

WANDERINGS

THE IMPORTANCE OF WHAT IS NOT

We join thirty spokes
To the hub of a wheel,
Yet it is the center hole
That drives the chariot.

We shape clay
To birth a vessel,
Yet it's the hollow within
That makes it useful.

We chisel doors and windows
To construct a room,
Yet it's the inner space
That makes it livable.

Thus do we
Create what is
To use what is not.



*Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu,
Poetry in Translation*



TABLE MANNERS BY REV. DR. JILL KIRCHNER-ROSE

That is the Kingdom / the Kindom of Heaven on earth. It requires an entirely different set of table manners. Table manners that call for us to throw open the doors of the banquet hall for all people. Instead of building walls between us, we claim this space for building relationships. Instead of creating a world of division, we gather around the table for reconciliation.

In this banquet hall, in this sanctuary, seated across from us around this great communion table, I would like for us to create a space for the abused and hurting, as well as the abuser, who feels alienated and troubled. I would like to see seated at this table the poor of the poor, the homeless teen on the street as well as the wealthy; those who are from the LGBT community and our very important straight allies; those who question and doubt and those who are rock solid in their faith. I would love to see a greater rainbow of color around this table as well as people of all ages – from the newborn baby to the elderly who hobble along with a cane; those with physical and/or mental challenges holding hands with those whose body and mind are in impeccable shape. And in keeping in line with whom Jesus shared table fellowship, may we set a place for the prostitute and even the IRS, the modern day tax collectors. Yes, may we welcome all kinds of people to this table and may we always make room for one more for God loves a full house.

Read the full sermon at <http://uccredlands.org/sermons/table-manners/>

“Instead of building walls between us, we claim this space for building relationships.”

FROM THE EDITOR'S IPAD BY KATIA HAGE

Is it time to open our hearts to new possibilities?

We have carefully fashioned our ideas and principles, experienced their tides, and uncovered what lies underneath our daily gestures.

Is it time to step out and reach our hands to the Other so that both of us can be filled with the beauty of being?



Petrified Log in the Memorial Garden

STORY OF RUCC'S PETRIFIED LOG BY BARBARA HAUSER

Near the barbecue center, in the succulent garden, was placed a section of petrified wood. This is the story behind that log.

About 200 million years ago, what is now northern Arizona was a low, swampy area abounding in tropical growth. There were rushes, ferns, cycads and trees, forerunners of species we know today. Small, primitive dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures roamed the vast flood plain. Upstream from this low-lying area were forests of huge trees. A dominant variety was a cone-bearing species (araucaria) related to some present-day trees we know as ginkgo, monkey puzzle and star pine.

During flood times, the rivers of the area became raging torrents. Big trees were uprooted and carried possibly a hundred miles downstream where they collected in the lowlands. They became submerged in water and covered with volcanic ash. Silica-laden waters percolated the cells of the logs and deposited tiny crystals of quartz, turning the wood to stone. Sometimes other minerals such as iron, manganese and copper filtered into the silica solution, resulting in the variety of colors sometimes found in petrified wood. This process of burying the trees continued over eons of time and eventually a huge deposit hundred of feet thick became what is now known as the Chinle Formation. Then, ages later, came changes. Volcanic and seismic action eventually altered the contour of the land. Mountains were pushed up to replace the lowlands. Still later, forces of erosion laid bare the layers containing those petrified trees from long ago.

(Continued on the last page...)

“Do not
be
bewildered
by the surfaces;
in the depths
all
become
law.”

Rilke

For everyone born,
a place at the table
For everyone born,
clean water and
bread
A shelter, a space, a
safe place for
growing.
For everyone born,
a star over head,
And God
will delight
when we are
creators of justice
and joy,
compassion and
peace;
Yes,
God will delight
when we are crea-
tors of justice and
joy!
(New Zealander hymn)

CLIMATE CHANGE BY CHRIS NICOLOFF

“People of faith are beginning to realize that the global warming and climate change are issues of environmental justice. For humans, those who are poorer are unable to adjust, will be the first to feel the effects of a warming planet. [...] For plants and animals, global warming means that they will not adjust in time and many will be extinct, thus reducing the diversity and beauty of God’s natural creation.

President Obama on June 25th, 2013 said:” Someday our children, and our children’s children, will look at us in the eyes and they’ll ask us, did we do all that we could when we had the chance?”



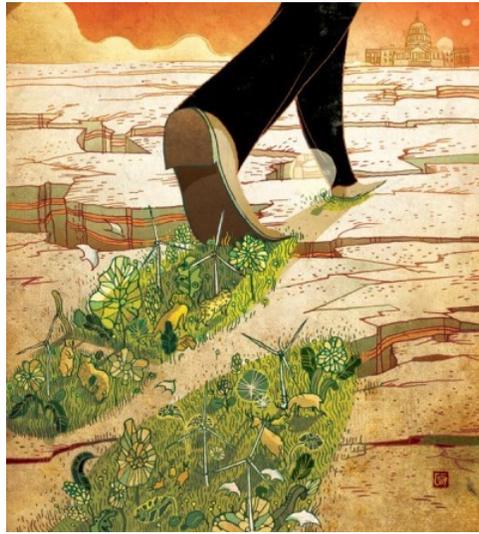
SOCIAL JUSTICE BY KEITH OSAJIMA

For too many, in this country, justice has yet to roll down like water.

Here in Redlands, we may take some solace that no overt instances of racism has put us in national news, but let us not believe that we have somehow escaped the ravages of racism, which indeed linger in this city.

Racial isolation makes it easier to ignore what is happening across town.

By crossing the divide, ..., we have a chance to do good work, but we also have a chance to challenge the comfort that keeps us isolated. It is a chance to build close loving connections with people who can enrich our lives. It is an opportunity to free us from any hesitation or tentativeness that keeps us from taking powerful stands against racism as a normal part of our daily lives.



Artwork by Victo Ngai

“Let us listen to the pleas of our surrounding thirsts.”

THE WAY THAT YOU WALK BY TOKO-PA TURNER

In these times of devastating ecological and social collapse, there are those of us who feel an urgency to attend to the world ‘before it’s too late.’ But the great paradox is that this very tendency to rush anxiously ahead is what got us into trouble in the first place.

In the Aboriginal way of dreaming, the past and future are embedded in the present. One’s embodiment is the ground into which all continuity flows, so the past can be just as influenced as the future by one’s way of going in the here and now.

Let the way that you walk be slow. Let us listen to the pleas of our surrounding thirsts. Let us acknowledge the forgetting which drifted us onto this terrifying precipice. Let the grief of it all make its encounter through your remembering. And may beauty come alive then, under your feet.

*Excerpted from the upcoming book “On Belonging” © Toko-pa Turner
2014. To read more, check Toko-pa’s website at www.Tok-pa.com*

(We take our)
color from God,
and who is better than
God at coloring?

—Qur’an 2:138

REDLANDS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

As the Redlands United Church of Christ, we are called by God to follow the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

We are an Open and Affirming community of faith, who value all people as the family of God.

We love, nurture, support, and give hope to one another on the journey of faith, seeking God's will for our lives.

Led by the Holy Spirit, we reach out to serve, and to help heal the hurts of humanity and the world with caring justice to the glory of God.

We welcome all into the full life and ministry of this church.

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STORY OF RUCC'S PETRIFIED LOG BY BARBARA HAUSER

Late in the 19th century, American explorers in the west became aware of the unique display of petrified wood that occurred in the high deserts of Arizona. President Theodore Roosevelt recognized the need to protect this distinctive and rare phenomenon and declared the area Petrified Forest National Monument (later upgraded to a national park). It would then be illegal for anything to be removed from the park. Boundaries had been set along surveyors' section lines that in some cases did not fully enclose the natural deposits of the petrified logs. Inevitably some specimens were found on private lands outside the park. That explains why some of it was accessible to collectors such as my husband.

(To be continued in the November issue)

I died as a mineral
and became a plant,
I died as plant
and rose to animal,
I died as animal
and I was human.
Why should I fear?
When was I less by dying?
Yet once more I shall die as human,
to soar
With angels blest;
but even from angelhood
I must pass on:
all except God doth perish.
When I have sacrificed my angel-soul,
I shall become what no mind e'er conceived.
Oh, let me not exist!
for Non-existence
Proclaims in organ tones,
'To God we shall return.'

—Rumi, Masnavi 3: 3901-03