

Four Elements of Transformation: Motion

By Edgar Solís

Illustration.

We are moving, yes...according to the Astronomical Society of the Pacific in California the planet Earth is rotating to the east, it is spinning on its axis at 800 to 1000 miles an hour.

The speed gets less as you move north, but it's still moving at a good clip throughout the United States. Because gravity holds us tight to the surface of our planet, we move with the Earth and don't notice its rotation in everyday life, (Slides 1) however we are moving so fast right now that scientists say that if the earth for whatever reason just stopped, and we weren't seatbelt buckled to the earth we would fall over and roll 800-1000 miles an hour to the east! What a disaster!

(Slide 2) The Earth also revolves around the sun at a speed of 66,000 miles per hour (107 million km/hr)³. At this speed you could get from San Francisco to Washington DC in 3 minutes. Now, orbiting the galaxy the Sun has the astounding speed of 483,000 miles per hour.(792,000 km/hr)! The Earth, anchored to the Sun by gravity, follows along at the same fantastic speed.

(Slide 3) And how fast is the Milky Way Galaxy moving? The speed turns out to be an astounding 1.3 million miles per hour (2.1 million km/hr)! Yes, believe it or not, we are in constant motion and as we move, we change. Moving in the immense space, we are never in the same place.

Motion is another important element in transformation. The action of moving is necessary to create and preserve our own existence and it is a palpable reality of our human heritage.

Motion in the Bible. Author Joan M. Maruskin says that the Bible begins with the migration of God's Spirit and ends with John in exile on the Island of Patmos writing of the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven to earth. *"In the beginning, all was darkness and void, and the Spirit*

*of God moved (migrated) over the face of the chaos” (Gen 1:1). As we can see, the Bible opens with God’s Spirit (Ruah) moving over the face of water followed by God the creator, who after, bringing into being birds, fish and animals (all of which move!) moved throughout creation looking for a caretaker for this world. Let’s remember this powerful principle. *Motion was present even before creation.* We also have the example of the people of God in the Bible. God’s people were called to experience his transformative presence as they moved along on their historical journey.*

Costa Rican Theologian Ruth Padilla DeBorst shared that the Hebrew and Christian scriptures are full of stories of people on the move. Where is God in these situations? As we see, God is near at hand, walking, leading, talking, freeing and encouraging people all along the way. God is actually nearer to them than to those who are esteemed by society, the rich and powerful. Padilla listed some other essential events throughout the Bible narrative. Do you remember among many other amazing stories when God decided to call a new people into being? (Slide 4) God did so by inviting an entire extended family to move, to migrate to a new land. The people of Israel were born from Abraham, a wondering Aramaean. We know many other stories of the Israelites, their suffering in Egypt and how God raised up different leaders to lead them to the promise land, to move them forward.

Jesus in constant motion.

Let’s look at Jesus, the ultimate expression of God’s love. He was brought up in a borderland, just four miles from of the very Greek city of Sephoris, from his conception, Jesus was the person on the move. While still in his mother’s womb, he was carried on a three to five-day journey to visit his aunt Elizabeth and back again. He was born in a town seventy miles, from his parents’ home, not far today but a week’s journey in those days. Later he was smuggled as a

refugee to Egypt, then back up to Nazareth, from where the family frequently made trips to Jerusalem for religious festivities.

(Slide 5) During his public ministry, Jesus was an itinerant, homeless, teacher, preacher and healer. He certainly appears to have focused most on his fellow Jews, but a deeper reading reveals a subversive sensitivity toward uprooted people on the margins; people with no homes, lepers who were ostracized from society, constantly pushed to the edge of town, (Slide 6) divorced women who ran from town to town to escape stoning, crowds of hungry people, displaced by the expropriation and taxation of imperial Rome, and even the Roman soldiers, forced far from family as pawns of imperial expansion. All of them, people on the move. Padilla also mentioned that Jesus not only heals, feeds, teaches, and accompanies these people who are on the move, they are also recipients of God's favor. Jesus' salvation recruits them as active agents for God's purposes. Let us also remember persecuted Christians who were on the run and who spread the good news to the most remote corners of the Roman Empire during the following decades.

Think about the apostle Paul, an extraordinary missionary who traveled all over Judea and Asia Minor, sharing the good news and educating the new church.

(Slide 7) As United Methodists, we must remember that during his ministry, John Wesley rode over 250,000 miles on horseback, a distance equal to ten times around the earth along the equator. He preached over 40,000 sermons and many of them were written while riding horseback! People in motion, experiencing the presence and transformative power of God along the way!

Application.

We have embarked on a journey where we have seen that motion is an eternal principle of life and transformation. (Slide 8)Looking again at the butterfly example, before its metamorphosis, this insect mainly does two things; eat and move. (Slide 9) Motion is crucial for transformation. When the caterpillar become a chrysalis, it no longer needs its caterpillar body, head, or legs, and so the chrysalis wiggles and twists until it splits and falls off.

After all of this moving, eating, and waiting the insect has been transformed into a new creature. The butterfly now works to gain strength by doing what? Moving! Once the wings have reached their full size, the butterfly will wait until it's completely dry before flying off to find a flower to drink from—all of this by the power of motion.

Dear Church, this is a time to reflect on motion as a crucial element needed to grow and transform. We have more than 600 muscles in our body that contribute to about 40% of the total body weight. By moving, we are strengthening our muscles, which improves stability, balance, and coordination. In our Christian life where are we called to go? Are we in motion in our spiritual journey, or are we in the same place as when we started our faith journey? Dear church, don't be afraid to move in God's direction!(Slide 9) Don't be afraid of new experiences along the way. Don't be afraid to look for new and exciting opportunities of growth, let's move! God is with us! Let's move so we can experience what God has store for us! Let's walk with Jesus toward a new path of transformation! Amen!