The 1998 Princeton Lectures on Youth, Church, and Culture
Growing Up Postmodern: Imitating Christ in the Age of "Whatever"

Introduction

Descartes is history. That's the conclusion of postmodernity. Foundational truth is out, relativity is in. Trace it to Hiroshima, the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the Challenger explosion. Technology is not the panacea we thought it would be. Trace it to Watergate, liposuction, spin doctors. Truth is not an objective reality anymore. Trace it to institutional differentiation, Baskin Robbins, cable TV. Choice can paralyze as well as liberate.

Nobody knows this better than the young people whose coming of age coincides with the turn of the millennium. They live in a world where microchips are obsolete every eighteen months, information is instantaneous, and parents change on weekends. The one constant in the postmodern adolescent's experience is upheaval. Truth changes daily. The signature quality of adolescence is no longer lawlessness, but awelessness. Go ahead, youth say to the church. Impress me. When everything is true, nothing is true. Whatever.

It's true that we live in a world that considers truth too relative to specify. The comics brought us mutant "X-Men" and now "X-Women"; consumer thinking brought us X-brands and X-spouses; pop culture brought us X-Files and Generation X. The letter "X" is having a banner decade, labeling "whatever" we don't have the time or the inclination to explain.

Maybe the word "whatever" found its way into the contemporary adolescent vocabulary because "X" describes precisely the Truth they seek. In the early church, the Greek letter "X" (chi) referred to Jesus Christ. This generation of young people is neither the first nor the last in search of "X." Paul recognized this quest in the Athenians, who went as far as to erect an altar to "an unknown god":

What you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. . .The One who is Lord of heaven and earth. . . made all nations. . . so that they would search for God. . . . God will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom God has appointed, and of this we are assured because God raised him from the dead. (Acts 17:23-31)

We all seek "X," God's Truth beyond relativity. We are here because we are called to imitate and obey and proclaim this Truth to all who worship unknown gods. The Truth is out there, for young people and for us.

May you find grace to peruse the "X-Files" of your own life in the days ahead, as we grope for "X" together. Though, indeed, he is not far from each of us.

Godspeed,
Kenda Creasy Dean
Director, Institute for Youth Ministry

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Home and Pilgrimage: Deep Rhythms in the Adolescent Soul

Sharon Daloz Parks

Once upon a time, a wise professor advised an entering freshman class, "I hope that as you take notes throughout your college career, you will include what is not being said." Particularly in a time of significant historical change, it is important to pay attention to what has not been said, to what is apt to be neglected. The attempt to do that prompts my reflections here.

Two people recently brought to my attention a special section of *The New York Times* that was devoted to a descriptive analysis of today's teenagers. What I found both particularly useful and sobering were the first two paragraphs of the lead article:

> Trying to label America's nearly 60 million teenagers is about as easy as staying on the trail of a snowboarder in a whiteout. No definition can stretch far enough to include bubbly Hanson fans and moody Marilyn Manson devotees, and marijuana-smoking home boys and savvy junior entrepreneurs, born-again virgins and single moms, student activists and frustrated truants, especially when one teenager might inhabit several of those identities. As adults circle, fascinated, teenagers survive and thrive within these interlocking universes. If these teenagers must be tagged, call them the autonomous generation, creating themselves in nobody's image but their own.[1]

Autonomous?

What I find disturbing in this first paragraph is the label, "the autonomous generation," and the description, "creating themselves in nobody's image but their own." Particularly in a society where vast amounts of money are spent by the advertising industry to form teens in the image of their clients' commercial interests, thinking of teens in this way misuses the language, distorts the truth of their lives, and utterly ignores the power of the social contexts that shape us all.

The article continues, offering an example of an "autonomous" teenager:

> Nicole Hernandez is one such 1990s teenager. She lives in Elmhurst, Queens, but not with her parents. Fleeing a troubled home, she became an emancipated minor last year and moved in with her boyfriend and his mother. Nicole likes going to clubs and concerts, but she spends most of her time juggling high school classes, chores, and a full-time restaurant job.
>
> "It is hard," she said during a recent interview on her day off from work. "I have to help pay the rent, and if I don't pass all my classes I don't graduate. But then there are days when I just want to hang out with my friends and be young, like I was a year ago."

The label "autonomous" and the description "emancipated" do not convey the reality of this young person's life. Such language does, however, absolve adults of our responsibility to support, nurture, and accompany adolescent youth. Surely, a vital part of adolescent development is the growing capacity to take responsibility for oneself and others, but in our society, so strongly steeped in an ideology of individualism, we too readily deny our interdependence as human beings with each other and with the natural world. We are much too quick to seek and to celebrate "autonomy" as the capacity to stand, to act, and to live alone — self-sufficient and needing no one. Indeed, the conventional psychological take on adolescence all too often rests on the assumption that as soon as a young person crosses the threshold of puberty and becomes a "teen," parents and other adults no longer influence young lives, and the "peer group" becomes the only power and value.

We begin to move into a more accurate reading of adolescent psychology by noticing that if the peer group has significant power with adolescent youth, "autonomy" is not the dynamic at play. Moreover, what is happening in adolescent development is something more profound than moving from dependence to independence. The motion of the adolescent life is a movement into participation in a wider world within which family and community play an important but changing role. All who listen closely to teenagers know that to become an adolescent does not mean that one desires to abandon a good enough home. It means becoming part of a wider world and a larger social structure.

Home and Pilgrimage

Consider two companion metaphors that capture the rhythms of this more complex movement in the adolescent soul. The metaphors are "home" and "pilgrimage."

During their childhood and teenage years, my husband's children, Kate and Todd, regularly spent time with us at our home in a very rural area of forest and

fields in northern Vermont.[2] About the time that Kate turned thirteen, she arranged one Saturday to get together with her childhood friend and neighbor, Natalie. When Natalie came over to our house, the two of them wandered outside. It was a lovely summer day. An hour, maybe two-and-a-half hours went by, and then the phone rang. It was Kate. She was calling from the general store in our little town of Glover, about four miles away. "We wandered off through the woods and made our way across lots," she explained. "We really weren't sure where we were going, but we managed to end up in Glover. Will you come get us?" Of course we said yes, got in the car, and went to fetch them.

On the way back home, Kate and Natalie were full of stories — the good fun and exhilaration of venturing forth from home through unfamiliar terrain. Clearly all of us had crossed some new threshold.

Two years went by, and Todd turned thirteen. As it happened, one weekend in the dead of winter, Todd brought his friend, Adam, along with him to our home. On Saturday afternoon, Todd and Adam decided they would prepare themselves for an expedition. When there is three feet of snow and freezing temperatures, you do not wander into the woods in T-shirts and shorts. Indeed, they donned jackets, boots, hats, mufflers, gloves — then added a knife, a rope, and an axe. At the last minute, they also opted for snowshoes. We sent them off with good wishes.

Time went by — an hour, two-and-a-half hours. The phone rang. It was Todd. They had traveled as far as the neighbors a quarter of a mile away — just beyond any sight of our house. The neighbors had welcomed them in and served them hot chocolate, and now, "Would you come and give us a ride home?" Todd asked.

At whatever age, a good life is a rich mix of venturing and abiding[3] — home and pilgrimage. These moments in the lives of Kate, Natalie, Todd, and Adam are emblematic of the recomposing of home and the new possibilities of pilgrimage during the adolescent years. Home and pilgrimage depend upon each other. But our society tends to overvalue the journey in ways that eclipse the significance of home.[4]

Journey at the Expense of Home

There are many reasons why our society and especially our religious culture have overvalued the journey at the expense of home. The word "journey" is rooted in "jour," meaning day — a day's travel, ongoing travel through time. The word "pilgrimage," in contrast, signifies going out from a homeplace and then returning home with gifts, blessings, wisdom. Thus the interdependence of "home" and "pilgrimage." In religious-spiritual and other cultural literature, traditionally the images of home and pilgrimage were profoundly linked. This began to shift, however, about two hundred years ago. Particularly since the Enlightenment, we have been keenly aware of

the limitations of our knowledge — especially our knowledge of God, Truth, Ultimate Reality. We have become poignantly aware of the relativized and partial character of truth. Our understanding is always incomplete — and, hence, we have a consciousness of always needing to press further in an ongoing intellectual and spiritual journey toward but never quite arriving at in our quest for truth and wholeness.

Many people in American society are immigrants. We have left our "homelands," and we have not returned. For this we pay a psychic price — a soul price. Moreover, the Industrial Revolution separated home from the means of production. The workplace and the homeplace have become increasingly bifurcated, again at the cost of "balance," family, community, and aspirations toward an integrated life.

When I was first beginning to explore the power of the relationship between these metaphors, I was in New Zealand. I will always remember how on the first evening that I was there, after I had spoken about these themes, a woman very purposefully sat down beside me and said, "I left the church, but I felt that I should still find a way to attend to my spiritual life. So I decided I would pay attention to my dreams." Then she said, "The first two figures who appeared were a homemaker and a pilgrim." I was surprised and intrigued. She continued, "Yes, I grew up in a home where my father was an alcoholic, and I never really had a chance to feel a sense of home until after I was an adult and he had died. Then I moved into a home that was the first home I ever really loved. But I subsequently gave up that home in order to go to seminary." And then she said, "In my dream, and in the reflection on it afterwards, the pilgrim was strong, robust, and striding along. The homemaker, however, was small and angry. I couldn't get them to talk to each other until first the pilgrim comforted the homemaker."

The next day when I was speaking with another group, this same woman was there, and I asked her to share her story. Then I invited everyone present to reflect on whether or not there was a pilgrim and a homemaker within them. In the discussion that followed, one man spoke with particular poignancy, saying, "I guess I identify the pilgrim with the career part of my life, and I identify the homemaker with the personal part of my life." (This was not what I had intended, but others also spoke in these terms.) He went on to say how much he wished that those dimensions of his life were related in a more adequate way.

As we reflect on the new powers of body, mind, heart, and soul that emerge during adolescence, we recognize the development of a capacity for a new experience of transcendence, a new "high" — a kind of soaring journey beyond where we have been. Here also we recognize that there is a corresponding development of a new experience of immanence, a new kind of intimacy, a new kind of belonging, a qualitatively new experience of home and tribe — since "now I can see you seeing me see you."[5]

The Power of Table and Hearth

With this dimension of development in mind, it is useful to note the power of the table. In the book *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World*, my colleagues and I tell the story of the findings in our study of the formation of more than one hundred people who are able to sustain commitment to the common good and practice the kind of citizenship that is now needed. One of the patterns we observed is that for many, though not for all, the family dinner table had an important place in their formation. The practice of the table is a primary way by which we learn the habits of belonging and lay claim to the practices of *civitas*. Douglas Meeks has said that the table is a place where you know there will be a place for you, where what is on the table will be shared, and where you will be placed under obligation. At the table we learn the arts of participation, gratitude, sharing, and conversation.

Across all societies, human beings eat together (except, of course, in our fast-food culture where one can find "stand-up gourmet" restaurants). We must eat in order to live, and in the face of that shared vulnerability, human beings gather together and eat in common.[6] During adolescence the table can become more, rather than less, important. As adolescents begin to explore a wider world, table and hearth can remain a meeting place for family, as well as with others. The table can be an important element in a new composition of self and world (even if perhaps at times it becomes a stormier place).

We intuitively know this. Someone recently remarked, "I have all of these eighth graders, and I really do not know what to do to bring them together." To which another responded, "That's easy — pizza!"

Jeanne McIver leads the youth ministry program at Fairmont Presbyterian Church in Dayton, Ohio. The youth gather on Wednesday evenings, and the time begins with dinner at the table. At every table there are four adults and eight teenagers, and the places are assigned so that there is continuity from week to week. Jean ensures that there is a good mix of young people who talk easily with the young people who find it more difficult. This practice of the table creates intergenerational community within the church. Once she asked the young people to indicate by a show of hands how many of them ate regularly with their own families at home. Her own daughter was the only one who raised her hand. This is in Ohio — America's heartland — where we presume that our values still hold. This kind of shift in our social practice has implications for our society, in part because it has implications for our religious life.

Wendy Wright has written, "To prepare and share a meal together is one of the holiest acts in all religious traditions .... We may pass our meals in conflict or

with trivial conversation. Yet the power of the ritual remains. At the deepest level, the gathering in the dining room or at the kitchen table is an experience of communion in which the mystery of our mutual need and nourishment is played out. This is the level of our true hunger and satiety and the level on which we must encounter one another to genuinely know who we are."[7] Chuck Foster, dean and professor of religious education at the Candler School of Theology, teaches that we cannot grasp the meaning of Christian communion if we have not been steeped in the practice of the table in ordinary time.

Recomposing Self, Home, and World

A teaching video was produced in concert with the book *Common Fire*. It opens simply with a scene of a typical family dinner table with a lit hearth in the background. An incident in the production of this scene further illustrates the interrelated dynamics of home and pilgrimage in the formation of young lives.

After the scene of table and hearth was first filmed, to our amazement and dismay some simple, very inexpensive, glass objects that had been used as a part of the table setting appeared much too elegant. We previewed it with a few people, and sure enough, the reactions were strong and charged: "That doesn't look like any dinner table I ever knew!" Precisely because the family table matters in people's lives (either positively or negatively), we knew that the image might in any case evoke uncomfortable and even painful memories for some, and it was important that the scene of table and hearth be one that all who saw it would want to affirm. So we made a tough budget decision and decided to shoot the scene over again.

The producer, Terry Strauss, is not only an excellent artist herself, she knows how to put together a talented and committed team. The cameraman she chose, Michael Anderson, has received two Academy Award nominations. She chose his nineteen-year-old daughter, Sarah, to be the assistant producer. When the full team arrived to reshoot the scene in a specially rented facility, the proprietor said, "By the way, you can't use the fireplace this time. We had it inspected yesterday, and they say it isn't safe."

Terry knew that even if nothing was filmed, the crew would have to be paid for half a day. So she pleaded, "I just have this one Duraflame log, and we only have to burn it for five minutes." The proprietor remained adamant. It was a tense moment. Everyone cast about for alternatives, to no avail. Then Sarah suggested, "Why don't we put a TV monitor in the fireplace and run the earlier take of the flames, and it might look like a real fire." The crew looked at each other, thought it wouldn't work, but agreed to give it a try. After the shot of table and hearth was thus redone, they put the new tape on the monitor, by this time thinking there was

a chance that it might work well enough for untrained eyes. To their surprise, they all had to admit that even "trained eyes" couldn't tell the difference.

Having heard about the crisis, I was thrilled when I heard the outcome, and I said to Terry, "You must tell Sarah how grateful we are." Terry responded, "Sarah knows that her father knows that she saved the shot. Nothing that you or I could say would add to the splendid satisfaction of that for her." Sarah is moving from her homeplace out into a wider world, and she is taking on new responsibility. But in the midst of that pilgrimage, "home" is being recomposed in a new conversation between self and world. Home and pilgrimage constitute the forth-and-back rhythm of a single dance in the development of the soul.

A Larger Conversation

Table and hearth can be important in the formation of adolescent spirituality because they are natural places of conversation. As we consider "imitating Christ in an age of whatever," notice that Jesus always appears in common settings and takes the conversation to a deeper place. Whether in conversation with the woman at the well, or the rich young ruler, or Zacchaeus, or the men who were prepared to stone the woman who had been taken in adultery, Jesus is always listening to the deepest currents of the soul and moving the conversation to the essence of things.

Across college campuses students are asking for more time with faculty, and faculty are dutifully posting more office hours. But if we listen carefully, it becomes clear that students don't want more office hours. They want hearth. They want table. They want a back-and-forth rhythm of conversation that moves us from where we are to where we could be as it works its way to the essence of things.

In ministry to youth, we do something enormously important when we legitimate "real talk." As adolescents increase their capacity for taking the perspective of others while maintaining their own, they move into transformative space. The Quaker mystic, Howard Thurman, expressed it this way:

> It is a miracle when one man [he is writing as a man] standing in his place is able while remaining there to put himself in another person's place, to send his imagination forth to establish a beachhead in another person's spirit, and from that vantage point so to blend with the other's landscape that what he sees and feels is authentic. This is the great adventure in human relations. To experience this is to be rocked to one's foundations. We are not the other person. We are ourselves. All that they are experiencing we can never know, but we can make accurate soundings.[8]

One of the people we interviewed now owns a profitable software company and seeks to help his clients create an exemplary work environment. Reflecting on

his teenage years, he told us, "At my synagogue there was a woman who was a fantastic teacher who had a pretty profound influence. We would be Hebrew school teachers for the younger kids in a leadership development program. They were taking thirteen-to-seventeen-year-old kids and in the midst of our adolescent problems teaching us how to be leaders, literally, like the concept of active listening. That was taught to me when I was fourteen. I think it taught us all to become more empathetic and more discerning."[9]

Another told us, "We had a youth camp every summer, and then we would meet once or twice each semester for a weekend retreat. It was a group that was about something important — serious discussions about life issues — sex and politics and pressing theological issues. It mattered to me so much that in those groups there was an affirmation of honesty and integrity and pushing you beyond the bounds of what you used to think .... The youth leaders were incredibly important in affirming a sense of a wider purpose, affirming my concerns, and giving me responsibility for beginning to act them out."[10]

Indeed, "good talk" — transformative conversation among teenagers — is most apt to occur where there are adults who help to keep the talk good by providing ground rules about the kind of respect that we extend to each other and thus help to clarify the terms of the belonging that otherwise may become fierce and destructive. Good, even great, conversation can take form among adolescent youth when adults offer themes that legitimate hard, mind-and-soul-stretching stuff to talk about. When this kind of conversation happens, youth are initiated into essential practices of genuine community.[11]

A Larger Homeplace

Community, communication, and communion are all a part of creating a good homeplace. Adolescents are ready for a larger homeplace. It is only in recent times that we have come to associate "home" more exclusively with one's own domicile. For most of the humans who have lived on this planet, "home" has meant village or region — a wider sense of belonging. Teenagers want to participate in this larger sense of "home." They test a community's capacity to function as a place where youth can connect and belong and participate in play and sport, creativity and performance, caring and responsibility, believing and daring. It is from this kind of "home base" that meaningful pilgrimage can happen well.

Pilgrimage beyond Tribe

A particular kind of pilgrimage is needed in our time. It is no longer enough simply to go further afield geographically. Young people today need opportunities for pilgrimage "beyond tribe." As human beings, we all need "tribe," and adolescence

can be the most "tribal" of times — in the best sense. But if we are preparing young people to become citizens committed to the common good rather than to just "me and mine," the study represented in *Common Fire* provides compelling evidence that it is critically important during one's formative years to have "constructive encounters with 'otherness.'" Surely, a primary characteristic of faithful citizenship in our time is the capacity to move comfortably and respectfully across institutional and social boundaries.

As our society becomes more complex and diverse, there is an understandable tendency to move into gated communities, to fortify professional guilds, to create a cacophony of single issue politics, and to flee to fundamentalistic religion. In every case, the fear of "the other" abounds. Yet, increasingly, the art of being human depends, in part, on the capacity to live both within and beyond tribe — to find a good mix of home and pilgrimage.

In his work, David Ng has helped us to see that "diversity" can take many forms in addition to ethnicity, gender, and economic-social class. Wherever "us" and "them" exist, we have diversity — no matter how subtle. Discovering that "us" and "them" can be transformed into "we" is one of the most vital dimensions of learning during the adolescent years.

There are many ways that this can happen. For example, a bright, gifted young woman suffered a serious accident while playing basketball, and thus became dependent on the use of a wheelchair. While still in high school, she was invited to a national gathering of youth sponsored by a mainstream Christian denomination. She was somewhat dubious about participating because she was concerned about the patriarchal practices of the church. But she knew that this conference was making a special effort to include differently abled young people like herself, and she decided to attend. A dance was scheduled for the last evening of the conference, and she and another young woman (who also uses a wheelchair) debated going. In the end, they did go to the dance and watched from the edge of the large gymnasium. Then a young man from Latin America asked one of them to dance, and she accepted. He wheeled her to the center of the room, grabbed a chair for himself, and the two of them began to dance. Another young man went to the second young woman and began to dance with her in the same fashion. Within moments, the remaining five hundred young people went for chairs of their own, sat down, and kept dancing! "Us" and "them" became "we." While still cautious, this young woman has a renewed respect for the possibilities of church.

This is precisely the kind of behavior that we expect from faithful practices of the church community. Growing up in this kind of community can make a significant difference in preparing people to live in the midst of a society that is increasingly diverse. There are many, however, who believe that people only become compas-

sionate toward others if they have suffered profoundly themselves. To be sure, sometimes our own suffering prepares us to respond more empathetically to others, and often those who are at the margins of their own communities because of some vulnerability may more easily extend compassion to others beyond their own "tribe."[12] But there is another kind of "marginality" that also prepares people to respond in positive ways to the stranger. There is a kind of "value-based marginality" that we see in those who grow up in communities that practice an uncommon regard for others.[13]

At a time when we bemoan the "coarsening of society," the church can be a place where young people can learn to respect and include the stranger — the ones who are different from "us." It has been rightly said that justice is simply a matter of who is included and who is excluded, or who we can tolerate neglecting.[14] Indeed, if we are "imitating Christ," even a limited reading of the Gospels reminds us that Jesus was always blurring the boundaries between who was included and who was excluded. Thus, a practice of pilgrimage that encourages young people to venture beyond their own tribe and into the place of "the other" is well placed as a central component of youth ministry.

Many people are already giving young people opportunities to go on pilgrimages and to encounter strangers. One pastor makes it possible for young people to travel from Indiana to Vietnam. When they return from this pilgrimage, the young people talk with their parents about the economic disparity between the two societies. They have a new set of reference points as they think about how to live faithfully in a complex world.

Another pastor accompanies young people on a pilgrimage to Tiajuana, Mexico. In an interesting blend of home and pilgrimage, the young people assist in building homes for people who are living in the new shantytowns. When the young people return to their own homes, they have important stories to tell.

During the adolescent years, it is essential to return to someone who will listen to the story of your pilgrimage and receive the blessings you have garnered for your "tribe." Like young people in many other churches, when I was a teenager I went every year to a weeklong camp with the youth group. Each year when we returned to our church home, the Sunday evening service would make place for each of us to have a few minutes in the pulpit when we would share with the congregation what had happened for us. At a deep level, we were learning that our home community cared about us and believed that we had something to say and to give that mattered.

Homelessness As Invitation to Contemplation

The transforming pilgrimage awaits teenagers — sometimes across the world, sometimes across town, and sometimes just outside the door on the streets of our cities and towns.

According to Evelyn Parker, homeless youth are individuals under the age of eighteen who lack parental, foster, or institutional care and who survive on their own without a safe home environment. Estimates of the total number of homeless youth in our society range from 100,000 on any given night to two million per year. Every year, as a society, we bury 5,000 teenagers in unmarked graves.

Evidence suggests that young people generally have positive attitudes toward family and home. They do not leave home on a whim or because of peer pressure or conflict with positive family values. Premature separation from family support arises from abuse, poverty, or parent/child conflict.

Kathleen Sorenson, from Boys Town, says that some of the young people who come to Boys Town are sent by the courts, some by their families, and "one percent are 'pilgrims.' They come by themselves seeking refuge, asking for home."

The Power of Hope program does not have a particular focus on homeless youth, but in each city where it develops a weekend program, it seeks out the adults who are working with homeless youth. The program invites these adults and their young people to attend. This has been important both for the youth and for their adult leadership.

These reflections upon homeless youth in our society are not intended to set us on a guilt trip, but they may provide an occasion when we can ask as a people, as a "tribe," Why was the workshop on homeless youth the one that was canceled at the Princeton Forum? By what strategies might the response to that particular seminar be different next time?

When you and I return home, each of us will decide whether to file or toss the printed program for this Forum. Whichever we choose, I encourage us to turn first to the page titled "Extended Seminars" and use the third listing, "In Search of Sanctuary: The Quest of Homeless Adolescents," as a focus for our personal or communal time of prayer and meditation. Again, the question I invite us to contemplate is not, "Why did I not . . . ?" But rather, "Why did *we* not . . . ?"

Breakfast for the Stranger

At the end of the special section on teens in *The New York Times*, there is a story featuring Brian Raymond, who lives in Bangor, Maine.[15] Again in a strange choice of words, Brian is described as "legally emancipated" from his family in his junior year after his manic-depressive father tried to commit suicide, his mother had

an emotional breakdown, and his younger sister fell in with some notably uncaring friends (and is now in foster care). Brian has a friend named Zach, and Zach said to his mom, Mrs. Woodward, "Can Brian come live with us?" Mom hesitated. The article reports two reasons for her hesitation. One is that she cares about how she keeps her home. But that was not a major concern because Brian was a good friend who had been around a whole lot over the years. The refrigerator, however, was another matter. Would it hold enough of the drinks that would be required for everybody when you have a house full of more than one teenager? Finally she said yes, and Brian moved in.

Brian is now in his senior year, scored 1420 on his SATs, and is headed for one of the two colleges he has been admitted to. He has fit nicely into the Woodward home, where a study was converted into a bedroom, and a second refrigerator was purchased. It is the most home Brian has known. "In those places I rented," he says, "I just had a fridge and had to stay in the room. Here, I can sit down, watch TV. It's more like I live here; it's kind of cool." The article concludes: "Mornings at the Woodwards' are hectic. Mr. Woodward heads off to his job at the newspaper office, and Mrs. Woodward to her work at the Federal Building. The boys are always late and eat their pancakes standing at the kitchen counter. One is enough for Zach; Brian eats four.

"Mr. Woodward once asked his wife why she bothered cooking pancakes every morning instead of letting them grab cereal. She responded, 'The boys will remember those pancakes the rest of their lives.'"

If I'm reading the same Scriptures that you are, we know that imitating Jesus may mean that occasionally we cook breakfast. It may also mean that as a part of youth ministry we offer hospitality to the stranger as our souls relearn the deep rhythms of home and pilgrimage. ❁

NOTES

1. Ann Powers, "Who Are These People, Anyway?" *The New York Times*, Wednesday, April 29, 1998, p. G1.

2. Note that for many youth who have suffered the divorce of their parents, the metaphors of home and pilgrimage carry a special meaning when they must regularly make, as it were, a pilgrimage from one home to another.

3. See Richard R. Niebuhr, "Pilgrims and Pioneers," *Parabola* 9.3:pp. 6-13.

4. See Sharon Daloz Parks, "Home and Pilgrimage: Companion Metaphors for Personal and Social Transformation," *Soundings*, 72.2-3, pp. 297-315.

5. See Sharon Daloz Parks, "Faithful Becoming in a Complex World: New Powers, Perils, and Possibilities" in this volume.

6. See Mary Frances Kennedy Fisher, *The Art of Eating* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1954) p. 353.

7. Wendy M. Wright, *Sacred Dwelling: A Spirituality of Family Life* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), pp. 61-62.

8. Howard Thurman, "Mysticism and the Experience of Love," Pendle Hill Pamphlet #115 (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1961), p. 18.

9. Laurent A. Parks Daloz, Cheryl H. Keen, James P. Keen, and Sharon Daloz Parks, *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), p. 42.

10. Ibid., pp. 42-43.

11. See Carol Lakey Hess, *Caretakers of Our Common House* (Abingdon, 1997), ch. 6.

12. Daloz, Keen, Keen, and Parks, *Common Fire*, ch. 3.

13. Ibid., pp. 74-77.

14. See Ronald Marstin, *Beyond Our Tribal Gods* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1979), p. 37.

15. Michael Winerip, "He's Getting By with a Little Help from His Friends," *The New York Times*, Wednesday, April 29, 1998, p. G11.