

## The Space Between: Examining Where Faith and Culture Meet

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Fr. Richard Rohr says that all transformation happens in a liminal space, "When we allow ourselves to be drawn into sacred space, into *liminality*." The people in the borderlands experience God's transformation in the liminal spaces of faith, politics, and culture. [Comunidad Limen Christian Church](#) in Tucson, Arizona, is creating a movement of progressive Latinxs living out their faith in that, 'in-betweenness' of life.

"Conversaciones de Fe" is one of our monthly activities. It's a communal practice where participants share their lives, celebrate their faith, and engage in a critical study of the Bible. At one of our gatherings, we did a post-colonial reading of the story of Moses. We asked this question, what are the similarities between Moses' life in Egypt and the lives of Latinxs in the US? When we consider Moses' hybrid identity, - that of being an insider (Egyptian) and outsider (descendant of Hebrew people) - what are the similarities to the complex struggles of Latinx people today? Our theological conversation ended with a concern about trauma.

## NBA Mental Health and Wellness Partnership

During July, the [Rev. Héctor J. Hernández](#) and the Rev. Bere Gil Soto, members of the [NBA Mental Health & Wellness Initiative](#), facilitated virtual conversations to help us address some of these questions. The theme was, "Longing to Belonging: No Soy de Aquí Ni Soy de Allá" (translated as *I am not from here nor there*). The dialogue was an opportunity to delve a little deeper into the joy of being recognized as a beloved child of God, particularly when one straddles between cultures. At the same time, it prepared the ground for a constructive reflection about the trauma caused by our immigration stories, cultural grief, and our constant search for belonging in American society.



I was not aware that in a new church movement, we would be able to partner with NBA through their Mental Health & Wellness Initiative. I asked Héctor about the possibility of having more of these virtual conversations. His answer was, "Of course, if participants have more questions, we can do this again." The response from the people connecting through Zoom and Facebook Live was great, and all of us had a lot of questions. I think that is a beautiful thing because talking about mental health issues is not common in a church. Our community has found these spaces for conversation, refreshing, and liberating.

## **Shifting Narratives**

As we start a new 'faith collective,' we are intentionally considering the new paradigms where ministry is taking place. There are young generations of activists, who claim shifting social and cultural narratives as part of their identity. These young leaders do not understand faith only as spiritual. They intuitively know that the spiritual is 'incarnational,' and 'spirituality' is also 'social action.' However, there's a heavy toll taken on their emotional and spiritual wellbeing. We at Comunidad Limen CC, want to be a part of these changes, co-conspirators in building God's kingdom. As a faith community, we seek to provide a space of refuge and renewal for the mind and the spirit of our burdened people. We remain grateful for the partnership we have with NBA to help us offer these liminal and sacred spaces.

*Rev. Pedro Ramos Goycolea is the pastor and organizer of Comunidad Limen Christian Church and is also pastor of [Desert Dove Christian Church](#) in Tucson, Arizona. Following God's call, Pedro and his wife, Alejandra, moved to the United States in 2006 from Sonora, Mexico, to start a new church in Sahuarita, AZ. He holds an M.Div. Degree from Pacific School of Religion (PSR) in Berkeley, California, and is an ordained minister with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). While attending PSR, he served as Pastoral Associate at Eden UCC in Hayward, California. After graduating, Pedro served as Program Director of the New Mexico Faith Coalition for Immigrant Justice and as Senior Pastor of Iglesia Congregacional Unida UCC in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Pedro enjoys playing guitar and coaching little league baseball. Pedro and Alejandra reside in Sahuarita with their two boys, Santiago and Agustin, and their pug dog Simón.*

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*As the health and social services general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the National Benevolent Association partners with congregations, regions, general ministries, and a variety of Disciples-related health and social service*

*providers to create communities of compassion and care. Founded in 1887 by six women responding to the needs of the day and on their doorsteps, for more than 130 years the NBA has continued to serve "the least of these." Learn more at [www.nbacares.org](http://www.nbacares.org).*