is one of success over the issue(s) at hand. In the labyrinth the alternate story is helping the person experience spiritual energy in a new way through walking the labyrinth. Second, both begin with a negative experience. In the labyrinth one begins the journey aware that something is missing and seeks to move toward insight and integration. Narrative therapy begins with a problem-saturated story that spells defeat and then moves to the alternate story of success. Third, both use hermeneutics, or interpretation of experience. The labyrinth walk is a lens through which to interpret one's experience.

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[10] Ingrid D. Bloos and Thomas St. James O'Connor, "Ancient and Medieval Labyrinth and Contemporary Narrative Therapy: How Do They Fit?" *Pastoral Psychology* 50, no. 4 (March 2002): 225.

Narrative therapy interprets experience in order to create a story of success over the problem.[11]

Both facilitate personal agency: narrative therapy by developing an externalizing conversation, labyrinths by providing an experience open to deep interpretation and empowerment. When one walks a labyrinth with others, one has a communal experience although words are not necessarily exchanged. Because of the long history and tradition of the labyrinth there is a sense that the walker is accompanied by a host of people who, literally or metaphorically, have walked the labyrinth as part of their own spiritual journey.

Bloos and O'Connor also outline major differences between the labyrinth and contemporary narrative therapy. First, narrative is part of the postmodern socially constructed view of truth. The labyrinth in its ancient and medieval traditions arises from a view of truth that is objective and universal. However, those with a postmodern view of spirituality adopt the labyrinth for their spiritual growth in a postmodern context. Second, narrative emphasizes the cognitive and the labyrinth emphasizes the kinesthetic. Insight is important in the labyrinth, and the means to insight is the kinesthetic experience of walking the labyrinth.[12]

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[11] Ibid., 226.

[12] Ibid., 227.

## The Ethnographic Approach

Clandinin and Connelly contend that as work proceeds, narrative inquirers may discover that aspects of their work have ethnographic features.[13] "Ethnography is best understood as a narrative form of writing, which means that it is organized as a story and told in prose, describing events that involve characters and a plot. This narrative form is not to be confused with fiction."[14] Ethnography works by helping get a feel for the undercurrents in the life of the community. These undercurrents often tell a different story from the one inscribed in official theologies or mission statements. Observing and listening to these stories can help "discover and name some of the issues that form the undercurrents of communal life. Once these issues are heard and explored in open conversation, the invisible hold of the undercurrents is usually diminished."[15]

The ethnographic approach has relevance in the context of Wilson College. If "doing ethnography is like studying navigational charts,"[16] then it is important to identify the quicksand and riptides at the college. Particular attention will be paid to the *habitus* of Wilson College – that is, the aspects of communal life that have become habitual, or predictable, for that group.[17]

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[13] Clandinin and O'Connely, *Narrative Inquiry,* 128.

[14] Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2008), 195.

[15] Ibid., 6.

[16] Ibid., 7.

[17] Ibid., 53.

Ethnographic research is a nonlinear process that values clear communication in the creation of authentic community.[18] At this stage I would hope to explore the causal/predictive puzzle. In other words, how might the chosen project impact the narrative of concern?[19] "The spiral-like learning process of ethnographic inquiry does not lend itself to simple, step-by-step instructions."[20] Rather it is more organic and responsive to the context at hand.

Along with interview data and documentary sources, ethnographers look at theology and human interactions to thicken the descriptive process.[21] "Thick description," arising from the work of Clifford Geertz, "is a detailed and interpretive description that conveys your understanding of the deep meanings of your observations. Thick description goes beyond the literal and expresses the tacit import of a gesture, word, or action in this particular context."[22]

According to Moschella, interpretation involves "the researcher examining the symbolic functions of things, looking for intrinsic meanings that may go way beyond the avowed purpose of the article or the environment. This form of analysis is somewhat akin to looking for themes or listening for the deeper meanings of stories."[23] Clandinin and

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[18] Ibid., 19.

[19] Ibid., 57.

[20] Ibid., 167.

[21] Ibid., 28.

[22] Ibid., 197.

[23] Ibid., 183.

Connelly note the needed transition from field text to research text. Field texts are not constructed with reflective intent. However, one must create some distance in order to be able to begin composing research texts. "The relationship shifts from the intensity of living stories with participants to retelling stories through research texts."[24] This signifies the move to analysis and interpretation.

## My Handprint in the System

As college chaplain I live in the tension between being a member of the community and being one set apart from it in order to perform a leadership role. Tom Frank calls this a liminal role, "standing on the threshold of insider and outsider status."[25] This liminal state is characterized by ambiguity, openness, and indeterminacy. I travel among the worlds of students, faculty, staff, student development, and church. The reality of standing apart is combined with the reality that "the metaphor of immersion has been used to describe ethnography itself . . . the researcher's presence and participation in a setting serve to generate knowledge."[26] Thus "we are our own subjects. How our subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of others is and always has been our topic."[27] This means I am called to confront my own narratives and understand that "the idea of a

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[24] Clandinin and O'Connely, *Narrative Inquiry*, 129.

[25] Tom Frank, quoted in Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice*, 37.

[26] Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice*, 168.

[27] Norman Denzin, quoted in Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice,* 67.

non-participant observer is not possible."[28] The reality that one is not a neutral, disinterested presence in the system of this project is humbling. "It is impossible (or if not impossible, then deliberatively self-deceptive) as a researcher to stay silent or to present a kind of perfect, idealized, inquiring, moralizing self."[29] Throughout the project I aim to intentionally assess and reflect on the ways the project is shaping me and I, in turn, am shaping it. This shall be through close collaboration with the Local Advisory Committee (LAC), eliciting feedback from my spiritual director and others, outside the system, with whom I have a shared history. I shall seek to stay connected to my spiritual center and be self-aware in a nonjudgmental, generative manner.

Issues of trust, confidentiality, and boundaries of personal pastoral care will be addressed directly in the project design. I seek to bring reverence to research relationships. "Reverence is profound respect and regard for the dignity of the persons and communities who allow us to see so much of themselves."[30] This models the values that underpin the project itself. The manner in which I conduct this project is as important as any programmatic initiatives in terms of outcome. Peter Block outlines a way of operating within a system through operating strategies of consent.

These strategies include:

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[28] Giampietro Gobo, quoted in *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* by Tim Sensing (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 95.

[29] Clandinin and Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry*, 62.

[30] Ibid.

- Moving from leadership to stewardship of conversations. Such conversations value the question more than the answers, they avoid discussing "they," and they move towards the tension.
- Engendering change through invitation, engagement, purpose, new conversations.
- Inviting participation through choice, transparency and public expression of doubt, the power of place.[31]

If it is true that "hope resides in large ideas expressed in small moments,"[32] then intentionality about creating the project environment is key. An awareness of my handprint in the system is combined with the active roles I shall be cultivating through the project, primarily that of active listener.

## Deep Listening and Theory U

Ethnographic research values full presence and deep pastoral listening. Most people long to be heard, and listening must never be confused with waiting to speak. Lindahl asserts that choosing to listen is an active choice of participation with, and awakening to, the other.[33]

De Jong maintains that the Theory U process, as outlined by Scharmer with full presence at its core, offers a new story line for leadership within an organization. "Scharmer suggests that every change starts with observe, observe, observe. This requires an individual to download and discard previous perspectives and then begin afresh by

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[31] Peter Block, "Strategies for Consent," paper presented at the meeting of Capital One Corporation Human Resource Leadership, Richmond, VA, May 2001.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Kay Lindahl, *Practicing the Sacred Art of Listening* (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2003), 4.

envisioning new frameworks of response. This downloading requires listening with all our senses, with an open *mind*, open *heart*, and open *will.*"[34]

Scharmer distinguishes four levels of listening: downloading, factual listening, empathetic listening, and generative listening: Generative listening requires the listener to pay full attention to the storyteller, without judging, giving feedback, or slipping in quick associations. According to Theory U, generative listening is the point at which real innovation starts.[35]

The aim of pastoral listening in ethnography is that the speakers and the group become empowered, "heard to speech" that is authentic, honest, and transformative.[36] Ethnographic research can be a form of holistic pastoral listening if it attends not only to people's words but also to the range of meanings and desires expressed through their lives.[37]

## Hearing New Voices and New Stories

Aligned with the necessity for deep listening is the need to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to be heard. The work of creating a space in which new and honest speech can emerge in a community is crucial.[38] Within any organization there are

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[34] Annemarie De Jong, "The Leadership Labyrinth," *Journal of Leadership Studies* 5, no. 2 (2011): 77.

[35] C. O. Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading form the Future as it emerges; the social technology of presencing* (Cambridge, MA: Society for Organizational Learning, 2007).

[36]Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice*, 141.

[37] Ibid., 10.

[38] Ibid., 143.

people who may feel marginalized and lacking in influence or power. Moschella contends that engaging those who feel peripheral, in and of itself, begins to challenge their undervalued status.[39] Although they may have reason to feel that their views are not valued, the conversation itself changes the culture. As Presnell writes: "We look with the person at her/his life story, identify its culturally subjugated as well as promising parts, and help reposition the person in relationship to life in the world to achieve their own authentic voice. This is a work of restoration and empowerment in itself."[40] Thus the process of helping others name their current situation and worldview may give rise to deeper knowing and a sense of self-determination going forward.

## Local Advisory Committee

At the beginning of the fall 2012 semester I invited the following staff and faculty to be on the LAC: Director of Counseling, Associate Dean of Students, Science Program Assistant, Stable Manager, Associate Professor of English, Assistant Professor of Business, and an elder from a local Presbyterian church. Those invited to participate in the LAC hold the issue of individual and community spiritual wholeness close to their hearts. Like me, they did not stand apart from the challenges and opportunities of this context. The LAC represents a wide cross section of the college community and as such is well placed to engage in active listening within their departments. I was dependent on my LAC to bring their stories to the table, to "thicken the story." The collective wisdom

[39] Ibid., 152.

[40] William Presnell, "Getting the Idea of Narrative: Story-Based Thinking About Ministry," *The Oates Journal* 144: 6.

gathered around the table was invaluable for identifying issues/opportunities that have not yet been identified, seeing how the stories intersect, identifying the main players, and bringing their own theological perspectives to the table.

In this process I saw myself as a "story broker" facilitating a community's negotiation between a "problem saturated story and a preferred emerging story."[41] I did not begin meeting with the LAC with a ready-made project design for them to ratify. The very nature of the project required that I be as intentional about the process as I was about the content.

It was a "big ask" to request others to add one more commitment to their workload. I would hope that the "ethnographic encounter itself, through the process of gathering and analyzing and sharing data, can affect the members of the group" in a positive way.[42] As researcher Lynn Davidman notes, "the telling of lives is always changing those lives."[43] This was a process of formation. *Formation* refers, first to how the group is formed to accomplish its purpose, and second, to the way group activity contributes to the personal and spiritual formation of the participants. "These two are interrelated and reciprocal."[44]

Rather than experiencing an energy drain, it was hoped members of the LAC would be energized by creating community synergy through our meeting together. I

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[41] Savage, Presnell, Sweet, and. Christensen, *Narrative Research in Ministry,:* 75.

[42] Presnell, "Getting the Idea of Narrative," 6.

[43] Lynn Davidman, quoted in Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice*, 11.

[44] Richard L. Hester and Kelli Walker-Jones, *Know Your Story and Lead with It: The Power of Narrative in Clergy Leadership* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2009), 125.

hoped the LAC itself could embody the kind of collaboration and trust the project itself sought to cultivate on campus so that, as Block says, "every time we gather becomes a model of the future we want to create."[45]

In consultation with the LAC, it was decided that our meetings should take place in my home, over a meal. This decision placed a high value on the power of relatedness that occurs when people break bread together. We began meeting in mid-September, rotating meeting times among breakfast, lunch, and dinner to accommodate people's schedules.

## Emergent Themes

Discussion with the LAC and my own listening conversations distilled several themes at play within the college setting. These themes were intentionally addressed in the design of the project and incorporated in the two primary underlying themes of the labyrinth: journey and relationship.

### Journeying Together

We can become so focused on a particular destination that we lose sight of the quality of the journey. The journey is valued in narrative research. Jensen makes the point that storytelling is not linear in nature; like life, it can appear circuitous. Referring to Garrison Keillor's stories, he claims that we do not listen for resolution of the story; we listen because we enjoy the journey itself.[46]

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[45] Block, *Community*, 32.

[46] Richard Jensen, quoted by Joseph P. Myers, in *Organic Community: Creating a Place Where People Naturally Connect* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 81.

When pilgrims walk the five-hundred-mile Camino de Santiago, they average about fifteen miles per day on foot for four to six weeks. Such a challenging pilgrimage would be impossible without pilgrim hostels where travelers are welcomed and provided a place to share a meal and rest before pressing on in their journey. Like such pilgrims, we need "way stations" on our journey where we welcome and are welcomed, where we offer and receive the gift of hospitality. Many community members at Wilson College regard each semester as an endurance test. It is a very different mind-set to consider it a pilgrimage. The project will provide opportunities to welcome one another and encourage creativity in our practice of hospitality. The reality is that however hospitable we think our communities are, they are "living and breathing organic entities; none is ideal or as deeply welcoming to all as we might hope."[47] The challenge to be deeply hospitable contains opportunity because "organized, professionalized systems are capable of delivering services, but only associational life is capable of delivering care."[48] The project will focus on the invitational nature of how we gather and the context in which our gatherings take place. Keeping this focus is especially critical when individuals and institutions meet across boundaries.

The three sections of a labyrinth have particular resonance with journeying and will be emphasized in the implementation of the project:

1. The inward journey: letting go and shedding (releasing)
2. The middle of the labyrinth: centering and resting (receiving)
3. The outward journey: incarnation and new life (returning)

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[47] Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice*, 33.

[48] Block, *Community*, 14.

**Relationship**

**Relationship with . . . Wholeness and Hospitality**

The labyrinth encompasses the concept of the inner journey (spirituality), the outward journey (in community), and the bridging of the two in wholeness. The relationship between our inner and outer realities is vital. The intent is to stay whole and maintain our center. Operating out of a place of acceptance of the reality of integration of mind, body, and soul supports the journey to wholeness and helps us move away from the dualism that reinforces fragmentation.[49]

With the College's reduced resources and tightly constrained schedules, extending generosity in dealings with others in the system can become challenging. This is especially the case when opinions differ as to the way forward. Hospitality can become a victim of the prevailing culture if it is not nurtured. When the focus is on trying to achieve a balanced budget, activities that are impossible to quantify are sometimes not valued.

Historically there has been resistance at the College to dealing with conflict in an open manner. Since anger is not fully expressed, it becomes resentment, which gets expressed in many covert ways. Different campus cultures have generated the stories that are told and have reinforced them over time. Some narratives connect tangentially while others are isolated and incomplete renditions. "If many [congregations] have learned to tell weak stories, many more tell safe stories. Safe stories are the ones people tell

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[49] Margaret Zipse Kornfeld, *Cultivating Wholeness: A Guide to Care and Counseling in Faith Communities* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 19.

themselves that are true but incomplete."[50] There are other kinds of stories that in their telling may become a limitation. "Limiting stories are those that are rehearsed or make the point that the future will be a slightly modified continuation of the past out of which the story arose."[51]

Hospitality requires making time out of already busy lives for others. It also involves individuals' rights and boundaries. Counterintuitively, perhaps, part of the internal work of hospitality is setting boundaries. As Homan and Pratt state, "Denying what we really and truly need, in some misunderstood notion about being hospitable toward others, or living with others, is not healthy. Boundaries keep us from feeling used or manipulated. When we set perimeters and refuse to allow ourselves or others to be violated, we become free to enjoy giving . . . hospitality doesn't mean you have to be a martyr."[52] Thus the concept of hospitality challenges a normative culture of overwork.

**Relationship with . . . Change**

The courage not to know, not to have all the answers, to face the uncertainty and work through it, is one of the biggest challenges at the College as it undergoes seismic changes. For some this process feels like being in a maze, searching desperately for the right direction. Living with questions may feel like being isolated in a maze when it could also be experienced as walking a labyrinth in community.

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[50] Golemon, *Finding Our Story*, 29.

[51] Block, *Community*, 35.

[52] Daniel Homan and Lonni Collins Pratt, *Radical Hospitality: Benedict's Way of Love* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2011), 179-80.

> Emphasizing the importance of living with questions, rather than solving them, is crucial in developing leaders in the 21century. Living with questions may feel like being lost in a maze, when in truth it is more about *walking the labyrinth*. The courage to live with the questions, guiding people on their journeys and becoming aware of our own contributions to the world, relies on a very important underlying principle – leaders need to listen and practice dialogue in order to engage the critical questions of the day.[53]

The courage to live with questions, to hold the tension, builds capacity to embrace change and anticipate a shared future. It is hoped that any anxiety participants experience during the project can be honored and held in a safe manner with the opportunity to process it afterward in appropriate forms and venues. People's unfamiliarity with the notion of labyrinths may be advantageous in that they will be experiencing it together for the first time. There are no experts. We will all be journeying into unknown territory.

**Relationship with . . . Rest and Play**

Validation of the need for rest and balance will run throughout the project, imagined as the point of stillness at the center of a labyrinth. It is challenging to take time out when there is a perception of "wasted time." This can be reframed as *kairos* time. *Kairos* carries with it a sense of opportunity, activity, and potential. Opportunities for play and creativity, as well as rest and silence, help build an emotional bank account of goodwill, fun, care, and respect.

Creativity will extend to being intentional about the spaces we make during the project, not only through the open, simple symmetry of the labyrinth but also through all gathering spaces, including artwork throughout the project. Creating beautiful spaces helps us inhabit familiar space in a new way.

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[53] De Jong, "The Leadership Labyrinth," 75.

**Relationship with . . . Identity**

There is considerable uncertainty about identity at the College at both an individual and institutional level. Institutional values, purpose, and mission are being renegotiated. Also, some people feel the proposed change threatens their notions of themselves. They do not trust anyone to look after their needs. "We are like turtles, turning in on ourselves, and we forget that we have choices we can make."[54]

Lutz states that "we come to labyrinths as we are."[55] This coming face-to-face with the mirror of identity is a powerful metaphor as we choose the new stories that will shape our identity. These include sacred stories as we find our ultimate identity at the heart of God's story.

Wisdom about individual transformation is not enough when it comes to community transformation, however intimately they are connected.[56] This is in line with Block's asset-based thinking: "There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about. Ask, 'What's possible?' not 'What's wrong?'"[57]

Block, by using the language of context rather than of culture, puts the choice into community members' hands. "Culture is a set of shared values that emerges from the history of experience and the story that is produced out of that. It is the past that gives us our identity and corrals our behavior in order to preserve that identity. Context is the way

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[54] LAC meeting, October 4, 2012.

[55] Jean Lutz, "The Labyrinth Letter" Scottsdale Arizona, n.d.,Letter

[56] Block, *Community*, 1.

[57] Golemon, *Finding Our Story*, 57.

we see the world."[58] Thus at Wilson College, the *context* may be one of financial insecurity but that need not determine the *culture*.

## Timeline for the Project

"If narratives are the stories that shape our memory, practices are the pathways that shape our lives" into the future.[59] This project will foster practices that can form pathways to our future in community. These practices were drafted in November 2012 in collaboration with the LAC.

**December 2012**

1. Speak with key constituents about the project, including College President, Dean of Faculty, Vice President for Finance, and Dean of Students.
2. Generate interest by inviting ideas for The Labyrinth Project logo and T-shirt design.
3. Post flyers advertising The Labyrinth Project @ Wilson College Coming Spring 2013.

**January/February 2013**

1. Begin labyrinth blog (www.thelabyrinthproject.blogspot.com).
2. Secure permission and promotional materials for temporary/pop-up labyrinth. This will involve Physical Plant department, grounds crew, Communications department, and Alumnae department as well as raising student, staff, and faculty awareness.
3. Synergy seeking: Pursue possibilities for interdepartmental involvement specifically through English and Fine Art departments.
4. Intentional ministry of opportunity: Create new contact points on campus.
5. Contact student clubs to inform them about The Labyrinth Project and invite participation.
6. Plan and publicize a day retreat to be held in April.
7. Contact The Labyrinth Society for additional resources.
8. Research alumnae involvement.
9. Plan and lead Lent worship series.

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[58] Block, *Community*, 55.

[59] Golemon, *Finding Our Story*, 7.

10. Plan monthly opportunities for community to gather informally and break bread together.
11. Continue meeting and updates with LAC.

**March/April 2013**

1. Continue planning for pop-up temporary labyrinth.
2. Continue The Labyrinth Project blog.
3. Begin community stone painting: Imaginative touchstones. Offer opportunities to paint stones at various venues and times to give many chances for community members to be involved.
4. Visit The Labyrinth Society.
5. Give an interview about World Labyrinth Day for Student newspaper, *The Billboard*.
6. Attend labyrinth workshop led by the Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress.
7. Continue meeting and updates with LAC.
8. Offer all-day retreat to students, staff, and faculty on a Saturday in April. Theme: A Day of R.E.S.T. (Rest, Exploration, Sacred Time) Location: Bon Secours Retreat Center.
9. Hold *The Way* event, based on the movie of the same name. Includes a showing of the movie, a Spanish-themed meal, and a lecture by Camille Bachman, who completed El Camino pilgrimage during fall 2012.

**May 2013**

1. World Labyrinth Day, May 4: Public culmination of The Labyrinth Project. As well as the entire College community, local churches, community members, and College alumnae will be invited to experience the labyrinth. Educational opportunities and resources will be available before people experience the labyrinth as well as facilitated review afterward. The temporary nature of the labyrinth will be a symbol of the ongoing nature of this project. This goes beyond building a labyrinth or even walking a labyrinth to "living the labyrinth" within our College setting.
2. Labyrinth to remain in place for one week.
3. Hold ceremony to take the stones from the labyrinth to form a stone path at a central location on campus. The heart stone shall be saved for subsequent worship occasions.
4. Review overall project with LAC: Sharing of narratives and assessment of whether there may be energy to create a permanent labyrinth on campus.
5. Complete site review meeting with LAC and project supervisors.

## Evaluation Approach

The impact of the project will involve narrative inquiry related to community life at the College. This inquiry will be a narrative one seeking to evoke stories rather than answers and will foster the life-giving narrative that exists at the College if we take the time to listen.

The following goals for evaluating the project were developed by the LAC during the development of the prospectus:

1. Renewed vision for the future of the College
2. Renewed sense of hope and refreshed spirits, which are currently lacking
3. Stronger sense of community spirit and cohesiveness, willingness and openness to listening to each other
4. Discussion of the possibility of creating a permanent labyrinth[60]

Frequent facilitated reflections will be held during the project as well as opportunities to contribute to a labyrinth log. Evaluation will involve an appreciation that our campus context, financial insecurity, does not need to dictate our community culture. Evaluation will be facilitated through the creation of informal spaces for conversation. Meal gatherings will be an opportunity to share the different ways the project is being made manifest. They will create opportunities to hear new stories and more multifaceted narratives. An indication of the worth and impact of the project will be gathered through seeing ways in which the project is retained or incorporated within other departments of the College after the project has concluded. There will be opportunity in fall 2013 to assess ways in which our labyrinth journey is continuing.

[60] LAC, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

At the spring 2013 convocation ceremony I used the following poem as a benediction before the College community began the journey through the semester and The Labyrinth Project.

> Every time you leave home,
> Another road takes you
> Into a world you were never in.
> . . .
>
> When you travel,
> A new silence
> Goes with you,
> And if you listen,
> You will hear
> What your heart would
> Love to say.
>
> A journey can become a sacred thing:
> Make sure, before you go,
> To take the time
> To bless your going forth,
> To free your heart of ballast.
> . . .[61]

[61] John O'Donohue, "Blessing for the Traveler," *To Bless the Space Between Us* (New York: Doubleday), 53-55.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT PROGRESS

*There are times*
*when we are neither here*
*nor there*

*Imagine a world where*
*We honored transitions enough*
*To take at least a moment*
*To notice and acknowledge them.*
*– Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion*

## Before Crossing the Threshold

### Local Advisory Committee (LAC) as Hub

The first meeting of the LAC took place on September 4, 2012. During the first few meetings the members of the LAC shared their impressions and experiences of the College community. I did not need to convince anyone of the power of stories in our lives.

> Sitting with Rosie even before the LAC meetings sharing our thoughts about stories and how powerful they are. I hear stories all the time as a counselor. They are meaningful. The power of stones, brainstorming, creating safe places with room to talk.[1]

[1] LAC member, interview by Chris Hammon and Vicki Hollon via conference call, May 8, 2013.

> The first few meetings turned into gripe sessions, affirming Rosie's sense that ministry to faculty and staff is as important as ministry to students. Subsequent meetings were positive, thanks to Rosie's leadership and the group's enthusiasm for her ideas. The committee consisted of a cross-section of staff and faculty, some of whom already worked together comfortably but also others who had never collaborated.[2]
>
> Rosie also provided a meal with each meeting which was a treat away from the rush of the workday. Sharing a meal around a table is a blessed way to learn to know others and form the bond of community. The LAC group became a closer community throughout the process.[3]

Despite the fact that some of the seven LAC members had never met in person before, the group was very open to sharing, and stories resonated, which in turn elicited other stories around the table. This required trust amongst the group members to be vulnerable with each other in deep sharing: "At the beginning Rosie asked leading questions and I was in tears. Things were so difficult!"[4] Soul-food moments gave truth to the belief that "transformation occurs when we invite people into conversations that ask them to act as creators or owners of community."[5]

The following quotations are representative sentiments from our first two meetings: "People get burned out and shut down and criticized." "I feel like we are dancing around a dead elephant at the college." "The campus is steeped in conflict but

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[2] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[3] Ibid.

[4] LAC member, interview by Chris Hammon and Vicki Hollon, via conference call, May 9, 2013.

[5] Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008), 60.

acts as if there is no conflict." "Our silos are so deep." "We are in running away mode." "We are asked to do a lot with very few resources." "The Honor Code exists but is it really a community code we live by?"[6]

Yet people took spoke of their pride in their work and the impact it could have. One LAC member said that she felt her "work here is a calling not just employment – it is a vocation, a servant call." Care for students was affirmed with reservations: "Too often the goal is to make students happy, which sometimes translates as having no expectations or accountability. We have the tyranny of low expectations."

The image I shared with the LAC was that of labyrinth and the distinction between a labyrinth and a maze. The image spoke to them and they began brain storming ways that a campus-wide project could be developed in light of the concerns they had expressed.

The LAC cocreated the project, in the sense of providing their own perspectives of concern and providing suggestions for the shaping of the project. As Whyte writes, loyalty in work is based on a "courageous vulnerability that invites others by our example to a frontier conversation whose outcome is yet in doubt."[7]

In discussion with the LAC it was decided that the Classical seven circuit labyrinth would be the most appropriate labyrinth design for the project. It is easier to

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[6] Wilson College Honor Code, see Appendix I.

[7] David Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2001), 129.

construct and reproduce than both the eleven circuit labyrinth and the medieval Chartres-style labyrinth, and just as open to imaginative representation in different media.

## Laying the Groundwork: From Cooperation to Collaboration

The LAC highlighted the need for transparency and strong communication about the project with key campus leaders.

> This way there was transparency with the project and again, it helped with greater ownership of the project by the community.[8]

> The Advisory Committee's first three meetings really helped us support Rosie in selecting activities for The Labyrinth Project that would have the most traction, result in the least amount of people feeling overwhelmed, and create the most positive impact on the community. So if there were potential problems or difficulties, we headed them off during the planning stages.[9]

As a result I arranged to have one-on-one meetings with the President, the Dean of Students, and the Vice-Presidents of Advancement and Finance. I gave each of them a general outline of the basis for the project, invited suggestions, and sought permission for activities where and when appropriate. I met with responses ranging from mild interest to enthusiasm and encountered no resistance to the concept of The Labyrinth Project in general.

I met with the Communications department, since I knew they would be vital in getting the word into the local press and the College magazine. I was interviewed about World Labyrinth Day for the student newspaper, *The Billboard*. I met with the Director of Alumnae Relations, who agreed to include information about The Labyrinth Project in

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[8] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[9] Ibid.

the spring 2013 alumnae magazine and on the alumnae Facebook page. Through her I made connection with an alumna who had an interest in labyrinths and had built one on her own property. She expressed her support for the project and put me in contact with another alumna, the Rev. Dr. Margee Iddings, who had designed several labyrinths, including the one at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico. I contacted the Rev. Iddings and asked if she might be willing to be involved in the project. She agreed to lead one of the Lenten worship services and to travel to campus for World Labyrinth Day itself.

Laying the groundwork continued through obtaining logistical and custodial support for the pop-up labyrinth from the Physical Plant department at the College. It was agreed that the labyrinth could remain in place from Saturday, May 4 to Monday, May 13, when preparations for Commencement on the main green would begin. The Grounds staff suggested they cut the grass on the green on May 2 to keep it as short as possible during this period. I appreciated the many occasions when suggestions were made that anticipated issues I had not even considered.

Sourcing the stones for the labyrinth became a challenge in itself. I had problems locating stones that would be large enough (six to eight inches). I was directed to the local quarry, which could provide stones of the right size, but they were jagged and rough and didn't fit with my vision for the project. Staff at the quarry suggested I use river rock, smooth and rounded. I was referred to a local Mennonite farm stand whose owner agreed to provide river rocks at cost for the project.

Getting the word out to students initially involved sending an email to all student club presidents telling them of the project and inviting their participation. Likewise, I sent

an email to all faculty members inviting them to consider ways in which the concept of labyrinth could be incorporated into their plans for the semester. Participation could be at any level and in a manner that suited people as individuals. As Block states, "Invitation is not only a step in bringing people together, it is also a fundamental way of being in community. It manifests the willingness to live in a collaborative way."[10]

> The project used a variety of venues – blog, classroom setting, experiential projects, inter-departmental collaborations, tangible and imagery opportunities, critical thinking components, taking the archetypal image and incorporating it into learning and spiritual growth opportunities, individual and community opportunities.[11]

## Imaging the Project

By December 2013, flyers advertising "The Labyrinth Project @ Wilson College Coming Spring 2013" were posted all over the College. I also began adding project information to the chaplaincy program Facebook page. I invited suggestions for a Labyrinth Project logo and T-shirt design. The simplest image seemed to be the most accessible, a seven circuit labyrinth.

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[10] Block, *Community* , 117.

[11] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

Figure 1. The Labyrinth Project logo

It was hoped the T-shirts and flyers could be a visual teaching aide to assist in answering the query, “What is a labyrinth?” T-shirts with the project logo came in different sizes and colors and were printed by early February.

Figure 2. Labyrinth Project T-shirts

Buttons of various sizes and designs were produced. Their messages included “Think Outside the Maze” and “Live the Labyrinth, Escape the Maze.”


Figure 3. Button designs

I started a blog at the beginning of the spring semester at the suggestion of an LAC member. Two students helped me design the blog page and I maintained it with updates on all Labyrinth Project activities.[12] The blog site name was printed on flyers, and posters, and was added to my work email signature.

> The blog provided an ongoing safe place for expression of, and involvement in, the project. It also allowed individuals to participate simply as followers if they desired. Many resources were provided through emails and links on the blog and the college's main website for individuals who wish to participate on a private level. This opening creates an opportunity to reach people that we will probably never even know about. Anyone seeking solace and respite in a private setting can now find the resources on their own to use a labyrinth and the principles presented to navigate life.[13]

[12] www.thelabyrinthproject.blogspot.com

[13] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

## Preparing Myself

Embarking on this project, I was very aware that I was not an expert on labyrinths. I felt it necessary to seek the wisdom of others about how this image could realize its full potential in the college setting. To that end I contacted The Labyrinth Society for additional resources.[14] I visited The Labyrinth Society offices in Trumansburg, New York, and met with its president, Peter Gallagher. He demonstrated his method of marking out a labyrinth and shared Ferré's manual on creating a seven circuit labyrinth, which we used as the basis for creating the labyrinth at Wilson College.[15] As well as a source of technical information, he was a valuable historical resource regarding how resurgence of interest in the labyrinth played out in the late twentieth century in the United States.

One of the key proponents of the reemergence of labyrinths is the Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress. In April I attended a workshop led by her so that I might be better prepared for facilitating the labyrinth experience for others.[16] At this workshop I became even more aware of the need for intentionality in all aspects of preparation and implementation. It is not uncommon for some people to feel disoriented or anxious on a labyrinth, especially if there is a large group of walkers. Artress emphasized the need for participants to be

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[14] http://labyrinthsociety.org/, accessed October 29, 2012.

[15] Robert Ferré, *How to Make a 7-Circuit Labyrinth* (Louisville, KY: One Way Press, 1997).

[16] Lauren Artress, "Nourishing the Soul: Feeding Our Spiritual Hunger by Walking the Labyrinth" Workshop, Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, Bryn Mawr, PA, April 19, 2013.

aware of any internal resistance they had to walking a labyrinth: "honor the feeling, pay attention."[17] The need to maintain a safe emotional space and to be available for processing afterward is paramount. As well as experiencing three different types of labyrinth – Chartres, Classical, and Santa Rosa – at the workshop, I was privileged to share space and conversations with many who had interacted with labyrinths for decades and continue to be intrigued by them. Artress stated the importance of using everything that happens in a labyrinth as a metaphor. She claimed to be "a failed meditator" and noted that "labyrinths give space to 'be and do' for us failed meditators."[18] She sees the ability of the labyrinth to quiet the linear/rotational mind as a way of moving from *chronos* time to *kairos* time.

One story that stayed with me was of a woman who entered a labyrinth with the intention of letting her inner child come out. She started walking the labyrinth only to find herself irritated by the presence of children playing on it. She quickly realized the irony of this, and ten minutes later she was playing tag on the labyrinth with the children.

At the workshop a harpist played while walkers were on the labyrinths. I had not considered the auditory element of the experience, and on my return to campus I made contact with a local harpist who agreed to play for World Labyrinth Day.

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

**The Journey to the Center**

The Power of Invitation: From Powerlessness to Participation

There was widespread enthusiasm for the opportunity to paint images on the stones that would form the path of the community labyrinth on World Labyrinth Day.

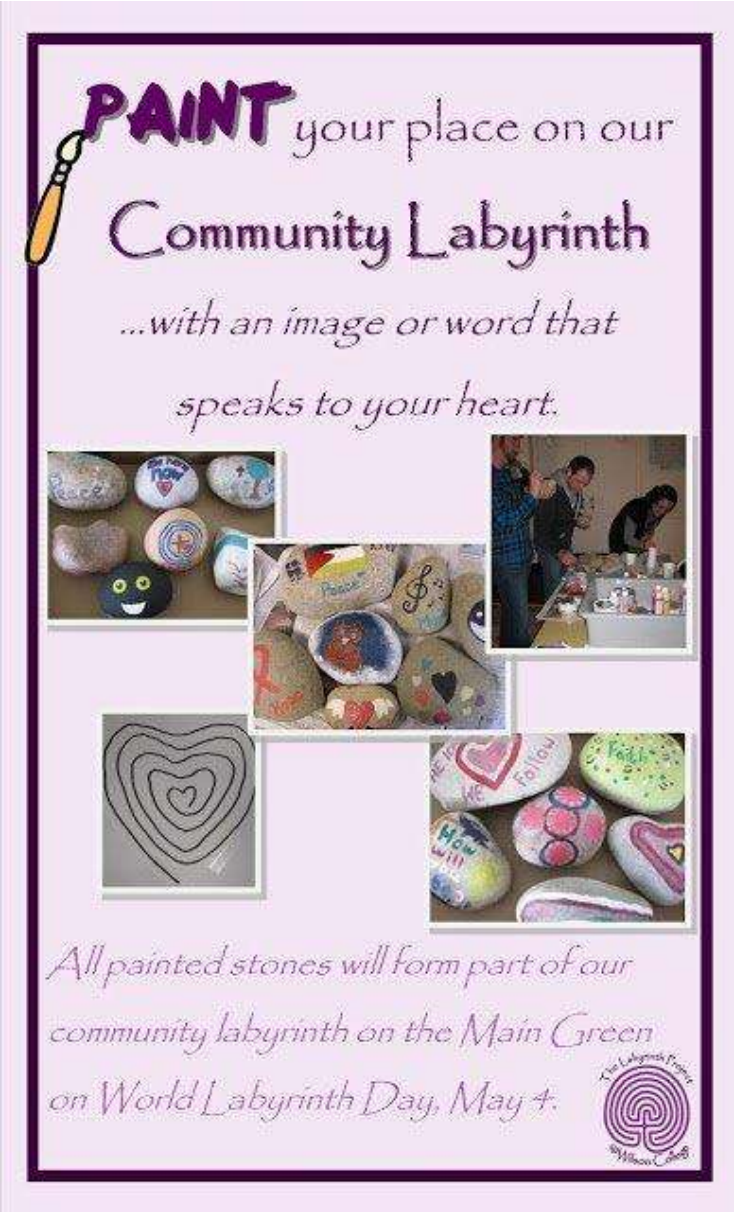


Figure 4. Invitation to paint stones for the labyrinth

Participants were encouraged to see these stones as imaginative touchstones to express whatever they wished – whether it be a wish for the world, for themselves, for a loved one, or just to play with paint.


Figure 5. Painting "GRACE"

Frequent opportunities were offered throughout the semester to paint stones at various times and locations to provide many opportunities for community members to take part.

Figure 6. Painting stones at FIRST Sunday

The most popular location for stone painting was outside the dining hall during lunchtime. Tables and chairs were set up with paint, brushes, and stones and participants

were encouraged to choose their own stone. Two or three students staffed these tables throughout the lunch hour so that the painting was always ongoing and generated the interest of passersby.

Painted stones were displayed on bookcases in the Career Development area, and as the semester progressed people came to view the growing collection and admire the handiwork.


Figure 7. Display of painted stones

At every stone-painting session there was a sign-up sheet for those who would commit to "The Big Build!" on World Labyrinth Day. All those helping with the project received a free T-shirt in a color of their choice. More than one hundred people had signed up to take part in The Big Build! by the end of April.


Figure 8. "The Big Build!" poster

The weekly crafting group on campus, Fiber Fellowship, began making finger collages together. All supplies were provided, and this brought new people to the group who had not previously attended. The collages took several weeks to complete and engendered commitment and regular attendance.

Figure 9. Making labyrinth finger collages at Fiber Fellowship

The Math Club offered to calculate both the dimensions of the labyrinth for the main green and the number of stones that would be needed to complete it. One afternoon I came across members of the club measuring on the main green, looking for the best location for the labyrinth. It was important that the labyrinth be unobstructed by trees or benches along its route. The club determined that one thousand stones would be needed to complete a labyrinth of the desired dimensions.

Figure 10. Math Club mapping the labyrinth

An art professor designed the syllabus for her Ceramics class to include a group project to create a ceramic labyrinth. She designed an original labyrinth design and each

student in the class contributed a tile that, when placed with the others, formed a composite labyrinth. The professor invited me to speak to the class about labyrinths in general and this project in particular at the beginning of the semester.

Figures 11 and 12. Creating the ceramic labyrinth

One of the business professors, also a member of the LAC, asked me to coteach one session of his Organizational Behavior class on the theme of labyrinth. This was emblematic of the interdepartmental involvement the project sought to nurture. The professor's primary objective was to give the students an opportunity to explore their core identity as leaders and potential leaders through walking a labyrinth. As he wrote:

> It may seem a bit of a stretch – labyrinths and organizational behavior?! But labyrinths are about being fully present and intentional about what we are doing – both of which apply to our working lives as well as our personal lives. Labyrinths speak to how we "are" in the world, how we show up both to ourselves and to others. In order to lead others successfully we have to know who we are.[19]

[19] Faculty member, email to author, February 27, 2013.

We decided to take the class off campus to a local church that had a canvas Chartres-style labyrinth. Before walking the labyrinth, participants were invited to consider one of the following questions to focus on during their walk.

1. What inhibits me from being a leader?
2. How does my leadership style empower others?
3. What will I leave outside the labyrinth?
4. What am I waiting for?

Students were encouraged to be aware of their own reactions to the experience of the labyrinth – physical, emotional, and cognitive.

Further interdepartmental cooperation came through the English department when Wilson's literary magazine, *Bottom Shelf Review* (*BSR*), teamed up with The Labyrinth Project. For part of its spring 2013 issue, *BSR* offered to devote a section of poems, fiction pieces, and essays to the concept of the labyrinth. All undergraduate and graduate students were eligible, as well as all faculty and staff. *Bottom Shelf Review* is an online publication, but, in honor of the occasion it was decided to print a Labyrinth Project edition.

This initiative was combined with an art invitational open to staff, students, and faculty in the media of painting, photography, textile, and found art on the theme of labyrinth. I was careful to call the initiative an "invitational" rather than a "competition." The former term seemed more in keeping with labyrinth language than the latter. Two art professors agreed to judge the entries. Entries in both the creative writing and the art invitational would make up *The Labyrinth Exhibition,* to take place in May in the main lobby of the College.


Figure 13. Art Invitational poster

At the semiannual International Multilingual Poetry Reading, The Labyrinth Project was represented by the reading of Sharon Erby's poem "Indiangrass" which was awarded first place in the staff/faculty division of the *Bottom Shelf Review* Creative Writing Invitational (Appendix II).

At Spring Fling, an event where all clubs are required to provide an activity, the campus Habitat for Humanity Club joined The Labyrinth Project to help paint stones for the community labyrinth.

Figure 14. Painting stones at Spring Fling

Wellsprings and Way Stations: From Scarcity to Abundance

The Lenten worship series was devoted to a different theme each week relating to The Labyrinth Project: pilgrimage, deep listening, wilderness, companions, landscape, and New Life.

> Chapel services often had a labyrinth theme this semester, although it did not feel like "all-labyrinth, all the time." For instance the annual Blessing of the Animals service, and one chapel service focused on fair trade, tended other important business; the labyrinth hadn't taken over the college.[20]

The Rev. Margee Iddings led the service on the theme, Deep Listening, by leading us through the spiritual discipline of walking a handheld heart labyrinth. We focused on our "walk" on the word "tears" after listening to a story, "The Monk Whose Face Was

[20] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

Red," by Theophane the Monk (see Appendix III).[21] She reminded us that within every question is a quest trying to emerge. Whether tears are of joy or pain, all are significant and God walks with us through them.

Figure 15. Heart labyrinth template

> The Rev. Margee Iddings led a labyrinth-themed service in which she read a text, we traced a heart-shaped finger labyrinth, and then we listened, wrote, or drew in silence. For me, this service inspired an image of a bread-shaped labyrinth. I tried to capture this image, which I entitled, I Had Been Hungry All the Years for the art contest. [22]

Figure 16. "I had been Hungry all the Years" by Lisa Woolley

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[21] Theophane, *Tales of a Magic Monastery* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 27.

[22] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

Subsequent to this series of Lenten services, a professor suggested that our annual Earth Day service on April 28 be a pilgrimage around campus, stopping at various points to celebrate earth, growth, and water.

> The spring pilgrimage was perfectly timed for dean's day (a surprise release from classes for the whole campus). We walked to stations at a tree and beside the creek. We gained a sense of companionship by the end of the service as we shared a glorious spring day together.[23]

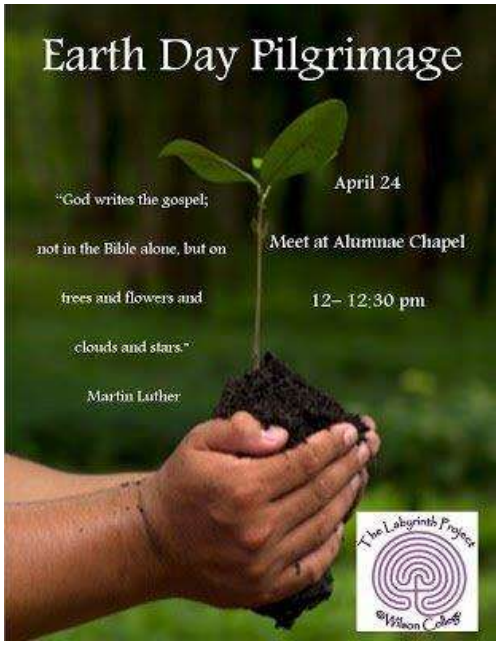


Figure 17. "Earth Day Pilgrimage" chapel flyer

"Tea on Tap" was one of the opportunities for the community to gather informally and "break bread" together. This was an informal occasion that took place in my home.

[23] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.


Figure 18. "Tea on Tap" invitation

For several staff members it was their first opportunity to be in the chaplain's house, as most events that take place there are for student groups. Snowfall prevented some people from attending, but the group that gathered enjoyed getting to know each other and sampling Irish home baking.

*The Way* event involved showing the movie of the same name and a lecture by Camille Baughman, who completed El Camino during fall 2012.


Figure 19. *The Way* Event poster

I made contact with Camille through the Director of Alumnae Relations. She, in turn, invited a Spanish professor, Asunción Arnedo, from a neighboring college to speak about her experience of walking El Camino de Santiago. The Spanish Club offered to meet with the College dining services to devise the menu for a Spanish-themed meal between the showing of the movie *The Way* and the lecture. Club members also baked the traditional pilgrimage cakes, Tarta de Santiago, an almond cake named in honor of the

apostle James. The Associate Dean of Students offered to pay for rights to play the movie and the Diversity Team helped pay for the food, making the event an interdepartmental collaboration.

Figure 20. The Way Event meal

Figure 21. Santiago cakes

Figure 22. Presentation

The event was advertised in the local newspaper. Several attendees were from local churches, one of which had recently built a labyrinth. The Spanish Club began the after-dinner presentation with a brief introduction to the history and geography of El Camino de Santiago. Camille and Asunción shared slides and stories from their experiences on El Camino. They told tales of heart-stopping generosity and hospitality experienced on the trek. They had met people from all over the world and described a

great sense of community. Yet, as Asunción stated, "It is your Camino. You may be with many people but you are responsible for your own Camino. Everyone has a different path to take." She told us that pilgrims walk El Camino de Santiago for many reasons: spiritual, religious, health, familial, perhaps just to go for a really long walk. Whatever their reason, pilgrims who complete the journey seem to get much more than their *compostela*, or certificate of completion, at its conclusion. They have the gift of experiences that can change their lives forever.

> After watching the film, I spent some time with my family and then returned to campus to hear the speakers. I was surprised that the size of the group had increased, that I had never seen many of these people before, and that people from on and off campus were all chatting like old friends.[24]

The Gift of Retreat: From Exhaustion to Wholeheartedness

The all-day retreat, open to students, staff, and faculty, was scheduled for March 2. A member of the LAC recommended the Bon Secours Retreat Center as a good location because it has a labyrinth on the grounds. The theme was "A Day of R.E.S.T. (Rest, Explore, Sacred, Time)." Two key components of the retreat were that it would be offered at no charge to participants and that it would be facilitated by someone from outside the Cllege community.

[24] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.


Figure 23. Day of R.E.S.T. invitation

Thirteen community members traveled to the retreat: students, staff, and faculty. Our facilitator, Andrea Springer, invited us to identify the blocks we experience in our relationship with God and throughout our lives. She asked us to *welcome* this naming as a means of clearing the path on our life's journey. Andrea invited us to see that the gift of struggle is conversion. Through struggle we find out who God is and who we are as individuals and community. The labyrinth was introduced as a means of journeying from

struggle to hope. “We do not walk the labyrinth with our thinking minds. We travel in with the struggle and the intention of traveling out with renewal. The work is God’s.”[25]

Figure 24. Labyrinth at Bon Secours (photograph by Diana Hollada)[26]

PREPARE

Take a moment to release and reflect

THE JOURNEY IN

Release concerns and quiet the mind

THE CENTER

Receive what this moment offers

THE JOURNEY OUT

Review and reflect

EXIT

Carry the experience into your life[27]

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[25] Andrew Springer, Retreat, Bon Secours Retreat Center, March 2, 2013.

[26] Photography, Staff/Faculty Division, Art Invitational, First Place.

[27] Sign at entrance to Bon Secours Labyrinth, Marriottsville, MD.

> For me personally, this was a much needed time to reflect on the challenges of my work, of the situation at the college, and my relationships with those I care about at Wilson. In short, finding time to hear God's voice in helping me decide my next steps. But in addition to that, I learned a lot about my co-travelers which was something that probably would not have happened in any other context. As a student development professional, I was very pleased with the number of students who came for this wonderful retreat and amazed at the diversity of their reasons for being there. For many of them, and for me, the retreat set the tone for the shared journey that we were embarking on for the remainder of the semester.[28]

## At the Center

### Waiting Well: Preparing for World Labyrinth Day

Planning the many elements for World Labyrinth Day continued through March and April. A press release was created by the Communications department and sent out to local news agencies (Appendix IV). The Communications department decided to purchase equipment to do time-lapse photography to record the World Labyrinth Day event for subsequent posting on the College website. Also, students from the Photography class offered to take photographs throughout the day. I sent out invitations to local churches as well as to all Presbyterian churches in the Presbytery of Carlisle. The event was also listed on The Labyrinth Society schedule of World Labyrinth Day events.

Since the event would run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., we decided to provide lunch for all participants, in addition to the regular brunch provided by the College dining services, which would be available only to students. A picnic lunch was planned that would be open to everyone free of charge. Other offices in the Student Development department

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[28] Staff evaluation, Day of R.E.S.T., March 2, 2013.

offered to help pay for the food. My appreciation for their offer of financial assistance was increased by the knowledge that their budgets were as stretched as mine toward the end of the financial year.

Because part of the project involves creating new spiritual habits or rituals, I felt it was important to mark the completion of the labyrinth with an opening and blessing ceremony. I met with the College dance ensemble, Orchesis, who agreed to dance during this ceremony. This led to the idea of having the choir sing and the handbell choir perform also. The directors of each choir were pleased to participate. I invited the Rev. Iddings to say a blessing during the ceremony (Appendix V).

## Marking the Labyrinth

On May 2, four students, along with one faculty member, a member of the LAC and me, marked out the labyrinth on the main green. I was indebted to the LAC member who, based on Ferré's manual, created a scale reproduction of the technique for creating a Classical-style labyrinth. Marking involved tracing the path of the labyrinth with rope and fixing it in place with metal pegs. The stones would then be placed on top of the rope on World Labyrinth Day.

Figure 25. Marking the labyrinth

Our first two attempts to lay the labyrinth footprint failed because by misplacing our central markers, we ran into a birdbath on the sixth, and then the seventh, circuit. The second time this happened, it was very tempting to settle for having this obstruction in the middle of the seventh circuit path. We had been working for over three hours at this stage. We pulled up the ropes and started again. Some of the team had to leave to attend class but other students came by and got involved.

> We had completed a significant part of the preliminary construction of the labyrinth and discovered that the layout would impede the participant passage on the outer rim. Where she could have settled for the inferior choice she instead believed the integrity of the experience was compromised with that layout. Knowing that we had already invested a significant amount of time, she still chose the right path by having the crew start over. After this past weekend it was clear if we had not moved the construction site it would have been detrimental to the worship/labyrinth experience.[29]

Figure 26. Labyrinth marking completed

After four hours the labyrinth was finally marked, with all the circuits unobstructed and on flat ground.

[29] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

By the day before World Labyrinth Day, over half of the required number of stones for the labyrinth had been painted. One of the Physical Plant staff traveled with me to collect the final load of stones to make up the remainder of the labyrinth. When these stones were put in the pickup truck, I suddenly felt anxious that we might run out of stones. The thought of having a scarcity of stones to complete the labyrinth went against everything the project stood for. So, ignoring the Math Club's calculations, I brought back more stones than planned. As it turned out, none of these extra stones were required to complete the labyrinth. It appears that anxiety about scarcity can take many forms! The night before World Labyrinth Day, I came across students painting stones by the display of stones. They knew the supplies were always available and said they found it relaxing. They helped me waterproof the painted stones so that the artwork would be preserved through all weather conditions.

## Sacred Formations

### World Labyrinth Day

World Labyrinth Day, May 4, the public culmination of The Labyrinth Project, dawned clear and bright. Volunteers started arriving for the 9 a.m. build wearing their Labyrinth Project T-shirts and buttons. I gave an overview of the day and asked everyone to treat the stones with respect since, for each person who had painted one, his or her stone represented a world. I asked a faculty member to oversee the build itself. Student members of the Campus Activities Board volunteered to help decorate the green with ribbons and streamers.


Figure 27. World Labyrinth Day schedule

I had scheduled two hours for the laying of the labyrinth stones. But, the process took only forty-five minutes.

Figure 28. Laying the painted stones

Figure 29. The labyrinth takes shape

To ensure that people did not lose interest and drift away before the opening ceremony, we quickly set up tables for more stone painting. In addition we set up a table for creating the luminaries for the following night's candlelight labyrinth walk.

Figure 30. Assembling the luminaries

Figure 31. Stone painting on World Labyrinth Day

Figure 32. Student with her painted stone

> Although the labyrinth was finished, thanks to a great turn-out, in forty-five minutes, rather than the two hours planned, Chaplain Rosie was able to keep those who wanted to be busy occupied until 11:00 with jobs for Sunday night. Meanwhile, others felt free to hang out and converse. I saw very few people leaving once the "work" was done, and I was reminded how much our community truly loves being together, despite all the conflict of the last few years.[30]

> Building the labyrinth was just amazing – there was something about laying down all the stones and just seeing the finished result . . . just incredible, awesome :) [31]

This led up to the picnic lunch, which was followed by a talk on preparing to walk a labyrinth led by the Rev. Iddings. She suggested that we hold the talk outside beside the labyrinth, rather than in one of the auditoriums as originally planned. This was a good suggestion and kept the focus of energy and attention close to the labyrinth itself. Interestingly, people sat on the grass in a pattern that reflected the shape and size of the labyrinth.

Figure 33. Prewalk talk

[30] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[31] Labyrinth Log, resource table, World Labyrinth Day.

Over the ninety minutes devoted to lunch and the talk, the labyrinth itself was rarely empty. Children especially were drawn to the space and danced around and between the stones. The opening ceremony began with the ringing of handbells to draw everyone back to the labyrinth. The Rev. Margee Iddings led us in a blessing (Appendix V).

Figure 34. Playing on the labyrinth

Figure 35. Picnic lunch

Figure 36. Handbell choir

Figure 37. Opening blessing

Figure 38. Harpist

Figure 39. Orchesis dancer

(photographs by Debra Collins)

Figure 40. Orchesis (photograph by Debra Collins)

The conclusion of the opening ceremony involved the start of the community labyrinth walk. I asked the child of a staff member if she would lead the way carrying the heart stone. I had in mind the peaceful image in Hebrews 11:6, "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." She laid the heart stone at the center of the labyrinth, thus completing the labyrinth.

Figure 41. Start of labyrinth walk (photograph by James Butts)

At 1 p.m. a handbell was rung and everyone stopped walking to mark the "Walk as One at One." After a period of silence, people were invited to resume their walk.

Figure 42. "Walk as One at One" (photograph by Debra Collins)

> On Labyrinth Day itself, participants listened intently to the opening words about Labyrinths, joyously viewed the Orchesis dance performance in the Labyrinth, and appreciated the music that preceded and was part of creating our own human Labyrinth. Students, in particular, were amazed and pleased by the building of the Labyrinth and what they were able to create. As stone by stone was laid with care and intention, many students expressed a sense of reverence and contemplation. For others, the mundanity of moving rocks allowed them time to think about the challenges lying ahead of finals, graduation, jobs, etc. One student commented that the rhythm of moving and placing the rocks was a very relaxing and soothing act for her. As we began to walk and create the human labyrinth some of us were struck by the energy of the moment, the constant changing of our positions and the varying juxtapositions of each of us in relation to one another and to the center of the Labyrinth – the gentle coming near and moving away from the center serving as another palpable demonstration of our spiritual and life journey.[32]

Educational opportunities and resources were available before people experienced the labyrinth, as well as facilitated review afterward. These included Scripture verses and questions to consider before entering the labyrinth, or after leaving the labyrinth, for those who wanted to be provided with a focus for their experience. A canvas Chartres-style labyrinth was available in the Science Center for those who wished to experience a different labyrinth design and/or experience a labyrinth walk in a more private setting. This labyrinth was provided by the same church, which had allowed us to come to their site to hold a class. This labyrinth was facilitated by one of their pastors.

[32] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

Figure 43. Chartres-style labyrinth (photograph by Douglas Crawford)

> On the final event day – the building of the labyrinth – there were approximately 100 people from the college community and the community at large involved in the process. The college has been experiencing a very difficult time with various struggles, and this project allowed the community to come together and work together in joy, laughter, respect for one another and creation, and with a peaceful spirit. This event was a true blessing to the Wilson community.[33]

Comments made in the Labyrinth Log placed on the resource table included:

> This is wayyyy toooo coool!
>
> There was a monumental energy – WLD was a crescendo!!
>
> I was looking at the people walking, I was on the edge of tears. We were pilgrims on the journey together. There are no words it was amazing.
>
> I went into the labyrinth wondering how I could have more peace and love and how I could be more loving. As I noticed the clutter in my mind coming and going, I had a thought come that I have enough of both – peace and love – inside of me, all I need is to be receptive and let it be there. There is no need for more. Emotions that surfaced as I walked spoke to the same idea. There is no need to feel I need more of anything. I have enough, I am enough.

[33] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

Figure 44. Labyrinth exhibit

An art undergraduate set up the art exhibition in the main lobby and helped collate the catalog. Copies of the printed version of *Bottom Shelf Review* were also available at the art exhibition.


Figure 45. Front cover *Bottom Shelf Review,* Labyrinth Edition[34]

"The art display helped to transform the lobby of Lenfest Commons into an inviting labyrinth resource center on World Labyrinth Day."[35] The artwork was displayed alongside the poetry submitted for the project.

[34] Bea Sanford, *Fused by Heat*, Found Object, Staff/Faculty Division, Art Invitational, First Place.

Figure 46. Sometimes unexpectantly I find myself" by Neena Gurung[36]

The Hunt

I stand at the precipice
knowing what I need to do
work on one thing

Confidence

The first step is always the hardest
knowing what must go through me
emotion, conflict

Pain

A tear runs down slowly, cleansing, erasing
sitting in my center, air flowing through me
finding what needs found

Peace

Finding my path, healing my soul
as water smooths river rocks, slowly, directly
walking, changing, flowing

Moving

The end is here and I feel alive
better than I have in years
having worked on one thing

Me. [37] by Amanda Stup

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[35] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[36] Painting, Student Division, Art Invitational, First Place.

[37] Poetry, Student Division, *Bottom Shelf Review*, First Place.

Figure 50. *Miles* by Lauren Dieffenbach[38]

Figure 48. *My Life's Thumbprint* (work in progress) by Christiana Bredbenner[39]

[38] Photography, Student Division, Art Invitational.

[39] Drawing, Student Division, Art Invitational, First Place.

Figure 49. *Being Stuck and Trying to Find a Way Out* by Laci Cox[40]

FIRST Sunday at the Labyrinth

Every first Sunday of the month a contemporary praise band plays on campus for our FIRST Sunday gathering. On May 5, FIRST Sunday was held at the labyrinth, and luminaries marked out the path.

Figure 50. Band at FIRST Sunday

[40] Photography, Student Division, Art Invitational.

As the sun set the luminaries were lit. To ensure the lighting showed up on the time-lapse video, the lighting process was done in a systematic manner, two lanterns at a time. This meant that the luminary-lighting process took about thirty minutes.

After the candles were lit, everyone had the opportunity to walk the labyrinth at their own pace.

Figure 51. Candlelight labyrinth walk at FIRST Sunday (photograph by James Butts)

> Sunday night's service drew a smaller crowd, but with some new faces. The Sunday evening session was incorporated into the monthly scheduled praise service so it had a stronger religious/spiritual tone. The spontaneous selection of the Taize song "In Our Darkest Night" was perfect. I'm at a loss for words but full of smiles. Sacred silence.[41]

The Taize chant and closing prayer signified the end of FIRST Sunday, but after the students spontaneously resumed singing, the band went back to their instruments and began playing again.

> Sunday night was a very powerful experience that doesn't occur often. God was present. People lingered, prayed and meditated on the experience.[42]
>
> It was a good night for God.[43]

As we were packing away the musical instruments, one student followed me to the storage area and asked if she could give me a hug. All she said was "I needed this."

## The Week of the Labyrinth

The labyrinth remained in place for a week. Throughout that time, printed materials were available at the resource table in the main building on campus, including a trifold brochure containing a general introduction to labyrinths. (Appendix VI) Laminated resources were placed at the entrance to the labyrinth (Appendix VII).

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[41] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[42] Labyrinth Log, May 5, 2013.

[43] Band member, conversation with author, FIRST Sunday, May 5.

Figure 52. Resource table

> Throughout the week, people continued to walk the labyrinth and leave comments in the Labyrinth Log.
>
> As I walked across campus at 9:00 a.m. this morning, someone from the grounds crew was intently walking the labyrinth by himself while the campus remained relatively quiet. After the "mountaintop" experience of the weekend, I was reassured that the labyrinth was still being used. Even though this labyrinth will disappear on Monday, the fellowship of the local advisory committee and those gathered on World Labyrinth Day will linger.[44]
>
> I just walked the labyrinth on the way back to class, and I was inspired to see that the grass is getting trampled. Now we're literally walking in each other's footsteps.[45]

Bloos and O'Connor recommend that people carry an item as they walk the labyrinth to represent the weight they carry in daily life.[46] One staff member followed the suggestion to walk the labyrinth with a stone, which she left at the center to represent a weight in her life she wished to release.

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[44] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[45] Labyrinth Log, resource table, World Labyrinth Day.

[46] Ingrid D. Bloos and Thomas St. James O'Connor, Ancient and Medieval Labyrinth and Contemporary Narrative Therapy: How Do They Fit? *Pastoral Psychology* 50, no. 4 (March 2002): 228.

The labyrinth was also used in unexpected ways. On Snior Day, a scavenger hunt is held in which professors must follow a set of clues to locate the "key" that will gain them access to their classes that day. This year the final clue, the "key to all the knowledge," was hidden by the students, and found by the faculty, under the candle at the center of the labyrinth.

The World Labyrinth Day time-lapse video was put on the College website and on YouTube. It was entitled *Wilson College Celebrates World Labyrinth Day.* "It took over 13,000 pictures through a span of 36 hours to stitch this great event together."[47]

> AWESOME!!!! Gave me goose-bumps and brought tears to my eyes.[48]

> I loved the video. The movement of the lighting and the movement of the people walking the day before mirrored each other. Then the light going off randomly and people moving through the labyrinth in different ways after 1 pm and exiting the labyrinth in different ways reminded me that we are community but also unique individuals.[49]

**Taking the Homeward Road**

Noon on May 13 was the scheduled time to disassemble the labyrinth. After a few words about the project, volunteers were invited to help move the stones from the labyrinth to form a stone path at a central location on campus, behind Edgar Hall. The heart stone was saved for subsequent worship occasions. If people wanted to take their

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[47] James Butts, Wilson College website, http://www.wilson.edu/, accessed May 10, 2013.

[48] Comment on College website, www.wilson.edu, accessed May 10, 2013.

[49] Student, email to author, May 11, 2013.

painted stone they could. One student told me that she "loved what you have done with the rocks so much that I am putting my stones back!"[50] Two students' painted stones had been taken from the stone path, which was a source of disappointment. All the extra unpainted stones were donated to the Physical Plant crew to fill up gullies on campus.

Figure 53. Path of labyrinth stones

After the stones were removed, the indentations they had made in the grass were still visible. The labyrinth lived on. The temporary nature of the labyrinth was a symbol of the ongoing nature of this project. This goes beyond building a labyrinth, or even walking a labyrinth, to "living the labyrinth" within our College setting.

[50] Student, conversation with author, May 12, 2013.

Figure 54. The labyrinth lingers

# CHAPTER FIVE

# THE FRUIT OF THE LABYRINTH

*Stories are data with a soul.*

–Brené Brown

## Gathering the Narratives

### From Bottom Line to Storyboard

The labyrinth was taken down two weeks before the end of the semester, when the College community was in a flurry of final exams and preparation for Commencement. This, together with the three-month summer break, meant that there was a relatively short period of time available to gather stories directly after World Labyrinth Day. Analysis of any ongoing or longer-term effects of the project took place during the fall 2013 semester.

In bottom-line measurement there is only one way to measure effectiveness, whereas in story measurement effectiveness can be measured in multiple ways. People were keen to talk about the project and initiated conversations with me when they saw me, whether in the dining hall, in the corridor, even at the grocery store. Some also scheduled appointments to meet with me. These narratives were combined with comments in the Labyrinth Log, emails, Facebook comments, conversations at chaplaincy programming, and intentional conversations throughout and after the project.

An overall review of the project, via a conference call, took place with the LAC and the project supervisors on May 8, 2013. All members of the LAC also completed individual review forms.

Collecting and interpreting the myriad feedback during and after the project at times felt like inhabiting a maze rather than a labyrinth. I became very aware that hearing different viewpoints does not mean *all* the different perspectives have been collated, since all feedback was discretionary. Also, having been so immersed in the project, I had no delusions of objectivity. Heifetz and Linsky use the contrasting images of being on the dance floor versus looking down on the dance floor from the balcony as a metaphor for the need to move from participant to observer. Beyond this, "you must set aside your special knowledge of your intentions and inner feelings and notice that part of yourself that others would see if they were looking down from the balcony."[1] This approach seemed more achievable in theory than during the review process itself. My disposition, as with anyone's, was likely to constrain me from seeing certain data and being open to certain interpretations.

## The Core Concept

Initial responses to the concept of labyrinth ranged from puzzled curiosity to vague familiarity to, occasionally, enthusiastic recognition. The word *labyrinth* seemed exotic enough to generate interest yet familiar enough to induce a twinge of recognition, as if harking back to a half-remembered concept. A variety of images sprang to people's

[1] Ronald A. Heifetz and Martin Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 53.

minds, including arrangements of hedges, movies, games, and literary illustrations. This meant the topic became grounds for engaging in substantive conversation about different ways it might be applied in the college setting. Most people automatically associated labyrinths with mazes and were surprised and interested to hear of a distinction. One LAC member noted:

> The idea was complicated and intriguing enough that it could distract members of the community from their disagreements about co-education. At the same time, the labyrinth project was concrete enough and offered enough simple, practical points of entry that a variety of people felt comfortable participating in some way—from painting a rock to taking a photograph for the art contest or coming out to walk the labyrinth itself, maybe even just eating lunch with the pilgrims on World Labyrinth Day. People participated because they felt comfortable.[2]

One staff member envisioned the project as opening up ways for the campus to interact under a nonthreatening umbrella of mind/body/spirit connections.[3] Perhaps the nonthreatening nature of the project contributed to the general sense of support. Even those who were not actively involved appeared to be "supportive of any attempt to bring our fractured community together."[4] The safety of the project was seen as having arisen from the concept itself and the intention with which it was communicated to the wider community. There was a perception that the project provided safe spaces for nourishment, both physical and spiritual.

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[2] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[3] Staff member, email to author, May 14, 2013.

[4] Ibid.

## Communicating the Concept

It is one thing to have a concept but another to communicate it to others and obtain buy-in when, as one faculty member said, "We don't communicate in low-stake situations so it means we communicate poorly in high-stake situations. This project created events that seemed low-stake yet had high impact." She said that she "learned you can communicate with people without losing your mind."[5]

In all communications I emphasized that the idea was not to create yet one more event that people felt obliged to take part in, but rather that by having a campus-wide theme that people could incorporate into work they were *already* doing, the project could create some much needed synergy on campus. People were made aware that they had the power to help shape the project, depending on their expertise and interests. All these conversations created a network of awareness and support for the project.

> No one could say they hadn't heard of The Labyrinth Project – you met with everyone! That was important on a campus where communication is poor.[6]

> On a campus well known for its complete inability to communicate *anything*, Rosie managed to meet with individuals representing every area of campus. She then opened participation up to every department and invited them to participate in whatever way they could incorporate the project into their own little worlds. Rosie was able to give each department just enough freedom to tailor the project with their own expertise without giving so much freedom that the overall framework and project goals were lost or skewed. This required a delicate balance.[7]

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[5] Ibid.

[6] LAC member, conversation with author, April 20, 2013.

[7] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

Levels of awareness and recognition, however slight, were recorded in different forums. Many people appreciated that the event was open to the local community. The director of a local nonprofit wrote, "The Labyrinth Project continues helping our Migrant Education Program feel right at home here on campus."[8] One professor remarked, "My afternoon class seems particularly unengaged with anything this year, but a flicker of recognition crossed even their faces when I plugged the art contest and mentioned 'that circular symbol' in class."[9] In conversations with others many comments were made that the project was "intentional," "well planned," and that "nothing was last minute." The process itself was perceived as having great value. This high level of awareness may stem from sensitivity to the issue of process at the College in general.

These conversations provided me with the opportunity to interact with community members I did not know well, and gave a new focus and energy to conversations with those with whom I had regular contact. This was part of the intentional ministry of opportunity to create new contact points on campus.

At all contact points the aim was to present the project descriptively, whereby people could get involved in a variety of ways, rather than prescriptively, which would tell people what was required of them. I believe this to be one of the most important factors in the level of participation. The genesis of an idea was provided, but the project took shape in situ and would have been very different in any other context. It was unique

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[8] Labyrinth Log.

[9] Faculty member, conversation with author, May 3, 2013.

to a particular space and place with a particular community at a specific time in the history of the College.

## Participation: The Art of Belonging

Participation was engendered through ownership and user-generated content of the project. There were several creative responses to the invitation to become involved in The Labyrinth Project. One student suggested that the invitation to paint stones be extended to the retirement community campus adjacent to the College. She offered to make connection with the staff there and drop off and collect the stones and paint. Similarly, a student who had a child in the College child-care center offered to coordinate the involvement of staff and children there by taking stones and paint to the center to be painted. During the stone-painting at the child-care center another student suggested that the invitation be extended to children from the migrant education program who come on campus weekly for after-school tutoring. This ripple effect took awareness of the project beyond the campus community in an organic manner and reinforced the power of word of mouth.

The Labyrinth and Leadership class generated a considerable amount of response. The professor of the class wrote:

> Given the context the biblical and theological aspects were not overt as Rosie facilitated discussion on conscious choice as leaders and led them through the labyrinth experience. Many in the class for the first time experienced a deeper level of introspection. Several commented to me afterwards how impactful that specific classroom experience had been. There was an initial look of 'the chaplain's here!" What are we doing? Interesting. In a few minutes people bought-in and talked about personal leadership, self-care, choices, and conscious choices. It significantly impacted my class. Many thanked me. The next week they were coming into my office and thanking me for a great experience. Faith

> CAN come into the classroom without scaring people. One student said it provided her space to reflect on the way she currently manages people and how work fits into the other parts of her life. It reminded her how important it is to take the time for self. She thanked me for taking the risk to offer a different experience to my students.[10]

One student in the class came to me the week after the class to talk over the impact it had on her. She was aware that having people follow her on the labyrinth made her feel very uncomfortable.

> I know now I don't want to be a leader, I don't want people to follow me – I want to be an artist. I am not saying it changed my life but I know what I want and what I don't want, leadership. I just want to do my art. I had the realization that I don't want to be a curator. I was only doing that because I wanted to be sure to get a job. I need to follow my passion at this stage in my life.[11]

The student went on to tell me that she was now hoping to apply for a master's degree in Sweden upon graduation. She expressed a much more expansive view of her future than previously. The insights she gained in the class had a direct impact on her sense of self and her future goals.

Sheldrake contends that "belonging involves both a connection to specific places and to our existence within networks of relationships."[12] Such belonging was cultivated and resulted in levels of participation that were surprising to many:

> It is not often we see so many departments cooperate on a project. Beyond the cooperation just to allow the project to proceed was the widespread participation.

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[10] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[11] Student, conversation with author, April 8, 2013.

[12] Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 10.

> Even when the campus can come together enough to implement a large project, there is often not a widespread voluntary participation in that project.[13]

The stone-painting was a thread that ran through the whole semester. It was novel to see the President and a custodian sitting side by side to paint a stone, or to hear someone ask if she could take a stone for her supervisor to paint. These painting sessions also became a place of conversation about the project in general. "The rock painting project helped to give ownership, excitement, and anticipation to the Wilson community."[14] Also, "Painting the rocks has been some of the best therapy."[15] Many students had stories about their stones. One student wanted to paint the word *Grace*. She realized halfway through painting the word that she had omitted to paint the *R* in *Grace*. As she said, "Stones don't have spell-check." Undaunted, she covered the error with a representation of the cross. Then she painted *GRACE* over the top. She experienced this as representative of the way Christ's love covers all our errors (Figure 5).

Of course not everyone took part. One college counselor reported that her clients had given various reasons for not having participated. "Either I wasn't interested; I had homework; I had to study; I wanted to stay with my boyfriend. One student said, 'I'm not going to walk it. No one is going to tell me how to do stuff."[16] Not everyone who started

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[13] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Student, conversation with author, April 20, 2013.

[16] LAC member, interview by Chris Hammon and Vicki Hollon via conference call, May 9, 2013.

a finger collage completed it. Some said the semester had become too busy and some lost interest. Also, not everyone who signed up for The Big Build! turned up on the day. One student was irritated that people got a free T-shirt just for signing up. In her eyes, if they did not attend, they had received "something for nothing."[17] Her comment came out of her own investment in the project which held other students accountable for their presence.

It was interesting to note the response of one participant who felt compelled to attend:

> My son hates religion and hippies but he had community service hours to do for his school. For him to stay still for twenty minutes is an accomplishment. Afterwards he said, "harps set my teeth on edge but the singing bowls were cool. It was peaceful."[18]

One student who was not able to be there on World Labyrinth Day itself had the experience the following morning:

> I am so sad that I was not feeling well and unable to participate but I did come early the next morning and walked the labyrinth as the sun was rising and the dew was still on the grass. It was such a peaceful experience to have. It was a way for me to see how every step through the labyrinth has an effect on me and the smallest dewdrop on each blade of grass. Every action we take has a ripple effect on the world around us. This experience has been a way to stop and enjoy the path taken and see what our choices and actions have done for our lives, how we have touched the lives of others and, how we want to impact the future. Once at the center, I sat down on the wet grass and just lived in the moment. The cool wetness through my pants and shoes. The morning sun on my face, the sounds of the birds and the cars as they passed. I sat there trying to clear my mind and think about nothing but that moment and all the senses I was feeling. I was in such an amazing meditation state that I sat there for over an hour not realizing how much

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[17] Student, conversation with author, May 4, 2013.

[18] Ibid.

> time had passed. I opened my eyes and was at peace. I love the ideas and the experiences with the labyrinth and I hope this will become a new Wilson tradition.[19]
>
> The campus is small enough for individual participation to be noticed:
>
> I was super surprised to see the most negative student there. She has personal struggles; she is graduating and is unsure of her future. She was really touched. Why? Because this project brought so many different components of the campus together in a way I have never seen before in the midst of the constant refrain of "the College is gonna close."[20]
>
> There was an appreciation for the many levels of participation that were possible throughout the project – "Even if you just placed just one rock, it was yours, there was ownership."[21]
>
> I engaged in a conversation in which we marveled at how some participants had been preparing for World Labyrinth Day for months, while others were able to paint a rock at noon and feel included. We admired an endeavor where someone could join at any phase of the journey. The parable of the last laborers being paid the same wages as the first group began to make more sense.[22]

Whether participation is sustained or spontaneous, Myers stresses the importance of validating all four "spaces" of human connection: public, social, personal, and intimate. "The secret is to see all connections as significant. All of these spaces are important, real and authentic in people's lives."[23] Myers claims that "true community can be experienced in public space. Public space is not mere togetherness; it is

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[19] Ibid.

[20] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Joseph R. Myers, *The Search to Belong: Rethinking Intimacy, Community, and Small Groups* (Grand Rapids, MI: Youth Specialties, 2003), 63.

connectedness. It is family."[24] He exposes the unhelpful and unhealthy trend of championing intimacy and close friendship as the be-all and end-all for every relationship and the only means of establishing community/belonging. He suggests that a more healthy view of belonging lies in realizing the validity of public and social relationships/belonging, and thereafter seeking harmony among public, social, personal, and intimate belonging. This concept makes space for a much more multifaceted view of community creation and what can be considered "successful" community building.

The communal nature of the World Labyrinth Day walk was challenging for some students: "I would have liked the labyrinth in a more secluded place, just for me. For me it is about meditation and solitude. Some others, they liked the big crowd so they could remain anonymous." Also:

> Beautiful day, amazing experience and yet at the part of the ceremony where we were to think about our reason for walking the labyrinth and share with person next to us – I couldn't. I couldn't bring myself to walk together as one at one p.m. This is personal and private for me.[25]

We had tried to plan for different spiritual personalities by also having a more private labyrinth available in the Science Center. In hindsight this alternative was not fully integrated and was given less promotion than it could have been in implementing the planning. "People may want anonymity but they do not want to be strangers."[26]

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[24] Ibid., 44.

[25] Student, email to author, May 7, 2013.

[26] Myers, *The Search to Belong*, 42.

## Being Aware on the Journey

Unprompted comments connected with the narratives of concern we had identified on campus. We measure what we perceive to be important. We record what we value. This means to "value building social fabric and belonging as much as budgets, and bricks and mortar."[27] In conversations with others I was struck by the fact that people would begin their comments in the first person. They owned their experience by talking about what they felt and saw, and about their own emotional, cognitive, and physical responses. As people search for community they are listening with their ears, eyes, and emotions.

The following comments in the Labyrinth Log are representative: "The labyrinth makes me feel free." "I found it a little upsetting yet I felt compelled to walk." "I feel very centered and peaceful." "I felt like I was on the open road on the labyrinth, dancing on the labyrinth." "I felt led to walk straight to the center; I gave myself permission to be there." Interpretation depended on the worldview of the individual: "I noticed everyone was making room for me. I thought I was being selfish but became grateful. In my life a lot of people have made room for me." This stands alongside another truth: "I lost my way because I kept yielding to others. People complicate the path!" Awareness of process was reflected by many in their comments:

> My posture changed throughout the walk from a contemplative stroll with my hands gently clasped behind my back to being in prayer with my hands gathered in front of me to a tall, proud, joyful walk and finally almost a gentle leap at the

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[27] Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008), 81.

> end of the journey where I felt complete joy. Physically I felt cold the farther away from my center I got.[28]

> I heard several remarks about enjoying the swirling combinations of people brought together as we walked the labyrinth and appreciating that the event was truly inter-generational. There was an older woman in the labyrinth at the center. She almost danced in an intentional, fluid, and peaceful way . . . that summed up everyone's experience.[29]

Awareness of others on the labyrinth was expressed in many ways: "My son was stepping on my heels on the labyrinth – just like in life."[30] The labyrinth appeared to enable people to be fully present to the experience perhaps because "in a labyrinth there is no competition; we can relax the intellect and be present with the journey itself, establishing our connection to the sacred."[31] Whyte writes, "Faith is the ability to pay attention to the world."[32] The depth of our identity is dependent upon the depth of our attention. Participants were encouraged to let go of specific outcomes and be fully open and present to each moment. Expectations short-circuit the process of being fully present and open to what is happening. Being fully present can be initially unnerving:

> The worst thing that could have happened happened. . . . Eager to get to the center, I suddenly realized I was exiting. . . . What do I do now? I flunked labyrinth walking!! Do I switch to another circuit? I just exited and let go of the

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[28] Labyrinth Log.

[29] Student, email to author, May 23, 3013.

[30] Faculty member, conversation with author, May 4, 2013.

[31] Robert Ferré, "Foreword," in *Living the Labyrinth,* by Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion (Cleveland, OH, Pilgrim Press, 2000), x.

[32] David Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2001), 115.

> voice that was saying to me, "You did it wrong" I've needed to let go of that voice for a long time. It was very cool.[33]

Written evaluations were completed by those who attended the Day of R.E.S.T. (Appendix VIII). Repeatedly, the word *peaceful* was used to describe the experience. Likewise, after World Labyrinth Day, participants reported increased feelings of calmness, clarity, and centeredness. "I was amazed at how peaceful all these people, with all their different opinions, were together in one place. No one wanted to leave. Whatever you were doing on the day you were comfortable. There were no expectations. I have not seen that on campus."[34]

In passing conversation, people seemed to want to talk with me about the labyrinth. One student saw me, smiled, and then headed toward the labyrinth saying, "I haven't walked the labyrinth today yet!"[35] It wasn't said out of guilt, but as she explained to me afterward, she had committed to walking the labyrinth every day that it was in place because she found it calming and knew that it would not always be there for her to enjoy. Another student told me that she had spoken about the labyrinth in church and was going to do so again the following Sunday. Some made very direct connections between their work and the labyrinth. One staff member said, "I had a very challenging meeting today so I went and walked the labyrinth beforehand and I think it helped."[36] A professor

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[33] Student, conversation with author, May 5, 2013.

[34] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[35] Student, conversation with author, May 9, 2013.

[36] Staff member, conversation with author, May 8, 2013.

remarked, "I didn't realize that many of the things I had been working on came with me into the labyrinth and had to be worked on as I walked. I had been feeling very stuck, personally and academically. I felt energized the next day to tackle stuff I had been putting off."[37]

## Taking Time

One of the issues that became a real talking point after FIRST Sunday was the length of time it took to light the luminaries for the candlelight labyrinth walk. This waiting was difficult for those who thought it would be more efficient to have more people lighting the candles. One expressed her frustration: "It took so long to light those luminaries – oh my goodness. It took so long to walk it!!"[38] Yet one staff member said she "drank it up! It took as long as it needed to."[39] She went on to share how the time enabled her to enter a more contemplative state, which she is rarely able to do unless on her own. She felt that the time it took to light the luminaries was a great metaphor for our life journey and the preparation required to travel well.

> Today we discussed as a group the length of time that it took to light the luminaries. I confess to being in the impatient contingent, but I also acknowledge that it was meaningful to have to wait, and the gradual illumination of the labyrinth held great symbolism. Seeing the stars come out made it worth the wait, and the bats added a wonderful dimension as well.[40]

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[37] Labyrinth Log.

[38] Conversation with faculty member, FIRST Sunday, May 5, 2013.

[39] Conversation with staff member, FIRST Sunday, May 5, 2013.

[40] LAC Project Site Review Form, May 9, 2013.

I, too, grew increasingly anxious over the length of time it took to light the luminaries. I was irritated with myself for not anticipating this. Yet when I saw the time-lapse video of the event later and noted how effective it was I thought the timing was just what it needed to be. The time taken took some people out of their comfort zone and yet enabled others to get in the zone of contemplation. In our fast-paced world this type of being out of one's comfort zone is an opportunity for growth.

## Moving Through Silence: Finding New Language

The labyrinth walk itself was a nonverbal experience with dramatic verbal consequences. Afterward, students especially were keen to talk, to share, and to process their experience. Often I find students to be disabled by their lack of accessible language relating to faith and meaning. Many find it difficult to articulate their spiritual understandings and their questions of meaning and substance. There appears to be no linguistic bridge between their idea of God, if such an idea exists, and the circumstances in which they find themselves. The labyrinth seemed to represent a way in. Their experience of the labyrinth was as valid as anyone else's. In response, students initiated new conversations and contributed as "equal" partners in dialogue. This is symbolic of the mutuality and reciprocity of roles inherent in true hospitality. "If I am included here, there is a place for me. Perhaps my voice can be heard. Different messages can be shared and heard . . . a space for me to be me."[41]As Myers reminds us, "People crave connection, not contracts. They want to participate in our rituals, even though they may

[41] Labyrinth Log.

not fully understand their meaning."[42] These new conversations are vital in the formational process.

Conversation is the heart of human life and every organization must keep several different conversations vital at once. "But the depth and usefulness of all these outer conversations depend upon an internal conversation that is occurring within each individual. It is very difficult to make any of those outer, abstract conversations real if people have no real conversation with their own individuality."[43]

A change in the pattern of community narrative from the norm on campus was noted by one faculty member:

> After walking the labyrinth together, people seemed reluctant to leave. Although nothing was going on, people stayed around and talked or sat in or near the labyrinth. When a grouchy colleague who had been doing other college-related duties that morning arrived and began complaining about something, I at first found the change in mood jarring and then I was surprised that no one added complaints. We sympathized with his plight and then uncharacteristically moved on to more pleasant topics.[44]

This would appear to be significant since, as Block contends "If we want a change in culture, for example, the work is to change the conversation – or, more precisely, to have a conversation that we have not had before, one that has the power to create something new in the world."[45]

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[42] Myers, *The Search to Belong*, 27.

[43] Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea*, 238.

[44] LAC Project Site Review Form, May 9, 2013.

[45] Block, *Community*, 15.

**Expressing Grief and Loss**

Participant's participation often related to grief and loss, either verbally or nonverbally. Many stones were painted to honor loved ones who had died. "The labyrinth has been a way of recalling and bringing to life some of the sayings and guidance I received following the death of a loved one."[46] "It was a spiritual journey which has helped me accept God's plan for my life and know that I will be held safely in the Father's arms during my living and dying with metastatic breast cancer."[47]

Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky maintain that the adage "People resist change" is not true; rather people do not resist change, per se, but loss.[48] "This has been a tough year. There are a lot of things that we can't manage or control. We have to let go."[49] When the experiences of loss and grief are openly discussed, the tendency toward unconscious sabotaging of the project is reduced.[50] "Coming around the last bend of the labyrinth, I saw the exit and I didn't want to leave. I was not ready."[51]

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[46] Labyrinth Log.

[47] Labyrinth Log.

[48] Ronald A. Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2009), 202.

[49] Staff member, conversation with author, May 10, 2013.

[50] Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2008), 55.

[51] Student, conversation with author, May 29, 2013.

I had not anticipated that the temporary nature of the labyrinth itself might generate a sense of loss in a community already experiencing loss. One student remarked, "My mother went into the hospital today. I said to my friend, "Where's that labyrinth when you need it?"[52]

## The Web of Community

A person's age and status as a student or employee did not seem to impact the specific values that participants identified in their feedback. Cross-departmental interaction was noticed and seen as valuable: "I have areas of expertise but did not see how other areas of expertise were applicable to this one theme – going out in little fingers, each area of expertise with a common goal."[53] As well as describing The Labyrinth Project, this could be a description of liberal arts education in general. New conversations took place between and among different campus constituents. I was not the hub of the project, but rather a web of interactions and connections were formed, giving truth to Block's claim that, rather than individual transformation leading to communal transformation, "transformation occurs when we focus on the structure of how we gather and the context in which the gatherings take place."[54] Block distinguishes social "bonding" and "bridging" by citing the book *Better Together,* by Putnam and Feldstein. *Social capital* refers to social networks, norms or reciprocity, mutual assistance, and

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[52] Ibid.

[53] LAC member, interview by Chris Hammon and Vicki Hollon via conference call, May 9, 2013.

[54] Block, *Community*, 73.

trustworthiness. Bonding social capital is networks that are inward-looking, composed of people of like mind. Social networks that "encompass different types of people and tend to be outward looking are bridging social capital. . . . So a pluralistic democracy requires lots of bridging social capital, not just the bonding variety."[55] Thus both inter- and intradepartmental bonds each had distinctive value through the project.

The words *example* and *microcosm* were used repeatedly to signify the hope that the project could serve as a model for future interdisciplinary collaboration and campus communication. "I believe this project can be a shining light on what is possible when we come together as the Wilson community and commit to a common goal."[56] The lived experience can be internalized. As Cousineau states, "Now you know the miniature is inside you. The journey is a miniature of the bigger one which is life."[57]

## Walking Toward Wholeness

People's language related to an awareness of health and wholeness generated through the project. The project created new experiences in real time that sought to connect mind, body, and spirit in a new way on campus. This involved a belief in the universality of the particular: "The whole of life, of time, of space is sanctified, made

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[55] Block, *Community,* 17-18.

[56] LAC member, interview by Chris Hammon and Vicki Hollon via conference call, May 9, 2013.

[57] Phil Cousineau,. *The Art of Pilgrimage: The Seeker's Guide to Making Travel Sacred* (Berkeley, CA: Conari Press, 1998). 222.

holy, by setting apart particular events, moments and places."[58] Exploring our inner world and connecting our deeper self with our lived experiences is a vital step toward wholeness. That there is a distinction between inner and outer work makes bridging the two all the more important. The project served as a meeting place for the inner and outer landscapes. For some there was a heightened awareness of the integrated nature of our life experiences: "For every sorrow there is a blessing, for every blessing a sorrow. But I know now one emanates from the other and is not the end of the journey in itself."[59] The balance between individuality and community is constantly being negotiated, as evidenced by one student who said she experienced "total aloneness even though others were on the labyrinth with me."[60] As Kornfeld writes, "We become aware of our wholeness in relationship; we stay aware in relationship."[61]

The nature of those relationships took place in a time-out from business-as-usual: "There is so much negative energy on campus. We took a time out on WLD. It was leisurely . . . NOT if I have to be here I need to be busy.[62]

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[58] Don Saliers, "Sanctifying Time, Place, and People," in *The Weavings Reader: Living with God in the Word*, ed. John S. Mogabgab (Nashville. TN: Upper Room Books, 1993), 239.

[59] Student, email to author, received by author, May 28, 2013.

[60] Labyrinth Log.

[61] Margaret Zipse Kornfeld, *Cultivating Wholeness: A Guide to Care and Counseling in Faith Communities* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 11.

[62] Labyrinth Log.

According to Kornfeld, "often the question is 'What work do we have to do?' When we ask 'How are we becoming more aware of our wholeness?' we have *reframed* the situation."[63] Participants were answering that question through their comments.

Experiencing the labyrinth repeatedly led to a deepening of perceptions: "The first time through the labyrinth was distracting. I was focused on the colorful stones and looking for the next one. The second time through I was able to reflect on the person and reason behind each stone. The third time through I was able to focus on God."[64]

Several comments relayed a snapshot image of the issues we had considered in the planning process. One student told me: "One afternoon my friend and I walked the labyrinth. Walking around the edge I felt a bit silly, but then I got less self-conscious and followed the stones. I turned to my friend and it was as if we were very close and had known each other a long time, though we haven't. Things looked different."[65] Looking at those around us with new eyes is key to creating I-Thou relationships rather than I-It relationships. One staff member noted, "It makes me tear up when I remember being told, 'Handle the stones with care, each stone represents a person.'"[66] In the larger picture there may be a growing awareness that if each stone represents a person, then in daily

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[63] Kornfeld, *Cultivating Wholeness*, 41.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Student, conversation with author, May 5, 2013.

[66] Staff member, conversation with author, May 4, 2013.

interactions each *person* represents a person and we are called to treat each other with care.

Rather than articulating theology, participants appreciated that the project introduced them to practices to better equip them on the journey of life, especially as it related to expectations and uncertainty:

> There were times I was just at the edge of the center and, at first, I thought I was just about there but the path went away again and eventually I got to the center but not when I expected to. Just like God's path I didn't always know where I was going to wind up next. But there was peace.[67]

> The walk started with no goal. As I walked I started to ponder the most common frustration in my life – not knowing what is next. Time allowed me to question God about how one can make choices without knowing what is ahead. I wanted so badly to reach the center. Would I discover something important about myself here? I'm not sure I did but I had a sense of accomplishment when I realized I'd come to the exit. I was sad.[68]

> I put pressure on myself to get a big message from God! My monkey brain was going, "chatter chatter, chatter." Then I heard "let it go, I have you."[69]

> The path to wholeness is grace, which was shared in a multitude of ways throughout the project.

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[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Student, conversation with author, May 5, 2013.

## The Place of Faith

The Labyrinth Project was identified with the identity of the College at large:

> We were struggling with our identity. My one hope is to help us solidify our identity and build a spiritual ethical intentional approach to college life. Even a T-shirt can be a visible symbol of identity and unity.[70]

> As the college struggles with its identity, with change and with an uncertain future, my hope is that more consideration may be given to the notion that as a Presbyterian affiliated college, we can become more conscious of the values that affiliation implies, faith, connection to each other, honoring the dignity and worth of every person.[71]

> There is a challenge in the issue of the academy (secular) and our desire to have in place a series of activities tapping into the spiritual. It's a tension I have experienced in all the colleges I have ever worked in.[72]

A chaplaincy activity accessible to those who do not identify as religious was perceived, in the main, as being hospitable without compromising personal integrity. One faculty member remarked, "If the Catholic Church was more like this, I wouldn't have left it!"[73]

One alumna was very displeased when she heard about The Labyrinth Project and wrote to the Director of Alumnae Relations. The Director did not wish to show me the letter for fear I would be offended. I assured her that I would not take the comments personally, and that I welcomed *all* feedback on the project. Eventually she agreed to

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[70] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[71] Ibid.

[72] LAC member, interview by Chris Hammon and Vicki Hollon via conference call, May 9, 2013.

[73] Faculty member, conversation with author, May 6, 2013.

show me a copy of the letter, having removed all identifying information. A portion of it is reproduced below (format and emphasis in original).

> Wilson's Chaplain is designing a meditation area? Is she also pastor of King Fu ? OR is she the Pastor of the Word and Sacraments ??
>
> Transformational Change indeed…
>
> WILSON is a CHRISTIAN COLLEGE. Presbyterian, in fact.
>
> When she lost that anchor she started this downward spiral ;…
>
> WE NEED a Chaplain who creates chapel, intercessory prayer time, BIBLE studies…not squander her time & college money designing "meditation" sites.
>
> Remember God ? He lives at WILSON; in those buildings, creeks, trees…all areas.
>
> We need a Chaplain to inspire, sustain, uplift and counsel students. She is there to present substantive CHRISTIAN values. Why else do we need her ?[74]

The writer's fears regarding the future identity of the College appear to be encapsulated in her perceptions of The Labyrinth Project. Just as interesting was the initial response within the College to shield me from this letter. This is symptomatic of the uncertainty with which potentially conflictual situations are handled at the College by seeking to avoid them.

The project was identified with the Office of the Chaplain, which had its drawbacks since "many equate Rosie the 'chaplain' with 'church' and don't pay attention

[74] Alumna letter, read by the author, March 6, 2013.

to whatever she does."[75] "Most people don't come to chapel – they feel it will be too pushy, Christian, boring, or haven't got time."[76] I was advised, "Don't have the chaplaincy host it all, make it a Wilson event not a chaplain event."[77]

Presenting chaplaincy programs in a sensitive manner was as necessary as it was valued: "Yes, it was sponsored by chaplaincy but it was not 'in your face.'[78] "Because of the current negative atmosphere of the campus she must strike a balance. If she is seen as 'tooting her own horn' in the success of the program, the cohesiveness and atmosphere of safety is destroyed."[79]

The project took chaplaincy out of the chapel, which is many people's perception of the sole locus of a chaplain's work. One faculty member shared a conversation he heard at the College Fencing Club meeting just after World Labyrinth Day:

> Wednesday night fencing club end of year party with about a dozen present (students and coach with faculty advisor). The fencing coach who is from the Chambersburg community asked the students, as we were eating pizza, if anyone had been involved with the labyrinth activities this past weekend. He had not and was curious. (I took a passive role and did not participate in the conversation as I chose only to listen). Several (4) indicated they had. There was a group response that it was a way to gain greater focus and think about things. One talked about the uniqueness of the design and specifically the painted rocks. One blurted out that it is a labyrinth and not a maze (yeah!). They went on as a group to explain

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[75] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[76] LAC meeting, October 2012.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Conversation with staff member, May 6, 2013.

[79] LAC member, interview by Chris Hammon and Vicki Hollon via conference call, May 9, 2013.

> that it is constructed so there are no tricks or dead ends like a maze but the labyrinth path is unrestricted moving toward the center and then back out. It is like taking a journey. He asked if it was some kind of religious service. One said that Saturday was not where Sunday was more religious. Another student said that the labyrinth is based upon ancient pagan customs and it is not at all Christian. Others disagreed (but very respectfully) and said you can get whatever you want out of the experience. It depends on how you show up. There seemed to be a hesitancy to share freely about the experience in a deeper personal sense but all students said it was a good positive experience and they encouraged others to walk it before it comes down on Monday. Overall the conversation was positive and there was enthusiasm in the discussion.[80]

Taking chaplaincy activities out into open, shared spaces on campus was an ongoing theme in responses.

> Another result has been to increase the visibility of the chapel program. Now there is a labyrinth right on the green, and students could be heard singing in the middle of campus last night. I'm not saying that we should be imposing the chapel program on anyone, but the light is no longer under a barrel.[81]

Of course participation in chaplaincy programs is voluntary. The days of mandatory chapel four times weekly are well over, but there are ways of making participation more attractive, appealing, and relevant. I-Thou moments happened in open space, unbounded by walls, among scores of people, not just among the twenty five or so who attend the weekly chapel service. "This makes faith a greater presence on campus, more of an OK conversation to have in the classroom. I'd like to get past the squeamishness about that being a part of who we are."[82]

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[80] Faculty member, email to author, May 13, 2013.

[81] Ibid.

[82] LAC member, interview by Chris Hammon and Vicki Hollon via conference call, May 9, 2013.

> Rosie was able to keep God at the center without making anyone feel they were attending a strictly religious ceremony. Instead they were attending a ceremony about navigating life, and in the middle perhaps discovered that God is at the center of it all.[83]

One LAC member noted that the senses were engaged through colorful streamers, movement, music, and trees in bloom: "We had an assist from nature."[84] She contrasted this with the very static space we have available for our weekly worship services. The project appropriated public spaces for new uses: "We have stewardship over the rooms of worship and the elements of symbol, gesture, movement, furnishings, and song that invite and enable God's word and our response."[85]

## A Personal Labyrinth Log

I have no doubt that this project has had an impact on my ministry at the College, as well as on my own spiritual journey. The "mountaintop experience" of World Labyrinth Day lives with me as a touchstone day. In the fall semester I experienced a sense of loss that the project proper was over; I was somewhat bereft. I appreciated the energy the project created and the soul connections that were made in everyday conversations during the project. I connected with many students for the first time and at a level that went beyond the superficial. The experiences I shared with students during the project were been the most encouraging of my ministry to date.

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[83] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[84] LAC member, interview by Chris Hammon and Vicki Hollon via conference call, May 9, 2013.

[85] Saliers, "Sanctifying Time, Place, and People," 239.

Initially, I overidentified with the problem-oriented dominant story at the College. In response to people's pain I was tempted to be a problem solver, thus running the risk of becoming a character in a drama that is already established.[86] I became increasingly aware of the need to imagine a person's very real thoughts and feelings and to hold my center, all at the same time. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky state that "a significant element of the burnout is from trying to carry other people's water – other people's hopes, needs, expectations, and fears. Other people's hopes can also take the form of other people's unresolved problems that you take on as your own."[87] I needed to remember that I always have a choice about the relationship I have with the College's dominant story about itself.[88] As one LAC member noted, "I have observed that Rosie has perhaps overextended herself by taking on SO many events. (I will give her this feedback myself at some point, but I have witnessed her being more edgy than normal, missing a few appointments, having too many balls in the air and dropping some, etc.)"[89]

In addition to my own values and sensitivities, I embody a piece of the larger picture that is the organizational system.

> There is a bit of a paradox here. On the one hand, you are trying to lead on behalf of something you believe in that is beyond your individual interest. On the other hand, in order to be the most effective in doing so, you need to pay attention to

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[86] Larry Golemon, *Finding Our Story: Narrative Leadership and Congregational Change* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2010), 44.

[87] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 202.

[88] Golemon, *Finding Our Story*, 43.

[89] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

> how you manage, use, gratify, and deploy yourself. You need to recognize that you are moving into an unknown space and then act accordingly.[90]
>
> Throughout this project Rosie remained true to her biblical and theological principles and values while honoring the variety in spiritual views on campus.[91]

I took a disciplined approach to understanding the part I played in the organizational system by meeting with my spiritual director and studying the Enneagram using the Helen Palmer book of the same name.[92] My Enneagram typology means that I need to pay particular attention to balancing the two life forces of individuality and togetherness when interacting with others. This project threw into sharp relief the need not to let other people's behavior determine mine. In my pastoral role, the process of remaining differentiated is as nuanced as it is necessary.[93] This preserves the individual integrity of the I-Thou relationship in which people keep their distinctiveness and enter into relationship from where they stand.

Nouwen suggests that if we are to be leaders who challenge, both humility and courage are necessary:

> There is within you a lamb and a lion. Spiritual maturity is the ability to let the lamb and lion lie down together. Your lion is your adult, aggressive self. It is your initiative-taking and decision-making self. But there is also your fearful, vulnerable lamb, the part of you that will easily become a victim of your need for other people's attention. The art of spiritual living is to fully claim both your lion

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[90] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 231.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Helen Palmer, *The Enneagram: Understanding Yourself and the Others in Your Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991).

[93] Peter L. Steinke, *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2006), 19.

> and your lamb. Then you can act assertively without denying your own needs. And you can ask for affection and care without betraying your talent to offer leadership.[94]

Discernment is required as to the time to be a lion and the time to be a lamb. Assertiveness arising out of fear or anxiety is not the "lion" of my "initiative-taking and decision-making self."

Through the project I came to my handprint in the system in a new way. Chaplains often refer to the "liminal" nature of the chaplaincy role, and it is a metaphor I have found useful. For several years this metaphor gave me solace as I traveled betwixt and between the faculty, administration, church, academy, student affairs, and student worlds. But increasingly over the course of the project, I felt the need for longer periods when my sense of identity was not "dissolved to some extent." I am indebted to Linda Morgan-Clement for introducing me to the work of Rita Nakashima Brock and the notion of "interstitial integrity." It offers one way of reflecting on our work and role that integrates multiple identities and roots. "Interstitial comes from *interstitium*, and it is used in biology to describe tissue situated in vital organs. The tissue is not organ tissue, but rather, it connects the organs to one another. Interstitial tissue lives inside things, distinct but inseparable from what would otherwise be disconnected."[95] Interstitial integrity helps me *claim* my many roles as the building blocks that constitute my identity as chaplain.

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[94] Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Dance of Life: Weaving Sorrows and Blessings into One Joyful Step*, ed. Michael Ford (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2005), 156.

[95] Rita Nakashima Brock, "Cooking Without Recipes: Interstitial Integrity," in *Off the Menu: Asian and Asian North American Women's Religion & Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 126.

The relatedness helps me give myself permission to move across the traditional barriers in ways that seek to be life-giving witness to the sacred in our midst. "This is the meaning of spirit in flesh, to find what is sacred by taking into our lives all that has touched us. Interstitial integrity is this spirit in us, our struggle to hold the many in the one. . . . Interstitial integrity is our ability to lie down, spread-eagled, reaching to all the many worlds we have known, all the memories we have been given, tempered in the cauldrons of history and geography in our one body."[96]

This experience was both personal and communal for me. Pauw writes that transformative change involves "personal and communal experience and desires."[97] This project has helped bridge my beliefs and practices, with the latter informing the former. As the saying goes, we live ourselves into a new way of thinking rather than think ourselves into a new way of being. I experienced this as liberation, an exodus of sorts from some long-established way of experiencing the world and relationships within it. This is partly due to the fact that the challenges of living in authentic community over the long term are very real to me. I grew up in a religiously divided community, Northern Ireland, at the height of the Troubles. A very dualistic mind-set was the norm in such a polarized environment, and I have a tendency to continue to see options as either "right" or "wrong." That is "maze" thinking. I strive to be more disciplined in seeking God's

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[96] Ibid.

[97] Amy Plantinga Pauw, "Attending the Gaps between Beliefs and Practices," in *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, ed. Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 36.

freedom – if that's not a contradiction. It's not about me ruminating about it endlessly so that I come up with the "right" decision. Rather it is up to me to be willing to let God create the conditions for life within me. This is to enter a new state of "being," not of "doing." The question then changes from "What does God want me to do?" to "Who does God want me to be?"

I have certainly been profoundly affected by the project as a whole. I attended a workshop in April led by Lauren Artress, a leader of the labyrinth movement in the USA. She commented that "some of us allow the labyrinth to become an organizing principle of our lives." I believe that I may have become one of those people through this project.

## LAC Legacies

LAC members appreciated being involved in the project in a very intentional manner and felt they had gained from the experience.

> At the culmination of the last LAC meeting, we commented that maybe we should continue getting together. We all enjoyed the sense of purpose and gained a sense of close community with individuals we may have not known before the committee was developed. As a committee, we were not only able to see the far reaching effects of the project, but we were all touched as individuals. Even though we had a purpose, we enjoyed the time together and the meetings were a time of refreshment for us despite having work to do and staying on task.[98]

> At our final meeting today the energy, enthusiasm, joy and thankfulness for a reviving project this semester characterized our conversation. Many of the projects met the goals above – the Retreat renewed a sense of hope/refreshed spirits/fostered community; the art project and literary project renewed vision for the future of the college/fostered community; and the labyrinth day itself met all four goals.[99]

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[98] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[99] Ibid.

Members of the LAC gave their assessment of the longer-term view of the project:

> While I cannot say that the Labyrinth project has taken a dysfunctional institution and made it more functional, I can say that it has helped solidify strong community ties with people who can support each other during a time of change and uncertainty.[100]
>
> I suppose cynics could say that the project created no lasting resource on a campus with so many concrete needs. Although the time might have been better spent fundraising to improve the poor material conditions on our campus, I think Rosie recognized that our treasure has never been in our cutting-edge equipment and facilities. Instead she saw the potential for state-of-the-art human relationships.[101]
>
> Wilson has not been an easy place to be for the past nine months, and The Labyrinth Project gave many of us a new way to focus energy and to begin personal healing. For those who have a strong spiritual foundation, the program was particularly nurturing and for seekers, the program offered new opportunities and ways to explore personal spiritual development.[102]
>
> What I'm not sure of, is whether on a global scale this program has served to create a renewed vision for the future of the college. The alums and Board are still contentious; a sense of uncertainty and scarcity still exists; and during the semester many good people made the decision to leave the college. I'm thankful for the opportunity to have participated in the project and to see the difference that it has made in the lives of many students, staff and faculty. It would be great to think that we have modeled something that can catch the eyes, ears, hearts and minds of those who have the real power to effect sweeping change in envisioning the future and new birth of the college.[103]

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid.

> Perhaps this gives us some concrete hope that we can go forward. It could be a catalyst – a watershed moment. WE DID THIS! Therefore we can do other things.[104]
>
> I learned a lot about possibility on this campus. Wilson is a wonderful small campus yet it is so hard to communicate and collaborate. Enthusiasm was beaten out of me pretty quickly. I have learned that it is possible. There is receptivity to collaboration. I was starting to lose hope. This set a great example.[105]

**Fall Semester: The Journey Continues**

"How do we keep sacred memories alive? How to make the journey part of our lives once we are back in the daily grind? I see the time of return as reintegration time, a time to recall as much as possible about the trip, a time of listening to dreams and creating something new so the awakening continues."[106] The fall semester brought an acute realization that the College is a very open system that presents both challenges and opportunities for sustainability. Approximately one quarter of the community graduate or leave at the end of the academic year. They took their experience of The Labyrinth Project with them, and it will, I hope, ripple out in ways I may never be aware of. New students, staff, and faculty arrived in the fall who had not experienced the project firsthand and would do so only through others, if at all. They were not at the college to

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[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Cousineau, *The Art of Pilgrimage*, 222.

hear: "This project helped me come to work every day"[107] or "This made my semester."[108] They encountered it through stories shared and photographs viewed. Did they also encounter the project obliquely through the impact it had on the campus culture?

Several community members extended the life of The Labyrinth Project in practical ways at their own initiative:

1. An article was written for the summer edition of *Wilson Magazine.*
2. The Dean of Students paid to have poster-sized photographs from World Labyrinth Day decorate the main lobby of the College.
3. The Director of Alumnae Relations has invited me to open the Leadership Weekend for alumnae on September 28. I was asked to speak about the labyrinth versus the maze to set the stage for a facilitated discussion of the role and expectations of the Alumnae Association.
4. I was invited to speak at local churches through people who experienced The Labyrinth Project. One LAC member's church built a temporary labyrinth in support of pilgrims while several congregants were on pilgrimage in Scotland and Ireland. The congregation would be able to journey with them on the labyrinth. For constructing the labyrinth, she used the directions she had created for the Wilson labyrinth (Appendix IX).
5. In September 2013 the annual Wilson College Donor Report was produced with a picture from World Labyrinth Day on the cover.
6. In response to the Labyrinth and Leadership business class, one faculty member decided to develop a course on leadership and community.

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[107] LAC member, interview by Chris Hammon and Vicki Hollon via conference call, May 9, 2013.

[108] Staff member, conversation with author, May 9, 2013.

7. One first-year student told me she thought a labyrinth should be their senior class gift.[109]

8. I was asked by College Advancement staff to provide input on organizing a campus-wide event, "Trees for Tomorrow," scheduled for April 2014.

9. I was invited to talk to the first-year students about the concept of labyrinth. It was described as a perfect image for students as they begin the journey of their College life.

10. The 2012-13 College Yearbook contained two pages devoted to photographs from World Labyrinth Day. The staff advisor to the Yearbook Club told me that club members felt it was important that The Labyrinth Project be included and space was created to do so. This attitude mirrored the intention of the project to make space for everyone.

11. I was asked to lead a local women's weekend retreat on, "Journeying with God" through someone in the presbytery who had heard about The Labyrinth Project.

Several community members expressed their desire that a permanent labyrinth be built. "The remark I heard most often: I wish this could be permanent. I think this referred both to the labyrinth and the sense of peace we created. Anytime at the end of an event, people on this campus want more – it is an amazing thing."[110] One trustee approached me to say she would be interested in funding a permanent labyrinth. Since I am not permitted to solicit funds for specific purposes at the College, I advised the trustee to follow up with the Advancement department. The labyrinth also lingered in people's

[109] Student, conversation with author, September 5, 2013.

[110] LAC member, interview by Chris Hammon and Vicki Hollon via conference call, May 9, 2013.

stories and experience of the project. One student told me, "On graduation day I went to walk the labyrinth. It was still there in the grass. I was glad."[111]

At the Board of Trustees meeting held during the weekend of graduation, one trustee commented to an LAC member that she had been following the project online and had hoped to walk the labyrinth. "It needs to be permanent. It would be useful for the board this week. In fact it would be useful for a lot of people!"[112] The college president concluded her report to the Board of Trustees by talking about The Labyrinth Project, stating, "This is the sort of positive thing we need to focus on." Upon inquiries as to whether I would create another *temporary* labyrinth for World Labyrinth Day 2014, I expressed the opinion that a *permanent* labyrinth at the College would be more appropriate and more in keeping with the archetypal nature of the labyrinth concept.

I have heard a few comments using the project as a frame of reference, as when one staff member exclaimed at a staff meeting, "I feel like I am in a maze today and I need to get into the labyrinth." The fact that everyone at the meeting understood the "shorthand" of this comment indicated that the project has, to some extent, entered the College lexicon. I saw community internalization of the concept in various ways, as when a professor told me that the 2014 student art exhibit included works on the theme.

Over the summer and during the fall semester, new initiatives began at the College to implement the changes that were approved by the Board of Trustees in

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[111] Student, conversation with author, May 18, 2013.

[112] Trustee, conversation with author, May 17, 2013.

January 2013. There was no large influx of male undergraduate students for the fall semester. In all, only three traditional-age male students began courses in August 2013. Other students appeared to take their presence in stride. The most vociferous student protesters against the decision to go fully co-educational had been seniors who graduated in May 2013. Some alumnae were still active on social networks, but current students appeared to want to distance themselves from these forums and not to become involved in ongoing disputes. It was heartening to see one alumna post the following comments:

> In the midst of all the recent furor and distress about Wilson, trustees, coeducation, etc. the effort and planning that Rosie put into the World Labyrinth Day celebration is a definitely a gift to all of us. We sometimes forget the importance of pausing in our busy lives and in our whirling about here and there to stop and Just Be. For me, "to be" in the present regarding the college is to consider the Wilson of today and not dwell so much on our nostalgic experience of 50+ years ago. Whether we agree or disagree about the coeducational issue, I hope we all want Wilson to survive and continue to grow not only as a center of academic excellence but to be preparation for a productive and fulfilling life. I think Rosie created an entire spring curriculum that focused on just that. Months of learning, planning and thinking brought together students, faculty, community, and administration in celebration of something far beyond the narrow confines of a small and struggling college. I have no doubt, however, that it will be remembered by the current students who participated as a unique day in their Wilson experience. Perhaps it will also serve to strengthen them in their future endeavors and lives.[113]

Visible and immediate impact was felt upon the building renovations that began on campus during summer 2013. As well as a renovated student center, work began on refurbishing two dormitories. New paving on campus filled in potholes and new flowerbeds brightened the greens. Fall semester brought an increased optimism on

[113] Alumna, Facebook post, accessed June 7, 2013.

campus as interest from prospective students rose, and projected figures for admissions for fall 2014 are the highest they have been in years.

It is challenging to distill the impact The Labyrinth Project had in this new reality. Certainly it contributed to the general milieu. Some individuals had profound experiences and as a community we engaged together in new ways that cannot be *un*-experienced. Relationships that formed continue to be built on, although not in a formal manner named "Labyrinth." I considered some formal programming on the labyrinth theme for the fall semester but instead put my energies into supporting new initiatives that sprang up organically among the student body. The student-led Christian Fellowship Group, Agape, re-formed in the fall. The Fiber Fellowship group decided to organize itself as an official College club so that it would be eligible for apportionment funds to support fund-raising activities for charitable causes. I continued to meet with staff members for support, encouragement, and prayer. Bonds formed with the wider Chambersburg community have continued. We had our first Wilson College Sunday at one of the local Presbyterian churches in September. Students acted as liturgists in a service designed to celebrate our identity as a Presbyterian-affiliated college.

## The Possibility of Abundance

According to Block, "Possibility without accountability results in wishful thinking. Accountability without possibility creates despair."[114] God is a God of possibility and expansive thinking. When people think "outside the box" they are, in the

[114] Block, *Community*, 48.

language of the project, thinking outside the maze. Several people imagined what could be:

> As I watch the Labyrinth Day video I'm thinking that we need a permanent Labyrinth at the college. Wouldn't it be great fun if we could keep the rocks already painted and use them to design a permanent Labyrinth embedded in the common area in front of the new library? Just thinking out loud again. It might not fly at the new library but maybe if we put the idea out there it might gain some traction to occupy another space on campus.[115]

> I would love to be able to repeat my experience back home in my own community with my church.[116]

> The labyrinth was an antidote for all the negativity we have been experiencing. It was an afternoon of positive conversation and reflection on what is possible.[117]

Block contends that participation is sometimes, in itself, a countercultural act. "Possibility, here, is a declaration, a declaration of what we create in the world each time we show up. . . . A possibility is brought into being in the act of declaring it."[118] Hoping for a brighter future is also a countercultural act at Wilson College. Hope is integral: "the strength of our own capacity to take action is the thinking that we decide what the world around us should become."[119]

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[115] Staff member, email to author, May 12, 2013.

[116] Student, conversation with author, August 29, 2013.

[117] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

[118] Block, *Community,* 16.

[119] Peter Block, *The Answer to How Is Yes: Acting on What Matters* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2003), 134.

Engagement appeared to release possibility and imagination. Block stresses the need to move from problems to possibility.[120] "But possibility is not a prediction, or a goal; it is a choice to bring a certain quality into our lives."[121] Possibility exists within a spirit of abundance rather than of scarcity.[122] The Labyrinth Project met the College context in an oblique fashion. However much hope there was, there were no predetermined expectations about a prescribed outcome. There was trust in the process. One particular LAC report captured The Labyrinth Project for me:

> It was amazing to see people of every age (toddler to the elderly) and all different walks of life moving as one body during the "walk at one as one" part of the labyrinth day celebration. Rosie was effective in creating a safe space in each of her events. An incredibly varied group of people were all comfortable just relaxing in the same physical space. This in itself creates a sense of unity rarely felt on this campus. It allowed people to see that there are others who want to move forward in a positive way *together*. This project opened eyes in the campus community as a whole to the possibility that it may actually be a minority that is driving the division on campus rather than a majority. It seemed before the project that it was the majority choosing division and contention. The success of the project in bringing the campus together raises the possibility that the minority is simply more vocal and determined. Perhaps through the renewal and community found in these cohesive activities, the positive majority can become more vocal and determined than the negative minority. A fabric of support has been established through this project. We are now challenged to find a way to continue to strengthen and expand that fabric.[123]

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[120] Ibid., 179.

[121] Ibid., 42.

[122] Joseph R. Myers, *Organic Community: Creating a Place Where People Naturally Connect* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 162.

[123] LAC member, Project Site Review Form, May 7, 2013.

# CHAPTER SIX

# BROADER HORIZONS

*Thus says the LORD: Stand at the crossroads and look,*

*and ask for the ancient paths,*

*where the good way lies;*

*and walk in it and find rest for your souls*

–Jeremiah 6:16

## Making Connections

### Grounding Our Intentions: Moving in Place

Throughout the project many spoke appreciatively of its "spiritual" focus. There was an appreciation that it was not too "religious." Some see a solid distinction between spirituality and religion, claiming that spirituality is personal and inclusive while religion is external and exclusive. Often the terms *religion* and *spirituality* are placed in opposition to each other as if they were mutually exclusive. Such a paradigm seems more in keeping with the mind-set of a maze rather than of a labyrinth. There is no doubt that *spiritual but not religious* has a different meaning and context for everyone who uses it. It seems that more emphasis is placed on exploring what people say they are not (religious) than on what they say they are (spiritual). Many have a bias or view suggesting that religion is intrinsically bad and spirituality is intrinsically good. Considering the manner in which these

two terms *relate* to each other helps avoid reiterating well-worn clichés. These two terms relate to each other particularly in the creation of a community with shared values and beliefs. Religion in this worldview can be a means of organizing our spiritual lives *in community* in a way that moves beyond the solo path of individual salvation or spirituality. Religion is then a means of creating and maintaining common ground. This form of grounding, rather than restricting freedom, can be a path to creating a more expansive and hospitable community identity in a way that moves beyond the solo path of individual salvation or spirituality. This is emblematic of the power of intention and opens up the possibility of any place of rootedness becoming a "thin place." We often associate thin places as being remote, or sites of great natural beauty. Perhaps, as Adams suggests, Iona was "just" a beautiful location and it was the prayers and intention of the community there contributed to the development of a "thin place."[1] When we (re)commit to *any* place, perhaps the same thing is possible. We don't need to move, but re-creating where we are can be a resurrection moment. We need to keep moving until we absorb the wisdom that a new setting will not provide the answer to our own dilemmas, for we take ourselves with us and we need to come home to ourselves. During The Labyrinth Project our community moved-in-place together in a new way. This transit-ional theology, this moving-in-place, can be a source of resurrection.

In our own lives, particular places become focal points of recognition and memory as well as pilgrimage. Identity occurs in place, in context. "The fact that identity has traditionally been so strongly 'placed' partly explains why travel is such an

[1] Ian Adams, *Cave Refectory Road: monastic rhythms for contemporary living* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2010), 88.

ambiguous reality. 'Well-travelled' may be a metaphor for wisdom and moral authority."[2] According to Sheldrake, "Whatever we mean by the mystical dimension of Christian faith and practice, I suggest that it both subverts our temptation to settlement and impels us into a condition of perpetual departure."[3]

## Bridges, Causeways, and Burial Grounds

Spiritual, emotional, and physical topography was traversed during the course of The Labyrinth Project. The project was designed to form a bridge between the interior and exterior world as well as between community members. A bridge is designed to connect the disconnected. The means was creativity, since "outer and inner landscape comes together in creativity."[4] It is inner work becoming part of outer work that strikes a chord within the community at large, for then we can be recognized for who we fully are. The Labyrinth Project was a journey toward authenticity.

The bridging of these inner and outer worlds can be challenging and born of crisis. "Work at its best is the arrival in an outer form of something intensely inner and personal; and the act of working itself—a bridge between the public and the private, a bridge of experience which can be an agony and an ecstasy to cross."[5] Causeways are a

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[2] Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 1.

[3] Ibid., 119.

[4] Elizabeth Canton, *A Table of Delight: Feasting with God in the Wilderness* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2005), 84.

[5] David Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2001), 67-68.

specific type of bridge. They are a "haunting symbol" that "causes a way to open up. It is a natural crossing point . . . only accessible when the dry land and solid ground of the causeway are exposed."[6] Silf describes causeways as haunting, since they open up most often through crisis of one sort or another. A causeway does not always feel safe: "Sometimes our times of change and crisis feel more like being driven forward along a narrow pathway into the unknown, with the sea swirling on either side of us, and the tide seeping in behind us, cutting off any possibility of retreat."[7] This narrowness often gives rise to anxiety. "There are bridges that we need, and bridges that we must eventually let go of, to trust the bedrock that is revealed only by the causeway. And there is the ultimate loss, in the burial place, which may prove to be the ultimate gateway to life."[8]

There are different ways of negotiating the terrain. Neal identifies "Edgewalkers" as people who "walk between worlds and build bridges between different paradigms, cultures, and realities."[9] There is a sense of danger inherent in the term *Edgewalker*, an element of risk. However, the rewards are very real if Edgewalker characteristics are inculcated into the culture of an organization. "An Edgewalker culture is one that values innovation, creativity, risk taking, unleashing the human spirit, and living in alignment

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[6] Margaret Silf, *Sacred Spaces: Stations on a Celtic Way* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2001), 147.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 140-141.

[9] Judy Neal, "Creating Edgewalker Organizations," in *The Workplace and Spirituality: New Perspectives on Research and Practice,*eds. Joan Marques, Satinder Dhiman, and Richard King (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2009), 202.

with values of sustainability, justice, compassion, and joy."[10] Edgewalker orientation is based on "relationship to time and relationship to change. It is important to have people who remember the founding values of the organization and who have a sense of the organizational memory. It is also important that people be focused on the present so that those tasks that need to be done right now are attended to. A focus on the future allows for strategic thinking, innovation, and visioning."[11]

An Edgewalker culture will form bridges (cooperation) and bonds (collaboration) and ensure safe passage through causeways. There also need to be space and place for burial grounds – where it is safe to commemorate and ritualize losses and where grief and loss can be named in real time in community. The Labyrinth Project involved the creation of public rituals. Ritual has long been understood as a vehicle for communicating content or information to the individual or corporate body, e.g., cultural identity. Ritual is also way of acting, a way of embodying values. Silf maintains that when the rituals of organized religion enter our daily lives we commission each other for the way ahead.[12] The project was shaped in an intentional manner but there was enough room, enough space, for individuals and community to engage and interpret the theme in ways most beneficial for them to move forward. This was empowering for those who are living

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[10] Ibid., 207.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Silf, *Sacred Spaces*, 157.

through loss, change, disruption and uncertainty. I saw this as an act of pastoral care in my role as a broker of community observances and rituals.

Touchstones served as markers for human losses in our community during the project – whether touchstone moments of surprising connection or painted stones of commemoration. Some people experienced holy encounters and were grateful for "holy places where accumulated experience carries the power to reorient us to what is essential to our humanity."[13]These moments happened in "real" time.

The sanctifying of time cannot be abstracted from the sanctifying of place, for we journey in time and dwell in space. These are *kairos* moments. Ecclesiastes 3 teaches us that there is a *kairos,* God-appointed, time to kill whatever it is within us that is preventing our spirits from soaring. There is a time to lose, a time to let go of whatever is holding us back. There is a time to be born, fresh and full again, out of old ideas, old forms. There is a time to build up, to construct a new environment so that what we leave behind is better than what we inherited. All of this takes place in the full realization that we live and serve "between the times." Amidst the "already" of redemption from sin and death, there is unmistakably the pain of "not yet."[14] Together our times and places are

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[13] Neal, "Creating Edgewalker Organizations," in *The Workplace and Spirituality*, 238.

[14] Don Saliers, "Sanctifying Time, Place, and People," in *The Weavings Reader: Living with God in the Word*, ed. John S. Mogabgab (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1993), 236.

sanctified by living through the whole story of God with us, rendering thanks and praise in all times and places, even as we struggle with the "not yet."[15]

## Converting Community

Lawrence maintains that it is a myth that an organization needs to change because it is broken. Rather the reality is that any social system is the way it is because the people in that system want it that way: "There is no such thing as a dysfunctional organization, because every organization is perfectly aligned to achieve the results it currently gets."[16] This is a call to conversion. Communion is a building of covenantal relationships with one another and with God. To convert means to "turn together," a communal act that involves engaging in community, and every turn on the labyrinth of life is a (re)conversion moment. There is an intimate connection between formation and the complexity of our lives. "Each person and group contains a piece of the larger picture that is the organizational system."[17] Formation is, therefore, not predictable as a product of input, but *created* through negotiations between individual, social, and cultural influences. Walking with each other through The Labyrinth Project gave opportunity for wise company and sensitive presence. The I-Thou encounters generated sprang out of

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[15] Ibid., 238.

[16] Jeff Lawrence, quoted in *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World,* by Ronald A. Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2009), 17.

[17] Ronald A. Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2009), 209.

new opportunities for respect and reciprocity. If it is true that the very core of the universe is love rather than, say, power, intelligence, or wealth, then to be more like God is to grow in love. *Agape* love embodies hospitality and mutuality and is deeply relational. This deep relationality is mirrored in our physical world: "When scientists sought to discover the smallest elements, they found particles that were smaller than atoms. These particles became so small that there were no particles—only relationships. Subatomic particles can only come into being because of the presence of other particles."[18]

Feminist Christian theology rightly emphasizes that agape love is primordially "equal regard." There is authority to be found through constant equal regard, which empowers us to become the fully relational human beings we were created to be. This "relational authority" is authority "with" rather than authority "over." This concept is especially pertinent in my work at an educational institution that seeks to disavow the persistent but flawed idea that there could be anything salvific in one human being oppressed at the hands of another. The concept of relationship is often sacrificed on the altar of authority, and authority in turn is often conflated with control. Authority itself can be viewed as a limited resource, and demand can be seen as outstripping supply. This shuts down engagement, disempowers learners, and objectifies knowledge. Yet, those who promote egalitarianism can refuse to call on the authority of their knowledge for fear of appearing autocratic. In seeking a dialogical process at *all* costs, legitimate authority is

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[18] Peter L. Steinke, *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2006), 23.

confused with control. Either extreme is unhelpful. If there is a belief that there is only so much authority to go around, leaders can become keen to preserve whatever personal authority they have and students often cede all authority, seeing any other option as a lost cause. Rather than seeking to get a bigger piece of the "authority pie," perhaps everyone in the system can make the pie bigger as different types of authority are recognized and embraced.

Shared responsibility gives everyone involved authority to question, to formulate, and to be creative. The creativity involved lies not just in providing an environment where such learning is the currency of interaction but in realizing that the outcome cannot be fully prescribed. The "hows" of engagement are therefore as limited (or limitless) as our vision of ourselves and the world. "A Christian vision necessarily affirms both a variety of life and also the common good (I Cor. 12). The true depth of human good consists of a particularity whose very existence depends on openness to what is other, beyond and more."[19]

## Conversations in Context

Heifetz and Linsky contend that failure to distinguish between contexts that require *technical* responses and those that require *adaptive* responses will result in ineffective outcomes.[20] The Labyrinth Project required both technical and adaptive

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[19] Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 168.

[20] Ronald Heifetz and Martin Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 89.

responses. Marking the path, calculating the stones, the geometry of construction - these can be likened to technical responses. They evoke questions that can be answered by using accurate information or finding people with the necessary expertise. They are solution oriented. The adaptive element relates to the formational parts of the project. Issues of value, attitude, behavior, and belief played into how people experienced a labyrinth. There was no requirement for technical expertise; rather the invitation was to look inward and explore interior landscapes in a way that went beyond any self-imposed limitations. It appears that technical problems involve *information*, whereas adaptive issues involve *formation* and adaptive responses that are themselves (re)formational.

I am reminded of how I struggled for many years to find my voice. While at seminary I sought out teaching and preaching sources. I came to those courses looking for techniques, for strategies that would be valuable in the classroom and the parish. In hindsight I realize that I wanted *tools* that would make me *feel* like a pastor. I was seeking a technical response to an issue that required an adaptive reorientation of my sense of identity and calling.

## The Work of Our Lives

Fox imagines "work as healthy nothingness," whereby "being is born of nonbeing, surprise from doubt, light from darkness, joy from sorrow, hope from despair."[21] He refers to the Tao Te Ching as a positive view of this healthy emptiness:

We join spokes together in a wheel,

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[21] Matthew Fox, *The Reinvention of Work: A New Vision of Livelihood for Our Time* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 51.

> but it is the center hole
> that makes the wagon move.
>
> We shape clay in a pot,
> but it is the emptiness inside
> that holds whatever we want.
>
> We hammer wood for a house,
> but it is the inner space
> that makes it livable.
>
> We work with being,
> but non-being is what we use.[22]

This sense of spaciousness, of *yasha*, is an expansive alternative to living in the narrow stretches, the *zarar*, of anxiety.

Whyte contends that the severest test of work today is not of our strategies but of our imaginations and identities. In order to find that freedom in the midst of the complex world of work, we need to cultivate simpler, more elemental identities truer to the template of our own natures. We carry enough burdens in the outer world not to want to replicate that same sense of burden in our inner selves.

> We need a sense of spaciousness and freedom, but find we can claim that freedom only by living out a radical, courageous simplicity—simplicity based on the particular way we belong to the world we inhabit. If we ignore our simpler necessities, the attempt to create a complex professional identity most often buries us in layers of insulation through which it is impossible to touch our best gifts.[23]

It is comforting to realize that God is ahead of us. God has already been active in our midst and continues to be so. Our primary task is to open our eyes to see in a new

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[22] Tao Te Ching, trans. Stephen Mitchell, quoted in *The Reinvention of Work: A New Vision of Livelihood for Our Time* by Matthew Fox (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 51.

[23] Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea*, 60.

way and to be open to God's activity. The medieval mystic Julian of Norwich understood the metaphor of "gardening" as an expression of ministry. The gardener does not make the plants grow; God does. The gardener attends to their growth as the plants become what they are meant to be.[24] This understanding helps individuals avoid taking on a level of responsibility that is unhealthy or inappropriate. "Our lives take the form of absence. Like the captain asleep below, we become exhausted from the effort needed to sustain our waking identities. The day may be full, we may be incredibly busy, but we have forgotten who is busy and why we are busy."[25] Bass reminds us that "the same One also continues, each day, the work of new creation: the work of forgiving and reconciling and restoring wholeness. This too we are invited to enter, both as ones who stand in need of this divine work and as partners in it."[26]

## The Parabolic Perspective

The labyrinth experience is a metaphor for our life's journey. As Block contends, "metaphoric meaning is a process, not a momentary, static insight; it operates as a story, moving us from here to there, from what is to what might be."[27] Through the labyrinth it is possible to move toward a new language acknowledging the reality that we are ever

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[24] Margaret Zipse Kornfeld, *Cultivating Wholeness: A Guide to Care and Counseling in Faith Communities* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 10.

[25] Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea*, 60.

[26] Dorothy C. Bass, *Receiving the Day: Christian Practices for Opening the Gift of Time* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000), 18.

[27] Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008), 15.

moving toward the "what might be" through our language.[28] Our language is limited, which makes it all the more important that we be very intentional in the language we use and understand the provisional nature of all language. Words cannot fully express what we experience on our faith journey. Yet, we have been given the awesome right and responsibility to wrestle with our ideas about God. Therefore, we must hold our metaphors lightly rather than grab hold of them for grim death. As McFague states, they provide an access point for our limited grasp of the nature of God. Rollins expresses both this right and responsibility in the introduction to his book *The Orthodox Heretic*:

> How to speak of something that cannot be said? . . . It is precisely the futility of this pursuit that acts as the manna that sustains desert pilgrims in their unending quest to inscribe, enact, and incarnate truth. And it is as we lean towards such travelers, listening to the dry crackle of their encrypted, elusive whisperings, that we may catch a glimpse of truth. This truth can be spoken only by those who live it and heard only by those who heed it. These timeless incantations have gone by many names over the millennia, but one such name is "parable,"[29]

The words parabolic and parable share a common root. The word *parable* comes from the Greek prefix *para-*, which means "besides" or "beyond" and the word *ballo* which means to throw. It seems as if parable in the Greek meant to throw two things beside each other or to throw one thing beyond another thing. The word *parabola* refers to a particular shape, as when a stone is thrown through the sky, its path traces an almost perfect parabola.

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[28] Sallie McFague, *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 33.

[29] Peter Rollins, *The Orthodox Heretic: And Other Impossible Tales* (Norwich England: Canterbury Press, 2009), x.

One of the characteristics of parabolic speech is an element of surprise that disrupts the world of the hearer. Parables, by their nature, suggest that resolution is going to happen in an unexpected and surprising manner. There is a breaking in of *kairos* time into *chronos* time. And as the physicists tell us, time itself is not linear, it is curved.

McFague describes how Jesus worked by "indirection" through parables. She contends that we "are not told about the graciousness of God in a parable, but are shown a situation of ordinary life which has been revolutionized by grace."[30] There is rich meaning to be found in McFague's arresting image of Jesus as the parable of God. Just as "a metaphor does not have a message – it *is* a message," "Jesus as the parable of God did not tell people about the kingdom, but he *was* the kingdom."[31] It seems that Jesus' disciples were not just hearing parables, they were being re-membered individually and collectively through Jesus's parabolic practices.She feels Jesus' followers are therefore called to live parabolic lives.

"The parabolic story, the kind of story which does *not* assume an ordered world but perceives order only indirectly, intermittently and beneath the complexities of personal and social chaos, is the kind most pertinent to our times"[32] A labyrinth is a sure way of getting from here to there in a beneficially circuitous fashion. Such an oblique orientation enables identification on the part of hearers. But the purpose is to go beyond

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[30] Ibid., 71.

[31] McFague, *Speaking in Parables, 82.*

[32] Ibid., 141.

hearing to living and to embodying the parable. The Labyrinth Project was parabolic in design and implementation. The project sought to create the possibility of new associations – physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual. The integrity of these associations was maintained through awareness of them. This created coherence in design and implementation of the project. There was a mirroring of means and purpose that in turn enabled "whole"-hearted participation, an integration of mind, body, and spirit. McFague states that part of being parabolic followers involves "being aware of imaginative associations wherever they occur."[33] I also see The Labyrinth Project itself as being an enacted parable of our community life and its possibilities. The genre of parables combines realism and symbolism. Parables involve routine, everyday situations with everyday people, yet through God's grace these particulars are transformed to extravagant effect. "In the parable truth is not expressed via some detached logical discourse that would be employed to educate us but rather it emanates from the creation of a lyrical discourse that inspires and transforms us: a discourse being that form of (mis)communication that sends us spinning off course and on a new one."[34]. Parables are not puzzles that can be solved in only one way. They are not mazes. Rather, they provide metaphorical markers that can be connected by the participants in their individual and corporate particularity. Life often takes the form of a parabola, and, through God's grace, our lives can become enacted parables. Individual arcs can find common ground with

[33] Ibid., 105.

[34] Rollins, *The Orthodox Heretic*, x.

others through this genre of shared experience. Paradoxically, the more articulately and intentionally one is able to speak of one speaks of the parabolic nature of one's own journey, the more universal this reality appears to become.

## God of Possibility

"There is no direct way to talk about God," according to McFague, among others. "Thus a poetic approach in life and language is called for in embodiment of the Gospel."[35] This opens up expansive possibilities for imagination and experience. The poet Emily Dickinson understood the nature of possibility to be found in poetry:

> I dwell in Possibility—
> A fairer House than Prose—
> More numerous of Windows—
> Superior – for Doors—
> . . .
> Of Visitors – the fairest—
> For Occupation – This—
> The spreading wide of narrow Hands
> To gather Paradise.[36]

Heightened awareness and appreciation of the journey at a literal and metaphorical level was one of the gifts of The Labyrinth Project. We created new stories and new parabolic possibilities by walking, by moving-in-place, together.

> We are the story. The journey continues, and the pilgrim community grows as we support one another by prayerful presence. When others are weary, we carry them until they can walk again. If someone gets lost or is ready to give up, we go looking for that sister or brother. Meanwhile God wears an apron and prepares a feast for us; a table of delight awaits just beyond the next outcrop of rock so we

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[35] McFague, *Speaking in Parables*, 114.

[36] Emily Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson,* ed. R. W. Franklin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, Harvard University, 1999).

> will not falter. A song of thanksgiving keeps us moving; a few of us dance, some plod, but we all know our pilgrim way leads to God's heart and hearth where we belong.[37]

[37] Elizabeth J. Canham, *A Table of Delight: Feasting with God in the Wilderness* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2005), xii.

APPENDIX I

WILSON COLLEGE HONOR PRINCIPLE

**Honor Principle**

In order to provide an atmosphere congenial to the pursuit of a liberating education, government at Wilson College rests on the assumption that every member of the community will act with integrity in all aspects of life; we trust each other to be mature and responsible individuals. This is our fundamental premise which stands rightfully before all other materials in this handbook.

The cooperative effort of learning and living in which we are all involved proceeds most satisfactorily when the members of the community acknowledge their responsibility to strive to realize their common aim. The soundness of the community depends upon the concern both for individual freedom and the rights and welfare of others; both call for the observance of certain regulations in order to promote this common aim.

In this spirit, therefore, we have agreed upon the Joint Regulations of the Faculty and Students and the Residence Regulations of the Students, and we undertake the responsibility for keeping them just and relevant to the needs of the present community.

## The Wilson Honor Code

Wilson College is a strong, healthy, caring community. In order to promote community values, this code and the Honor Principle set expectations for members of the community. Individuals must respect others and behave with the interest of the whole

community in mind. It is assumed and understood that joining is evidence of a subscription to ideals consistent with our shared mission. As a member of this community each individual is obligated to

**Demonstrate Personal Integrity**

... a commitment to this ideal is consistent with honesty in academic situations and in interactions with others.

**Respect the Dignity of all Persons**

... a commitment to this ideal is consistent with behaviors which do not compromise or demean the dignity of individuals or groups, such as humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, harassment, and discrimination.

**Respect the Rights and Property of Others**

... a commitment to this ideal is consistent with respectful behavior which does not violate the rights of others, such as self-expression and privacy.

**Respect Diversity in People, Ideas, and Opinions**

... a commitment to this ideal pledges affirmative support for equal rights and opportunities for all members of the community regardless of age, gender, sexual preference, religion, disability, ethnic heritage, socioeconomic status, political, social, or other affiliations or disaffiliations.

**Demonstrate Concern for Others, Their Feelings and Their Needs for Conditions which Support Their Work and Development**

... a commitment to this ideal is a pledge to be compassionate and considerate, to avoid behaviors which are insensitive, inhospitable, or inciteful, or which unjustly or arbitrarily inhibit another's ability to feel safe or welcome in pursuit of appropriate social or academic goals.

http://www.wilson.edu/about-wilson-college/honor-principle/index.aspx

## APPENDIX II

## POETRY, ART INVITATIONAL, STAFF/FACULTY DIVISION, FIRST PLACE

### Indiangrass

I.
The goat we saw in the high pale field
was not a goat but instead a young
albino deer who (we learned later)
hankered for the tender parts
of the neighbor's smooth azalea.
We entered a pact with all
concerned
to keep it quiet
and our Indiangrass did its part
to swallow the fellow up and save it
from random (and deliberate)
blasts of lead from steel.

II.
I climbed past that same high field
across many seasons
in shoes not meant for hiking
wearing clothes that did not fit
to reach a plateau where
I could rest in nature's arms.
And the burden of my shadow
fell away
replaced by a new self
seen in a flowing street of sparkle
where earth and sky
animal and human
were all luminous.

III.
*Look there!* you said
after whisking me out,
wind washing us taking our breath
from us
to glimpse again the white wonder,

this time closer leggier leaping.
In winter, I lobbed logs
into the outside fire box and
wondered how many colors of flame
we must endure to purify
our selves into white deer.

IV.
I cannot claim Teresa's castle,
cathedrals constrain me
my eyes deceive me
and I have no power
to take breath away.
Please say you did not hear
any of this from me. Let me keep
these small surprises of self
quiet, safe, in Indiangrass.

– Sharon Erby

## APPENDIX III

## THE MONK WHOSE FACE WAS RED

by Theophane the Monk

Standing beside a cave was a monk whose face was red, I mean really red. He smiled at me and said, "I guess you're wondering why my face is so red."

I sure was. "Well, it was this way. When I was fifty I died. When I went to judgment, they asked me, 'What have you accomplished?' That's when my face turned red. I pleaded with them to give me more time. 'All right,' they said, 'we'll give you seven more years.'

"So I came back to my cave. I went in and kept going. I went in deeper than I'd ever gone before, in and down, in and down. I must have walked for several days, although it was so dark I couldn't tell day from night. I just wanted to get away from people; my face was so red. And I wanted time to think, to think about how I would spend those seven years. But it was scary. I didn't know what I'd meet down there, and I wasn't sure I'd be able to find my way back. I kept going.

"Finally I began to hear a rumbling sound, like mighty waters. You know what it was? It was the tears of the whole world! I heard the bitter tears of EVERYONE'S fear, hurt, despair, disappointment, rage. Everyone's. And I heard the sweet tears too—you know, when you're loved, when you're safe at last, a loved one restored, those tears of joy. Yes, I heard the death of Christ and his resurrection. I must have been at the heart of the earth, because, while I couldn't hear any words, I heard ALL the tears and therefore I experienced total communion. I was separated from my separateness.

I don't know how long I stayed there in that state of total communion—days, weeks. But I finally decided how I would spend my seven years. I would go back to the mouth of the cave and conduct people back and forth to the depths.

APPENDIX IV

PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE:** April 30, 2013

**CONTACT:** Rev. Rosie Magee, Helen Carnell Eden Chaplain

Phone: 717-264-4141, Ext. 3307

Email: rosie.magee@wilson.edu

# WILSON COLLEGE HOSTS ACTIVITIES TO MARK WORLD LABYRINTH DAY ON MAY 4

**CHAMBERSBURG, Pa.** – Communities all over the world will come together for World Labyrinth Day on Saturday, May 4, to promote peace in our lives and world. Wilson College will observe the day by creating a temporary labyrinth on the campus green and hosting activities centered on the concept of the labyrinth, in which those who walk it are said to "find" themselves rather than getting lost, as they might in a maze.

The event is free and open to the public.

At 11 a.m. in Warfield Hall's Allen Auditorium, the Rev. Dr. Margee Iddings will present "Preparing to Walk a Labyrinth," where participants can learn more about this ancient practice before experiencing it themselves. A picnic lunch will be held at noon

outside Lenfest Commons, where labyrinth art and a creative writing exhibit will be on display.

An opening ceremony will begin at 12:30 p.m., featuring the Wilson College Choir, hand bell choir and members of Wilson's Orchesis dance troupe. The ceremony will conclude with the formation of a human labyrinth at 1 p.m. to coincide with the "Walk as One at One" connecting people throughout the world observing World Labyrinth Day.

An indoor labyrinth will also be available throughout the day in the lobby of the Brooks Science Complex. Resource materials and facilitated walks will be available.

On Sunday, May 5, the college will hold a candlelight labyrinth walk at 8 p.m. on the campus green. All are welcome.

The labyrinth will be in place for one week and community residents are welcome to walk the path.

This event is part of a semester-long labyrinth project at Wilson College. For more information, visit the project blog at http://thelabyrinthproject.blogspot.com/ or contact the Rev. Rosie Magee at rosie.magee@wilson.edu or 717-264-4141, Ext. 3307.

Founded in 1869, Wilson College is a liberal arts college offering bachelor's degrees in 30 majors and master's degrees in education and the humanities. Wilson has been named a "Best Value" college in its region for 11 consecutive years by *U.S. News & World Report's* "America's Best Colleges" for providing quality academics at an

affordable price. The college has been ranked one of the best regional colleges for undergraduate education for nine straight years by *U.S. News*.

Located in Chambersburg, Pa., the college had a fall 2012 enrollment of 695, which included 17 students from 9 foreign countries. Visit www.wilson.edu for more information.

APPENDIX V

A BLESSING FOR THE LABYRINTH

from the Native American Tradition of Facing and Invoking the Directions

**Facing East**

We draw on the promise of a new day, a day filled with rebirth, creativity, and fresh starts.

We bring this energy to the labyrinth and all who walk it that all might be blessed.

**Facing South**

We draw on the warmth and comfort of the worldwide community of persons, who,on this World Labyrinth Day, walk the labyrinth yearning for peace on earth.

**Facing West**

We draw on thanksgiving for the completion of hard work, for the call to be calmed as we journey to the center of self and the power of oneness.

**Facing North**

We draw on the strength that comes to us, assuring us that goodness triumphs over evil, that love wins out over hate, that light cannot be extinguished by darkness, that life is stronger than death.

**Looking Up**

We draw on the wisdom and insight of the ancestors, calling out for clarity about what is needed for the future and what is worthy of incorporating from the past.

**Looking Down**

We draw from the core of the Universe and find our entire being connecting to that tether that allows us to live in the place of roots and wings.

**Looking Within**

We draw on that which is truly ourselves and offer our broken self for healing, our our integrated self for oneness, our vulnerable self for growth, our true self for love.

May this physical manifestation of pilgrimage sustain us, nourish us, and keep us always receptive of blessing.

So let it be.  Amen.

Rev. M. Iddings

APPENDIX VI

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO LABYRINTHS

**HISTORY OF LABYRINTHS**

- Archeologists believe the first were in Egypt and Ertruria (now central Italy) c. 4500 BC.
- A building that is considered a labyrinth, with subterranean passages and many rooms has been found from 2000 BC inEgypt.
- Southwestern Peruvian Indians built labyrinths on the extremely dry, flat desert floor as early as 500 BC.
- Remains of crude stone labyrinths have been found on the coasts of the Baltic and White Seas.
- Earliest extant Christian labyrinth dates from A.D. 325 at a church in Algeria.
- During the Middle Ages towns in northern Europe constructed labyrinths and named them after events in the Trojan War.
- The Cathedral in Amiens, France built their labyrinth in 1288. In 1825, it, too, was destroyed.
- For many, many years, the Chartres Labyrinth (1194-1220) was hidden and many believed that it, too, had been destroyed.
- Canon Lauren Artress of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco is credited with the current revival in the use of labyrinths as a spiritual resource.
- There are now over 1,500 labyrinths in the United States.
- Find a labyrinth near you by going to www.internationallabyrinthregistry.com

**THE PURPOSE OF LABYRINTHS**

- prayer
- pilgrimage
- inspiration
- a way back home
- a physical journey turned into a spiritual one
- body prayer
- a link whereby we, today, are linked with antiquity
- a symbolic reminder of death and rebirth
- self-discovery
- a pathway that symbolically takes us, as we walk, from our outer world to our center (soul) and back out again
- an opportunity for body/mind/spirit to be intimately engaged with each other
- to ask questions and seek guidance about an issue in life
- for wellness, healing, and to renew strength
- to find resources within to deal with life's challenges.
- Resource: "Pondering the Labyrinth" by Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion


"Solviture ambulando"

(It is solved by walking)

St. Augustine, 354-430

**GUIDELINES FOR WALKING THE LABYRINTH**

- Be assured that there is no wrong way to walk the labyrinth.
- There are no wrong turns because labyrinths are UNICURSAL, which means "single path". You can trust that by following the path you will get to the Center and back home again.
- The entrance to the labyrinth is called the threshold or the mouth. Before entering, as much time as you need to prepare for this journey.
- Be silent.
- Move at your own pace.
- Listen to your body and do what feels natural.
- Find your rhythm.
- Feel free to gently step ahead of a person in front of you, or, to step aside to let someone pass when you are meeting.
- Stay in the Center as long as you wish.
- Take as long as you need, this is not a
- competition or a race.
- Use the labyrinth for what you need.
- Leave the path if you wish.
- Walk your own walk.
- Be fully present to your own experience.

**WAYS TO WALK THE LABYRINTH**

✦ Choose a focus word or phrase that is meaningful to you or "gets at" the issue which you want to address. Repeat this continually as you walk toward the center.
At the center, listen for what bubbles up out of your center in response to the word/phrase. Walking out, consider this question: "What shall I do with what I felt, observed, or discovered?"

✦ Use 4 questions to prompt the transition to each stage of the pilgrimage:

**WALKING IN** – Where are you God?
**AT THE CENTER** – What word, phrase or image becomes clear?
**WALKING OUT** – What am I to do with this?
**REFLECTING** – How does this impact or connect to my daily life?

✦ Use the labyrinth to hold a person or people in the light.

**WALKING IN** – repeat the person's name.
**AT THE CENTER** – How shall I address my concerns about this person?
**WALKING OUT** – What shall I do with what has emerged?
**REFLECTING** – write and/or share what has resulted.

✦ **Just walk and see what happens!**

**THE JOURNEY OF LIFE**

The labyrinth is a model for the journey of life. We follow a path, not knowing where it will take us, but knowing we will eventually arrive at the center and that God is with us on the journey. Sometimes the path leads us towards the ultimate goal, only to lead outward again. So it is with life. When past failures haunt us we can come to realize that we stand on the holy ground of our lives, take off our shoes and be with the God who never left us.

The stories of God's people, ancient and contemporary, remind us that pilgrimage is a way of life. Labyrinths provide sacred space where inner and outer worlds can connect, providing a glimpse of other ways of seeing.

"Our spiritual quest, I feel, can be summarized as this single obligation, to switch from life-as-maze to life-as-labyrinth" (*Robert Ferré*).

*Bless to us, O God,*
*The earth beneath our feet.*
*Bless to us, O God,*
*The Path whereon we go.*
*Bless to us, O God,*
*The people with whom we walk.*

APPENDIX VII

WELCOME TO THE SEVEN CIRCUIT CLASSICAL LABYRINTH

**Guidelines for the Walk**

We come to the labyrinth walk at various stages in our spiritual journey and with a wide variety of needs and questions present in our lives.

Some people find it helpful to focus their minds and hearts on a particular question, others prefer to simply clear their minds and open themselves to whatever they experience on the path. Trust your experience and the Spirit to guide you on your way.

Feel free to walk this labyrinth at any time.

Consider these 3 stages for walking the labyrinth:

- **Releasing** – As you enter the labyrinth, let go of the details and preoccupations of your life and open yourself to God in prayer.
- **Receiving** – When you reach the center, stay there as long as you like. It is a place of meditation and prayer. Accept what is there for you to receive.
- **Returning** – The walk out of the labyrinth is actually and symbolically the act of taking what we have received back out into our daily lives.

**Bless to us, O God,**

**the earth beneath our feet.**

**Bless to us, O God,**

**the Path whereon we go.**

**Bless to us, O God,**

**the people with whom we walk.**

APPENDIX VIII

COMPOSITE REFLECTIONS FROM A DAY OF R.E.S.T.

**1. Why did you choose to attend today?**

I thought it would be an interesting experience.

I needed to rest my mind and my body.

I wanted to reflect on my life and spend time with God.

To get away from stress and college.

A day with others, focused on well being.

Needed some quiet/reflection time. I like programs that actively involve students, staff, and faculty.

I have been very stressed lately, and I needed a day to stop and devote time to God.

I needed a day to relax and free my mind. Also, I thought this would be a good way to help me get closer to my faith and my God.

I felt the need for some peaceful time and connect with God.

I needed a day away from everything and I thought this trip sounded relaxing. It also relates to the labyrinth project that we're making.

Expanding my spiritual journey.

I wanted to participate as part of the Wilson Community and to reconcile my feelings about leaving job at Wilson. I wanted to reflect on letting go.

**2. What have you found most useful/beneficial about today?**

Coffee and really good food.

The quiet time. I haven't had enough lately, so it was very refreshing. And I <u>loved</u> the labyrinth.

Everything was beneficial. The quiet, peace, and time I had to really spend with God that I normally wouldn't was really great

I really appreciated having time and getting the peaceful chance to relax and think about my struggles. I never get to do that which makes all of them build up and get harder to face.

Being together. Community silence, the sharing, the openness, the leadership.

Personal time and community time. Quiet/reflection opportunities, opportunity for spiritual growth.

The welcoming prayer – seeing my identity in God. I am in the process of redefining my role as mother to my adult children. My current struggles with my son have caused me to rely on God's strength to get me through the day. I appreciated seeing myself as God's child.

It was awesome to walk the labyrinth and release struggles. It is also nice to just relax.

The quiet and peace.

I really enjoyed the welcoming prayer. In the silence and the focus on the breath. I felt an opening, a chance to drop into the heart space.

I found the time alone to be the most beneficial because it helped me come to terms with my troubles.

Peaceful surroundings – meditating on the fact: learning that the struggle makes us who we are.

**3. What have you found least beneficial about today?**

The meditation was not a meditation.

Nothing, I found it all beneficial. (x8)

Went too quickly.

One day is hardly enough for me to quiet my mind enough to hear.

**4. If the labyrinth had a voice what would it tell you about the time you just spent together?**

Feel and be glad.

You stayed up way too late last night.

I am glad you visited. Enjoy your peace and don't forget that I'll be here when you need me again.

That God loves and cherishes you and to stay close to God, trust his ways, and rely on him to take care of you and your troubles.

Thank you for trusting me :) This journey helped you find answers.

Hang out with me. Travel with me.

Peace, tranquility, meditation, love, faith. Sound of the wind chime through the labyrinth; sound of the wind through the bamboo at the peace garden.

Like life I must turn and travel directions I never intended to travel, but God will not let me stray if I keep my focus on the path God has laid before me. God is with me every step of the way.

Never be afraid.

You never walk the journey alone.

Bless you and return soon.

That I shouldn't worry about my troubles so much because they lead me to my future and ultimate goal.

I wasn't able to spend as much time as I would have liked which reminds me I need to spend more time with God.

The journey is a gift. Let go and watch your life unfold.

**5. What words, symbols, feelings, or sounds best describe what occurred within you today?**

Feeling.

Emotion.

Silence (in the good way).

Sadness, hurt, pain, heaviness, awareness, relief, love, happiness, joy and peace.

Fear, disappointment, hope and happiness.

Calm, lifting of the fog.

Made time for quiet reflection in my daily business. Plan more spiritual retreat time during this year w/others or by myself.

Peace, surrender, joy, love, forgiveness.

Peace, hope, love, serenity, calmness, grateful.

Peace, rest, healing.

Peace, renewal.

I imagine myself in an ocean with waves crashing around me. I can go against the waves and choose to struggle or I can let go of the struggle and let the waveds move me & "Whee!" enjoy the ride! :)

**6. What learnings do you bring back with you as you move forward?**

That struggle is not a bad thing to have.

Take time for peace and quiet and use that time to rest my mind and listen for God's voice.

So many things: to trust God and rely on him to help you get through your struggles and no matter how hard it may get at times it will all be Ok in the end.

I want to know who I am and be thankful for what I have.

Never alone. Trust.

Welcome the emotions, don't avoid them.

To take time.

I live by Philippians 3:14 that "I can do all things through him who gives me strength." I also learned that struggles are temporary.

It's OK to let go and to move forward.

You have to let go in order to be blown away.

APPENDIX IX

DIRECTIONS FOR LAYING A SEVEN CIRCUIT LABYRINTH

**For Wilson Labyrinth**

Path width: 3 feet.

Labyrinth is 45′ wide. Labyrinth is 15x the path width (pw).

Center of the Labyrinth is along the top of the central square, 2.5 pw from left corner. This is called L center pin in the following description.

2 lines form the lines of the labyrinth, marked here with the rope. Each of these lines is 300 feet long.

Lines that form the labyrinth start and end at each corner, upper right to lower left, and upper left to lower right.

Materials:

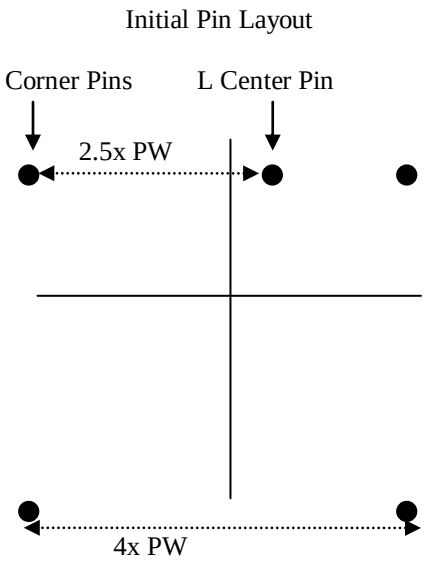
Chain at least 15′ long
Stakes for corner – 5
400 rope pegs
600+ feet of rope.
Masking tape to mark center cross.

Process to create a labyrinth:

1. Place first pin. This will be the center of the labyrinth, located 2.5 pw right of the left corner. This pin is called L center pin in following description. See graphic below.
2. Place chain (15′ or so long) over L center pin.
3. Mark chain at .5 pw (1.5′). This is 1st mark.
4. Mark chain at 12 more marks 1 pw apart, so each mark is 3′ from the previous one.
5. Mark top corners of the square, which is 4 pw wide (12′), with dowels solidly driven into the ground.
    a. Make sure you have a straight line between corners and center labyrinth spike.
    b. Left corner is 2.5 pw (7.5′) from L center pin.
    c. Right corner is 1.5 pw (4.5′) from L center pin.
6. Mark bottom 2 corners of the square.
    a. Be sure that all corners are 4 pw (12′) apart and that the square is exactly square.

i. This can be done by measuring and making sure that sides are 4 pw (12′) and 4 pw (12′) apart from opposite side. Diagonal measurement is 17′.

7. Draw a cross through the middle of the square, at 2 pw (6′) from corners. Use different colored rope or paint or tape. This will be replaced by rope later.




8. Put loop of chain over L center pin. Pull chain to the right, passing above upper right corner pin at 2nd mark.
    a. Attach end of the rope to upper right corner.
    b. Pivot the chain counterclockwise, pegging the rope to the ground at the 2nd mark as you go. Continue until rope gets to the top line.
9. Relocate the chain by pulling it around the upper left corner and back toward the top line so that the 4th mark meets the rope that was laid so far. Now move the chain clockwise, pegging the rope at the 4th mark.
    a. Keep moving the chain clockwise and pegging the rope, continuing at the 4th mark as the chain moves free of the left upper corner peg.
    b. Keep moving clockwise, the chain will catch on the upper right corner peg, but you keep pegging at the 4th mark until you reach the right side.
10. Peg the rope across the horizontal cross line to the left side.

11. Relocate the chain by swinging it counterclockwise, catching on the upper left corner pin, and moving it until it reaches the left side. The rope across the center should be there at the 5th mark.
12. Move the chain clockwise, pegging the rope at 5th mark, stopping the rope at the right side.
13. Relocate the chain now by continuing its clockwise path around the bottom right pin and back up to the right side. The chain should meet the rope at the 7th mark.
14. Move the chain counterclockwise now, pegging the rope at 7th mark. Continue all the way around to the bottom left pin. This is a long arc.
15. This ends the first rope. Tie the rope onto the bottom left pin.
16. Now we begin the second rope. Keep the chain on the L center pin and pull it to the left, so that the 3rd mark is at the upper left corner above the left corner pin.
17. Tie the second rope to the upper left corner pin.
18. Swing chain clockwise, pegging the rope at the 3rd mark.
19. The chain will catch on the upper right corner. Continue pegging the rope across the right side and up to the top line, .5 pw from the L center.
20. Relocate the chain so that it is above the top line. Swing it counterclockwise, pegging the rope at 1st mark. Make a small arc around the L center peg so the rope comes to the vertical of the center cross.
21. Peg the rope across the vertical cross line to the bottom side.
22. Relocate the chain to the right, around the top and bottom right corners, to meet the rope at the center bottom, at the 8th mark.
23. Swing the chain counterclockwise, pegging the rope at the 8th mark, all the way around the upper right, upper left and lower left corners, continuing around the lower left to the inside of the left side.
24. Relocate the chain around the left upper corner to meet the rope at the left side.
25. Swing the chain clockwise, pegging the rope at the 6th mark. Continue until the rope reaches the lower right pin, and tie it off there.

All done!! Remove the pins and the labyrinth is ready.

Adapted by Patricia Butler from Robert Ferré

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