



# Wellspring

*Articles of Inspiration and Transformation*

*April 15, 2018*



**Loving People to *LIFE*: Relational. Relevant. Bold.**



# Freedom

By Karin Zaldaña-Moran

Freedom is not an idea, a concept or a theory, but rather an intrinsic value given to us by God. Neither you nor I can truly take freedom away from each other or others. Yet as a society we set proper restrictions on it, fundamentally and foremost for the benefit of our own perceived needs and then the needs of others. I'm sure we can all understand and agree that the reasoning behind these restrictions is that we don't want our own freedom to be violated, right? If you do, I know someone you can talk to. I will set you up... But nonetheless, when talking about freedom here in the United States its hard for some of us to accept that we all should have freedom equally like the majority. Some of you may ask, "why?"

As a society we should all know that we have rights that protect our freedom because freedom is gift and an objective truth given to us by God just because we are all human beings and we can all coexist. That is to say we should all be treated equally and no one should be excluded. Period.

Sadly, that's not true for all of us and we've seen this through history and now in current events. As an individual from a minority (Latino if you want to know) I can tell you that our rights are regularly being violated which means our freedom is in constant jeopardy. The results of our freedom being in jeopardy is the catalyst for some to start believing that they no longer have rights, culminating in their conclusion that they no longer have freedom.

Now because of fear and the idea of not having rights or freedom, freedom begins to warp, twist and deform into a vile perverted manifestation of its original form. Thus, we get corruption and people or groups trying to become their own law for means of survival. I've seen this in my neighborhood with the cats I grew up with and with some of the other youth I see now today. Obviously, not all of us turn out to be that extreme, *but we do end up getting jaded.*

I'm not saying that I don't experience freedom at all because freedom can be experienced in a different context; For example, when I'm with my friends or family, when I'm painting, or when I'm swimming out to the buoys by myself and connecting with God, I feel freedom in those moments.

My purpose here was just to touch on the conflict that freedom is experiencing here in the United States when exposed to the power of fear and lies. Fear of loss of freedom weighs heavily on those who are at risk losing it. We are all children of God and shouldn't have to feel any different than any other human being.

*Karin is an artist from the local neighborhood who recently shared his thoughts and paintings regarding Freedom at our March Village. Look for more inspiration from Karin coming soon to PPC.*

# A provocative question: Do you manage your treasure, or does it manage you?

## Tobin Wilson

Jesus said in the conversation on the Mount, *“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them, and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.”*

God uses money to test us. God doesn’t just automatically give blessing to anybody; he tests you first to see if you are responsible. Hence, the question: Do you manage your money, or does it manage you? If God can trust you with money, then God can trust you with the good stuff of spiritual power. If you cannot manage your money well, why in the world would God trust you with the good spiritual realities that really matter.

I recall my first ministry position as a youth worker. I made a whopping 18,000.00 per year. About poverty level, but I was pumped. Here is the catch, it was hard to manage the needs of a growing family with that. I found myself being managed by my money. The very last thing we wanted to be doing as we launched young careers and families was worry about not enough check left in the middle of the month. It was the best we could do to stay afloat financially. Over the years our story has been one of small successes in changing this narrative in our lives. Here is how we did transform our lives from being managed by money to being better managers of God’s money. A few thoughts:

**We gave out of our first fruits and not our leftovers.** We simply started. We began. It wasn’t much, it was probably 2%. This went on for many years, but it was a start. We had won the moment.

**We learned that our spending habits reveal what we love most.** Purchases like cars, homes, labels, golf equipment—mostly Tobin and admittedly not Dawn. Eventually I started looking at my checkbook at the time (by the way, did you know that most folks fifty years and under do not have a checkbook any longer—we live in a cashless society). This process was painful. I started looking at my calendar, checkbook and credit card statement to see what I really loved the most. Starbucks was quickly eliminated and our eating out food budget fell down to almost nothing. We never did take an our-family-only-vacation until a year ago. The way we spend our money tells others what we really love the MOST. Who or what do you love the most based on your bank statement and credit card bills? Listen to what that says and ask god if this is appropriate.

**We eliminated some things and increased our pledge to 5%.** Again, this took some painful reflection and reprioritization, but we eventually grew into it. I am happy to say.

**Money shows what you really trust the most.** This was particularly painful. We had to come to terms with do I trust God to provide or do I trust myself to take care of myself and our family. Ouch...In other words does God deliver joy, peace, security and happiness as a byproduct or do we trust that money can provide those things? This battle was about a decade long. We continued to increase and fall short until we came to terms with this truth. The money we have is not "mine or ours." I/we do not possess anything. It all belongs to God and we have access to everything because God allows us to be stewards of all things. Money is the acid test for faith in Christ.

**Money shows if God can trust you.** When I realized that since it all belongs to God and we are stewards of money, children, ministry, etc. Then I/we don't need to buy everything because in Christ we already own everything. This was transformational for us. We have made it to more than ten percent, but it has truthfully been a thirty-year journey, with many twists and turns along the way, short term success and bigger failures but we have happened into a place where we steward what belongs to God and it does not manage us any longer.

This is the story of God at work in spite of us. It really has been all about God. I also realize that many are on fixed incomes and can in no way do anything let alone an astronomical 10 percent. Have you seen the cost of living in SoCal? I get that, which is why calls on some to give until it really hurts. For some 20- 30% or more is the point where it starts to hurt. Do you give until it hurts?

Perhaps this little story of transformation may spur you on toward love and good deeds in a manner that allows you to steward your resources and not allow them to manage you.

Pastor Tobin Wilson

# Three Powerful & Kind Reminders!

## Alfredo Delgado

In March and the beginning of April, I “bumped into” two wonderful senior citizens. The first one was the self-named hospitality person at a carwash in Anaheim. The other one was in charge of an arcade game in the “Circus Circus” hotel in Las Vegas. Both of them were in their mid-eighties. They have several common characteristics that made them unique. They exulted joy, energy, and kindness.

The first one was called Arthur. He saw me entering the carwash in which he “works” (He is the grandfather of the owner) and immediately greeted me with a big and friendly smile. Right after I got off of my car, Mr. Arthur grabbed me by my arm and started talking to me in a very welcoming way. At one point he asked me: Can I share with you the big miracle that Jesus made on my behalf? I naturally agreed, and there began a fantastic conversation. He was gratefully excited to share how the Lord has preserved his life from an unfortunate car accident. He felt his mission in life was to tell every person that came to that carwash how good God was.

The second person was called Mary. She also greeted Carolina, Victoria and me with a big smile. She told us the rules of the game and even showed us how to win! However, we did not win, but she decided that we had won and gave Victoria several beautiful stuffed animals. Before we left her spot, she went out of her way to tell us where to play and how to possibly win the other games. That was incredible fun and joyful moment for all of us.

As I thought about it, I was reminded that any person could be the potential messenger of kindness and generosity to our lives. As I continued to think about these two fascinating encounters, I remembered my work at PPC. Yes, part of the Joy of working at PPC is the abundant number of brothers and sisters that are well advanced in years and well advanced in kindness and generosity. Placentia Presbyterian is blessed with a significant amount of Seniors Citizens who have been and continue to be faithful and fruitful givers of their time, talents and resources.

Arthur and Mary and our PPC Seniors are potent reminders of how generous and kind God is. They are also powerful reminders that we too can be kind and generous to people around us.

Are you willing to be a powerful and kind reminder of God’s deep and wide love?

In the Strong Hope of our Kind and Generous Lord,

Pastor Alfredo Delgado

# Every Day Is an Opportunity

*Laura Mariko Cheifetz*

When people ask about the story of our faith, I think many of us share the big stories: conversion to faith, our baptism (if we remember it), the moment on a mountain where God's greatness was suddenly apparent, the time at church camp when we gave our lives to God and accepted Jesus into our hearts, or midnight at New Year's when we dedicated the coming year to God. That big rush of emotion we get at a significant event is what we think of sharing.

Coming to faith is not just a one-time event. We continue to come to faith as we grow and mature as Christians. God is always working in us. Every day is another opportunity to come to faith, whether we are struck by something in worship, or we read something that makes us think a little differently, or a friend challenges us to consider another point of view, or a colleague asks us to pay attention to something of which we were previously unaware. As Christians, everything engages our faith.

As humans, we are always growing and learning. What a gift it is. Being a Christian is serious business, with its calls to love God, love neighbor, spread the good news, and care for the widow. Being a Christian is also a gift of grace. We are called and freed to be the people God created. We may be joyful in the knowledge of salvation through Christ, such very good news, but we are also aware that we are dealing in matters of life and death.

We are left at the end of this issue of *These Days* on Holy Saturday. The curtain in the Temple has been torn in two. Jesus' body is buried in the tomb. The disciples are scattered, in hiding. It is not a time when we think of laughter. It is the most serious time of the year.

But even in the depths of Holy Week, we live in the hope that throughout the tribulations of our faith journey and the trials of life in this world, life will triumph over death. Even in the valley of the shadow of death, death does not have the last word. The liturgical cycle tells us that we will again see the risen Lord, the birth of the church at Pentecost, the anticipation of preparing for the birth of Jesus. When we lose people we love, we will still find ways to smile at the good memories we carry with us.

Sometimes we forget that being a Christian means we are gifted with laughter. Even in the Bible, we read of people of faith who laugh. Some verses, if you read them with an eye to humor, can be funny due to exaggeration or wordplay. We learn from our own sacred texts about the fullness of our faith.

I was once in a discussion with friends from all over the world about shellfish. Some of us firmly believe Dungeness crab to be superior. Some of us prefer eating blue crab. We discussed the best way to prepare crab, whether in the style of the Atlantic seaboard and the south of smothering the crab in spices, Italian style in cioppino, or Cantonese style, with ginger and scallions. One person who loves to poke fun at every conversation advocated for imitation crab, due to its role in kimpap (Korean rice rolled in seasoned seaweed). No one advocated for crawfish over any other shellfish, and no one believed lobster to be better than crab. (I have a sneaking suspicion that Maine was underrepresented in the conversation.)

What a silly discussion. Despite our strong shellfish opinions, what does it matter? Well, it serves as a reminder that faith is not all somber. My funny shellfish conversation took place in a group of people who gather to share and talk as Christians. In the midst of discussion about biblical interpretation and faithful ministry, we noticed how God created diverse creatures around the world and made us creative in how we prepare our shellfish.

Time and again, studies show companionship and humor increase our longevity and quality of life. Even in an era that is so very serious, with partisan divisions, major theological disagreements, the renewed threat of nuclear war, and differences of opinion over how we handle diversity of thought or lifestyle or our very beings, we are gifted with humor and forbearance. Whether we embrace and exercise that gift is up to us.

*From These Days, Daily Devotions for Living by Faith*

“Being a peacemaker means my prayer becomes visible in concrete action.”

-Father John Dear

**For much of the past year, I have felt God leading me deeper into what it means to be a peacemaker in our community, and more specifically what peacemaking looks like in the world of children’s ministry.** A year ago, I had the opportunity to participate in an Immigrants’ Journey Immersion Trip to the San Diego/Tijuana border under the leadership of Jon Huckins of The Global Immersion Project. The focus of this experience was “everyday peacemaking” through the lens of immigration. (To hear more about that experience, please click [here](#).) Then in February of this year, I attended a conference at the University of San Diego titled “Revolution of the Heart: The Counter-Cultural Spirituality of Henri Nouwen.”

Henri Nouwen was a beloved Catholic Priest, professor, theologian, author and peacemaker with a heart for social justice. He had very profound relationships with many people throughout his life, one of them being Father John Dear, a priest, author and social activist. Father John Dear was one of the speakers at the Revolution of the Heart conference, and what he shared aligned beautifully with Henri Nouwen’s practices of peacemaking. That is, there are three spiritual movements in the revolution of the heart regarding peacemaking. First is the *Inner Revolution of the Heart*, which begins with prayer. We must allow God to disarm us as we pray, followed by us having mercy on ourselves, so that we can go forward as public peacemakers. The second spiritual movement is the *Public Life of the Heart*, which involves revolutionary nonviolence. The third spiritual movement is Working for a New Culture of the Heart. This is the Kingdom of God here on earth.

**In other words, peacemaking involves prayerfully stepping outside of our own safety and comfort, often at the most inconvenient times.** Shane Claiborne, a prominent peacemaker and social justice advocate, was another speaker at the Revolution of the Heart conference. He pointed out that we can’t anticipate the interruptions that require peace. A quick peek at the life of Jesus makes that quite clear... the good Samaritan... running out of wine at a wedding... Jairus’ daughter needing healing... Shane said, “The Spirit moves in the interruptions, and we often have no room for the interruptions.”

**Friends, let us begin by praying for open eyes, ears and hearts so that we may recognize these interruptions as opportunities for peacemaking, whether it be in our world, nation, community, work environment, family, church. Through our prayers, we will be centered in the holy will of God, and not just in our own feelings of anger or fear. Out of our prayers, may God move us to action.**

In planning for our upcoming summer children and youth programming at PPC, Garrett and I have been meeting regularly with the Solidarity staff to continue with our beautiful program partnership. The foundation of our summer ministry will be “everyday peacemaking” using the book [Mending the Divides](#) by Jon Huckins and Jer Swigart as our guide. **We recognize the need to be peacemakers as leaders of children and youth, as well as the need to help guide these precious young people into their own roles as everyday peacemakers within the Kingdom of God here on earth. I can feel God moving here, and I am so excited to see what is in store for our community.**

**Mindy Plick, Director of Children’s Ministries**



## **Relationships + Development = Discipleship**

**Earlier this month at a library conversation, I mentioned the 3 goals of our summer teen leadership program. These goals actually function as more of a formula for transformation. Let's take a deeper look:**

### Relationships

No one can understate the value of relationships to adolescents. We all have witnessed the ways in which relationships can be both a positive and negative influence in the lives of teenagers. Research has shown that one of the largest factors in the health and wellbeing of a young person, is the quality of their friendships. We also know that a factor for continued church involvement during adulthood, is intergenerational relationships. This is why at PPC we put such a high value on relational ministry. This is also why the formula starts with relationships, as this is what students need to thrive.

### Development

After relationships are formed, students become more open to learning. When we spend time mentoring and sharing with students, we are contributing to their identity formation. Teenagers form their values and identity on many things, but a key factor is based on what others say about them, to them. When we understand that the words we speak help form the identity of a student, we should make effort to speak life into them. Working with a student on their personal development is not: "you should care about these things", "you should act like this" or "when I was you are age I was more mature". When we truly want to impact a student's personal development it looks like: "I see the gifts and passions God has given you", "I believe you can do the things you feel God is asking of you", "I am here to listen to what you have to say".

### Discipleship

I like to define this very churchy word as: "Small steps in growing closer to God". Yet, how is discipleship accomplished? Well, that is different for everyone. For some, it is simply spending time reading the Bible, worshiping God, serving others, fellowship, or any combination of those. Yet, I believe that students can experience real growth in their relationship with God when we follow the formula here. Students first have to develop safe peer and intergenerational relationships. Through these relationships they become open to others speaking powerful words of life and God's love into their identity. When they understand who they are in relationship to God's love and grace, they then begin to move one step closer to God.

**So, if the first step to transformation is making a new friend, who will you meet this week?**

**Garrett Gerhart, Director of Emerging Generations**

I want to draw a distinction between two concepts, as I have found this distinction to be helpful when interacting with people of diverging viewpoints. That said, I am limited by the English language to using terms for which a multitude of different definitions exist. In defining these terms, I am not attempting to establish my definitions as the “right” ones. I am simply clarifying what I personally mean by them when making this distinction.

The two distinct concepts are “faith” and “religion.”

By “faith” I am referring to what one believes about the ultimate nature of the universe, our place within it, whatever higher power(s) may or may not have brought it about, and where we are finally heading. Faith, by this definition, is something that everyone possesses, as we all believe something. Naturalism is as much a belief about the universe as is supernaturalism. Even agnosticism—which holds that such ultimate questions simply cannot be known—is still a belief about the ultimate knowability of these matters.

By “religion” I am referring to the guiding principles of one’s ethical sphere of life. Our religion is what motivates us to make one choice over another, believing certain actions to be moral or immoral. Religion, in this sense, need not necessarily be attached to belief in a higher power, though such beliefs may certainly influence one’s religion. And as with faith, everyone has a religion, as here understood, because everyone has their own ethical guidelines for how they believe they ought to live.

Here’s why I find these distinctions to be helpful.

My faith is Christianity, which I’m here defining by the Apostles’ and the Nicene Creed. I believe that God created the universe (through the process of evolution, but that’s another article), that God became flesh as Jesus of Nazareth, that Jesus died and rose again, that he will return to set the world aright, and all the other belief statements that orthodox Christians have always held in common.

But my religion is love. Love is, I believe, the religion that Jesus spent his entire earthly ministry teaching. Love is the religion Jesus summed up in his “Golden Rule,” to “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Love is the religion that the earliest followers of Jesus attempted to live and teach (if at times faultingly). Love, the Apostle Paul taught, “fully satisfies all of God’s requirements” and “is the only law you need.” Love is the “pure and faultless” religion James taught, “to care for orphans and widows in their difficulties and to keep the world from contaminating us.” It all comes down to love.

Unfortunately, not long after the time of the Apostles, Christianity changed from being a faith based on Jesus to being a religion based on rules. Even though Jesus and the Apostles explicitly condemned law-based religion, Christians quickly came up with long lists of right and wrong actions that often had little or nothing to do with love. So while I am a Christian by faith, I wholeheartedly reject the legalistic “Christian” religion.

On the one hand, this places me at odds with many (though certainly not all) of those who share my Christian faith. But on the other hand, this builds an incredible bridge of commonality for those of different faiths who nonetheless share the religion of love.

The religion of love, it would appear, lies at the purest center of nearly every faith this world has ever known. Most faiths quickly become contaminated by the religion of legalism, but when you peel back the layers, they all have a heart of love. Faiths as divergent as Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, and secular humanism, when you get right down to their founding principles, are all about treating others the way you’d like to be treated.

**And I think that’s something to celebrate.**

# I Don't Want This

*Leanne C. Masters*

It had been a hard week. I was running at breakneck pace, playing Whac-a-Mole with problems and issues that keep cropping up. Each time I had one situation under control, another one reared its ugly head and I went back into management mode, taking care of the problem at hand before moving on to the next.

I was tired. At that moment, it seemed as if the hits just wouldn't stop coming.

And then the school called. My kindergartner was sick, and I really should keep him home from school until the stomach bug cleared up. By that evening, I knew that I had to keep not only him home the next day but the baby as well.

In a quiet moment, I sat down, and the words came pouring out of my mouth before I even realized what it was that I was saying. "I don't want this," I said. "I don't want any of this."

And then I realized: None of us want this. Not this world and not the difficult things that we are dealt in it. The world around us is hard, and it is broken. We deal with crisis situations in our homes, in our work, in our communities and in the world. We run ourselves ragged trying to keep up with the tasks that we are given and the tasks that we choose. More than that, as we look around we realize that injustice, pain, and suffering are everywhere. The world is hurting.

And we are tired.

This could mean only one thing: I would have to manage my work issues from my living room, with the added challenges. It's easy for us to just wish it away. And so we ignore what we can and grit our teeth to just get through the rest so that we can get to the "good stuff," the stuff what we want. In times like these, I remember two pairs of people (one literary, the other biblical).

In J.R.R. Tolkien's epic series *The Lord of the Rings*, the protagonist, the hobbit Frodo Baggins, sits in his home and listens to the wizard Gandalf telling the story of the One Ring, how it came to be in his possession, and the terror that it brings. He responds:

"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo.

"So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

When Queen Ester demurs at confronting the king regarding the growing plot to kill all the Jews, her uncle Mordecai urges her to go to the king, despite the risk to her own life, reminding her,

"For if you keep silent at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this." (Esther 4:14)

Through these conversations, I am reminded that we have no control over the actions of others or over the actions of the world. But we have control over how we respond and what we do in the face of all we encounter. It may not be what we want, but these are the times and the situations that we have found ourselves in. And we can choose to ignore them, or we can choose to face them. It is my belief that, like Esther, we find ourselves in these times because we are uniquely called and gifted to seek God's good in the world in these moments. In and through prayer, we can find guidance in how God calls us to speak and to act, even in the midst of chaos and pain, and we can grow to understand what it is that God is calling us to in such a time as this.

*From These Days, Daily Devotions for Living by Faith*

## It's Time to Celebrate!



The **“GROW AND BLOSSOM” Luncheon, Silent Auction and Fashion Show** event will be held on **Thursday, April 19, 2018, 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM** at the Placentia Round Table (901 N. Bradford Ave., Placentia). The fashion show will be sponsored and produced by Charity's Closet. This event will also be an opportunity to honor two special volunteers, Cynthia Marshall and Bob Hutchinson. Their efforts over the years have had a huge effect on the success of H.I.S. House.

Cynthia is one of the two lovely ladies who are basically responsible for the creation of Charity's Closet! Cynthia and Barbara Goff have had primary responsibility for its operation and success – along with the many dedicated volunteers - since its inception in 2006. Under the leadership of these two ladies, Charity's Closet has provided funding of over \$1,752,000 to the shelter! We are honoring Cynthia at this time as she and her husband, John, are moving out of the area. She and John will be missed very, very, much! The good news is that the many volunteers who continue to make Charity's Closet a success are still 'on the job,' keeping the shop running smoothly. If you would like to join this winning team of volunteers, just call the shop at (714) 993-4687, go to the website ([www.charitysclosetoc.org](http://www.charitysclosetoc.org)), or stop by to shop (134 N. Bradford Ave., Placentia), pick up some bargains, and find out more about how you can help.

Bob (Hutch) Hutchinson was one of those instrumental in getting Placentia Presbyterian Church to purchase the shelter property in 1989, and in its expansion from 20+ beds to the 42 bed facility we now have. Since then he has held essentially every office or position involved with H.I.S. House. For years, he was the sole maintenance person working on the shelter. When that became more than one person could handle, he formed the 'Tool Box Ministry' which continues to perform uncounted maintenance and fix-it tasks at all of the H.I.S. House facilities. His band of handymen and women (handypersons?) have painted, rewired, plumbed, planted, pruned, installed, fixed, constructed, and otherwise done just about everything that one can imagine to keep the shelter properties safe, attractive, and comfortable for the residents. Bob and his wife, Mary Kay, will also be moving out of the area, and it is with great regret that we see them leave. His talents and many years of dedication will be sorely missed! If you would like to join the group continuing to provide the fix-it services, please call the shelter at (714) 993-5774 to find out what kind of work is planned and when they will be meeting (usually Saturday morning, but check to be sure).

Now, back to the Luncheon, Silent Auction and Fashion Show. We hope that many of you will be able to attend to have a great lunch and help honor our volunteers, donors, and sponsors. You can also help support H.I.S. House by participating in the silent auction. To order tickets, go to the website ([www.hishouseoc.org](http://www.hishouseoc.org)), or call the shelter at (714) 993-5774. Tickets are \$45 per person, or \$80 per couple. Come help us celebrate. You can GROW and BLOSSOM and have fun doing it, too.

Blessings and Thank You,  
Allen Sypherd



The ministry of the Nitro coffee bar is twofold:

1. Provides a destination for visitors (with their coffee card) to connect with members of our church on a personal basis guiding them to involvement and possible future membership in our congregation.
2. Proceeds of the Nitro Bar are donated to the Youth Scholarship Fund of PPC to allow children and youth to attend church activities they cannot afford on their own.

The PPC Nitro Bar partners with and serves Solid City City Coffee. Solid City Coffee is a social enterprise ministry of Solidarity that uses quality, ethically sourced, direct trade specialty coffee.

Solid City works in conjunction with the Solid Enterprise team of Solidarity to provide job training and discipleship for youth right here in our neighborhood. We believe that through business urban youth can be empowered to bring renewal to their communities.

The PPC Nitro Bar supports this mission of Solidarity by purchasing and serving Solid City Coffee.

The proceeds of the Nitro Bar are used to fund leadership training for youth and scholarships for children and youth to participate in various PPC activities and camps they cannot afford on their own.

**Please support this ministry and enjoy a refreshing, silky, creamy, stout-like Nitro Cold Brew coffee or tea with the knowledge that you are supporting local at-risk children and youth.**











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