



Fear, Forgiveness & Freedom on the Labyrinth: Stories and Images from around the World

Pastor and children (some HIV positive) walking the
labyrinth at HEAL Africa, Goma, Congo

What good can a labyrinth do?



What good has a labyrinth done in your life?

Wisdom Ways Temporary Labyrinth, St. Paul, MN

Unleashed creativity



Provided a safe place for “real” prayers

Lanser Labyrinth, AZ



Some of the good the labyrinth has done in my life...

Invited shared visions

Charism Labyrinth by C F Dudley



Taken me internally
and externally way beyond
anywhere I could have imagined!

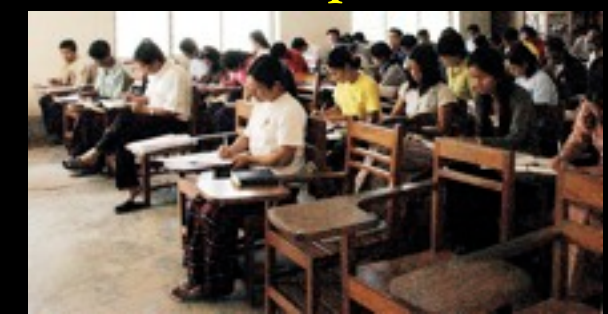


Expanded my horizons
St. Quentin Labyrinth, France

Faith, Hope and Love Global Ministries exists to creativity inspire, teach, and encourage leaders, ministers, and other motivated individuals to live fully, grow spiritually, and serve Christ more effectively.



- ❖ Teaching short-term courses, workshops and seminars
- ❖ Coaching of individuals and groups
- ❖ Providing labyrinth prayer experiences and other creative opportunities for spiritual renewal and connections to God.
- ❖ Offering written and web resources



What good can a labyrinth do?

Fear & Labyrinths

A photograph of a sandy beach with seaweed and driftwood. The text "Our bodies carry our fear..." is overlaid in the center.

Our bodies carry our fear...

fear of the future

fear of change

fear of being wrong

fear of disconnection

fear of unemployment

fear of being hurt

fear of financial ruin

fear of insignificance

fear of hurting others

fear of loss

fear of failure

fear of meaninglessness

fear of vulnerability

fear of illness

fear of dangerous people

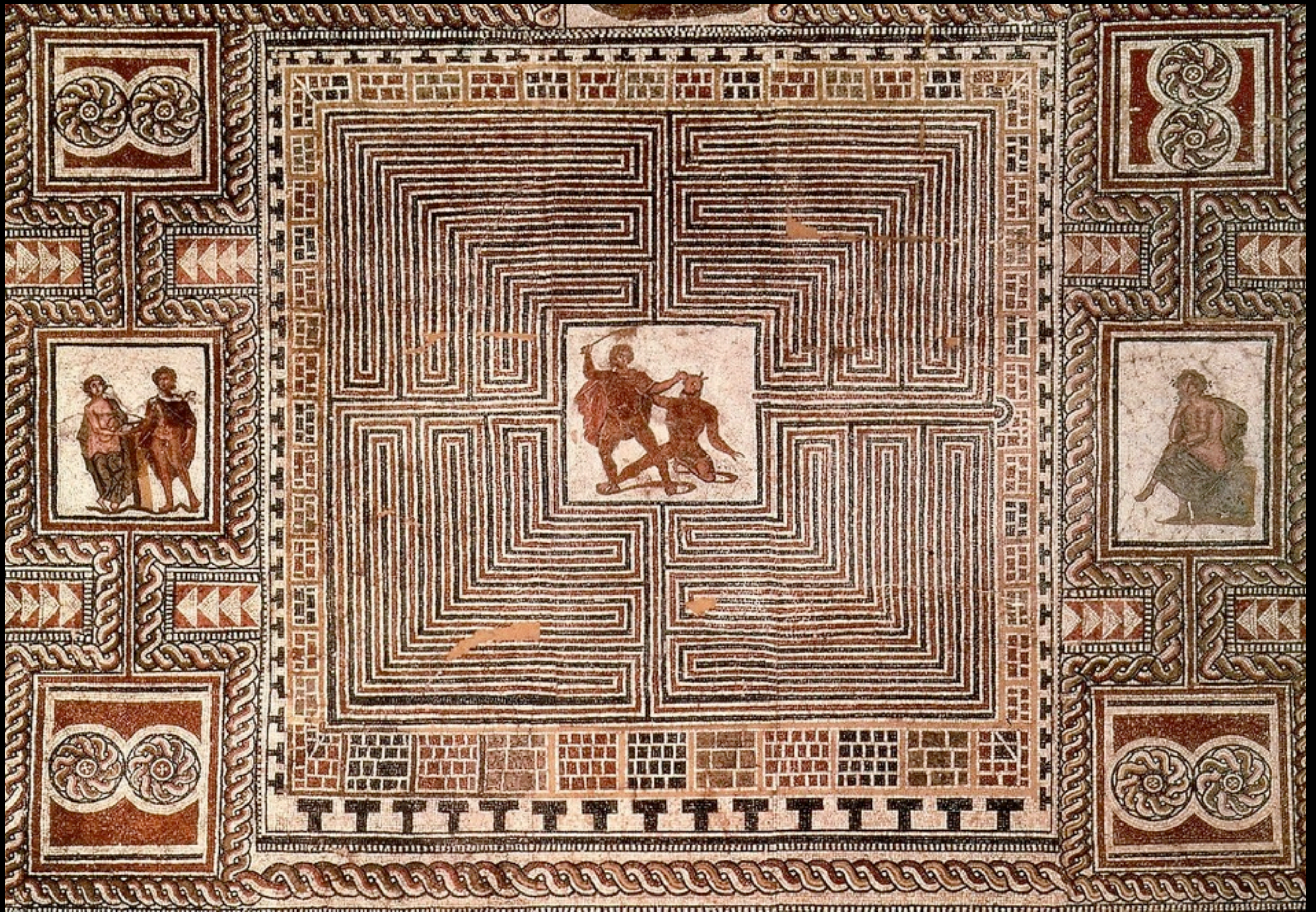
fear of success

fear of being powerless

fear of death

fear of pain

fear of the unknown



Mosaic Labyrinth now at the Kuntz Museum in Vienna, Austria



Some people
know that the
labyrinth
will invite
change.
Their fear
keeps them
from
trying it.

Marilyn Larsen,
Jill's paraphrase

Fear of The Holy:

What might happen if we encounter The Sacred One?





Labyrinth Prayer, HEAL Africa
Goma, D. R. Congo October 2007



The smoking Nyiragongo Volcano

The lingering effects of the civil war from 1998-2003, the ongoing problems of “security” caused by warring militias, the refugee camps for internally displaced persons with all the misery they hold, the lack of governmental infrastructure or help, soaring inflation, widespread poverty, hunger...these problems affect nearly every resident in overwhelming ways. Fear is a daily companion for the residents of Goma.

The paths of this labyrinth were made of crushed lava. Dividers were made from larger pieces of lava. Life in Goma, D. R. Congo could easily be described as “suffering upon suffering.”



Participants of Pastors' Leadership workshop in Burma spoke of their experiences:

- I prayed for the Myanmar people in prison who are suffering. As I was walking, I thought about them and prayed for them.
- Before I get started I worried that something bad would happen to me. Now I feel peace and joy. Don't know how to express it. What God wants us to do is labyrinth prayer.
- There is a way out. For every way, there must be a way out. In the Buddhist way of circle—there is no way out. But in life, for Christians, there must be a way out like the labyrinth.





This young woman, who helped build the labyrinth at HEAL Africa in the Congo, was waiting for surgery. The baby on her back was conceived when she was raped. Women and girls with fistulas (abnormal openings between organs) are often shunned by their husbands, relatives, and communities. While living at HEAL Africa they learn skills that will help them support themselves and their families when they return to their villages. We can not begin to imagine the fears that they bring when they enter a labyrinth.

Children enjoyed the labyrinth at HEAL Africa, as they always do! These boys walked and ran it many times. Most of these kids lived nearby. Some test positive for HIV/AIDS and are receiving antiretroviral medications and food so that the drugs will be effective. I was so happy that they could experience a safe, spiritually supportive environment where they could enjoy themselves and each other. The labyrinth gave them a respite from the many fears they know in an embodied way.



Using labyrinths during times of fear..





When I am afraid,
I put my trust in God.
In God, whose word I praise,
in God I trust; I am not afraid;
what can flesh do to me?

Psalms 56:3-4

Teacher and AIDS orphans Bukavu, D. R. Congo
Labyrinth constructed by the family of Rev. Lipandaski
Photo courtesy of Jacob Lipandaski

“...even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil...” Psalm 23:4



Labyrinth installed at Kitgum (war-zone) in northern Uganda at an elementary school.
Photo © Lynn Coghill



Praying a labyrinth in response to the tsunami in Asia, 2005
St. Paul Monastery, Temporary Shell Labyrinth

I John 4:18b



“...perfect love casts out fear.”

What might happen if we walk in love
as well as, or, when possible, instead of in fear?



heart shaped 7 circuit labyrinth produced by ispiritual.com

When it comes to fear,
What good can a labyrinth do?

Praying Using A Paper Labyrinth



Experiencing the Labyrinth Through Your Hand or Eyes

*Use your finger, a pen, or your eyes
to follow the pathway
to the center
and back out.*

Forgiveness and Labyrinths

Forgiveness, Pilgrimage & Labyrinths: Outward journeys for inward spiritual purposes



One of the oldest dated labyrinths, 1500 BC, Marin Spain
on rock outcrop beside the Atlantic Ocean



“Life is suffering.”

Buddhist Teaching

“Life is difficult.”

Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*

Forgiveness is
often needed.

First stone of the Chartres, France labyrinth
shaped like a chalice. Installed in 1201.

revenge



freedom

reconciliation

survivor

perpetrator



transgressions

pilgrimage

pardon

punishment

guilt



confession

restitution

“I believe in the forgiveness of sins...” Apostles’ Creed

Forgiving something does not make the forgiven act less horrible, but it does break the power that act holds over you. The truth is that those who don't forgive are dying from the unforgiveness. The bitterness eats them up. When you forgive, you are healthier and more alive. Ugandan Pastor speaking of work with Rwandan Genocide survivors.



Chartres labyrinth stitched in 2008 by a widow & teacher of orphans of AIDs and the war in Congo.

What can move/shift/change as we move using labyrinths?



University students giving the labyrinth a try.

An energetic boy who was about ten years old, told me he wanted to pray the labyrinth at HEAL Africa. I asked, "What would you like to pray for?" "I want to be a pilot when I grow up," he explained. "Great!" I replied, wondering if it could ever be possible, but not wanting to discourage him. "Talk to God about it as you pray on the labyrinth." He walked to the center, and then followed the path back out. After he exited, I asked, "What did God say to you?" "He told me, "God told me that I need to stop doing the bad things I've been doing, and to walk with Him if I want to get to my goal." "You've been shown the way..." I responded, amazed at what had transpired.



The Labyrinth sometimes opens us to our need for forgiveness.





What if we used the labyrinth to accept forgiveness?

“When I was walking the labyrinth, I became aware that there was a part of me that wanted to serve myself instead of God. When I realized it, I stopped right there, and asked for the grace to get back on track.” Pastor.

What if we used the labyrinth as a tool
to help us to forgive others?

At an inter-religious event one man shared,
“Without expecting it,
I began to pray for my enemies.”



Movement from anger to forgiveness.



Forgiveness:
change in self,
not the other!

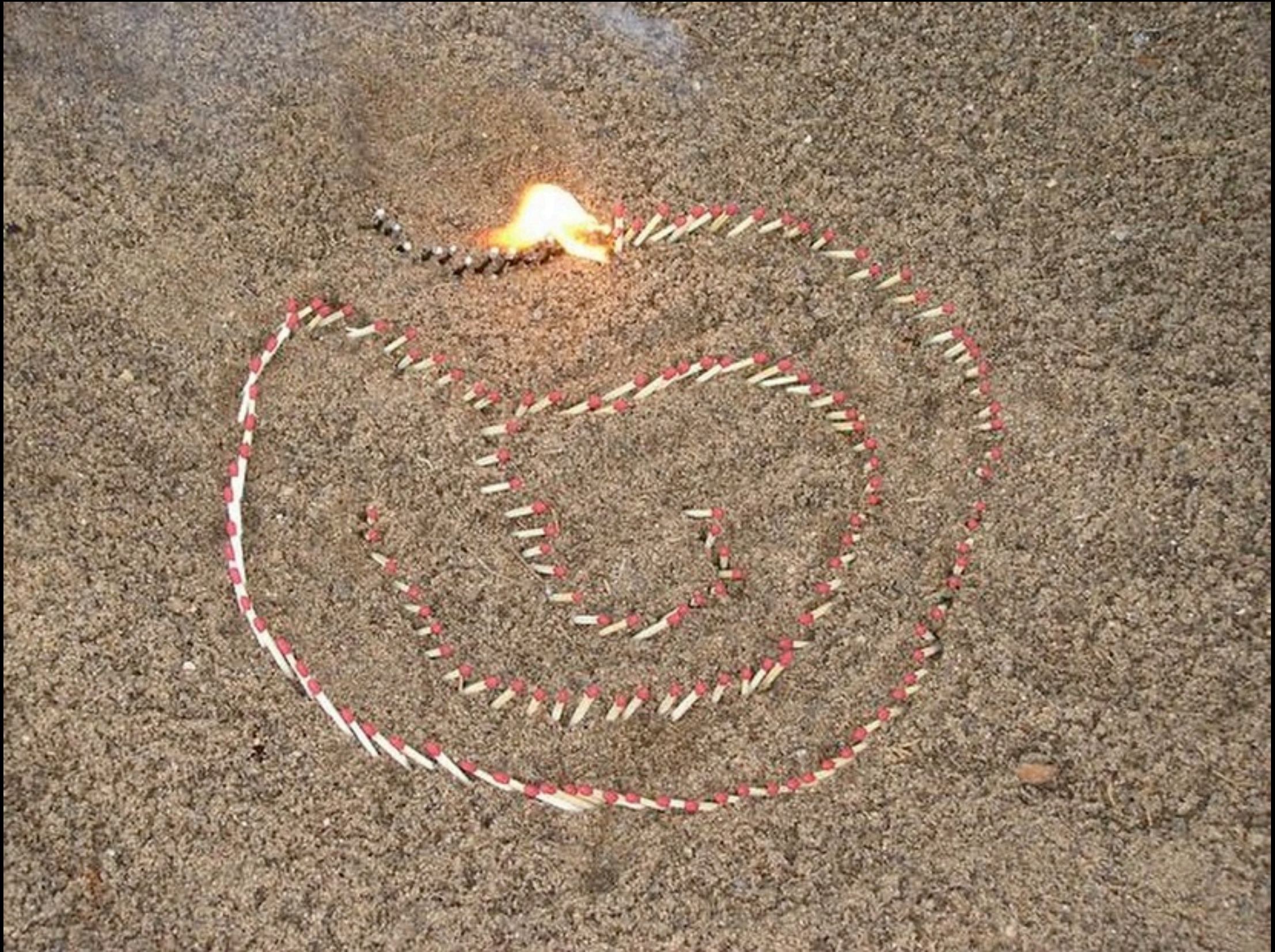
What if we used the labyrinth as a tool to help us to forgive ourselves?



After one of the group walks, a pastor asked to talk privately. "While we were praying on the labyrinth, I was totally preoccupied with my need for forgiveness. Twenty years ago..." As he told me more, he described how he had sought forgiveness--from those he had wronged, from others that were affected, and from God. All that remained was for him to forgive himself. The labyrinth walk had prepared him to be set free...at last.



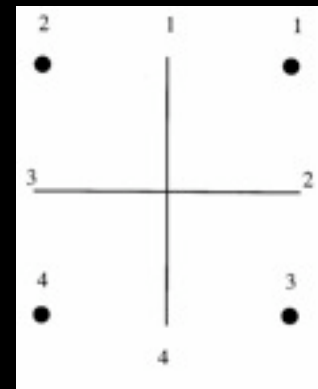
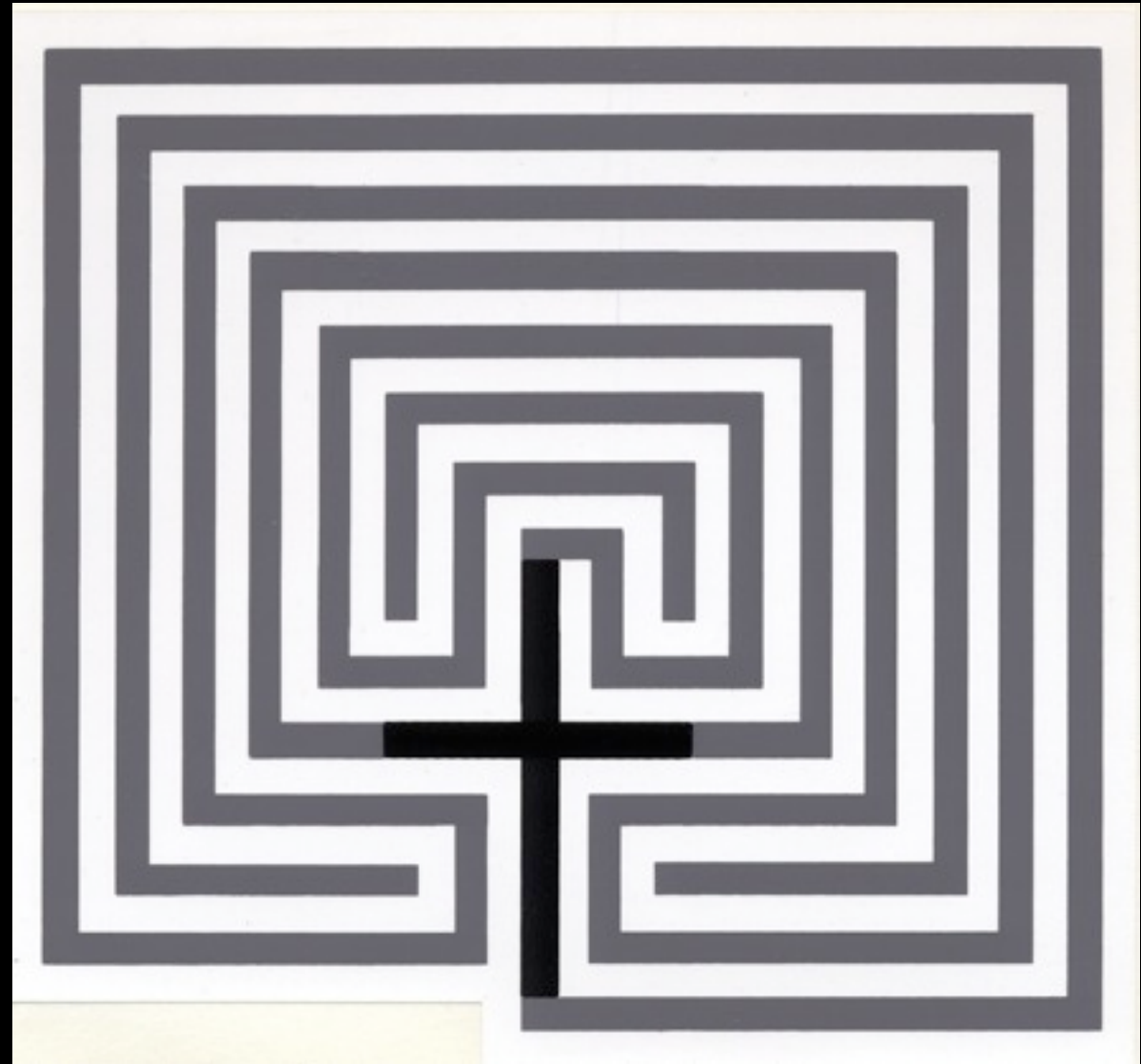
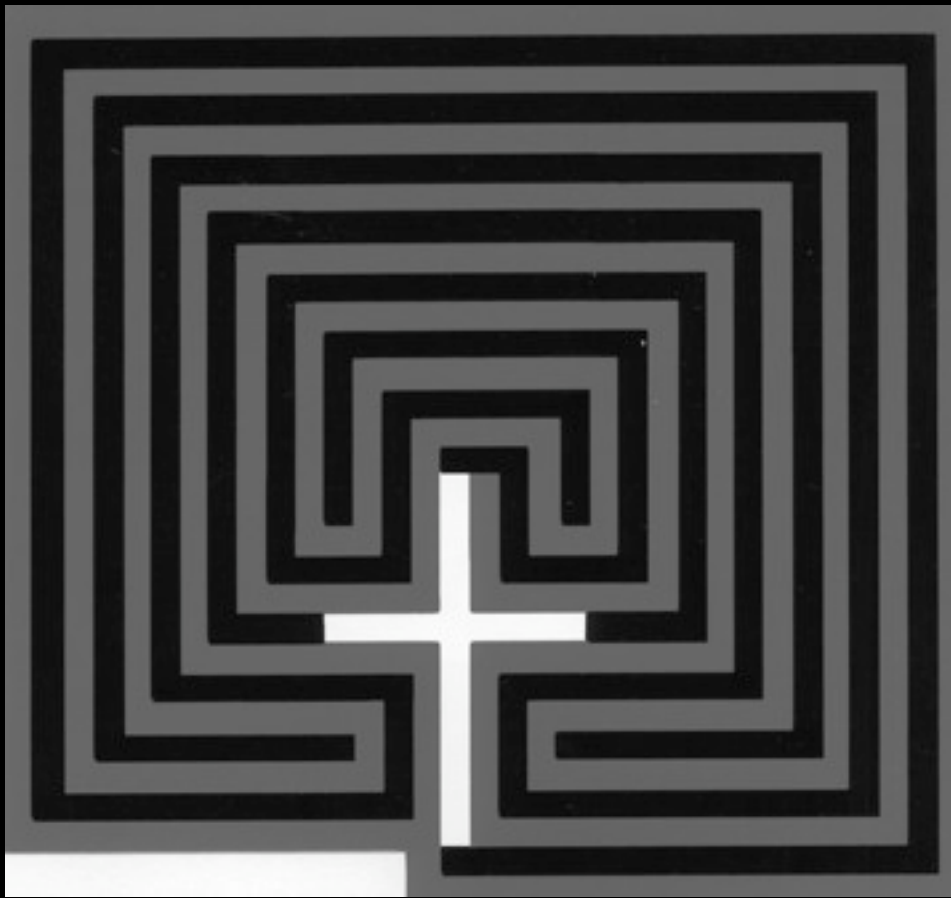
What if we used the labyrinth to help us forgive God?



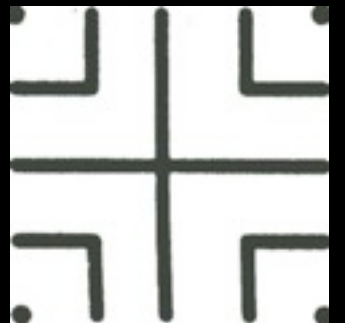
Bishop John. *The Bishop of Rwanda.*
Finding Forgiveness Amidst a Pile of Bones
(Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2007) 182.

Holding on to your anger is not something that ends even when you die. Instead it gets passed on to your children. By remaining angry, you train them to be angry as well. ...It is better for us to suffer a little more now, so that we can heal this suffering once and for all. Then we can pass the healing on to the next generation.

For Christians, walking the labyrinth can be understood as walking the way of the Cross.



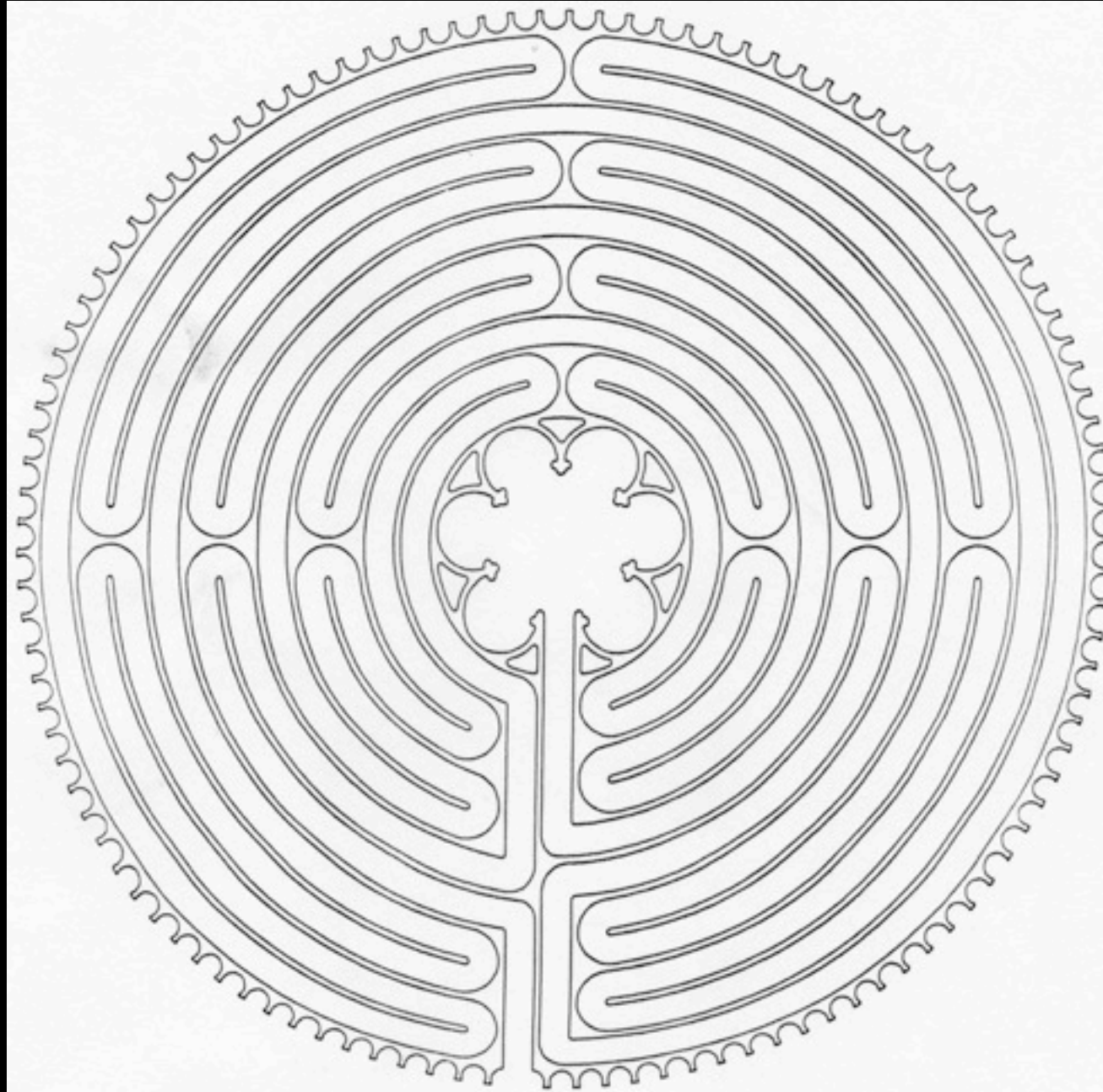
Hansen Art labyrinths,
7 circuit classical squared,
with highlighted crosses.



It was on the cross that Jesus offered forgiveness, "Father, forgive them..." Luke 23:34

When it comes to forgiveness,
What good can a labyrinth do?

Praying Using A Paper Labyrinth



Experiencing the Labyrinth Through Your Hand or Eyes

*Use your finger, a pen, or your eyes
to follow the pathway
to the center
and back out.*

Freedom

and

Labyrinths

What if there was a place to go...where one could be free?





Free
for what?

Free to be present where we are.

Placing labyrinths on the floor or on the “ground” allows for connection with the earth.



Children running a snow and ice labyrinth on Lake Minnetonka, MN



©Dancing Woman Labyrinth of Life Deephaven, MN

Free To Connect with self, others, and God.



Communauté de Chemin Neuf Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth, France



Students pray the labyrinth in the early morning before classes.
Connecting with God on the campus of Myanmar Institute of Theology in Yangon.

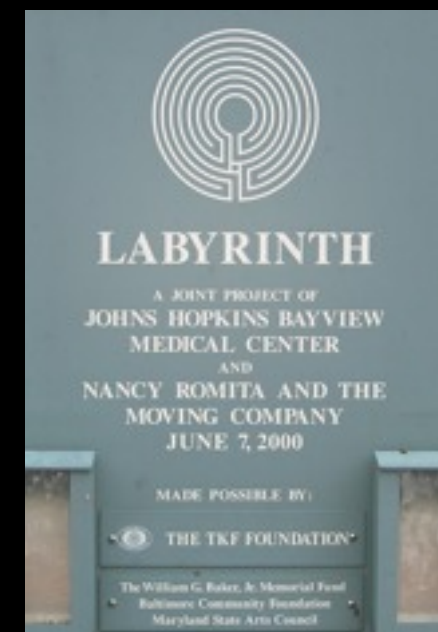
“My experience was fixed on one objective: I started at the beginning and was focused on going towards an end. When I was on the labyrinth, all distractions disappeared. My experience was characterized by a connection with God. I also felt that I was one with the others, especially with the others who were with me in the center.” Ms. Kavira Nganza.



Freedom to Connect.

Free to become more whole.

Labyrinths can be tools for healing of the body, mind, spirit, emotions, relationships...



John Hopkins Hospital Labyrinth Baltimore, Maryland

HEALING...

wholeness

reconciliation

restoration

physical cures

mental shifts

emotional release


reduction of anxiety

*receiving
forgiveness*

spiritual connection

being complete

physical wellness

A photograph of an elderly woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a pink patterned shirt, sitting at a wooden table in a restaurant. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. In the background, another person is seated at a table, and the restaurant has large windows with colorful hanging lanterns. A glass of water with a straw is on the table in the foreground.

“When I started walking the labyrinth, I felt lifted up and carried. I had never felt this before. Even though I was worried about my weak heart, my blood pressure remained normal—even in the 90 degree heat. I don’t know what to think.” Anesthesiologist in Burma

“As I moved my finger through the labyrinth, my heart, which had been beating irregularly for two to three weeks, stopped racing.” President of a seminary in Yangon, Burma

Physical Healing





Emotional freedom was a gift that came as these Burmese women used the labyrinth.
Many reported, "I came feeling burdened and now I feel great joy!"



“I was released from stress bondage.”

Mental Freedom

A photograph of three people walking on a dirt path in a park-like setting. On the left, a man in a white and blue striped short-sleeved shirt and a dark sarong walks towards the camera, holding a small blue cup. In the center, a woman in a yellow t-shirt and black pants walks away from the camera. On the right, a man in a light blue long-sleeved shirt and black pants walks away from the camera. The background features a white fence and lush green trees.

“This was the first time
my mind had been free of distractions
in two or three years.”

Some of the medical staff from the nearby HEAL Africa Hospital walked the labyrinth on their way to and from work. This man told me, "As I walked, I saw the way was long and very difficult. Then I realized that what needed to change was my attitude. The way was long, but I had the possibility of choosing what I thought about it."

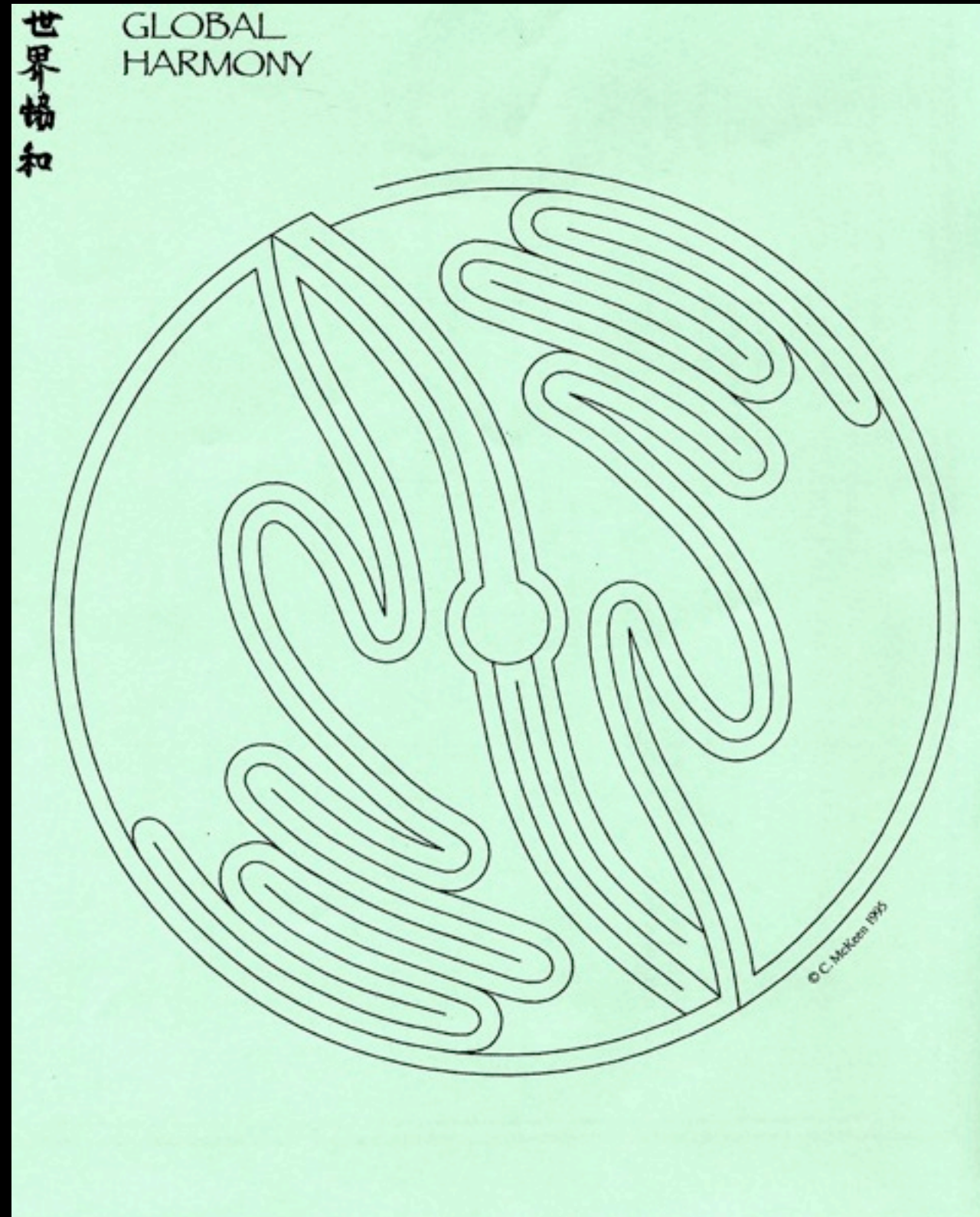




“In the labyrinth, I was able to lay my sense of despair about what is happening in our country down.”

Free to imagine the world as we would like it to be.

Before we work for change, we need to be able to imagine it.



Global Harmony Labyrinth St. Paul, Minnesota

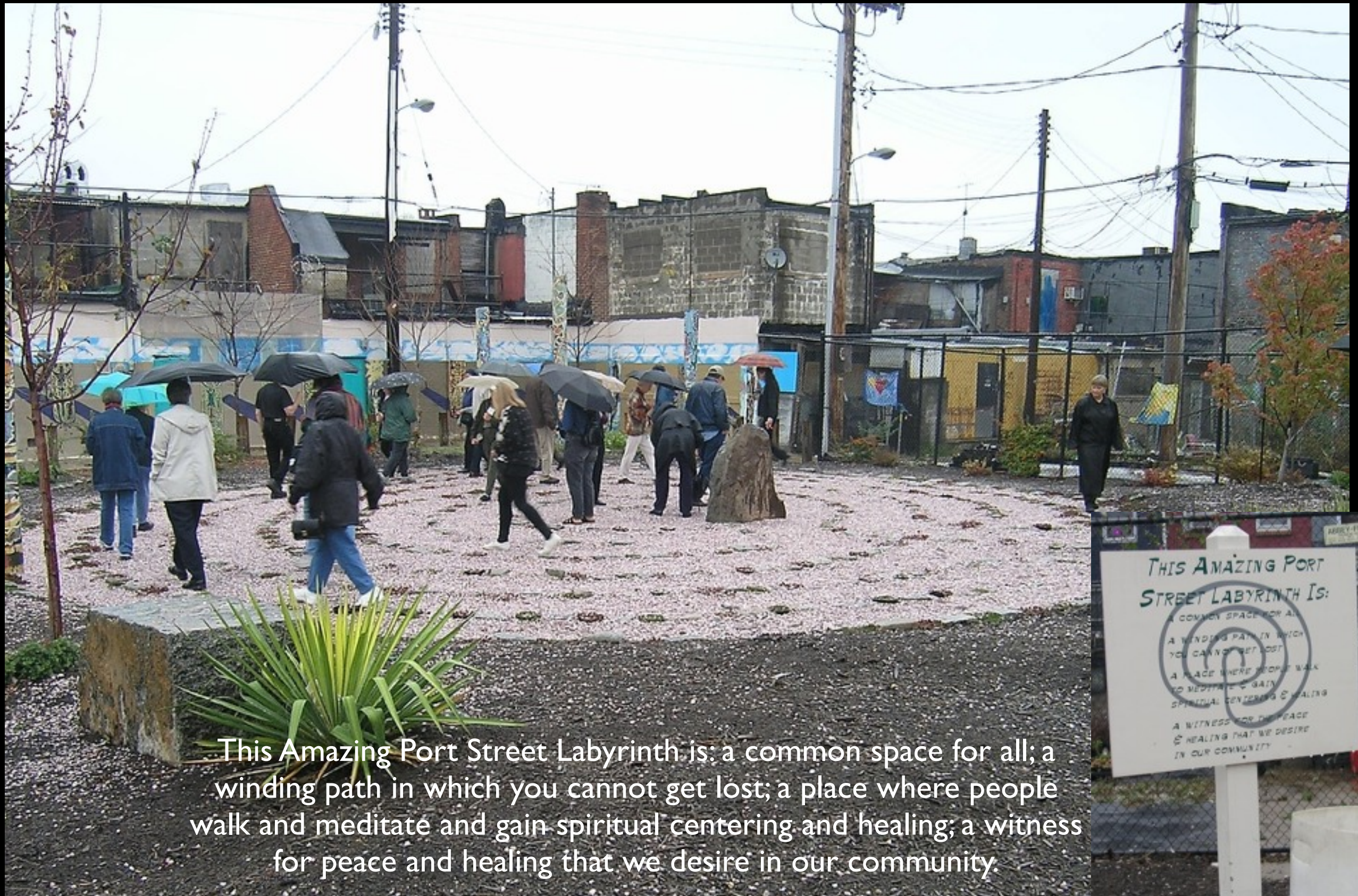


Refugees from Ethiopia enjoying a moment of freedom... Deephaven Labyrinths & Retreats, MN



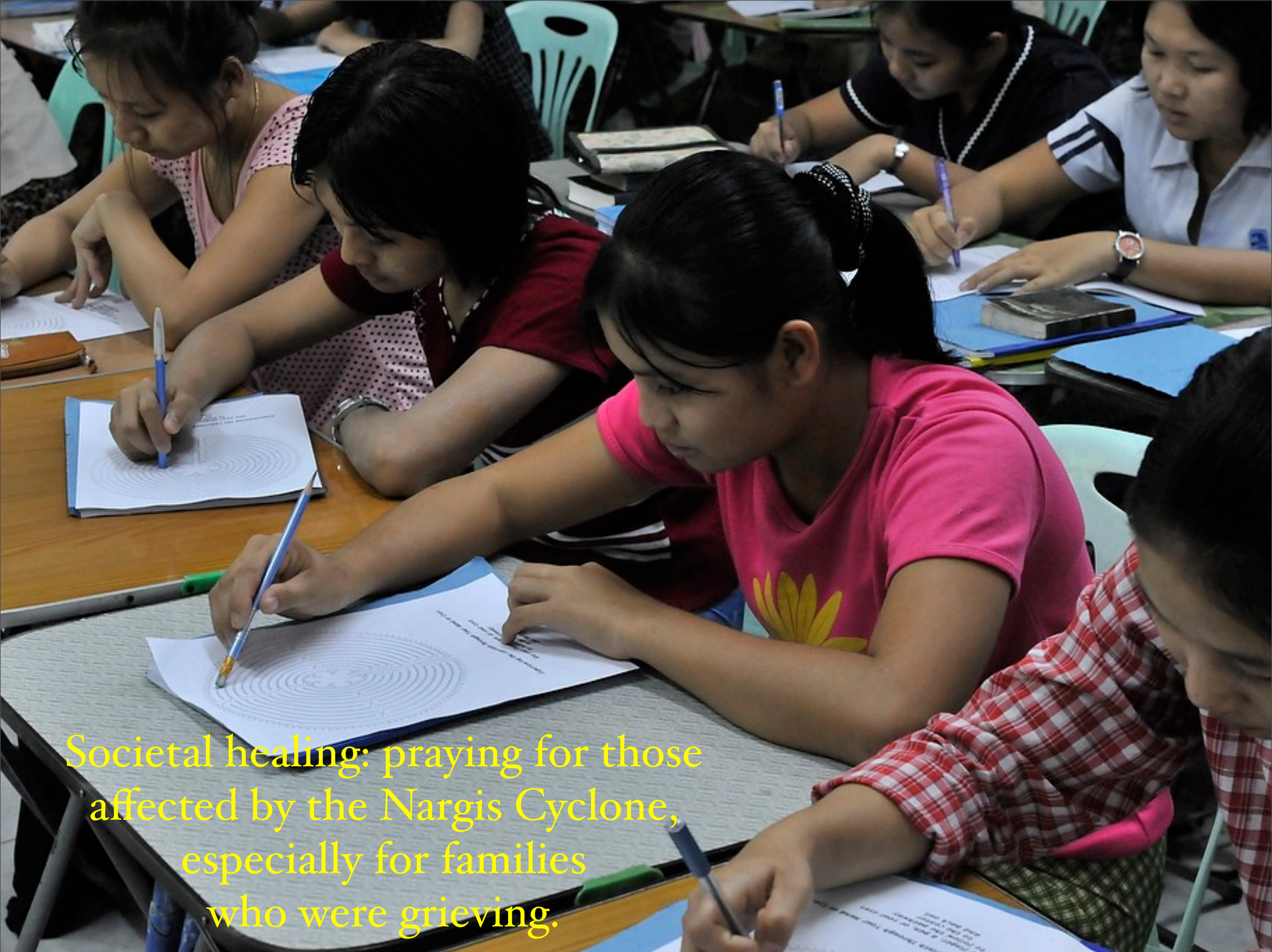
Societal Healing can begin on a labyrinth.
After using the labyrinth,
people in Yangon spoke of having prayed for their families,
their churches,
their country
and the world.

Free to make a difference in troubled communities.



This Amazing Port Street Labyrinth is: a common space for all; a winding path in which you cannot get lost; a place where people walk and meditate and gain spiritual centering and healing; a witness for peace and healing that we desire in our community.

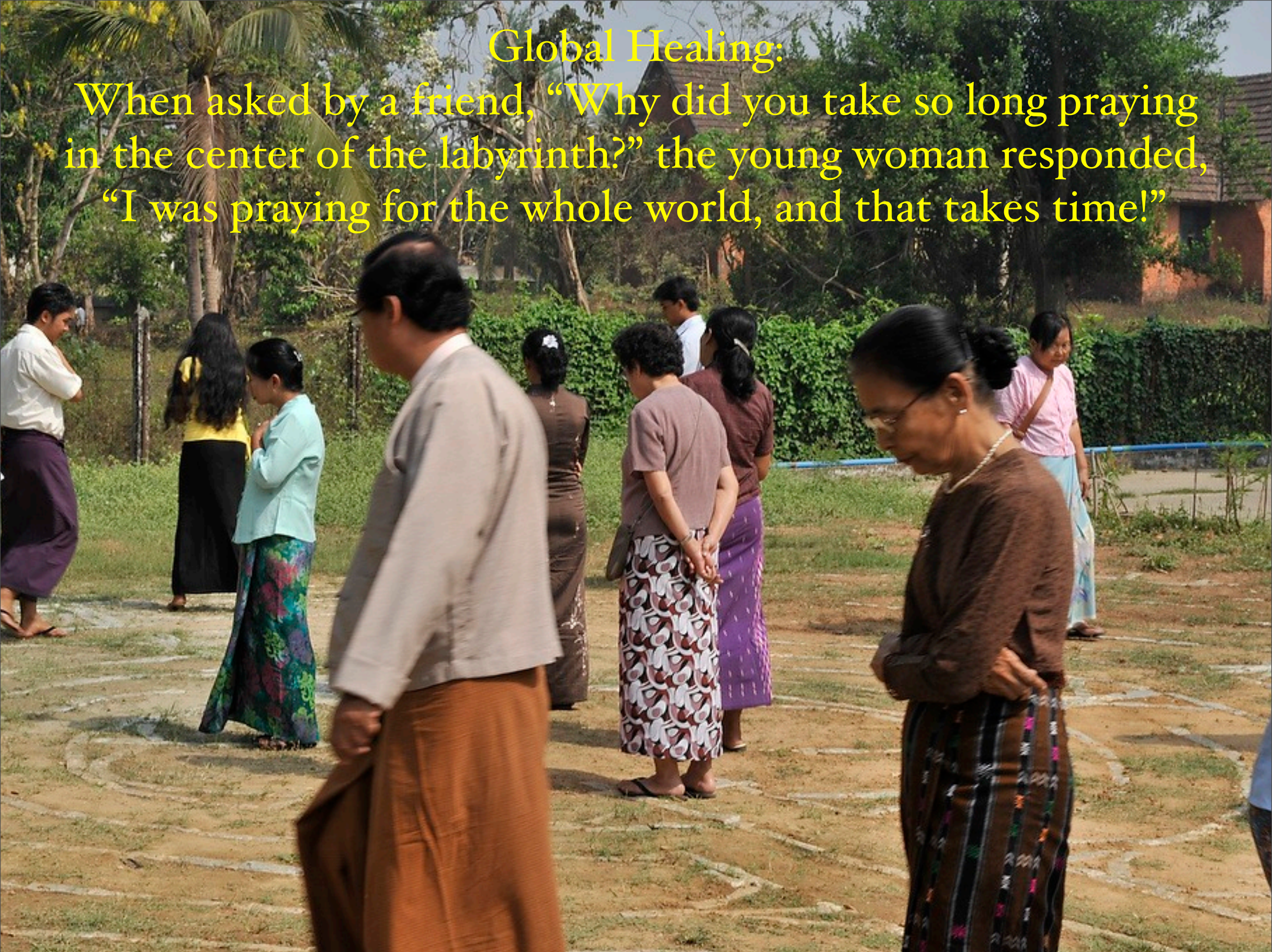
“Troubled” neighborhood, Baltimore, Maryland

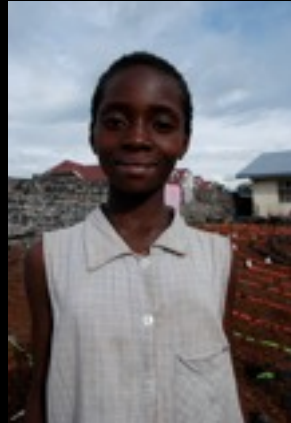


Societal healing: praying for those
affected by the Nargis Cyclone,
especially for families
who were grieving.

Global Healing:

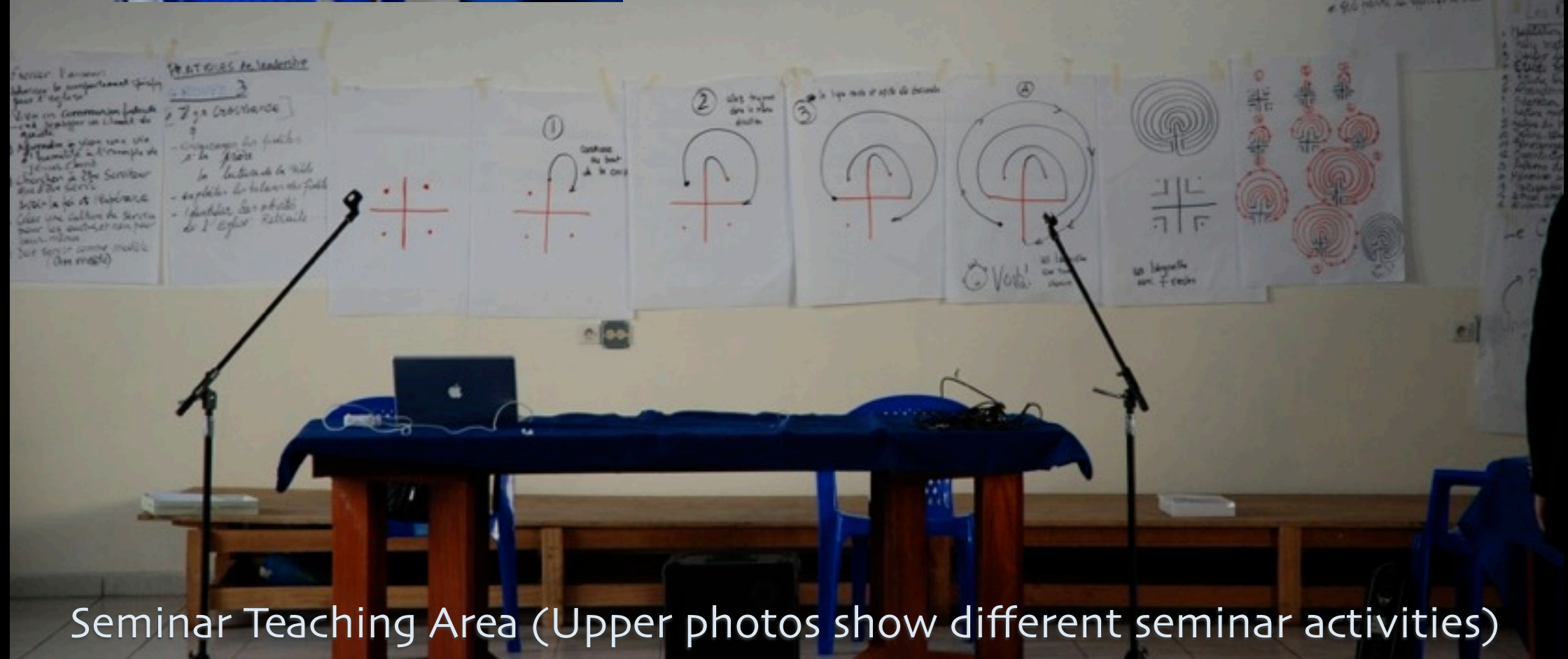
When asked by a friend, “Why did you take so long praying in the center of the labyrinth?” the young woman responded, “I was praying for the whole world, and that takes time!”





Free To Create.

One morning I greeted several pastors who were out by the labyrinth drawing a sketch of it. They asked, "How do you make this?". I began to show them. As I outlined the seed pattern and steps to follow, more and more pastors gathered around. That's when I realized I needed to teach everyone how to draw (and hopefully build) a labyrinth. Many thanked me afterwards, promising to send word when they had built a labyrinth in their community.



Seminar Teaching Area (Upper photos show different seminar activities)

Chin Hills Pentecostal Church



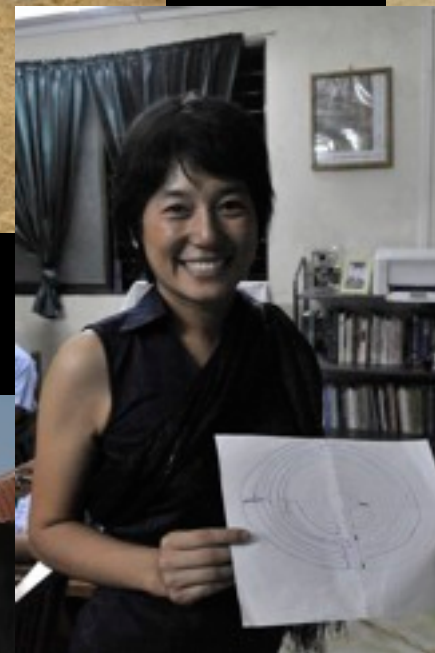
Northern, Myanmar "Black Zone"



Catholic Church Labyrinth



Maulum, Myanmar Baptist Church





War Zone of Northern Uganda
Cement labyrinth which was requested
after people experienced a 56 foot
Chartres-style stone-on-earth
labyrinth the year before.

Photos courtesy of Lynn Coghill



Wilbur Quispe, Peru Woven ©Dancing Lady Labyrinth
Photo courtesy of Lisa Gidlow Moriarty

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.
Jesus, John 10:7-10



Labyrinth tatoo
worn as a symbol of freedom.

When it comes to freedom,
What good can a labyrinth do?

Praying Using A Paper Labyrinth



Experiencing the Labyrinth Through Your Hand or Eyes

*Use your finger, a pen, or your eyes
to follow the pathway
to the center
and back out.*

What good
have labyrinths done?

On the evaluation form for Labyrinth Prayers for Peace, A Faith and Art Event of the Peace Studies Center, there was a line, “My labyrinth prayers...”

- For the church, for pastors and their families, for the poor, for poverty, for disasters, for my families especially, for our country.
- For forgiveness and to understand people with whom I am not turned well. (A priest, currently on dialysis, who will not accept a transplant)
- I need peace of God, and I need peace with my family, my church, and my society. So I pray for peace.
- ...asking God about my unsolvable problems.
- Peace for Myanmar. Peace be upon my community. Peace be with my family.
- Why am I supposed to live according to God's will? And I prayed for all the inconveniences that I'm feeling.
- Actually, this praying for peace through labyrinth could be a very touching and moving force.





The labyrinth is my prayer village.



Jean Paul (grey shirt), a construction foreman, walked the Goma labyrinth after work. He had no introduction to it. The next morning he introduced himself. "When I prayed the labyrinth, I realized that even though there are many challenges, and different things happen, the important thing in the spiritual life is to keep going. Perseverance is necessary." He felt stronger to face the challenges in his life. He wanted to know if I could give him a copy of the design so that he could build labyrinths. He was particularly interested in how labyrinths might be a resource to help youth grow closer to Christ. Later, he asked for more information and when I returned a year later, he told me about how the labyrinths he had built had helped people.

Women waiting for fistula repair surgeries watched as people prayed the HEAL Africa labyrinth. Sometimes, they came to walk it themselves. After walking to the center and back out together, the woman with the red scarf told me, "This is the path of my life. I am walking to God."





“The spiritual life is a long trajectory. On this journey we often encounter difficulties that discourage us. And often we go around in circles. But when we have courage, we arrive at our destination. God is with us on this walk, and we will finish by arriving in the center.”

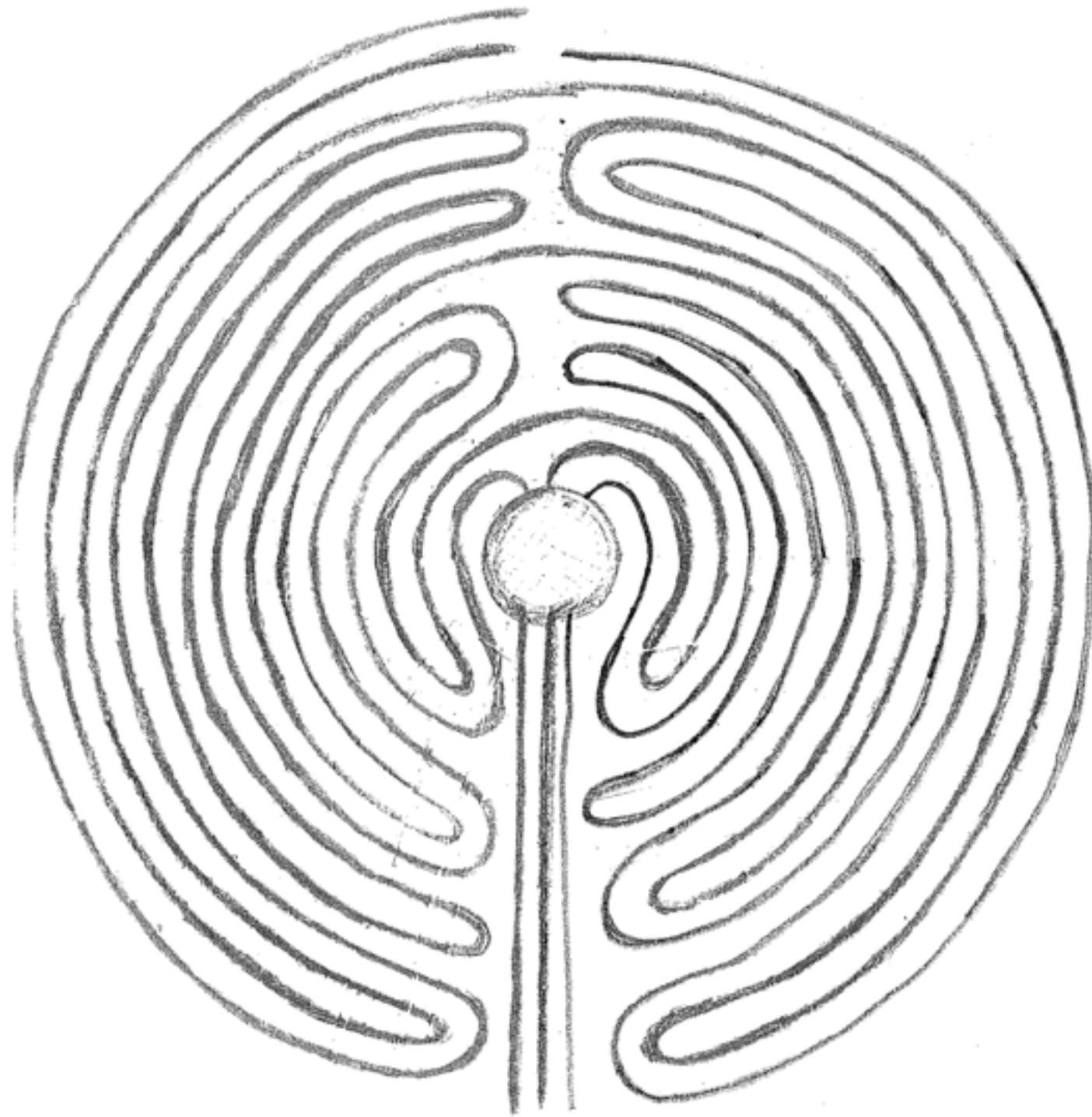
Rev. Bizimana Mulera Gaston

As I walked, I sensed that God reveals himself in our weakness.
In spite of my weakness, God is inviting me to grow.” Rev. Lipandasi B. Jacob





“After I was done, I noticed how many pilgrims there were still in the labyrinth, and I prayed for them. When I went back into the labyrinth, I saw how many people were on the outside of the labyrinth, supporting me and encouraging me to keep going. We are together in this prayer. Although we walk by ourselves in the labyrinth, there are others there, and we are all close in prayer.” Myatsi Waiko Seraphine.



“Abrahamic Strands”
3 path labyrinth design
(in process of being
refined)

Labyrinths can help us
to walk together...
when we are afraid,
when we yearn for
forgiveness, and
as we move towards
freedom.

©CFDudley



Next labyrinth: Northern Rwanda in November 2009
During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying,
“Come over to Macedonia and help us.” Acts 16:9

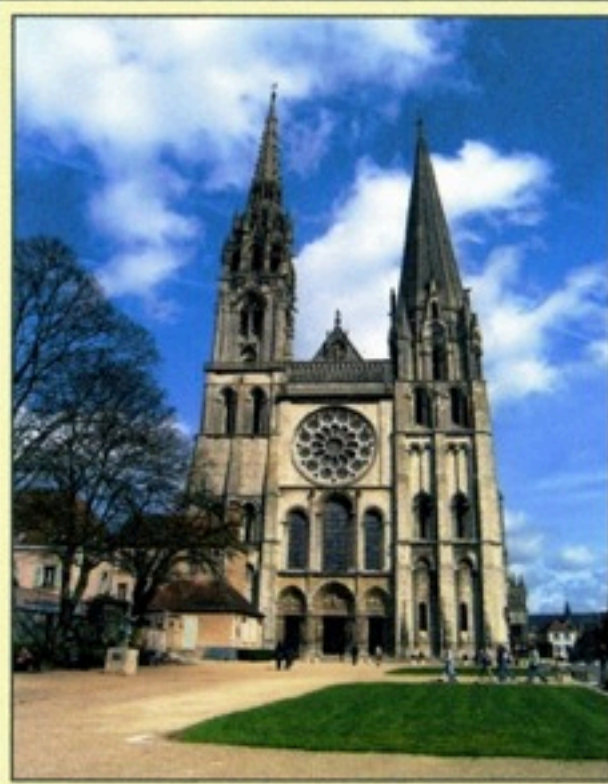


Deephaven Labyrinths & Retreats Come visit anytime during daylight hours.



FLEXIBLE DAILY SCHEDULE

7:30-8:30 am	Breakfast, in silence
8:30-9:30 am	Guided Contemplative Prayer in the Cathedral
9:30-10:00 am	Break
10:00-11:00 am	Sunday (5-7:30pm): Grounding Monday: Seeking God Tuesday: Knowing God as Father (Divine Parent) Wednesday: Following Jesus, the Son Thursday: Living by the Holy Spirit Friday: Pursuing Our Calling Saturday: Preparing to Move Onward Sunday: Taking Next Steps
Noon-3:00 pm	Lunch & Personal Time
3:00-4:30 pm	Experiencing the Cathedral: On-site Exploration & Prayer Experiencing the Depths: Crypt Tour with Malcolm Miller Experiencing the Windows Experiencing the Heights Experiencing a Mini-pilgrimage Experiencing the Labyrinth Experiencing a Silent Prayer Retreat
4:30-6:00 pm	Personal Time
6:00-6:30 pm	Guided Contemplative Prayer at the Cathedral (optional)
6:30-7:00 pm	Daily Debriefing & Group Sharing
7:00-7:30 pm	Cathedral Vespers (Sung in French)
7:30pm	Dinner (on own) & Personal Time
9:00-9:30 pm	Eventide Connections with God
9:30pm-8:30am	The Great Silence



Registration is limited to 25 retreatants.

Program cost: \$1895.00 includes accommodations, two meals each day, numerous guided cathedral visits, a half-day walking pilgrimage, and a private group labyrinth experience. Travel to and from Chartres is not included. Deposit of \$500 is non-refundable. Full payment is due by August 1, 2009.

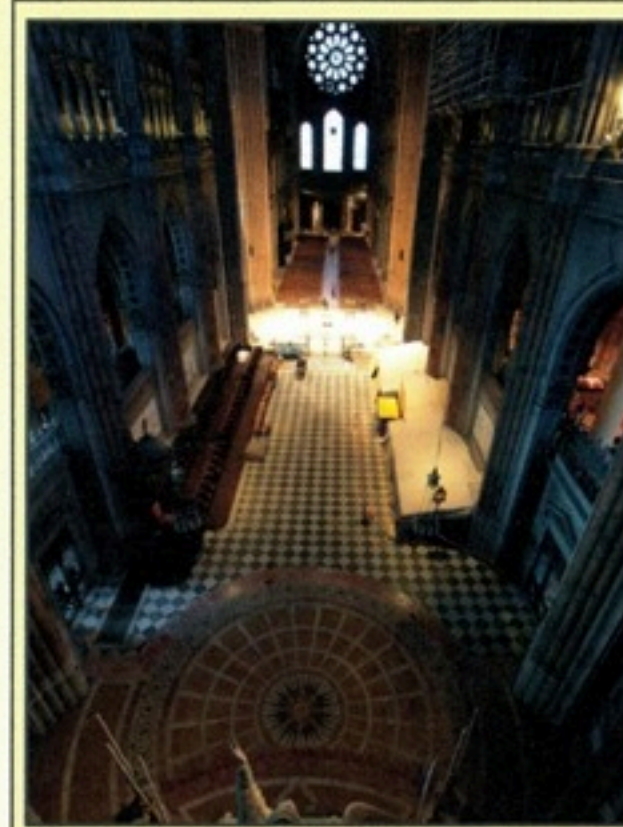
We will be staying in a monastic retreat center. Singles and double rooms with bathrooms are available on a first come, first served basis. Several rooms for couples are available. Room assignments will be made when full payment is received.

To register use the enclosed form and mail to:

FAITH, HOPE & LOVE GLOBAL MINISTRIES
1660 HWY. 100 SOUTH, SUITE 426
ST. LOUIS PARK, MN 55416
952-334-3340
INFO@FHLGLOBAL.ORG

MOVING INWARD: MOVING ONWARD CONTEMPLATIVE PILGRIMAGE

CHARTRES CATHEDRAL



✠ OCTOBER 18-25, 2009 ✠

Deepen your
relationship
with God.
Better envision
your calling in
life.





Following in the footsteps of centuries of pilgrims, we will spend significant time each day in the Chartres Cathedral praying and seeking God.

"I was glad when they said to me,
'Let us go the house of the Lord.'"
Psalm 122:1



Are you eager for spiritual transformation? Do you long to serve Christ more effectively?

RETREAT HIGHLIGHTS

Group sessions will incorporate ritual, visual presentations, song, teaching, interaction, and prayer. Special pilgrimage experiences will include: praying on the labyrinth after hours; a worship service in the ancient crypt chapel; an exclusive tour of the exterior roof-level walkways; guided contemplation of the world-class, medieval stained glass windows and sculptures; an optional six mile mini-pilgrimage to the church from the original area where the stones for the cathedral were quarried; and a half-day silent retreat.

This week-long experience is designed to support Christians who value holistic spiritual growth, are open to contemplative prayer, and want to serve God better.



RETREAT LEADERS

The Rev. Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion, Ph.D., a frequent pilgrim to the Chartres Cathedral, has published seven books on labyrinth prayer, two of which focus on praying with the labyrinth in the Chartres Cathedral.

Jill's leadership style is enthusiastic, visual, devotional, and inviting. She loves guiding pilgrims to enter as deeply as possible into the beauty and love of God as it can be experienced in Chartres.

The Rev. Timothy C. Geoffrion, Ph.D., has taught extensively on the New Testament and Christian spirituality in colleges and seminaries. His two most recent books, *The Spirit-Lead Leader* (2005) and *One Step at a Time: A Pilgrim's*

Guide to Spirit-Lead Living (2008), express the heart of his teaching and spiritual life coaching work throughout the world.

Tim's engaging teaching style blends thought-provoking questions, relevant input, group interaction, and guidance for personal reflection. He loves teaching and helping others grow in every dimension of their life.



What good
do you want a labyrinth do?

Useful Websites on Labyrinths



Christian Labyrinth Prayer

www.jillgeoffrion.com

Finding a labyrinth near you (worldwide)

www.labyrinthlocator.com

Labyrinth construction

www.labyrinth-enterprises.com

International Labyrinth Society

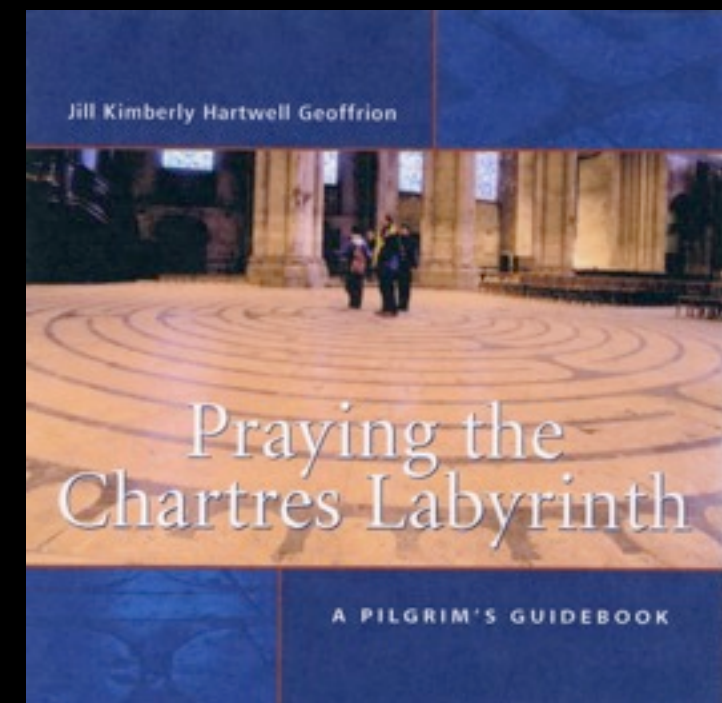
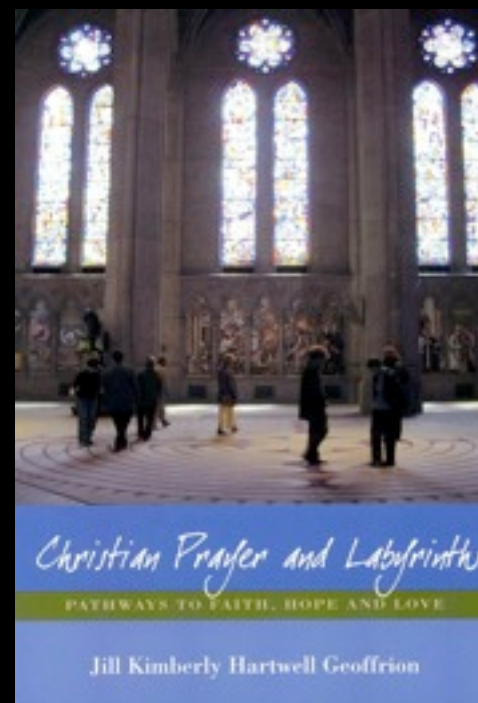
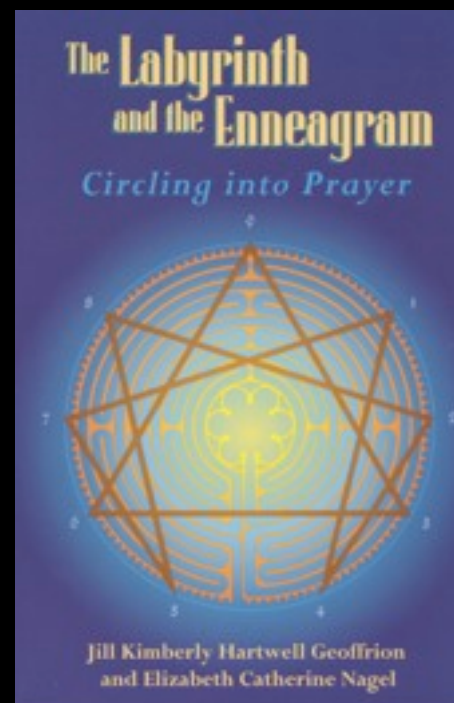
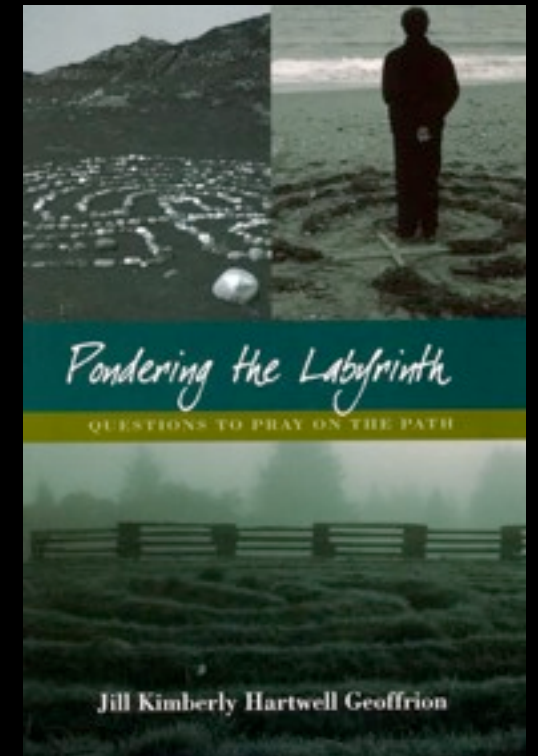
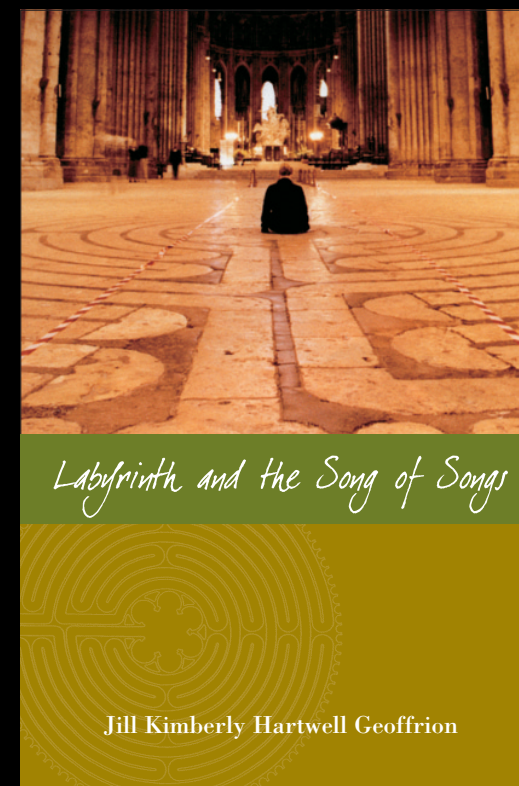
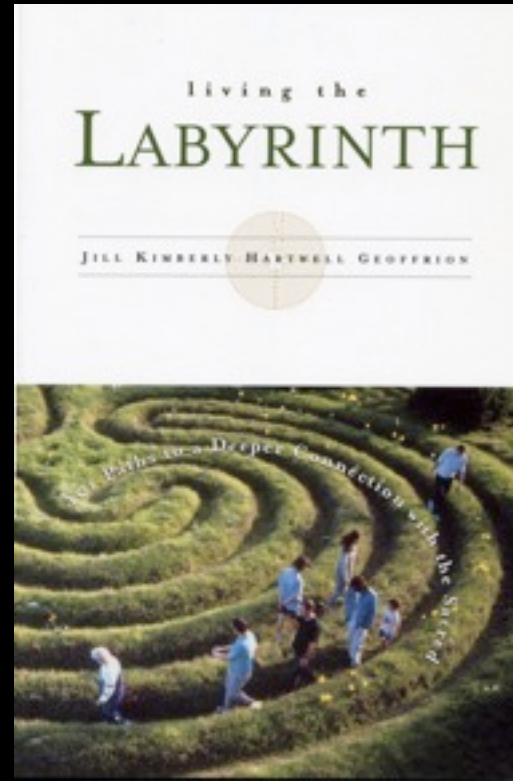
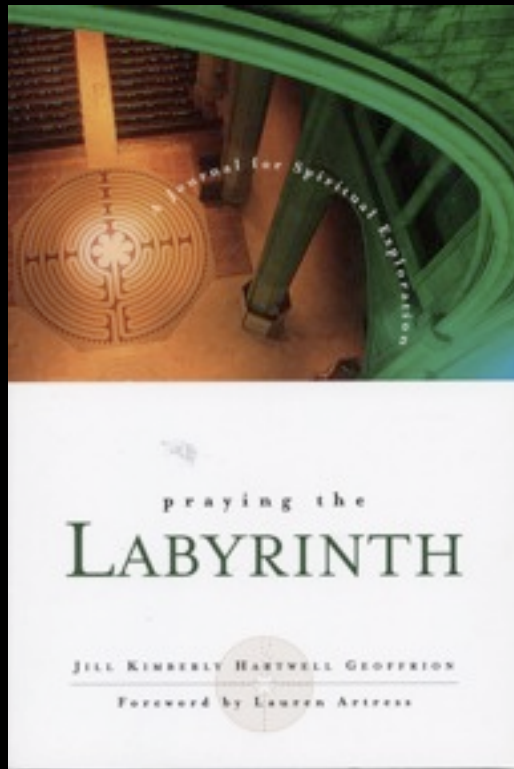
www.labyrinthsociety.org

Labyrinthos: Academic Journal

www.labyrinthos.net

Labyrinth Photo Gallery (Professional) www.sacred-land-photography.com/Labyrinths.html

“May my teaching fall like rain, and my words, distill as the dew,
like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants.” Deuteronomy 32:2



Books by Jill on labyrinth prayer



Feel free to contact me:
jill.geoffrion@fhlglobal.org

www.jillgeoffrion.com
www.fhlglobal.org

“To bear witness to such suffering requires the highest measure of compassion and conviction. That is why Paschal (a National Geographic photographer) kept going back. “Somalians came up to me every day and asked, ‘Why has the world abandoned us?’ he says. ‘I’m hoping my pictures can help just a little bit.’”

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