

Deus Migrator—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration

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Abstract

Our time, which has been dubbed “The Age of Migration,” demands a new way of doing theology (“Migration Theology”) and a new conceptualization of basic Christian beliefs (“Theology of Migration”). This essay begins with a survey of the American Catholic Church and eight migrations in the history of Christianity to show that without migration there would have been neither a US Catholic Church nor the emergence of Christianity as a world religion. “Migrantness” is therefore a mark of the church and of Christianity itself. The construction of a theology of migration, then, requires a method composed of three mediations: analytic, hermeneutic, and practical. Using this method, the author sketches a theology of God, Christ, Holy Spirit, eschatology, and Christian existence from the perspective of migration.

Keywords

church, God, eschatology, Holy Spirit, immigration, Jesus, migration, theology of migration

The haunting image of the three-year-old Syrian boy Alan Kurdi, whose body was washed up last year on a beach in Turkey, drew worldwide attention to the plight of migrants and refugees. One seismic phenomenon in our contemporary world is no doubt migration. Since the World War II, migration has become a global phenomenon of unimaginable magnitude and complexity. There is virtually no nation on Earth that has not been seriously affected by migration either as country of origin or as country of destination.

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According to one statistical report, in 2013, 232 million people—3.2 per cent of the world's population—lived outside their countries of origin. It is predicted that the migration rate will continue to increase over time. A 2012 Gallup survey determined that nearly 640 million adults would want to migrate if they had the opportunity to do so.¹ The recent wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and lately, in Syria, as well as the uprisings in various countries in the Middle East during the Arab Spring, have dramatically increased the number of migrants and refugees and highlighted their tragedy and suffering. According to a recent report released by the United Nations Refugee Agency, a record 65.3 million people were displaced as of the end of 2015, compared to 59.5 million just twelve months earlier. Measured against the current world population of 7.349 billion, these numbers mean that one in every 113 people globally is now either an asylum-seeker, an internally displaced person, or a refugee. Whereas at the end of 2005 there were an average of six persons displaced per minute, today the number is twenty-four per minute. The three countries that account for more than half of the world refugees are: Syria (4.9 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), and Somalia (1.1 million). About half of the world's refugees are children.² Behind these cold numbers lie human faces struck by tragedies of immense proportions, with loss of land and home, family separation, physical sufferings, rape, sexual violence, psychological damage, lack of opportunities for education, uncertain futures, and death itself. Global population movements today are so worldwide, frequent, and immense that our time has been dubbed "The Age of Migration."³

1. "Dimensionalizing Immigration: Numbers of Immigrants around the World," *Boundless Economics*, July 21, 2015, <https://www.boundless.com/economics/textbooks/boundless-economics-textbook/immigration-economics-38/introduction-to-immigration-economics-138/dimensionalizing-immigration-numbers-of-immigrants-around-the-world-544-12641/>. There are legions of websites dedicated to the study of migration.
2. "With 1 Human in Every 113 Affected, Forced Displacement Hits Record High," UN Refugee Agency, June 20, 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2016/6/5763ace54/1-human-113-affected-forced-displacement-hits-record-high.html>.
3. The best one-volume study of international migration is Stephen Castles, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 5th ed. (New York: Guilford, 2014). On migration, the historical, sociological, anthropological, and political studies, in addition to specialized journals and websites, are numberless. The following general works are worth consulting: Paul Collier, *Exodus: How Migration Is Changing Our World* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2013); Alejandro Portes and Josh DeWind, *Rethinking Migration: New Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives* (New York: Berghahn, 2007); Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, eds., *Migration Theory: Talking across Disciplines* (New York: Routledge, 2008); David G. Gutiérrez and Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo, eds., *Nation and Migration Past and Future* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2009); Thomas Faist, Margit Fauser, and Eveline Reisenauer, *Transnational Migration* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2013); Joseph H. Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2013); Karen O'Reilly, *International Migration and Social Theory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani, eds., *A Companion to Diaspora and Transnationalism* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2013).

In response to the migration crisis, political organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union have set up agencies to study the problem of migration from various perspectives as well as to provide emergency relief. Religious authorities, especially Pope Francis, have awakened our sense of solidarity with these victims and urged churches and religious communities to welcome them into their midst. On the other hand, anti-immigration rhetoric and policies, especially against Muslims, have been on the rise in recent times, even in countries that have traditionally been hospitable to migrants.⁴

Migration is a pressing and perennial concern for the church as *church*, and not simply as a social organization dedicated to the promotion of the welfare of all, especially the most vulnerable members of society. To help understand this claim, I first analyze the church as an institutional migrant from the historical point of view and show how migration has shaped the faces of the church throughout history. Next, I argue that theology as an academic discipline, in order to respond adequately to the current challenges of migration, must be a “theology-in-migration” or a “migration theology,” with “migration” used adjectivally to describe the nature and method of theology. Finally, I attempt a brief reinterpretation, in the key of migration, of some Christian doctrines—God, Christ, Spirit, and Church—and thus sketch an outline of a “theology of migration.” While my perspective is that of a Roman Catholic and refers mostly to the Catholic Church, it is not difficult to extrapolate it to other Christian churches.

The Church as an Institutional Migrant

On his visit to the United States in September 2015, Pope Francis began his first speech on the lawn of the White House, with these words: “As the son of an immigrant family, I am happy to be a guest in this country, which was largely built by such families.”⁵ To this he might have added: “As the head of the Catholic Church which was, is, and will be built by the sons and daughters of immigrant families, I am happy to be a guest in the American Catholic Church, which was, is, and will be built by such families.” Two points emerge from this reflection on the pope’s speech.

The first is so obvious that it hardly needs elaboration: the US Catholic Church would not have existed at all without migration and migrants, a fact that no adequate history of the US Catholic Church would fail to point out. Of course, there were Catholics in North America prior to the establishment of the thirteen English colonies: namely, Mexicans, especially in California, Texas, and New Mexico, thanks to the Spanish missions, and Native Americans, especially in Michigan and Louisiana, thanks

4. In Britain, for example, the recent vote for Brexit was motivated in part by an anti-immigration attitude, and in the United States, Donald Trump won the contest for the Republican nominee for president partly on the basis of his vitriolic rantings against Mexican and Muslim immigrants.

5. Pope Francis, “Address of the Holy Father” (White House, Washington, DC, September 23, 2015), https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco_20150923_usa-benvenuto.html.

to the French missions. However, the US Catholic Church in its Anglo-European form, which rapidly established the dominant narrative, began with the arrival of English Catholics to Maryland in 1634. These migrants were eventually joined by waves of Catholic migrants, especially in the nineteenth century, mainly from Ireland, Germany, French Canada, Italy, Poland, and other Eastern European countries. Immigration dramatically swelled the number of US Catholics, from a mere 195,000 in 1820 to over three million in 1860, and made them the largest denomination in the US. In spite of widespread anti-Catholic prejudice and discrimination, Catholic migrants assimilated the North American culture, building churches in spite of their meager financial resources (the so-called “brick-and-mortar Catholicism”), engaging in education and healthcare, founding devotional societies, and forging a new type of Catholicism marked by cultural pluralism and lay involvement—all accomplished while remaining faithful to their ethnic origins through a system of national churches.

The flow of Catholic immigrants to the US slowed down after the Immigration Act of 1924 (the Johnson–Reed Act), which imposed national quotas that worked against immigration from traditionally Catholic countries. Because of its racist implications, the 1924 Immigration Act was superseded in 1965 by the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Hart–Celler Act), which replaced national origins as the criterion for admission with professional skills and relationship with US citizens and residents. This act opened the doors for migrants from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Southern and Eastern Europe. War and political events during the 1970s brought to the US a large number of immigrants from China, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Central America, a substantial percentage of whom were Catholics. Furthermore, the population of North American Catholics was drastically increased thanks to the arrival of Mexican and Central American immigrants, both documented and undocumented.⁶ Furthermore, Catholic migrant families provide a large number of priestly and religious (especially female) vocations, without whom quite a few dioceses and religious orders would have suffered great diminishment in numbers. Significantly, these new Catholic immigrants have brought with them a new type of Catholicism for the US Catholic Church, one quite different from that of the Irish and German migrants.⁷

Of course, not everything was problem-free with migration and migrants within the US Catholic Church. For instance, the system of national churches and ethnic parishes, which helped migrants preserve their cultures and religious traditions, have occasioned numerous conflicts between laity of minority ethnic groups and the hierarchy. However, by any measure, the US Catholic Church was, is, and, will be an institution of migrants. It could be said, *extra migrationem nulla ecclesia americana*.

The second point about the pope’s speech at the White House is much less evident and requires some demonstration. My contention is that without migration the church as a whole, and Christianity as such, would not have existed as a *world religion*, or, to

6. According to the statistics provided by the Center of Applied Research for the Apostolate (CARA), the number of foreign-born adult Catholics was 4.7 million in 1975; in 2014, the number ballooned to 21.5 million.

7. Relevant statistics can be obtained by consulting the reports by the Center of Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at <http://cara.georgetown.edu/frequently-requested-church-statistics/>.

put it in theological terms, would not be “Catholic,” in the sense of all-inclusive (with a capital C) and worldwide (with a lower-case c). The church is confessed to be “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.” To these four marks of the true church I propose to add a fifth, namely, migrant.⁸ Part of the difficulty in conceptualizing “migrantness,” to coin a neologism, as an essential attribute of the church lies in its traditional image as *societas perfecta*, that is, as a fully formed, unchangeable, and immovable institution possessing all the necessary means to achieve its aims as an instrument of salvation. Vatican II recovers the concept of the church as a pilgrim journeying toward the kingdom of God, especially in chapter 7 of the “Dogmatic Constitution of the Church” (*Lumen Gentium*), which is entitled “The Eschatological Nature of the Pilgrim Church and Its Union with the Church in Heaven.” However, this eschatological nature of the church is treated in the conciliar text in exclusively theological terms, by referring to the church’s future fulfillment in heaven and by discussing the so-called last things (i.e., death, judgment, purgatory, hell, and heaven) and the liturgical commemoration of the saints.⁹ Not once does it make clear that historically migration has been a major catalyst for the realization of Christianity’s eschatological dimension, so that migration is not simply an accident of history in the development of Christianity but constitutes the church’s very nature as an eschatological community—that migrantness is an essential mark of the true church.

Another obstacle to understanding the role of migration in the expansion of Christianity is the ahistorical conceptualization of apostolicity. The ahistorical approach is reflected in the legend about the origin of the Apostles’ Creed, according to which each of the twelve apostles contributed an article to its composition before dispersing throughout the world on their evangelizing mission. In this approach, the expansion of Christianity is attributed chiefly to the work of the twelve apostles, and apostolic succession becomes the dogmatic cornerstone of the true church. Historically, however, apart from Paul, who was not one of the Twelve, the New Testament provides next to no information about the work of the Twelve except about the early missions of Peter and Philip. It is here that Christian migrations provide the missing and much-needed information to understand the development of Christianity into a world religion. Space allows me only to offer the barest outline of the eight migrations or migratory movements that stamp Christianity as an institutional migrant, each of them presenting a distinct face of the church.¹⁰

8. This may appear at first sight an unjustified meddling with the Creed. However, it arguably has at least as solid a historical and theological basis as Pope Pius XII’s use of “Roman” in reference to the marks of the true church of Christ in his 1943 encyclical *Mystici Corporis*. This followed the usage of the First Vatican Council in *Dei Filius*, cap. 1, DZ 3001. See *Mystici Corporis Christi* (June 29, 1943) 13, http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi.html.

9. As *LG* states, “The church . . . will receive its perfection only in the glory of heaven, when the time for renewal of all things will have come.” *Lumen Gentium* (November 21, 1964) 48, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

10. A comprehensive history of Christianity from the perspective of migration and migrants still needs to be written.

1. The first Christian migration, one that radically transformed Christianity from a Jewish sect into a worldwide migrant institution, occurred with the Jewish Diaspora after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.¹¹ The Jewish Diaspora played an important role in the spread of Christianity in the first centuries of the Christian era. It is repeatedly reported in Acts that Paul, whenever he went, preached first to the Jews, most often in their synagogues, and that even though his mission to the Jews was a failure as a whole, the first important converts and leaders of the early church (e.g., Titus, Timothy, Apollo, Priscilla and Aquila, Barnabas, and many other men and women) came from diaspora Judaism. The face of the church here is that of Jewish-Christian migrants.¹²
2. Following on the heels of this first migration was another, much more extensive, exodus of the Christian community out of Jerusalem and Palestine. The destruction of the Temple and the subsequent suppression of the Jewish revolts of 115–17 and 132–35 caused migrations not only of Jews but also of Christians. The Christian community, numbering by that time in the thousands, emigrated en masse from Jerusalem and from Palestine as a whole, either by force or voluntarily, into different parts of the world.¹³ In five destinations Christians eventually

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11. Helpful works on the Diaspora during the Greco-Roman period include: Menahem Stern, "The Jewish Diaspora," in *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions*, ed. Shemuel Safrai and Menahem Stern (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974–76) 117–83; Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)*, trans. A. Burkil, rev. and ed. by Geza Vermes and Fergus Miller (Edinburgh: Clark, 1973–87) 1–176; Tessa Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); and Erich S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2002).
 12. The literature on early Jewish-Christians has recently grown by leaps and bounds, partly due to the rise of Jewish–Christian dialogue. From the historical point of view, the works of Daniel Boyarin and Amy-Jill Levine are of great relevance. Two further works deserve notice: Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalik, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), and Judith M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2004).
 13. For background to this discussion, especially on Christian expansion into Asia, see Dale Irwin and Scott W. Sunquist, *History of the World Christian Movement: Volume I: Earliest Christianity to 1453* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001) 57–97. Histories of the early church are legion. However, studies on migration as a social phenomenon during the patristic era are scarce. The most useful single-volume histories of the early church include: Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (London: Penguin, 1967); Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2001); W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); and Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003). Multivolume histories include: Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937–45); Hubert Jedin and John Dolan, eds., *History of the Church* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965–81); Jean-Marie Mayeur et al., *Histoire du Christianisme des origines à nos jours* (Paris: Desclée, 1995). A helpful introduction to

built a great number of vibrant and mission-minded communities: Mesopotamia and the Roman province of Syria, with its three major cities, namely, Antioch, Damascus, and Edessa; Greece and Asia Minor; the Western Mediterranean, including Italy, France, Spain, and North Africa; Egypt, in particular Alexandria; and Asia, especially India, where Mediterranean and Syrian migrants settled.¹⁴ Here the face of Christianity is that of Middle Eastern migrants.

3. The third migration, which had an enormous and permanent impact on the shape of Christianity, was occasioned by the Emperor Constantine's transfer of the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Byzantium and the subsequent establishment of the imperial court at Constantinople (the "New/Second Rome"). There resulted not only momentous geopolitical changes but also a shift in the Christian center of gravity. Gradually there emerged a new and different type of Christianity, commonly known as "Orthodox Christianity," both within the "Byzantine Commonwealth," which was part of the Holy Roman Empire, and outside the Byzantine/Roman sphere of influence, each church developing its own liturgy, theology, monasticism, spirituality, and organization. Migration, both forced and voluntary, played a huge and determinative role in shaping the future of the Orthodox Church.

After the Islamic victory over the Byzantine Empire in the eighth century, the Byzantine Church, like its non-Byzantine sister churches, suffered grievously under Ottoman Muslim rule. The fateful year of 1453, when Constantinople, "God-protected city," was sacked by Mehmed II's Turkish army, spelled the end of the glorious history of the Great Church and the beginning of its long and still-ongoing "captivity." With the irreversible decline of "Second Rome," the Muscovite patriarchate arrogated the title of "Third Rome." In its turn, the Russian Orthodox Church has been deeply affected by migration and division. The Russian revolution of 1917 not only ended the Russian Empire but also fragmented the Russian church with the establishment of national Orthodox churches in Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland. The face of the church in this series of migrations became that of Greek, Middle Eastern, and Slavic peoples.

4. The fourth major population movement in early Christianity was the migration of the Germanic tribes, which include the Vandals, the Goths, the Alemani, the Angles, the Saxons, the Burgundians, and the Lombards. The Vandals, the

the various backgrounds of early Christianity is Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987). For a history of Asian Christianity, see Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia: Volume I: Beginnings to 1500* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998).

14. Whereas the story of the migration of Christians to the West is well known, that of Syrian missions to the East, particularly to India, is virtually ignored by older church history textbooks, partly on the assumption that the mission of St. Thomas to India is not historically unreliable. For a comprehensive account of St. Thomas's mission to India and the St. Thomas Christians, see George Menachery, ed., *The Thomapedia* (Ollur, Kerala: St. Joseph's, 2000).

Goths (both the Ostrogoths and the Visigoths), and the Lombards invaded Southern and Eastern Europe, particularly Spain, whereas the Angles and Saxons spread to the British Isles. Once converted to Christianity, these Germanic tribes established churches in their lands. Here the face of Christianity is that of northern European migrating “barbarians.”

5. Another mass migration, which radically altered the map of Christendom, coincided with the so-called “discovery” of the New World during the “Age of Discovery” under the royal patronage of Spain and Portugal. From the end of the fifteenth century the two Iberian countries competed with each other in discovering and occupying new lands outside Europe. Once again, it was migration—the movement of massive numbers of religious missionaries and secular Europeans to Latin America and Asia—that built up a new form of Christianity which, although at first heavily marked by European Christian (especially Spanish and Portuguese) traditions, eventually developed distinctive forms of Christianity that reflected the cultures and religious traditions of the indigenous peoples of Latin America and Asia. Here the face of Christianity is that of European, mostly Portuguese and Spanish, missionary migrants and of the indigenous peoples they conquered.
6. From about 1650 to the First World War (1914–18) migration played an increasingly vital role in modernization and industrialization in world economy.¹⁵ Warfare, conquest, the emergence of empires and nation-states, and Europe’s search for new wealth produced enormous migrations, both voluntary and forced. By the nineteenth century other European powers joined the commercial and colonizing projects started by Portugal and Spain: France, Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Holland vied with one another in the “scramble for Africa,” with most African countries, except Liberia and Ethiopia, falling under the domination of Europe. Almost all Asian countries, too, were colonized. Between 1800 and 1915 an estimated 50 to 60 million Europeans moved to overseas destinations, and by 1915, an estimated 15 percent of Europeans lived outside Europe. Again, the massive migrations of Europeans to Africa and Asia that, together with a large number of missionaries, especially Protestant, expanded Christianity in ways hitherto unimaginable and produced new forms of Christianity that eventually bore little resemblance to that of the European churches. In addition, the transatlantic slave trade from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries brought more than twelve million Africans—the largest forced migration in history—to the Americas and transformed the Christianity of the continent. The face of the church in these lands became that of European colonialists, and the peoples they conquered, especially Asians and Africans, and slaves.¹⁶

15. For an excellent account of world migrations, see Castles, De Haas, and Miller, *The Age of Migration* 84–197. These pages survey migration before 1945, migration in Europe since 1945, migration in the Americas, migration in the Asia-Pacific region, and migration in Africa and the Middle East.

16. On Asian migrants, see Sunil S. Amrith, *Migration and Diaspora in Modern Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2011); and Judith M. Brown, *Global South Asians: Introducing the Modern Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2006).

7. More than any other armed conflict, World War II caused global large-scale migrations. Following 1945 Europe has experienced massive migrations, as the authors of *The Age of Migration* have noted: “The upsurge in migratory movements in the post-1945 period and particularly since the mid-1980s, indicates that large-scale immigration has become an intrinsic part of European societies.”¹⁷ Large-scale migrations were spawned by events such as decolonization, which was accompanied by the return of former colonists to their countries of origin and the relocation of colonial subjects to colonizing countries. In Asia, while European countries were closing their doors to migrants, countries that were economically advanced or oil-rich but with small or declining populations (Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Emirates) imported work forces from poorer Asian countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, China, India, and Vietnam. Meanwhile, the African continent was in full transformation. The wars of anticolonial liberation, the establishment of dictatorial regimes, the exploitation of mineral riches, the apartheid system in South Africa, and regional, interregional and tribal conflicts produced a steady stream of refugees and migrants. Here the face of the church became that of Christian migrants in the diaspora.
8. Finally, in the Middle East the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Syria caused massive migrations, as mentioned above. In particular, the Iraq War wrought havoc upon the most ancient centers of Christianity, reducing to rubble what remained of Middle Eastern Christianity. In addition to war, globalization and ease of travel have made international, transnational, and transcontinental existence a daily fact of life. The contemporary face of the church is that of a global migrant institution that gives the term “local church” a new meaning. For the first time, the Catholic Church is truly “catholic,” that is, global, or “glocal,” with global diaspora populations represented in myriad localities. Christianity itself is now “World Christianity,” a world religion that has always been but is becoming more than ever diverse, multiple, transnational, transcultural, and polycentric in all aspects of its life, due to the demographic shift of the Christian population from the Global North to the Global South, globalization, and the presence of migrants from everywhere on all six continents.¹⁸

17. Castles, de Haas, and Miller, *The Age of Migration* 123.

18. See Peter C. Phan, “World Christianity: Its Implications for History, Religious Studies, and Theology,” *Horizons* 39 (2012) 171-88, doi: 10.1017/S0360966900010665, which contains a large bibliography pertinent to the theme of “World Christianity.” See also Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist, *History of the World Christian Movement*, vol. 1, *Earliest Christianity to 1453*; vol. 2, *Modern Christianity from 1453–1800* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2001–12); Douglas Jacobsen, *The World’s Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); Sebastian Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *Christianity as a World Religion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008); Mark A. Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009); Noel Davies and Martin Conway, *World Christianity in the 20th Century* (London: SCM, 2008); Dyron B. Daugherty, *The Changing World of*

It is clear that without migration the church as such, and Christianity as a whole, could not be what they are today. Migration is not simply a historical factor that has wrought immense and indelible changes to the church. Rather without it the church cannot fulfill its nature and mission. To put it in a Latin adage: *extra migrationem nulla ecclesia*.

I hope I have so far established two theses: the first is historical: *extra ecclesiam nulla ecclesia Americana*; the second theological: *extra migrationem nulla ecclesia*. Migrantness is a constitutive mark of the true church. Now, these two theses lead to a third: if the traditional maxim *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* holds true, and if the new adage *extra migrationem nulla ecclesia* also obtains, then from these two premises the conclusion would follow: *extra migrationem nulla salus*. But this requires that we reconceive Christian faith from the perspective of migration, which in turn demands that we do theology from this perspective as well.

Migration Theology: Doing Theology from Migration

That all theologies are inescapably perspectival and contextual is a truism, but this truth has often not been acknowledged in so-called classical theology, especially that of the Roman magisterium, which has tended to claim universal applicability apart from the context from which it originates. Vatican II rejects this methodological neutrality. The exordium of *Gaudium et Spes* begins with ringing, unforgettable words: “The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially those who are poor and afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well.”¹⁹ The council affirms that “in every age, the church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel” (*GS* 4). Since the council, discerning and interpreting the signs of times has been the hallmark of many types of theology, including liberation theology, which privileges the voices of the poor and the afflicted.

But which “sign of the times” is one that expresses most dramatically the “joys and hopes, the grief and anguish” of “the poor and afflicted” today? It is, I submit, migration. Are migrants not to be counted among the “poor and afflicted,” whose “grief and

Christianity: The Global History of a Borderless Religion (New York: Peter Lang, 2010); Charles Farhadian, ed., *Introducing World Christianity* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012); Justo L. González, *The Changing Shape of Church History* (Saint Louis: Chalice, 2002); Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley, eds., *The Cambridge History of Christianity: World Christianities c. 1815–c. 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2006); and Hugh McLeod, ed., *The Cambridge History of Christianity: World Christianities c. 1914–c. 2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2006).

19. *Gaudium et Spes* (December 7, 1965) 1 (hereafter cited in text as *GS*), http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

anguish” impel them to emigrate from their homelands, at the risk of life and limb, in search of a place where they can live their dreams of “joys and hopes”? With regard to migrants, *Gaudium et Spes* goes on to say,

Justice and equity also demand that the sort of mobility which is a necessary feature of developing economies should not be allowed to jeopardize the livelihood of individuals and their families. Every kind of discrimination in wages and working conditions should be avoided in regard to workers who come from other countries or areas and contribute by their work to the economic development of a people or region. Furthermore, no one, especially public authorities, should treat such workers simply as mere instruments of production. But as persons; they should help them to bring their families with them and to obtain decent housing conditions, and they should try to integrate them into the social life of the country or area to which they have come. (*GS* 66)

As important as these conciliar injunctions regarding the treatment of migrants are, there is a lot left unsaid by Vatican II, and there is a burgeoning literature on the ethical duties incumbent upon both the sending and the receiving countries of migration and on migrants as well as on their hosts.

Underlying this theological effort are a new method, which I term “migration theology,” and a new conceptualization of the main *loci theologici*, which I call a “theology of migration.” In order to discern the signs of the time correctly, a multidisciplinary approach will be the most fruitful way to construct a theology of migration. This means that in addition to such proper theological disciplines as biblical study, church history, systematics, and practical theology, a theology of migration must first derive its data from such secular disciplines as sociology, geography, demography, anthropology, psychology, history, politics, and migration law. As a result, the theologian will develop a “multi- and inter-cultural” epistemology of seeing from the margins and the underside of reality.

The first step of a theology of migration then is a sociopolitical and cultural analysis of migration, one that is not simply based on abstract numbers, surveys and statistics, grand sociological theories, and legal structures. Rather, a theology of migration must be deeply rooted in the flesh-and-blood stories of migrants themselves as human beings whose dignity and rights have often been trampled upon. In this way, theologians, especially if they themselves are not migrants or do not share their day-to-day lives with migrants, will acquire a deep appreciation of and empathy with migrants’ fears and hopes, courage and daring, pains and sufferings, displacement and marginalization, loss and nostalgia, and the daily struggle to dwell betwixt-and-between two or more worlds. Migrants’ experiences are narrated not only in word, private conversation, or public witness, in novel or short story, in prose or poetry, but also in song, drama, ritual, symbolization, visual art, and folklore.

This “socio-analytic mediation” is followed by the “hermeneutical mediation” whereby the life stories of migrants, sociological, historical, and legal data, and theories of migration are given a properly theological meaning. This is done both by correlating and interpreting these data in the light of the stories of migration in the Old and New Testaments, the teachings of the Bible on the obligation of special care for

and hospitality to migrants, the teachings of the church on migration, and the history of the movements of Christians throughout history. This hermeneutical mediation has a double purpose: interpreting and evaluating the Christian teachings on migration in the light of what can be learned from the social sciences and migrants' experiences, and conversely, interpreting and evaluating the scientific data in the light of the Bible and church teachings. Thus there must be a mutual illumination, complementation, and, when necessary, correction between the sources of faith and secular knowledge.

The third step of the theology of migration is "practical mediation." In this mediation the theological understanding of migration is brought to fruition by the theologian's "option for the poor," or in this case, "option for the migrant." This option must not of course remain at the level of empty or romanticizing rhetoric about migration and migrants, but must be translated into the theologian's concrete actions with and for migrants. An option for migrant as such does not of course validate the truth of a particular theology of migration, nor, it must be added, does a particular theology of migration validate a specific action in the option for migrants here and now. In other words, whether one practices what one holds does not make what one holds true or false, just as whether one holds what one practices does not make one's practices good or bad. The relationship between theory (orthodoxy) and practice (orthopraxis) is not one of reciprocal epistemological and axiological justification (true or false and good or bad) but rather one of mutual fecundity. That is, the issue is: Does theory (orthodoxy) enable good practice (orthopraxis), and does good practice (orthopraxis) produce a deeper understanding (orthodoxy)? There is therefore a dialectical tension between praxis and theory. First, praxis exerts pressure on theory to critically evaluate itself; theory, in turn, reacting, modifies praxis; next, theory and praxis are transcended in search of a more adequate understanding and more effective practice; and the spiraling and never-ending circular movement goes on and on.²⁰

Here I would like to point out that in the practice of migration theology, especially in the US, the role of interreligious dialogue is indispensable. As is well known, the US has become "the world's most religiously diverse country."²¹ Recent immigrants from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East bring with them religious traditions other than Christianity, particularly Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. The presence of these new immigrants with their diverse religions calls for an interreligious dialogue that is based not only on learned discussions but also on mutual welcome, acceptance,

20. For an extensive elaboration of this methodology, see Peter C. Phan, "The Experience of Migration as Source of Intercultural Theology," in *Contemporary Issues of Migration and Theology*, ed. Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) 179–209. See also Jorge E. Castillo Guerra, "A Theology of Migration: Toward an Intercultural Methodology," in *A Promised Land, a Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, ed. Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2008) 243–70.

21. See Diana Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002).

understanding, and sharing—in a word, friendship.²² It is friendship, love among equals, that migrants need from the hosts and the hosts need from migrants.

Thus, a Catholic theology of migration must first begin with a scientifically informed and up-to-date understanding of the phenomenon of migration in all its dimensions; next engage in a hermeneutics of the contemporary data on migration in the light of the sources of the Christian faith and vice versa; and finally test the fecundity of this theology of migration in a practice with and for migrants with an eye toward developing a richer theology of migration itself, which in turn leads to another more effective practice. With this method, a Catholic theology of migration does not simply formulate a theology about migration. Rather, with migration as the searching light and as a *locus theologicus*, it revisits Christian doctrines and raises the basic question, How do migration and migrants' experiences challenge and enrich our traditional conceptions of the Christian faith?

God-On-The-Move: A Theology of Migration

In light of migration as the existential characteristic of our human condition a theology of migration asks: Who is God? (trinitarian theology); Who is Jesus? (Christology); Who is the Holy Spirit? (Pneumatology); Who is a human being? (anthropology); What makes a Christian? (spirituality); What is salvation? (soteriology); What do we hope for? (eschatology); What is the church? (ecclesiology); How do we worship? (liturgical and sacramental theology); How do we relate to non-Christians? (interreligious dialogue); How do we behave and act? (theological ethics/moral theology); How do we minister to others, in and outside the church? (pastoral theology and missiology); How do we preach the Good News? (homiletics); How do we teach and transmit the faith? (catechetics); How do we theologize? (theology). Answering these and other questions while keeping migration and migrants front and center entails a radical reformulation of Christian theology and most likely requires a collaborative effort,

22. See James Fredericks and Tracy Sayuki Tiemeier, eds., *Interreligious Friendship after Nostra Aetate* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). On how migration and religion interact with each other, see Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, eds., *Religion across Borders: Transnational Immigrant Networks* (New York: Altamira, 2002); Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, eds., *Religion and the New Immigrants* (New York: Altamira, 2000); Karen I. Leonard et al., eds., *Immigrant Faiths: Transforming Religious Life in America* (New York: Altamira, 2006); Yvonne Yasbeck Haddad, Jane I. Smith, and John L. Esposito, eds., *Religion and Immigration: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Experiences in the United States* (New York: Altamira, 2003); Michael W. Foley and Dean E. Hoge, eds., *Religion and the New Immigrants: How Faith Communities Form Our Newest Citizens* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2007); Hussam S. Timani, Allen G. Jorgenson, and Alexander Y. Hwang, eds., *Strangers in This World: Multireligious Reflections on Immigration* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015); and M. Daniel Carroll R. and Leopoldo A. Sanchez M., eds., *Immigrant Neighbors among Us: Immigration across Theological Traditions* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015).

since rarely can a single theologian master all these different fields and disciplines. In what follows I will not deal with all of these issues and can do no more than sketch a bare outline of a Catholic theology of migration.²³

Deus Migrator, God the Primordial Migrant

Christian theology is speaking about God as God is manifested in God's intention and action for humanity and the world as well as about other realities insofar as they are related to God. From what God has done in the world—God the “Economic Trinity” or “God for us”—we try to get a glimpse into who God is—the “Immanent/Transcendent Trinity” or “God in Godself.” Etymologically, theology is *logos* about *theos*, a human discourse about God that is made possible and authorized by God's own speech to humanity, that is, God's self-revelation in history. In fact, we can only speak about God because God has spoken to us first. Our *theologia* is rooted in God's own *theologia*. Though God's *logos* (word) is spoken always and everywhere, especially in religions and their founders and prophets, God has spoken through God's

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23. Among works on a theology of migration, the following deserve notice: Daniel G. Groody, *Border of Death, Valley of Life: An Immigrant Journey of Heart and Spirit* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002); Gioacchino Campese and Pietro Ciallella, eds., *Migration, Religious Experience, and Globalization* (Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies, 2003); Groody and Campese, *A Promised Land, a Perilous Journey*; Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz, eds., *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching* (Plymouth, UK: Lexington, 2009); Fabio Baggio and Agnes M. Brazal, eds., *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University, 2008); vanThanh Nguyen and John M. Prior, eds., *God's People on the Move: Biblical and Global Perspectives on Migration and Mission* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014); Kristin E. Heyer, *Kinship across Borders: A Christian Ethic of Immigration* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 2012); Susanna Snyder, *Asylum-Seeking, Migration and Church* (London: Routledge, 2013); Julius-Kei Kato, *How Immigrant Christians Living in Mixed Cultures Interpret Their Religion* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2012); M. Daniel Carroll R., *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2013); Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan, eds., *Contemporary Issues of Migration and Theology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan, eds., *Theology of Migration in the Abrahamic Religions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); and Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan, eds., *Christianities in Migration: The Global Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). Along with Daniel Groody, Gioacchino Campese is among the most ardent advocates for a theology of migration. See his “The Irruption of Migrants, Theology of Migration in the 21st Century,” *Theological Studies* 73 (2012) 3–32, doi:10.1177/004056391207300101; “Mission and Migration,” in *A Century of Catholic Mission: Roman Catholic Missiology 1910 to the Present*, ed. Stephen B. Bevans (Oxford: Regnum, 2013) 247–60; “La théologie et les migrations: La redécouverte d’une dimension structurelle de la foi chrétienne,” *Dossier: Les catholiques et les migrations* 24 (2012) 135–55.

Spirit, according to Christian faith, in a special way to the people of Israel, and in a final and definitive way in Jesus of Nazareth who is called God's incarnated Logos (Word). God's words and deeds in history have been recorded in writings, the Bible that Christians regard as inspired and containing all the truths necessary for their salvation.

Because God is Absolute Mystery, to use Karl Rahner's expression, our speech about God, even the most learned, is nothing but a stammering, by means of analogies, to describe who God is, or to be more precise, what and who God is not. As mystics and proponents of negative theology do not tire of reminding us, all language about God is by way of affirmation, negation, and transcendence. For instance, we affirm that God is "Father." At the very same moment, we deny that God is "Father" in the way all the fathers we know in our experience are. Further, we transcend both our affirmation and negation by saying that God is "father" in the sense that God possesses all the good qualities of a "father," shorn of all imperfections, but to an infinite degree (God is infinitely "father"). If asked what we mean by that, we must confess that we do not know. There is an inherent *agnosis* (non-knowledge) in our *gnosis* (knowledge) of God. Thus, our knowledge about God is, to use Nicolas of Cusa's expression, *docta ignorantia* (learned ignorance), and all our talk about God ends in silence, and for believers, in adoration. Because of this intrinsic deficiency of human language about God, it is necessary to use a variety of metaphors, images, and analogies to speak of God. Some of these are "authorized," that is, used and licensed by the Bible, and therefore should not be discarded without cause. Others are not, but they must be used either to counteract the abuses of biblically licensed images detrimental to human dignity (for example, the use of the "fatherhood" of God to bolster patriarchy and androcentrism) or to expand our understanding of God (for example, the use of feminine and motherly images in speaking of God).

It is in this context that a theology of migration can refer to God, I suggest, as *Deus Migrator* (God the Migrant). Of course, the threefold movement of affirmation–negation–transcendence in God-talk must also be applied here: God *is*, is *not*, and is *infinitely* a migrant. With this caution in mind, we can explore how the Christian God can be thought of as the *Deus Migrator*, "God the Migrant" or "Migratory God" or "God-on-the-Move." Even though the term "migrant" is not used of God in the Bible, there are hints suggesting that God possesses the characteristics commonly associated with migration and migrants.²⁴

Migration means movement, and the Christian God is a "mover" par excellence. To explain the possibility of change in the world Aristotle argues that in order there to be movement at all, there must be *ho ou kinoumenos kinei* (the Unmoved Mover), *proton kinous akinetos* (the Prime Mover), *protaitios* (the First Cause), that which moves everything in the universe but is itself not moved by any prior mover. Subsequently, classical metaphysics of substance portrays God as immutable and impassible (the Unmoved). But it does not follow from the notion of "Unmoved" that God cannot be

24. For further reflections on God as a migrant, see Ched Myers, *Our God Is Undocumented: Biblical Faith and Immigration Justice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2012).

conceived as living and hence, “moving” since, as Aristotle himself puts it, “life also belongs to God; for the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality, and God’s essential actuality is life most good and eternal. We say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God; for this is God.”²⁵

It is to be noted that in denying change and suffering in God the intent is to affirm God’s absolute perfection or God’s eternal and perfect life. What is denied is the idea that there is within God change as increase from imperfection to perfection, from lack to fullness (or as Aristotle puts it, from potency to act), or loss of perfection and fullness. But this denial of change in God does not entail that God cannot and does not “move,” “change,” and “suffer,” not out of necessity or by chance but out of God’s own free will and out of love. At any rate, whatever philosophical arguments can be mounted in defense of God’s immutability and impassibility, from the point of view of the Christian faith in God’s creation of the world and especially in God’s incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth, it is incontrovertible that there are “events” or “movements” in God. These events or movements, while not necessarily entailing increase or loss of divinity and attributing temporality in the sense of successive moments of time in God, do affirm a real movement within God from a noncreative God to a creative God (whose creative act occurred with, and not before or after, the creation of time) and from an unincarnated God to an incarnated God (whose becoming human occurred in the “fullness of time”). I submit that these two movements in God may be interpreted as God’s migratory acts.²⁶

First, God’s creative act can be interpreted as God’s migration out of what is divine into what is not, a movement that bears all the marks of human migration. In creating that which is other than Godself, God crosses the border between Absolute Spirit and finite matter, migrating from eternity to temporality, from omnipotence into weakness, from self-sufficiency (aseity) to utter dependence, from secure omniscience to fearful ignorance, from the total domination of the divine will over all things to the utter subjection of the same will to the unpredictable conditions of human freedom, from life to death. In the creative act God experiences for the first time the precarious, marginalized, threatened, and endangered condition of the migrant.

25. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 12.1072b, ed. and trans. W. D. Ross, *Metaphysics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University, 1995) 2:1552–728 at 1695.

26. I am not here engaging with the arguments of process philosophy and theology in favor of change in God, especially as they are put forward by Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne. I am simply arguing that it is possible from the Christian faith in creation and the Incarnation to affirm change in God if it is understood not as arising out of necessity or need or chance on God’s part but out of God’s freedom and love. In this I am inspired by Karl Rahner’s thought on the Incarnation. See his *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, trans. William Dych (New York: Seabury, 1978), especially 212–28. Furthermore, I am interpreting this change in God as God’s migration into the world.

Thus, the migrant is the *imago Dei*, created in the image and likeness of God as any other human being equally is, and this the ontological ground of human rights. Therefore, the migrant possesses all the human rights which must be respected by all.²⁷ However, as *imago Dei*, the migrant does not enjoy any stronger claim to human dignity and human rights than the citizens of the host country, or anyone else for that matter.²⁸ What is distinctive and unique about the migrant is that he or she is the *imago Dei migratoris*, the privileged, visible, and public face of the God who chooses, freely and out of love, to migrate from the safety of God's eternal home to the strange and risky land of the human family, in which God is a foreigner needing embrace, protection, and love. Thus, when the migrant is embraced, protected, and loved, the *Deus Migrator* is embraced, protected, and loved. By the same token, when the migrant as *imago Dei migratoris* is rejected, marginalized, declared "illegal," imprisoned, tortured, or killed, it is the original of that image, the *Deus migrator*, who is subjected to the same inhuman and sinful treatment.

Second, the Incarnation of God's Word in Jesus of Nazareth can equally be regarded as God's migratory movement.²⁹ Indeed, if the theology of the Incarnation of Scotus rather than Aquinas is followed, the Incarnation is to be understood not as simply God's emergency plan after humanity's fall into sin but rather as the *telos* and culmination of God's first migration into creation. In this migration into history as a Jew in the land of Palestine, God, like a human migrant, entered a far country where God, as part of a colonized nation, encounters people of different racial, ethnic, and national backgrounds, with strange languages, unfamiliar customs, and foreign cultures, among whom God, again like a migrant after a life-threatening journey, "pitched the tent" or "tabernacled" (*eskēnōsen*: John 1:14).

Furthermore, as truly divine and truly human, the incarnated *Logos*, like the migrant, dwelt betwixt-and-between worlds, acting as a mediator between God and

27. Of course not all thinkers ground human rights in the fact that humans are created in the image and likeness of God. This claim for human rights is unique to the Abrahamic religions.

28. Daniel G. Groody, one of the few Catholic theologians who have written extensively on the theology of migration, makes an eloquent and forceful case for the migrant's human rights based on the fact that the migrant is the *imago Dei*. Groody elaborates on the need to cross over the four divides separating migration from theology by (1) moving from treating the migrant as a problem to seeing the migrant as the *imago Dei*; (2) joining the divine with the human by seeing Jesus as *Verbum Dei*; (3) uniting the human with the divine in understanding Christian mission as *missio Dei*; and (4) overcoming xenophobia by subordinating nation/country to the kingdom of God by considering the goal of human existence as *visio Dei*. See his "Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees," in Kerwin and Gerschutz, eds., *And You Welcomed Me* 1–30.

29. Though the history of God's migration with Israel—with the patriarchs and during the covenanted people's exodus out of Egypt, exile, and return from exile—is an intrinsic part of the Christian faith, I leave it out of consideration here and concentrate instead on the distinctive beliefs of the Christian faith.

humans. Not unlike the migrant, the incarnated *Logos* is rooted both in his native country (divinity) and makes a new home as a stranger in the land of Israel (his Jewish humanity). Consequently, the traditional doctrine of the hypostatic union in Jesus should not be taken to mean a kind of static joining of two opposite ontological states but a dynamic movement back and forth between them, just as the migrant has to move and “mediate” constantly between the two existential conditions of being this-and-that.

Jesus the Paradigmatic Migrant

As the *Logos/Son-of-God-made-flesh*, Jesus of Nazareth is the perfect *imago Dei Migratoris*, and to paraphrase Hebrews 1:3, the “reflection” of the glory of God the Migrant and the “exact imprint of God’s very being” (NRSV) as a migrant. There is Jesus’s status as a stranger and migrant in his own country, his foreign ancestry (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Beersheba), his birth far from home (Luke 2:1–7), his and his family’s escape to Egypt as refugees (Matt 2:13–14), his ministry as a homeless and itinerant preacher who has nowhere to lay his head (Luke 9:58), his fate as an unwelcome stranger in his own country (John 1:11), and his self-identification with the stranger (Matt 25:35)—so many reminders of the day-to-day existence of migrants in both their own homelands and their host countries.

Furthermore, Jesus carried out his ministry at the margins of his society. A migrant and border-crosser at the very roots of his being, Jesus performed his ministry of announcing and ushering in the kingdom of God always at the places where borders meet and hence at the margins of the two worlds separated by their borders. A marginal Jew himself, he crossed these borders back and forth, repeatedly and freely, be they geographical, racial, gender, social, economic, political, cultural, or religious. What is new about his message about the kingdom of God, which is good news to some and scandal to others, is that for him it removes all borders serving as barriers, both natural and man-made, and is absolutely all-inclusive. Jesus invited Jews and non-Jews, men and women, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak, the healthy and the sick, the clean and the impure, the righteous and the sinners, and any other imaginable categories of peoples and groups, to enter into the house of his merciful and forgiving Father. Even in his “preferential option for the poor” Jesus did not abandon and exclude the rich and the powerful. These, too, are called to conversion and to live a just, all-inclusive life.

As a stranger and migrant, Jesus gratefully and gracefully accepted the hospitality others showed him. He was the guest at the home of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary (Luke 10:38–42), of Andrea and Simon (Mark 1:29), and of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10), and he did not hesitate to share table fellowship with sinners and tax collectors (Mark 2:15). Paradoxically, though a stranger and a guest, Jesus also played the host. In his many parables he presents the kingdom of God as a banquet to which all are welcomed, especially “the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame” (Luke 14:21). In the

same vein, once, when he was invited to dinner, he told his host, “When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind” (Luke 14:13). At the Last Supper, he put on a towel and washed his disciples’ feet, though he was their “Teacher and Lord” (John 13:1–20). After his resurrection, he prepared a barbecued breakfast for his exhausted disciples after a night of unsuccessful fishing (John 21:4–13).

Standing between the two worlds, excluding neither but embracing both, Jesus was able to be fully inclusive of both. But this also means that he is the marginal person par excellence. People at the center of any society or group, as a rule, possess wealth, power, and influence. As the threefold temptation shows, Jesus, the border-crosser and the dweller at the margins, renounced precisely these three things. Because he was at the margins, in his teaching and miracle-working, Jesus created a new and different center, the center constituted by the meeting of the borders of the many and diverse worlds, often in conflict with one another, each with its own center that relegated the “other” to the margins. It is at this margin-center that marginal people meet one another. In Jesus, the margin where he lived became the center of a new society without borders and barriers, reconciling all peoples, “Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female” (Gal 3:28).

A marginal person throughout his life, Jesus also died as such. His violent death on the cross was a direct result of his border-crossing and ministry at the margins which posed a serious threat to the interests of those occupying the economic, political, and religious center. Even the form of his death, by crucifixion, indicates that Jesus was an outcast. As the Letter to Hebrews says, he died “outside the city gate and... outside the camp” (Heb 13:12–13). Symbolically, however, hung between heaven and earth, at the margins of both worlds, Jesus acted as the mediator and intercessor between God and humanity.

But even in death Jesus did not remain within the boundaries of what death means: failure, defeat, destruction. By his resurrection he crossed the borders of death into a new life, thus bringing hope where there was despair, victory where there was defeat, freedom where there was slavery, and life where there was death. In this way, the borders of death become frontiers to life in abundance.

As the paradigmatic migrant, Jesus holds up to migrants a way of life that is not exclusively centered on the well-being of oneself and one’s family but is also committed to the promotion of the kingdom of God marked by justice and love for all, and by solidarity with other migrants, especially those who are poorer and weaker than themselves. As a gracious host, Jesus reminds migrants, though poor and marginalized, that they must be generous hosts to others, especially to their fellow migrants. Lastly, Jesus’s final victory over his suffering and death in his resurrection is a source of patience and hope for migrants on their own way of the cross as they struggle for their survival.³⁰

30. For further reflections on Jesus as a migrant, see Deirdre Cornell, *Jesus Was a Migrant* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2014).

The Holy Spirit: The Push and Pull of Migration

In the Bible, the Holy Spirit is depicted with various images such as fire, wind, breath, life, power, energy, spirit, gift, grace, and love. Subsequently, Christian theology of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology) highlights the Spirit's different activities within the Trinity such as the Holy Spirit "proceeding" from the Father and/through the Son, or as the bond of love uniting the Father and the Son, or as the divine gift. Within the history of salvation the Holy Spirit is presented as the loving and gracious God dwelling in human beings and as the divine power pushing history toward the fulfillment of the kingdom of God. In this sense the Holy Spirit may be said to be the "push" and "pull" of the kingdom of God.

Among the many theories of migration, one traces its origin to the "push" and "pull" of the international labor market.³¹ The low wages and the high rate of unemployment in the sending countries "push" their people to migrate, while the countries—normally the developed ones—with decreasing work forces, low birth rates, high labor demand, and better pay exert the "pull" on the migratory flow. From the Christian perspective, the Holy Spirit can be said on the one hand to "push" migrants out of their poverty and inhuman living conditions, infusing them with courage, trust, and imagination to envision a different life for themselves and their families, one consonant with the promise of a world of justice given by the *Deus Migrator*, whose image and likeness they are. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit as the entelechy of history can also be said to "pull" migrants toward its final goal which, though inclusive of a minimum of material conditions required for a life with dignity for all, transcends all that humans can ever hope to achieve.

Eschatology and Migration

The last-mentioned point about the Holy Spirit as the final goal of the migrant's journey raises another important aspect of a Catholic theology of migration: the impact of migration on eschatology.³² To be a migrant is to be on the move, and one of the most fundamental virtues required of people on the move is hope. Movement and hope are precisely the two essential elements of Christian eschatology. A movement or journey entails a goal; otherwise it is blind and directionless. For Christians, that goal is the kingdom of God, as the common destiny of all human beings and human history, and ultimately Godself. Because the kingdom of God is God's reign of universal justice, perfect peace, total reconciliation, and unbounded happiness it cannot by definition be achieved by human efforts. Essentially a utopia—literally, a good place and no-place—it is the deepest desire of the human heart and yet remains forever an asymptotic goal

31. See Michael J. Piore, *Birds of Passage: Migrant Labor in Industrial Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1979).

32. For an insightful study of eschatology from the perspective of migration, see Anselm Kyongsuk Min, "Migration and Christian Hope: Historical and Eschatological Reflections on Migration," in Baggio and Brazal, eds., *Faith on the Move* 177–202.

beyond human reach. It lurks behind all messianic ideologies, driving history forward. Yet this collective dream will never be fully realized in our midst and by our own doing.

This truth is driven home more vividly and bitterly to migrants than to anyone else, as their hopes for a better life are dashed again and again, and that is why, more than anyone else, migrants need hope. But hope is not simply a wish that may or may not come true, a *velleity* for something ephemeral, a desire for something the absence of which leaves one ultimately indifferent, or a passive waiting for some fateful future happening. In contrast, hope is a vigilant standing-on-tiptoe, a longing expectation, a leaning forward into the future. Above all, hope is embodied in actions to bring about, or at least prepare for and anticipate, the coming of the reality that is hoped for.³³

Because the object of eschatological hope is beyond human power, the person who hopes for it must renew her or his hope again and again by calling to mind the promises that God has fulfilled in history, and for Christians, what God has accomplished in creation and redemption, especially in Israel and Jesus Christ. Thus, eschatological hope is deeply rooted in the past. However, this remembering (*anamnesis*) is not just a private mental act, a nostalgic hankering after the good old days in the old country. Rather God's past deeds and faithfulness are celebrated here and now in the community of other migrants, by word and sacrament, so that together they can look forward (*prolepsis*) to the eschatological future that God promises and which is no other than Godself. This future reality is, in Anselm Min's precise summary,

the common destiny of all humanity: their common subjection to the sovereignty of the one Creator and the saving providence of the triune God, their fundamental equality as creatures before God, their common redemption through the one mediator, Jesus Christ, their common eschatological call to share in the communion of the triune God as members of the Body of Christ, their social interdependence with one another in sin and grace. All human beings have been created in the likeness of the triune God and called to become, in the power and movement of the Holy Spirit, brothers and sisters of Christ the Son and in him sons and daughters of the Father and therefore also brothers and sisters of one another.³⁴

Min goes on to highlight three ways in which migrants, especially undocumented migrant workers, are "the paradigmatic symbol of our eschatological destiny today." First, migrant workers, insofar as they are refused universal solidarity, are "the judge of our unworthiness to enter into the eschatological fulfillment in the community of the triune God." Second, migrants urge us to "return to our most profound eschatological identity as sisters and brothers of one another in Christ the Son, and sons and daughters of the father in the power and movement of the reconciling Spirit." Third, migrants remind us that "we are all migrants to our eschatological destiny, and the

33. For reflections on hope as an eschatological virtue, see Peter C. Phan, *Living into Death, Dying into Life: A Christian Theology of Death and Life Eternal* (Hobe Sound, FL: Lectio, 2014) 131–42.

34. *Ibid.* 190.

success of that destiny depends on what we do now to the migrant worker, especially the undocumented.”³⁵

Migration and Christian Existence

Min’s last point leads us to a cluster of issues that require consideration in a Catholic theology of migration and can be grouped under the general rubric of “Christian existence.” They include the question of who human beings are today (anthropology); how Catholics should worship in a way that fosters solidarity with migrants (liturgy); and which virtues are especially apposite in the age of migration (ethics). A brief word on each of these by way of conclusion is in order.

Victorino A. Cueto describes human life in general today, and not only that of migrants, as “exilic existence in a hyperglobalized world.”³⁶ In the globalized world, where persons often belong to more than one social and cultural grouping, existence is necessarily hybrid: it is lived “out of place,” in “exile,” “inbetween worlds.” We all are migrants, or better, co-migrants now. As such, when we welcome, protect, and love the foreigners, the strangers, and migrants among us, we not only welcome, protect, and love them as we embrace, protect, and love ourselves, but also welcome, protect, and love ourselves in and through them. Together, we natives and migrants—the distinction has now become otiose—are all pilgrims, not back to where we came from (the countries of origin) nor to the foreign lands (the countries of destination) because neither is our true home. As the celebrated Letter to Diognetus puts it most eloquently, Christians “live in their own countries, but only as aliens (*paroikoi*). They have a share in everything as citizens (*politai*), and endure everything as foreigners (*xenoi*). Every foreign land is their fatherland, and yet every fatherland is a foreign land.”³⁷

Christian life is also ecclesial existence. Migration is a permanent feature of the church, and not just a historical phenomenon in its history.³⁸ Like unity, catholicity, holiness, and apostolicity, “migrantness,” as has been pointed out above, is a mark of the true church because only a church that is conscious of being an institutional migrant on the way to the kingdom of God and cares for all migrants in this common journey, truly practices faith, hope, and love. Because of its intrinsic migrantness, in its liturgical celebrations the church must worship the *Deus Migrator* in Jesus the paradigmatic migrant and by the power of “push” and “pull” of the Holy Spirit. In this way, not only are migrants fully integrated into the local churches and can participate as equals in all church activities, but also migration becomes the spirit animating church worship. Daniel Groody has offered insightful reflections on the link between the Eucharist and

35. *Ibid.* 199.

36. See his “‘Out of Place’: Exilic Existence in a Hyperglobalized World,” in Baggio and Brazal, eds., *Faith on the Move* 1–19.

37. “The So-Called Letter to Diognetus” 5:5 in Cyril C. Richardson, ed. and trans., *Early Christian Fathers* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 217.

38. On church as a migratory community, see Emmanuel Serafica Guzman, “The Church as ‘Imagined Communities’ among Differentiated Social Bodies,” in Baggio and Brazal, eds., *Faith on the Move* 118–154.

immigration, highlighting the connection between Jesus's actions and words at the Last Supper and the migrant's life: between "He Took the Bread" and the migrant's decision to migrate; between "He Broke the Bread" and the migrant's broken body; between "And Gave It to His Disciples" and the migrant's self-sacrifice for the good of others; between "Do This in Memory of Me" and the church's "option for the poor/migrant."³⁹

Finally, "welcoming, protecting, and loving" the stranger and the migrant entails an appropriate ethical behavior. Kristin E. Heyer has proposed a Christian ethic of immigration in which "civic kinship" and "subversive hospitality" serve as the guiding principles for our relationship with migrants. "Welcoming" migrants takes the form of generous hospitality, a virtue to which all Catholic theologians of migration have given pride of place.⁴⁰ "Protecting" migrants takes the form of defending human rights.⁴¹ "Loving" migrants takes the form of compassion (suffering with) and solidarity. In this compassionate solidarity, not only do I love the migrant as—in the sense of in the way that and as much as—I love myself (as enjoined by the command, "Love thy neighbor like yourself") but also I love the migrant because the migrant is myself inasmuch as I myself am a migrant (as implied in Deut 24:17–18: "You shall not violate the rights of the alien or of the orphan, nor take the clothing of a widow as a pledge. For, remember, you were once slaves in Egypt").⁴²

The migrant is the person in and through whom I can discover my true identity, who I am: a migrant, or better still, a co-migrant with Jesus, the paradigmatic migrant, and with fellow migrants, all of us energized by the push-and-pull of the Holy Spirit, on our migration back to the home of *Deus Migrator*, God the Migrant, God-on-the-Move.

39. See his "Fruit of the Vine and Work of Human Hands: Immigration and the Eucharist," in Groody and Campese, eds., *A Promised Land, a Perilous Journey* 299–315.

40. See William O'Neill, "Christian Hospitality and Solidarity with the Stranger," in Kerwin and Gerschutz, eds., *And You Welcomed Me* 149–55.

41. See Graziano Battistella, "The Human Rights of Migrants: A Pastoral Challenge," in Campese and Ciallella, eds., *Migration, Religious Experience, and Globalization* 76–102; Graziano Battistella, "Migration and Human Dignity: From Politics of Exclusion to Politics Based on Human Rights," in Groody and Campese, eds., *A Promised Land, a Perilous Journey* 177–91; Donald Kerwin, "Rights, the Common Good, and Sovereignty of Service," in Kerwin and Gerschutz, eds., *And You Welcomed Me* 93–121; Donald Kerwin, "The Natural Rights of Migrants and Newcomers: A Challenge to U.S. Law and Policy," in Groody and Campese, eds., *A Promised Land, a Perilous Journey* 192–209; and Agnes M. Brazal, "Cultural Rights of Migrants: A Philosophical and Theological Exploration," in Baggo and Brazal, eds., *Faith on the Move* 68–92.

42. For further reflections on theological ethics, see Agnes M. Brazal and María Teresa Dávila, eds., *Living with(out) Borders: Catholic Theological Ethics on the Migrations of Peoples* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2016). In my contribution to the volume, I argue that one of the most important virtues for both the migrant and the native is remembering one's migration: "'Always Remember Where You Came From': An Ethics of Migrant Memory" 173–86. This is an abridged version of a much longer original text.

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