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**“Wisdom in the Plaza” - Address to the Association of Field Theological Educators
January, 2011**

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Introduction

When Lorraine St.-Marie first contacted me several months ago about speaking at this conference, the invitation was to talk about theological reflection. That invitation evolved as the planning committee for this AFTE Biennial Consultation saw the opportunity to take advantage of this setting, San Juan, to focus more deliberately on how the global and multi-cultural realities of our world and our church (or our churches) both currently affect and indeed should inform the work of theological field education. And so emerged the theme of the plaza as a place of encounter.

In my comments this morning I want to think aloud with you about plazas, or in other locales, the town square or the commons, as places of encounter. How has the plaza worked in societies? What is the attraction to the plaza? What happens to the nature of our encounters, in fact to the nature of the plaza itself when the scale morphs, when the plaza becomes a global phenomenon? What does life lived on a global plaza do to the ways we compose identity and belonging, pass on meaning beyond the life-span of a single generation, and articulate faithfulness to the Gospel we profess? And, perhaps most importantly, what are the challenges and opportunities that life on the global plaza create for those of us whose calling it is to educate leaders for faith communities for the future? So, first, some thoughts on what the plaza means for human beings and what happens to the plaza when the scale of life morphs to the global. Second, I will present a brief consideration of explanations and metaphors employed by sociologists and cultural theorists who have been tracing and trying to make sense of shifts in the construction of

human identity and belonging in a global world. Thirdly, I will offer some thoughts on the implications of these shifts for religious heritages and faith communities. And, finally, I will put forth for your consideration some proposals regarding theological reflection for a global, multi-cultural world and church, theological reflection on the plaza. My intention is to prompt your thought and the table conversations that will follow this presentation in ways that will develop further as you go out into the plaza this afternoon.

The Plaza (or Town Square or Commons) -- Does Scale Matter?

A personal story. In the fall of 1997, still the era before cell phones became ubiquitous, while on an academic sabbatical I spent a month in Rome, Italy, at the residence of a friend. The house was on the Piazza del Cenacolo. During that month, I made a retreat and completed a writing project. Each day I would walk from the place where I was staying to the Vatican to deliver outgoing mail. Everyone in Rome knew that if a letter needed to get somewhere in a timely manner, it needed to be mailed from the Vatican, not via the Roman post. (I don't know if that is still the case or not.) One day during my third week in Rome, I was feeling rather bold and decided to take a slightly different route back from the Vatican post office to the house. And, as you might imagine, if you have ever walked around Rome and are, like myself, among the world's more directionally challenged, I got myself lost, seriously lost. After two hours of trying to find my way back to the piazza, and with evening light falling and a panicky sensation rising within me, I stood on a residential street, not knowing which way to turn, when, mercifully, a cab chanced by. I quickly hailed the cab, and in my broken Italian asked for

the Piazza del Cenacolo. I was so relieved when the cab delivered me to the Piazza that I could have knelt and kissed the bricks.

So, what does my story tell us about a piazza, a plaza? For one, a plaza is a public space. It is widely known by the population that lives around it, or crosses it, or engages in economic, political, social or cultural intercourse on or near it. But a plaza is fundamentally a geographic space of significance to real, embodied human beings. Physical contact with the plaza has been, through human history to this point, essential to how the plaza has worked in human life. The plaza is a material symbol of human interconnection necessary for physical survival, an interconnection sometimes acknowledged, but more often obscured.

So, what is a plaza? It is at one and the same time many things. A plaza is a place of different kinds of encounters -- social, economic, political, cultural, familial, intergenerational, friendship or network-of-interest based. A plaza is a place that anchors and locates an individual -- Piazza del Cenacolo was my pivot, my axis mundi, the center of my world from which I gradually branched out, successfully and with some stumbling missteps for that month, while residing in a very large city that I did not know, as a stranger who spoke the language poorly. Historically, the plaza is a key location where children and young adults learn roles and social conventions, including what it means to be a public self. In other words, a plaza is, in the language of Larry Daloz and his colleagues in *Common Fire*, “a place where the diverse parts of a community. . . come together and hold a conversation within a shared sense of participation and responsibility”¹

In many cultures the plaza is the site of formalized life-cycle rituals, public celebration of babies and the transition to adulthood, marriage, and death. These rituals mark the passage from one stage of life to another for individuals. Rituals and celebrations on the plaza cement identity, social cohesion and the plausibility of a shared worldview. Interactions on the plaza reinforce one's status and standing in society. On the plaza those who belong and those who are strangers are sorted out. The plaza also is where political power, both just and unjust, is exercised. Examples past and present are legion: the execution of Indians on the plazas of colonial Latin America towns, the hanging of Quakers on the Boston Commons, the rounding up of Jews in the plazas and squares of European towns and cities for deportation to the death camps, the crushing of a nascent democracy movement in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, that city's central square. The plaza is a site of communal deliberation in the face of novel challenges. The plaza is the place where shared imaginations inspire the courage to resist and the courage to create change -- think of the mothers of the disappeared in Argentina, during the early 1980s, of the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia. Social revolutions, some peaceful, some not, often have begun on plazas, for plazas, town squares, commons, have been the gathering places of the people.

My list of the ways the plaza functions could go on and I am sure, even as I speak that you are adding to it both functions and possibilities that I have omitted. But what I hope is clear is that the plaza is multivalent. It is a place and a practice that anchors, orients and reinforces. It is a place and a practice that dislocates, disrupts, and undercuts. And it is, I would propose, almost always both at the same time. The plaza is a place and also a ritual means of managing human contingency and human interconnectedness.

But the plaza as a physical space across which one treads, on which one engages in social intercourse of various kinds, or where one just sits, is qualitatively different from the plaza as the globe, massively larger and instantaneously available via virtual reality and the wonders of telecommunications. And what is different is the presence of discrete human bodies.²

And yet, mass migration and expanding modes of communication do make the globe increasingly like a plaza, if not into a plaza. How to “be” on this plaza, how to interrelate on this plaza, how on this global plaza individuals and groups manage human contingency and human interconnectedness -- these are the questions we are living into, puzzling to grasp.³ They have profound implications for how we educate leaders for faith communities of today and tomorrow. For, as the co-authors of *Common Fire* put it, we need to understand better and to think through more fully how individuals “sustain long-term commitments to work on behalf of the common good, even in the face of global complexity, diversity, and ambiguity.”⁴

Capturing the Shifts in Human Identity and Community in a Globalized World; or, (From Taproots to Rhizomes)

For decades now sociologists and cultural theorists have been debating the influence of large-scale and now global society on human beings’ construction and experience of individual and communal identity. Parker Palmer, a sociologist by training, long before he became an inspirational speaker for higher education, argued in *The Company of Strangers* that shifts in economic and political life and communication media were undercutting the capacity in the U.S. for community, including the ability to

tolerate difference, and so the capacity to maintain healthy public spaces and public selves.⁵ Despite the best efforts of designers, malls did not succeed, argued Palmer, in replacing the public square, the plaza.

Shortly after, Robert Bellah and colleagues published the now well-known *Habits of the Heart*.⁶ Bellah and his co-authors argued that the dominant way in which Americans frame both moral guidance and the experience of community was expressive individualism, a sensibility and practice that again does not strongly support public life. A decade later, in 1995, Robert Putnam published his provocative essay, “Bowling Alone,” in which he sketched what he saw as a loss of “social capital,” that is the commitment of individuals translated into motivation to engage in a sustained manner in civic life and voluntary organizations. Social capital, argued Putnam, puts humans into situations where they learn to interact with people quite different from themselves.⁷ Voluntary organizations, in which persons of very different economic and cultural backgrounds gather as public selves when they organize around common need or interest, argued Putnam, were rapidly disappearing in many parts of the United States.

Palmer, Bellah, Putnam and others argue that the erosion of public interaction among people who are different from each other is damaging to societies. Public spaces, the plazas, have historically been the site for such encounters, where persons, many of whom may be strangers to each other on a personal level, gather and interact for the common good. Think if you will, about the polling place in a city during an election (before the advent of mass vote-by-mail and proposed on-line voting), think of harvest festivals in small towns, think of carnival. All are regular, ritualized sites for encounter with strangers.

Some sociologists such as Nancy Tatom Ammerman, among others, have countered Bellah and Putnam, arguing as she does in *Congregation and Community* that social capital is not disappearing, but rather that forms of community are changing--think Facebook, and so the nature of public spaces are changing--imagine “new plazas,” and so ways of organizing social capital are changing.⁸ The massive growth of nongovernmental organizations over the past twenty-five years may be one indication of the new ways that social capital is being organized. It still remains far from clear, however, just what all the new forms of the plaza are or will be in our world, where expansion of web communications increasingly makes it possible, simultaneously, to listen only to those who say things with which one already agrees, to meet and communicate with persons of vastly different cultural backgrounds who hold positions on issues quite different from one’s own, and to build networks of communication that mount revolutions. We do not yet know what happens to a human being’s capacity to tolerate difference, to engage with the stranger, in a world dominated by communication media that allows each of us to “customize our portals” so that we receive only the information we want to receive. We do not yet grasp fully the meanings of the differences between communicating face-to-face, in the flesh, and communicating virtually.

Faith communities today, seminarians, and we as theological field educators are living the changes that scholars are trying to describe accurately and to interpret insightfully. How people experience identity and community, how identity and community make sense to them, relates directly to what they understand religious communities to be and to be for. How they understand these things influences the very

intelligibility of the gospel message -- what can and cannot be heard and made sense of. Or, to put it another way, what is the sense of gospel stories of Jesus eating with the poor and the outcast to listeners who exist in a customized world?

Robert Wuthnow at Princeton has spent a career tracking changes in individual identity and community and their influence on faith communities. In his 1988, *The Restructuring of American Religion*, Wuthnow argued that the actual content and practice of historic faith traditions as embodied in denominational organizations and heritages had been eroding, steadily losing meaning and the power to organize communities since the end of World War II.⁹ A decade later in *Loose Connections: Joining Together in America's Fragmented Communities* Wuthnow parsed life in a world of “porous boundaries.” American society, according to Wuthnow, is made up of individuals who “move across social boundaries with relative frequency; they move geographically and educationally, change interests, switch employers, and sometimes separate from marriage partners and remarry.” We have become a porous society, one in which people, goods, and information “flow easily and rapidly across social boundaries.”¹⁰

In a porous society the role of institutions changes. Rather than supporting long-term commitments or undergirding the authority of local communities, families, or civic institutions, institutions instead become brokers of “reattachment.” They help people who have moved to re-assemble their lives and compose new communities. The role of institutions shift because “porousness influences the ways in which individuals lead their personal lives and the ways in which organizations conduct their activities.” In porous societies, networks make more sense than long-term commitments or devotion to roles assumed for a lifetime.¹¹

In studying congregations full of people who have experienced and participated in such porousness, Wuthnow found that their members' affiliation with such congregations, and the ways they think about religious and civic life, are different from those of persons who have lived in less porous circumstances. Members of large Protestant congregations comprised primarily of people shaped by porousness (i.e., they had changed via education, moving, employment, economic affluence and so change in social class), participate differently in religious and civic life. They tend to do volunteer work and to join organizations in their congregations. They prefer networking to any other form of social organizing. They prefer loose, short-term, functionally specialized relationships that are established to accomplish specific tasks. These people tend to decline civic involvements. They volunteer for activities that help their children and join groups for self-help and personal growth. They are, in short, focused around their own needs and those of their families—not because they are 'selfish', but because re-assembling personal and social life is transformed into a crucial central task by their porous contexts. This also leaves them thinking that it does not make much sense to join civic service clubs or to take an active part in politics. They do, however, admire individuals who are capable of taking an unpopular stand on an issue and who can get things done.¹²

So, a porous society significantly affects how people compose their own identity and belonging. Short-term commitments focused primarily around families and personal growth, task-specific networking, and clear boundaries on the scope and term of commitments characterizes people who have experienced porous society most fully. Their relationships are loosely structured, intentional, and changeable as needs and

interests shift. These people understand identity and role quite differently than has been the case historically in any of the churches of the Magisterial Reformation, that is, historic mainline, or old-line or side-lined Protestant denominations and post-Reformation Catholicism.

Two French philosophers, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari employ a contrasting set of metaphors that I think are helpful in explaining the shift to a more porous society with more fluid identity and looser, network-based communities of our global world. They contrast two images, a tree with a taproot and rhizomes.¹³

Think first of a large elm tree or an oak tree. A tree has a taproot, that central root from which other roots branch off, but to which they remain connected. The root anchors and sustains a tree that has different branches, some old, some new, some gnarled, some straight. This tree has leaves, perhaps in different stages of development, but still recognizable as the leaves of a single tree. There may be multiple trees, even a grove of trees, but each has a root. Identity and society, by this image, can be traced chronologically, in a narrative of growth, change, evolution, even decline.

Now consider large, bearded iris plants, or better daylilies, or, to use a less kindly image, think bamboo planted without a protective barrier around the bed. If you are a gardener or have ever helped a gardener with daylilies, you know that they spread rapidly and fill all available space, and that over time they become one huge matted mass of rhizome roots. When the huge matted mass is chopped apart, usually with a spade or a garden saw and then replanted, the lilies bloom, generally in many different colors, even when as a single matted mass they bloomed less and in a single color. The thing about rhizomes -- there is no way to trace continuity of any root. Rhizome runners go out,

testing possibilities in all directions, sending up shoots wherever they can. There is a mutual, horizontal continuity, random connections of nodes that yield spurts of growth and novelty in multiple directions at the same time. Rhizomes yield multiplicities, not multiples of a single entity.

Implications for Faith Communities or Why Do You Bother With Those Old Traditions?

Historically the plaza functioned, supported human interdependence, within the frame of a taproot world. The plaza fits in a world primarily place-based, ordered by stable roles and institutions, and of manageable scale. The plaza has been the place where the single root binding all into one community was visibly and ritually reinforced. That is why the plaza could be a place of encounter with strangers--it contained (limited, structured, made manageable) the fear of the other. But if Parker, Bellah, Putnam, Ammerman and Wuthnow are correct, that in the process of globalization we are now living in a different, more loosely connected world, in political, economic, and social relationships captured better by the image of the rhizome than the taproot, then those of us involved in theological field education need to be noticing and hearing much more carefully, the assumptions, sensibilities, desires, commitments, even strongly argued positions of our students. I think our students, with each passing year, have been formed in and think and feel in terms of rhizome ways of being and relating -- loose connections of multiple nodes of interest and imagination and novel expressions that become quite new things. This is what we are encountering when we discover that our students increasingly have quite different notions than do we about what religion is, how it works, what constitutes faithfulness, and what the vocation of a pastor or lay minister might be.

(To make the work of theological field educators even more interesting, I would wager that in the programs you represent, you have students of different ages, even different age cohorts whose assumptions and sensibilities regarding church and ministry, whose understandings of identity, community and commitment range from totally taproot to completely rhizome in form.¹⁴) And, I would argue, the ways our students express and make sense for themselves of religion, community, pastoral leadership and more, affects directly how we can and cannot help them to think in, with, and through whatever faith heritage we claim; and, how we can and cannot help them to learn the skills to facilitate others to do the same.

Let me illustrate my point with another story, from my teaching experience. Five years ago, at my previous institution, I was teaching a course titled “Personal Commitments and Global Problems,” the concluding seminar for an alternative, international core curriculum. This course explored how personal and religious commitments contributed both to creating and to ameliorating global issues. All twenty-five students in the course were between nineteen and twenty-four, and nearly all had been raised in some faith community, most some variety of Christianity. Most had studied abroad at least once. All were passionately interested in global issues, among them the enslavement of women in the sex trades, global poverty, world hunger, clean water, and environmental degradation. Because most of the students had never taken a religion course, I used Charles Kimball’s *When Religion Becomes Evil, Five Warning Signs*, which presents an argument for how the three Abrahamic traditions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, go off the rails and become destructive forces.¹⁵ The text provided both a simple introduction to the study of religion from a moderate Protestant

perspective and offered an argument for how religion contributes to global problems. I also arranged a phone seminar for the class with Kimball, himself a Harvard-trained expert on Islam and an ordained American Baptist. The students submitted their questions for Professor Kimball to me ahead of time so that I could send them to him. For twenty-three of the twenty-five students, the top question on their list was this: “Why do you bother with those old traditions, they are not worth anything anyway?”

That was for me a moment of revelation. For my students there was no obvious connection between their current commitments and the values that had been transmitted to them in their families and faith communities. Nor was there a sense of needing an anchor within a stable community in order to be who they were or to achieve their aspirations, most of which had to do with solving world problems. Clearly, these students made sense of things quite differently than I did or do.

I know you are teaching students who always have thought or who have come to the conclusion that some religious tradition is worth something; or, at least that they need to be part of faith communities to get what they need and accomplish what they want, be that responding to a direct call from God or organizing to change the world. I suspect, however, that they came to that conclusion through a process similar to the one that led my students to conclude that those old traditions aren't worth bothering with. Religion has become, overwhelmingly as the most recent ARIS and Pew studies have found, a matter of choice.¹⁶ Religion or spirituality as choice, and especially choice made in a rhizome world of porous boundaries, loose connections and nodes of connection impossible to sum, choice made on a global plaza rife with possible beliefs, practices and

ways of experiencing reality is a very different animal than religion inherited along with family, ethnic group, class, and regional identity.¹⁷

There are many other things about this rhizome world that make religion different. To name four. First, the authority of office counts far less in a rhizome than in a taproot world. Not office but talent and charisma win the day. Donald Miller's study of post-denominational churches, *Re-inventing American Protestantism* and studies of contemporary global Pentecostalism make this very clear.¹⁸ Second, individuals overwhelmingly now choose religion or spirituality, not for forgiveness -- something that makes sense in a taproot world where identity is framed primarily in terms of role and steady location in a society -- but for healing and energy. Spirituality is about energy, the inner resources, supplemented by whatever transcendent forces are accessible, to survive and to thrive in the world.¹⁹ Thirdly, individuals' own inner experience and that of their friends counts for far more in tracking the meaning and direction of one's spiritual life than does the expertise of those who study spirituality or those who have walked the path of discipleship longer. Fourth, tradition matters little; powerful experiences, self-verification of the reality of the divine and its place in the individual's life, matter a great deal. (What has been personally verified is often couched in the language of tradition, but the degree to which traditions actually claim individuals' lives has altered markedly in the past forty years.)

Theological Reflection and the Forming of Leaders of Faith Communities for a Rhizome World

If the global plaza exists in a world better understood through the image of a rhizome than a taproot, we are left with important questions regarding how a theological heritage rich in history and rooted in an understanding of long-term relationships across generations is made intelligible today. Even more, we must face the question of how our faith heritages which have been handed on from generation to generation primarily through stable institutions by persons who occupied roles for long periods and even a life-time, will be communicated in this new world. What, finally, is an indicator of authenticity when it is seemingly impossible to trace continuity in a rhizome?

We are engaged in our work of theological field education in the midst of vast change we cannot fully grasp, let alone address. In this situation, I want to suggest three nodes, if you will, relevant to what we are about as we connect students to rich biblical and theological heritages and seek to help them be leaders of faith communities for a world we do not yet comprehend.

First, whatever our students become and whatever they do, they are, by virtue of their roles, carriers of memory in a context of at one and the same time the erosion of memory and the emergence of new memory. Memory is a story, a narrative in which and by which we live. In theological reflection we seek to connect students, who are themselves spiritual seekers, to the rich body of wisdom that is the Christian heritage. This heritage or tradition is, to borrow from Edward Farley, the human community's accumulated insight into the meaning of our living, loving, hoping and dying, "insight into the way things are, into what we human beings are up against, into the perils and promises of life."²⁰

In a rhizome world, memory as held by the taproot erodes and eroded memory, argues Farley, can lead to a “dispersal of consciousness,” even a new human being “incapable of empathetic response to the claims of other living things.” So, memory is integral to our capacity to experience the bond to “others.”²¹

It is important, then, on the global plaza, for students to learn to listen to and to listen for the narratives people tell, which are the shared memories that they occupy. We as theological field educators need to encourage their curiosity, nurture their capacities for awareness, for listening through all their senses. Even more, leaders of faith communities for the future, need to develop a capacity to discern the new articulations of memory that comes from a community’s ceasing to rely so heavily on the past and returning to the originating stories to experience them anew, and perhaps find new memories that connect to old versions of the story and to the realities around us. In our students is the capacity for a new memory to emerge that, in fact, better embraces the whole, the entire body, not just of the human community, but of the more than human community.²²

Secondly, whatever congregations or groups our students lead, they will be forging new crucibles of commitment in a context of loose connections and rediscovery of new forms of community. My central point here is this -- in a rhizome world, movement and change are a fundamental impulse. How, in this setting do we help our students to learn to create communities in which individuals stick around long enough to learn what it means to live “on behalf of”? What does it take to so experience the connection to others, the claim of their need, that one willingly undergoes the suffering that always is part of even chosen commitment?²³

Students' field education experiences can be mined in ways that help them to see how those placements are their own crucibles for commitment. Theological reflection can help them to limn the meaning of those experiences. More, theological reflection can be a means for them to create opportunities for learning to live "on behalf of" in the communities they lead.

Third and finally, the students we educate will of necessity be cultivators of novelty and animators of the body in a context of both the discarding and the discovery and retrieval of belief and practice from the Christian past and from other world religious traditions.

On the global plaza, our students are the ones who will slowly give voice to an intelligible theology and ethic, a theology and ethic intelligible to people for whom the rhizome world is the norm. Hence, in our work with students, helping them to hear the genuinely theological question of those around them in its local idiom is vital. We are awash in a new theology being written, but it is mainly not being written with recognizable theological code words.

However we do theological reflection with our students, it is important, I think, that we provide processes that leave room for, and that honor, imagination and innovation. If we are able with far less confidence today track the continuity in fidelity from the taproot, we can recognize the nodes of intensity in a rhizome world that open onto a transcendent horizon and perhaps signal dimensions of fidelity we have not noticed. Encouraging students to engage in thick description of their ministerial settings and experiences, to borrow a phrase from the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, and creating space for them to pause and ponder those experiences without prematurely

moving to closure through interpretation are important pedagogical strategies in this regard.²⁴ Questioning and pondering are certainly equal in importance with quick leaps from events to the closure of interpretation. It may be that our time calls for faith-filled, open exploration more than energetic proclamation of certitudes.²⁵

Of particular moment are those occasions when for our students and for us, beauty overcomes fear, and fascination with the freedom and horizon of imagination of another individual or a community trumps the corrosive acids of envy and diminished horizons.²⁶ In all these moments in our work with students, I think we glimpse and perhaps begin to give the first words to articulations of faithfulness for the future into which we are living.

Carriers of Memory, Crucibles of Commitment, Cultivators of Artful Faithfulness -- this is what I want our students who are called to leadership in faith communities to become. These are I think, good ways of framing the work of leadership in Christian communities, as we live our way into the fuller meaning of the global plaza.

Thank you.

¹ Laurent A. Parks Daloz, Cheryl H. Keen, James P. Keen, Sharon Daloz Parks, *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 2.

² See Patricia O'Connell Killen, "Community as Concept and Quest: Enculturating Catholicism in the United States," in David G. Andrews and Patricia O'Connell Killen,

editors, *Agenda for the Small Church: A Handbook for Rural Ministry* (Des Moines, Iowa: National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 1998), 121-138, for an overview of issues related to scale; see also Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), chapter 1 and 2.

³ The literature on globalization is massive. See for example, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, *Healing a Broken World: Globalization and God* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2002) for an introduction and theological development of the term.

⁴ *Common Fire*, 5.

⁵ Parker Palmer, *The Company of Strangers: Christians and the Renewal of American Public Life* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1983).

⁶ Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

⁷ Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995): 65-78; expanded into his book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

⁸ Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Congregation and Community* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

⁹ Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

¹⁰ Robert Wuthnow, *Loose Connections: Joining Together in America's Fragmented Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Robert Wuthnow, "Reassembling the Civic Church: The Changing Role of Congregations in American Civil Society," in *Meaning and Modernity: Religion, Polity and the Self*, edited by Richard M. Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, Steven M. Tipton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 166. Wuthnow's entire discussion on "porousness", pp. 165-169 is instructive.

¹¹ Wuthnow, "Reassembling the Civic Church," 167.

¹² Wuthnow, "Reassembling the Civic Church," 169-176. I have paraphrased closely from Wuthnow's essay.

¹³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*. Translated by Brian Massumi. (London and New York: Continuum, 2004). See also Timothy K. Beal and William E. Deal, *Theory for Religious Studies* (London: Routledge, 2004).

¹⁴ One manifestation of this is discussed in Christopher Evans, "Rethinking Classroom Diversity: Three Student Cultures in a Mainline Seminary" *Teaching Theology and Religion* 10 (4): 223-230.

¹⁵ Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil: Five Warning Signs* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2003).

¹⁶ *American Religious Identification Survey* (http://www.americanreligionsurvey-aris.org/reports/ARIS_Report_2008.pdf); *Pew Religious Landscape Survey* (<http://religions.pewforum.org/>).

¹⁷ For helpful presentations of the beginnings of this shift, see Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney, *American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 11-71 and Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s* (Berkeley: University of California

Press, 1998), 1-84. For contemporary analysis of young adults see Christian Smith and Patricia Snell, *Souls in Transitions: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁸ Donald E. Miller, *Re-inventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Phillip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁹ Ann Swidler, "Saving the Self: Endowment Versus Depletion in American Institutions" in *Meaning and Modernity: Religion, Polity and the Self* edited by Richard M. Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven M. Tipton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 41-55.

²⁰ Edward Farley, *Deep Symbols: Their Post-Modern Effacement and Reclamation* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity International Press, 1996), 31, 32-33; for a fuller explication of religion as a "chain of memory," see Daniele Hervieu-Léger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory*. Translated by Simon Lee. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1993).

²¹ Farley, 38.

²² See Patricia O'Connell Killen, "Memory, Novelty and Possibility in This Place," in *Cascadia, the Elusive Utopia: Exploring the Spirit of the Pacific Northwest* edited by Douglas Todd (Vancouver, B.C.: Ronsdale Press, 2008), 65-85. On listening see James R. Cochrane, *Circles of Dignity: Community Wisdom and Theological Reflection* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999) and Laurie Green, *Let's Do Theology: Resources for Contextual Theology* Revised Edition (London: Mowbray, 2009).

²³ See Sharon Daloz Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 104-157; also, Sharon Daloz Parks, *Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2005); and, Farley, 42-54. I deal with the issue of disillusionment and its connection to spiritual maturity in *Finding Our Voices: Women, Wisdom and Faith* (New York: Crossroads Publishing Company, 1997).

²⁴ See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

²⁵ For a context to my use of "certitude" Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection* (New York: Crossroads Publishing Company, 1994), chapter 1.

²⁶ John Shea has written eloquently about these themes in his *The Spirit Master* (Chicago, Illinois: Thomas More Press, 1987) in which he develops fascination, freedom from fear and discipleship.