

Labyrinth Prayer: Session 7

Healing and Labyrinth Prayer

Myanmar Institute of Theology Yangon, Myanmar 2013



Shout to the Lord

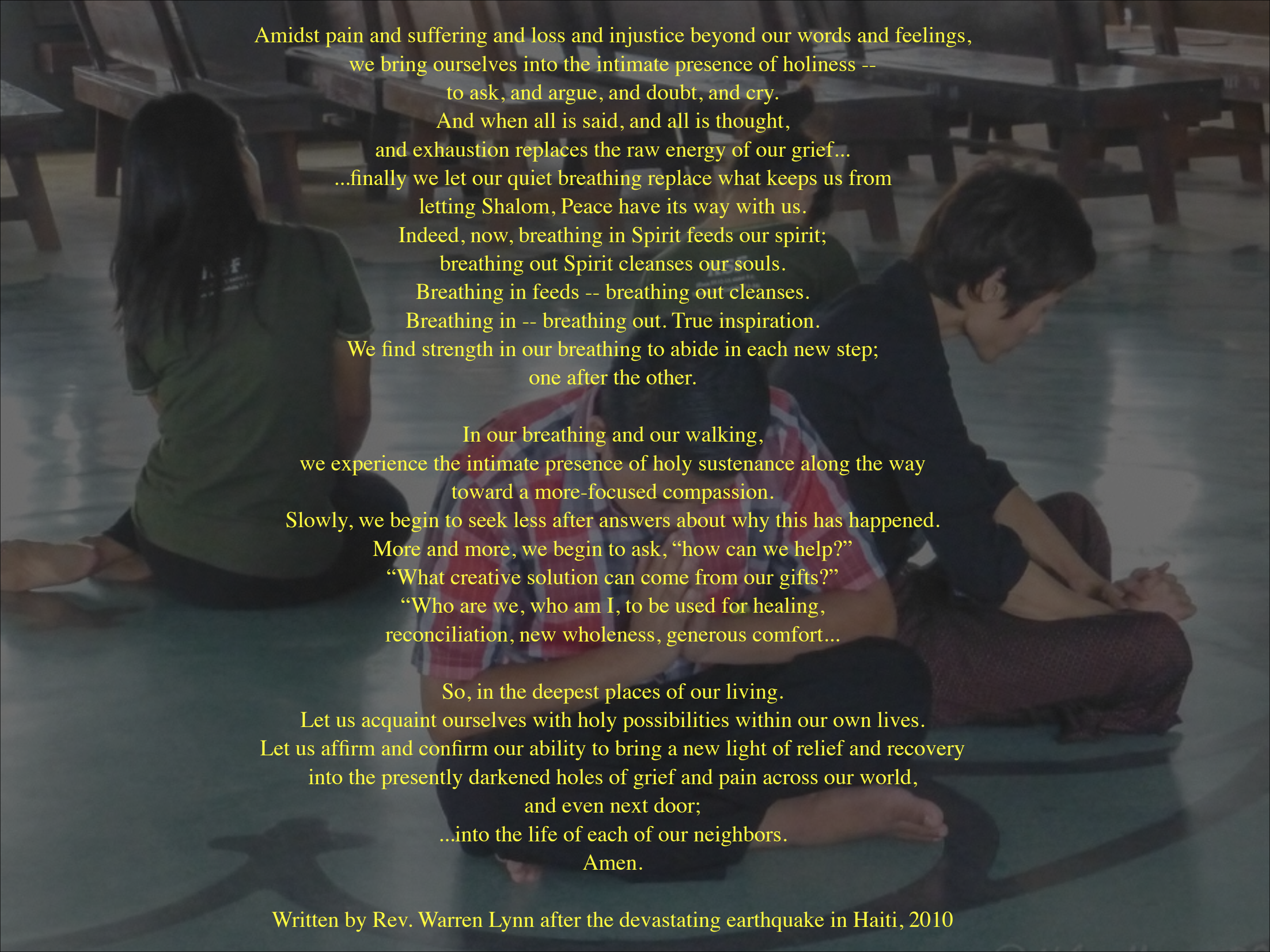
My Jesus, my Savior
Lord, there is none like You
All of my days, I want to praise
The wonders of Your mighty love

My comfort, my shelter
Tower of refuge and strength
Let every breath, all that I am
Never cease to worship You

Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing
Power and majesty, praise to the King
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar
At the sound of Your name

I sing for joy at the work of Your hands
Forever I'll love You, forever I'll stand
Nothing compares to the promise I have in You

Songwriter: Darlene Zschech Published by: Integrity Hosanna Music!



Amidst pain and suffering and loss and injustice beyond our words and feelings,
we bring ourselves into the intimate presence of holiness --
to ask, and argue, and doubt, and cry.
And when all is said, and all is thought,
and exhaustion replaces the raw energy of our grief...
...finally we let our quiet breathing replace what keeps us from
letting Shalom, Peace have its way with us.
Indeed, now, breathing in Spirit feeds our spirit;
breathing out Spirit cleanses our souls.
Breathing in feeds -- breathing out cleanses.
Breathing in -- breathing out. True inspiration.
We find strength in our breathing to abide in each new step;
one after the other.

In our breathing and our walking,
we experience the intimate presence of holy sustenance along the way
toward a more-focused compassion.
Slowly, we begin to seek less after answers about why this has happened.
More and more, we begin to ask, “how can we help?”
“What creative solution can come from our gifts?”
“Who are we, who am I, to be used for healing,
reconciliation, new wholeness, generous comfort...

So, in the deepest places of our living.
Let us acquaint ourselves with holy possibilities within our own lives.
Let us affirm and confirm our ability to bring a new light of relief and recovery
into the presently darkened holes of grief and pain across our world,
and even next door;
...into the life of each of our neighbors.
Amen.

Written by Rev. Warren Lynn after the devastating earthquake in Haiti, 2010

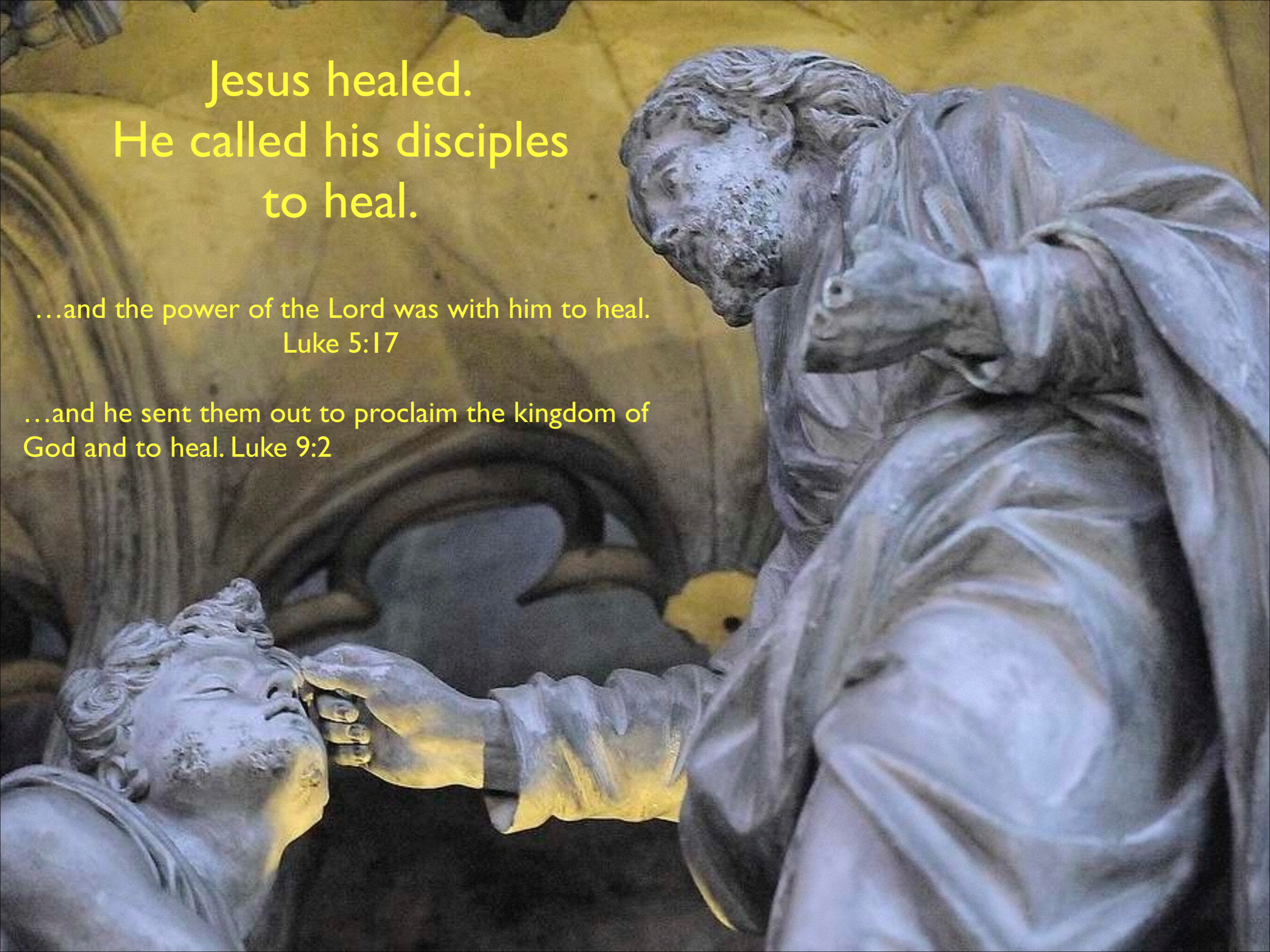


What questions do you have about labyrinths and healing?

Jesus healed.
He called his disciples
to heal.

...and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.
Luke 5:17

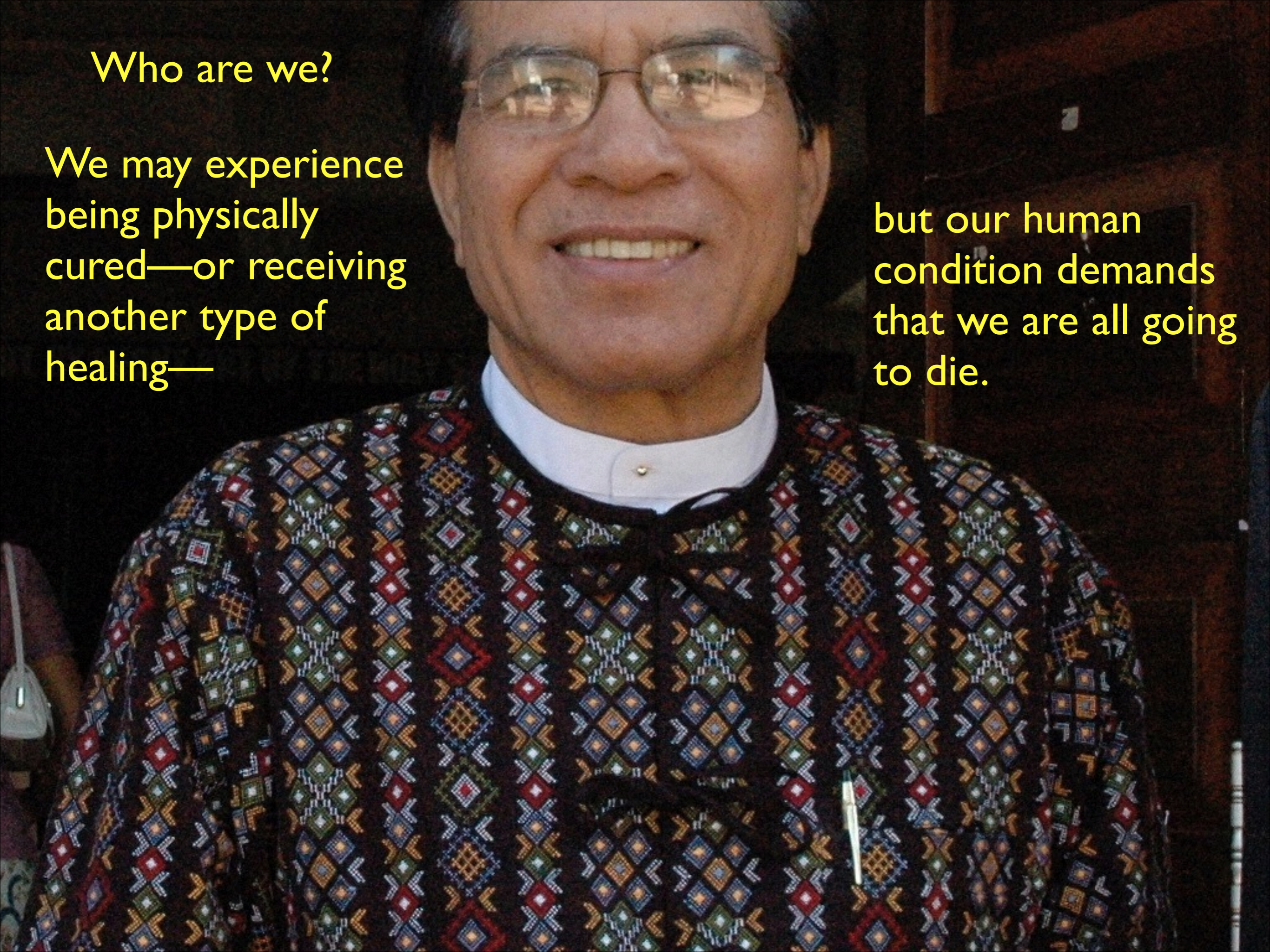
...and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of
God and to heal. Luke 9:2



Who are we?

We may experience
being physically
cured—or receiving
another type of
healing—

but our human
condition demands
that we are all going
to die.



Healing: to make whole (literal definition).

It can be physical, emotional/mental, spiritual, communal, relational and/or ecological.

heal

/hēl/ 

verb

gerund or present participle: **healing**

1. (of a person or treatment) cause (a wound, injury, or person) to become sound or healthy again.

"his concern is to heal sick people"

synonyms: make better, make well, **cure**, **treat**, restore to health [More](#)

antonyms: make worse, **harmful**

- become sound or healthy again.

"he would have to wait until his knee had healed"

synonyms: get better, get well, be cured, **recover**, **mend**, **improve** [More](#)

antonyms: get worse

- alleviate (a person's distress or anguish).

"time can heal the pain of grief"

- correct or put right (an undesirable situation).

"the rift between them was never really healed"

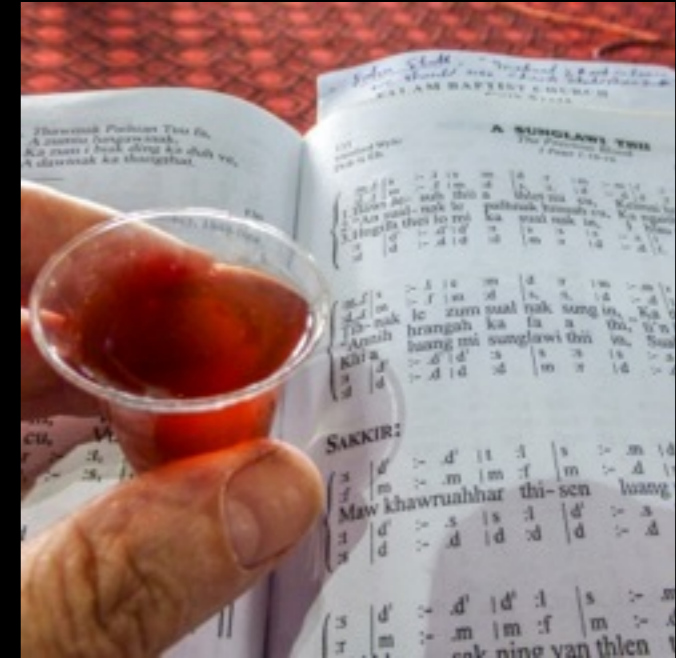
synonyms: put right, set right, **repair**, **remedy**, **resolve**, **correct**, **settle**; [More](#)

antonyms: **worsen**

What is health?



I [Jesus] came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.
John 10:10



What healing do humans need?

Wholeness is multidimensional:

Physical
Communal/Societal
Spiritual
Mental/Emotional
Relational
Ecological



HEALING (BECOMING MORE WHOLE) MAY INVOLVE..

mental shifts

reconciliation

restoration

justice-social change

physical cures

feeling
forgiven

emotional release

reduction of anxiety

extending forgiveness

spiritual connection

less ego-centrism

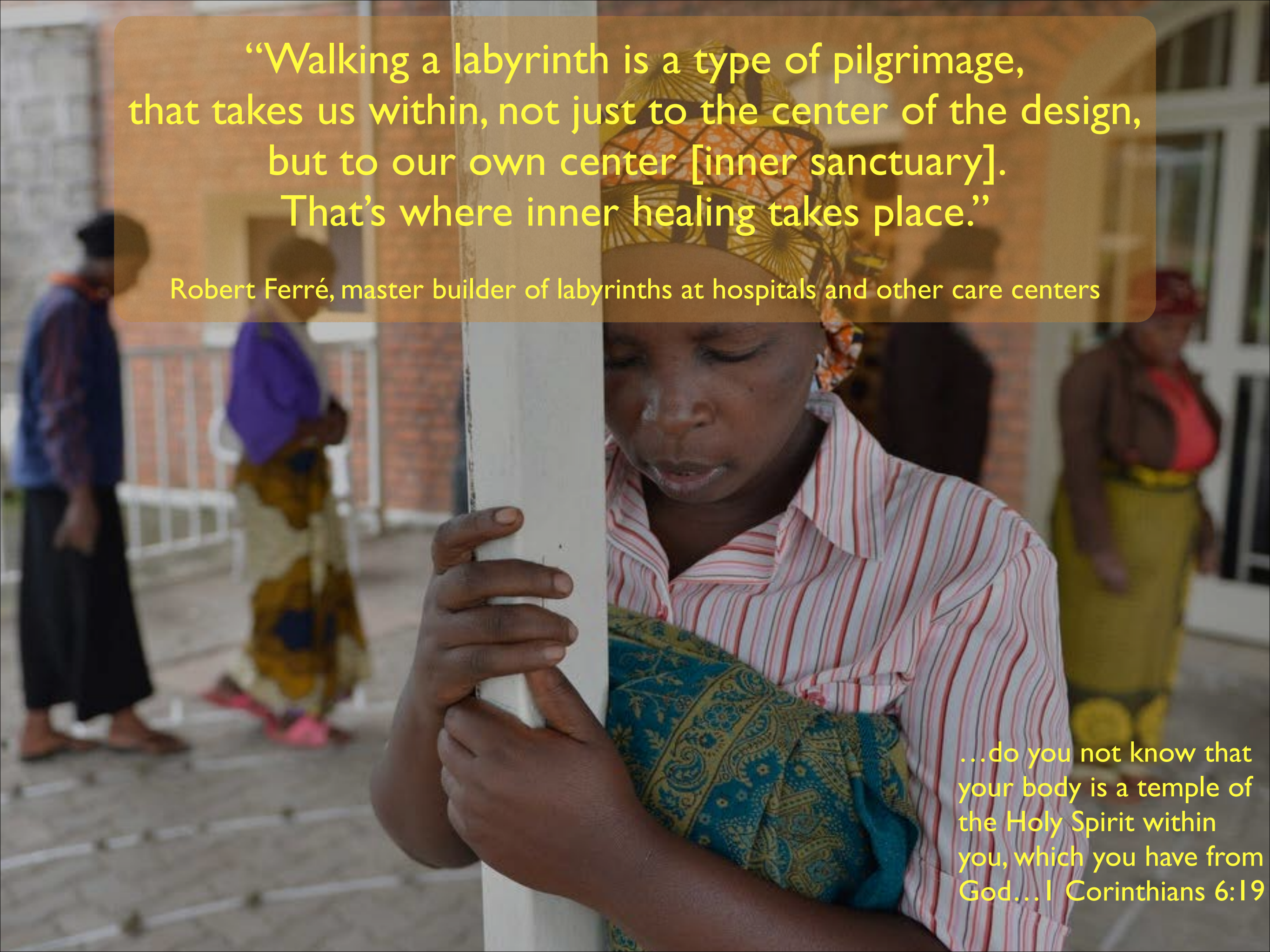
feeling whole

peacefulness





How Do Labyrinths Function As Tools For Healing?



“Walking a labyrinth is a type of pilgrimage, that takes us within, not just to the center of the design, but to our own center [inner sanctuary]. That’s where inner healing takes place.”

Robert Ferré, master builder of labyrinths at hospitals and other care centers

...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God... I Corinthians 6:19



Labyrinth prayer helps us as we seek wholeness.

The symmetrically shaped labyrinth symbolizes wholeness and balance.

While walking a labyrinth, we use our whole brains (both hemispheres)

We engage our whole body as we move in prayer—our minds, our spirits, and our physical selves.

The beauty of the labyrinth speaks to the soul which recognizes wholeness intuitively.

Labyrinths are refuges—safe, contained places where we can feel free to explore anything—including difficult feelings and thoughts.

“Available evidence does not suggest that labyrinth walking can be used to prevent or treat cancer or other serious disease. However, it may be helpful as a complementary method to decrease stress and create a state of relaxation.
American Cancer Society



Farmington Care Center, Minnesota (USA)

In America many hospitals are installing labyrinths. They are known as “complimentary” healing tools.



John Hopkins Hospital
and Medical Center
Baltimore, MD (USA)



LABYRINTH

A JOINT PROJECT OF
JOHNS HOPKINS BAYVIEW
MEDICAL CENTER
AND
NANCY ROMITA AND THE
MOVING COMPANY
JUNE 7, 2000

MADE POSSIBLE BY:

 THE TKF FOUNDATION

The William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund
Baltimore Community Foundation
Maryland State Arts Council

Hospice (End of life care) Labyrinth Healing Gardens

An Invitation

For over twenty years Crossroads Hospice Society has provided support to those affected by end of life experience. As a part of that legacy Crossroads Inlet Centre Hospice has experienced, first hand, the healing power of nature through its rooftop sanctuaries. Now, through the Crossroads Hospice Labyrinth Healing Garden, we are able fully integrate nature into our compassionate focus for both our patients, staff, volunteers, supporters and our community.



Located on the grounds of Pioneer Memorial Park in Port Moody, BC, this labyrinth-style was built in partnership with the City of Port Moody and contributions of time, energy and talents by a host of supporter and volunteers. As a point on the Trans Canada Trail is also welcome respite for tourists and weary travelers and joins a community of over 3,000 labyrinths worldwide.

A Healing Tool

The labyrinth healing garden is a unique tool in the extension of our bereavement services as well as a place for members of our community to find peace and serenity. Designed for the participants of Crossroads Hospice Society's programs and services the public is also welcome to enjoy this naturescape for moments of meditation, reflection and healing.



Labyrinth mown in the grass as part of a memorial garden
Property owned by the Congregational Church
Bayport, Minnesota (USA)



Psychological

Physical

Spiritual

Mental

Emotional

Relational

Stories of healing on labyrinths

Inner

Outer

Inter-religious

Individual

Communal/Societal

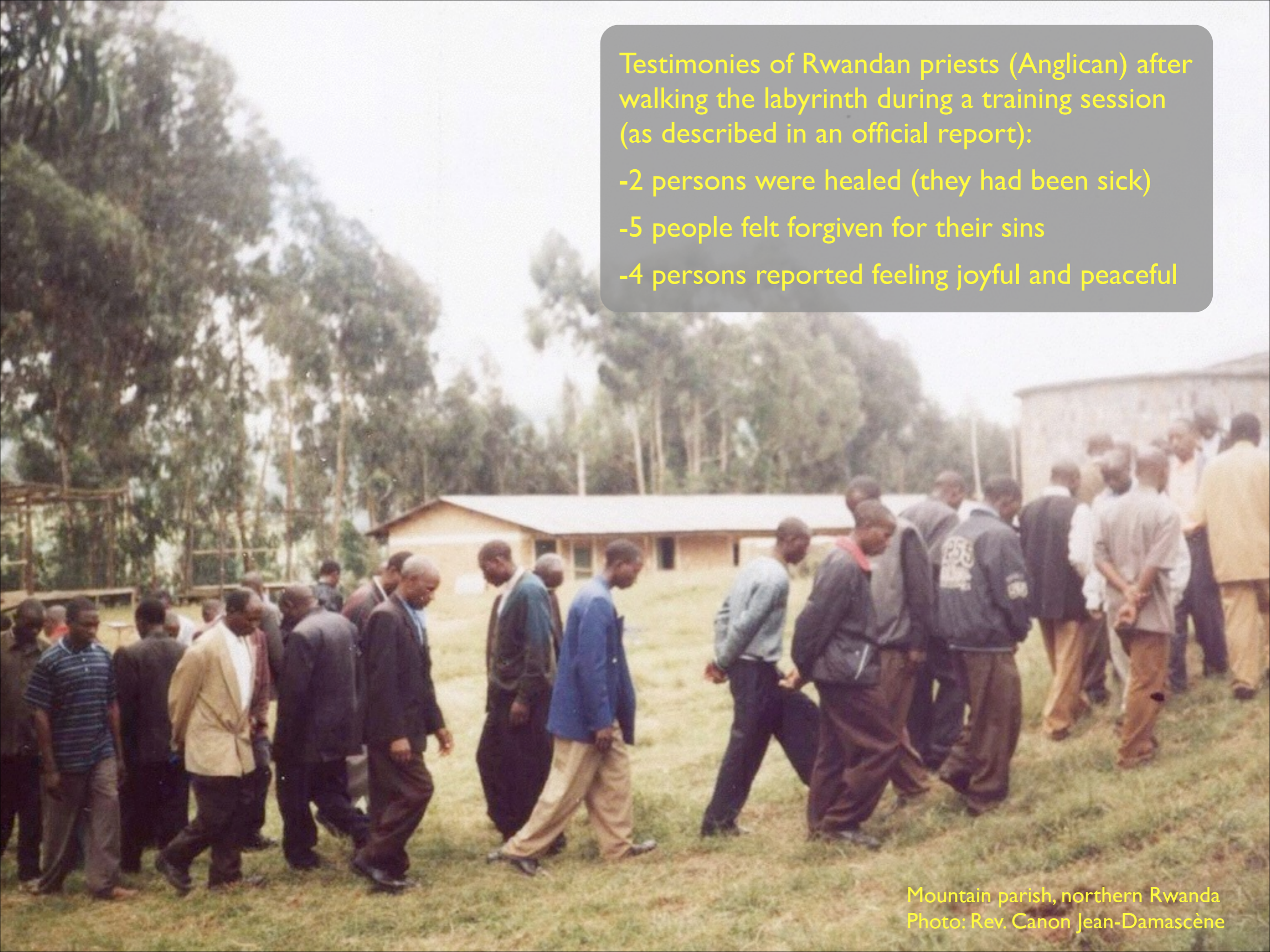
Interpersonal

Testimonies of Rwandan priests (Anglican) after walking the labyrinth during a training session (as described in an official report):

-2 persons were healed (they had been sick)

-5 people felt forgiven for their sins

-4 persons reported feeling joyful and peaceful

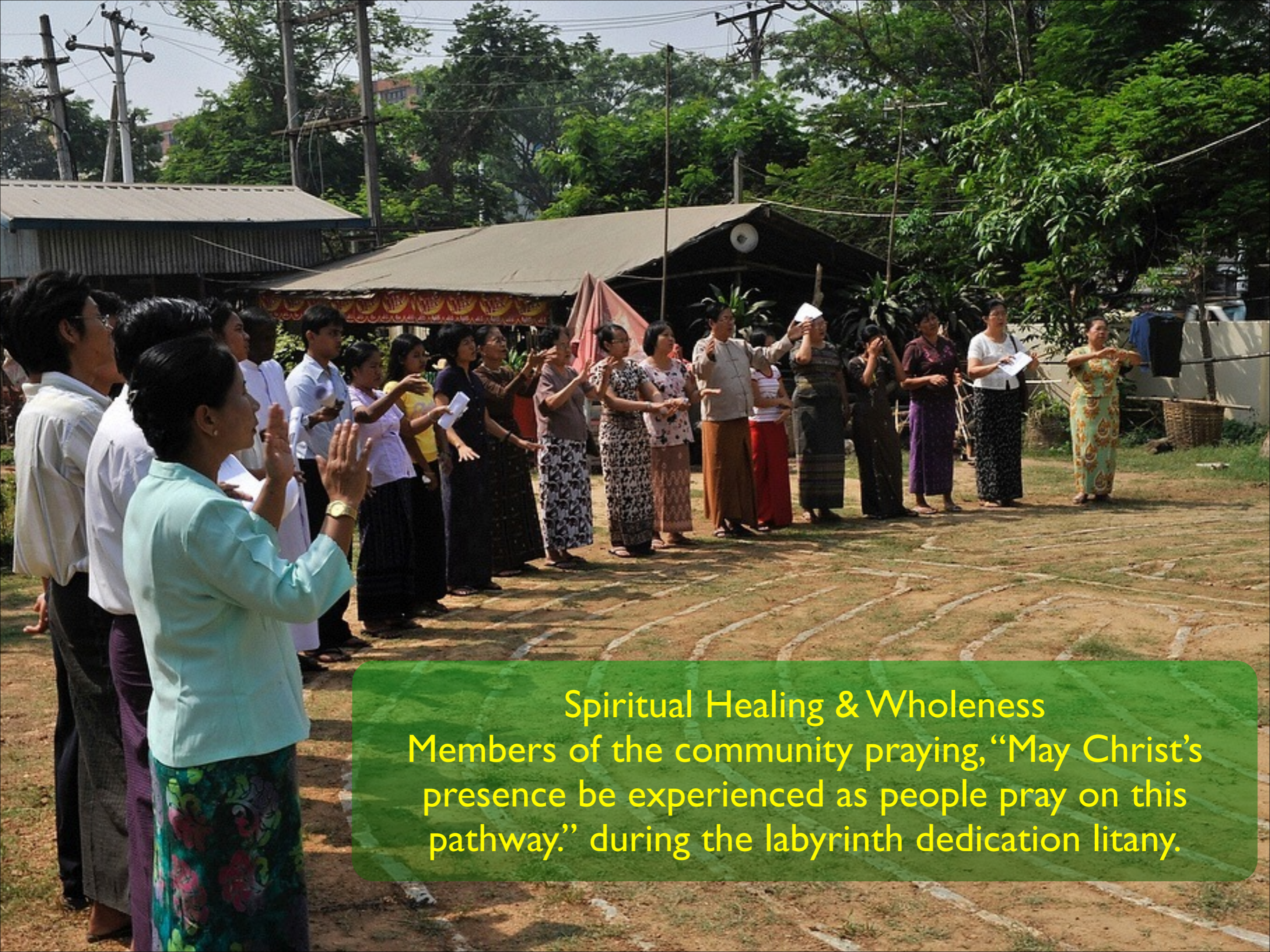


Mountain parish, northern Rwanda
Photo: Rev. Canon Jean-Damascène

Labyrinth Healing: Spiritual Changes Personal and Communal Growth



Baltimore, Maryland (USA)



Spiritual Healing & Wholeness
Members of the community praying, “May Christ’s presence be experienced as people pray on this pathway.” during the labyrinth dedication litany.

Labyrinth prayer vigils have been held during times of local and international crises as a way to support healing and action.



Flooding Kalay, Myanmar

Activities

Women for Peace Workshop: Domestic Violence January 20-22, 2010



Women for peace! With this claim, another workshop on Domestic Violence was held from January 20-22, 2010 in Shan Baptist Church, Muse Township in Northern Shan State, under the funding of Mennonite Central Committee, USA. Although two resource persons were expected, only Rev. Dr. Maung Maung Yin, Vice-principal and Professor of Christian Ethics of MIT, could make it there.



Walking prayer in the Labyrinth

Essentially, topics on issues related to family violence and roles of the church were tackled progressively within three days under the resource person's facilitation. Methodology accompanied with inductive Bible study also made the workshop more dynamic and multidimensional from Christian perspectives in regard to addressing family violence. The workshop was attended by 31 participants from different nationalities and Christian denominations. ☺

“We used the labyrinth as a kind of preventative method for violence to be reflective about ourselves, and to transform ourselves through prayers.”

Peace Studies Center

Shan State, Muse Township
Myanmar

Feeling a life-giving connection with God is reported by many labyrinth walkers.



On exiting the labyrinth for the first time:

“This pathway could really help the widows and orphans that I work with.

I want to put a labyrinth in my garden so that when they come to me feeling very sad and hopeless, I will explain labyrinth prayer, and then have them walk the labyrinth.

When they come out they will have let go all of their burdens!”

Furaha, D. R. Congo



Labyrinth Healing Prayer: Relational Healing



Labyrinths are tools that can be used for reconciliation. Intentional walking can help us to forgive others —and ourselves.

Sedalia,
Arizona (USA)





Forgiveness:
change in self,
not the other!

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.



On the labyrinth things had begun to become more clear for another pastor. Changes were needed. Changes that had not seemed possible before. We cried together, and then we prayed together. Through the use of the labyrinth, God had provided a new perspective, and a new willingness to hope, to chose wisely, to act differently--to be freed from the past.



Labyrinth Healing: Physical Changes/Cures



Physical Effects of Labyrinth Walking

According to Dr. Herbert Benson, walking through a labyrinth can evoke the relaxation response, a bodily state directly opposite to the stress or “fight-or-flight” state.

"Our more than 30 years of research shows that the relaxation response is characterized by decreased metabolism, heart rate, breathing rate, and blood pressure, and [also] slower and distinct brain wave activity," Benson says.

Herbert Benson, MD, is the founder of the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital (USA) and author of *Relaxation Revolution*

“As I moved my finger through the labyrinth, my heart, which had been beating irregularly for two to three weeks, stopped racing.”





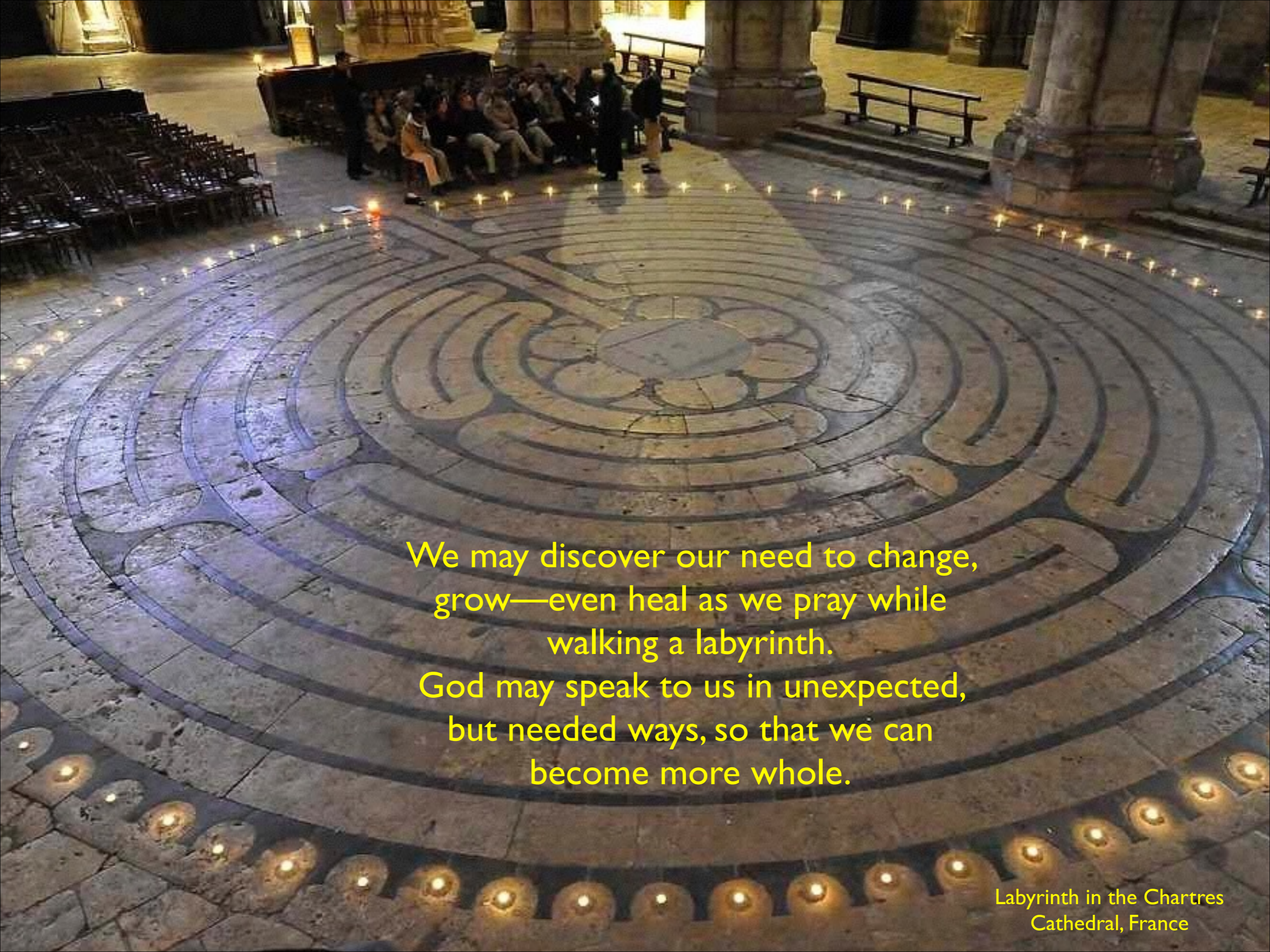
“When I started walking the labyrinth, I felt lifted up and carried. I had never felt this before. Even though I was worried about my weak heart, my blood pressure remained normal--even in the 90 degree heat. I don't know what to think.” Anesthesiologist



“I’m so happy the labyrinth is in my neighborhood. I try to pray for my extended family every day. Because of my high blood pressure I am supposed to exercise. Now I can walk the labyrinth while I pray and do something to support my health.”

Labyrinth Healing: Emotional/Mental Support and Shifts





We may discover our need to change,
grow—even heal as we pray while
walking a labyrinth.
God may speak to us in unexpected,
but needed ways, so that we can
become more whole.

Labyrinth in the Chartres
Cathedral, France

Mental Freedom



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

Seminary Lecturer

“I was released from stress bondage.”

Participant, Pastors' Leadership Workshop





“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.



Medical staff from the HEAL Africa Hospital walked the labyrinth on their way to and from work in Goma, D. R. Congo. 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."



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

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

A photograph of a sandy beach with a labyrinth made of seaweed. The labyrinth is a complex, winding path of seaweed on the sand, leading towards the ocean in the background. The text is overlaid in yellow on the sand.

Our bodies carry our fear.

We need help in letting fear go.
Moving prayer on a labyrinth can support this.

Perfect love casts out fear. | John 4:18

One of these walkers spoke of her journey from anger to calm resolve. It was not what she expected when she entered the labyrinth!



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

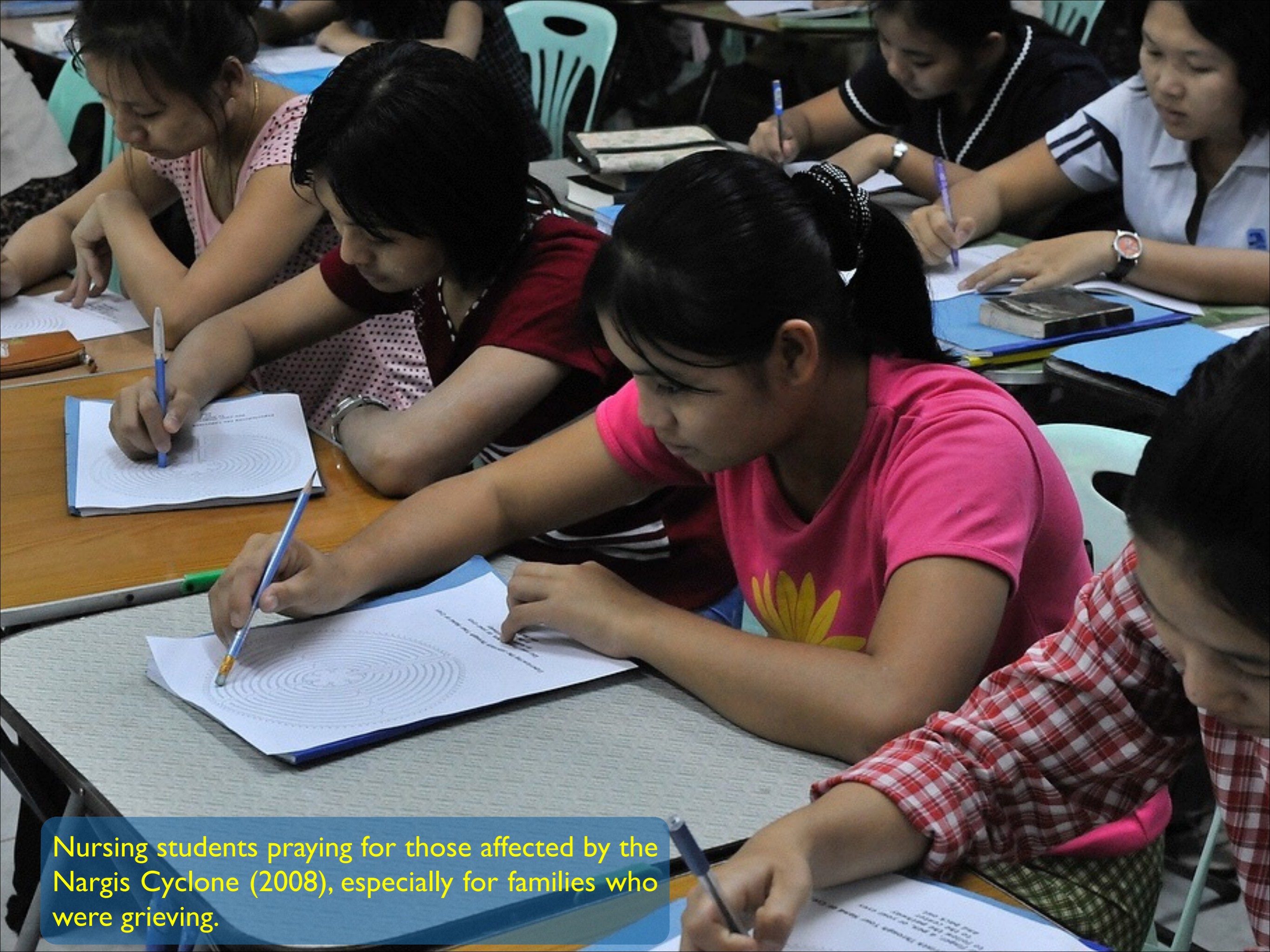




As I walked, I sensed that God reveals himself in our weakness. In spite of my weakness, God is inviting me to grow.” Pastor, D. R. Congo

Labyrinth Healing Prayer: Support During Communal or Individual Crisis





Nursing students praying for those affected by the Nargis Cyclone (2008), especially for families who were grieving.



Walking in Community Can Bring Healing for Those Who Are Marginalized

Teacher with orphans whose parents died of AIDS.
Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo
Labyrinth constructed by the family of the Rev. Lipandaski
Photo courtesy of Jacob Lipandaski

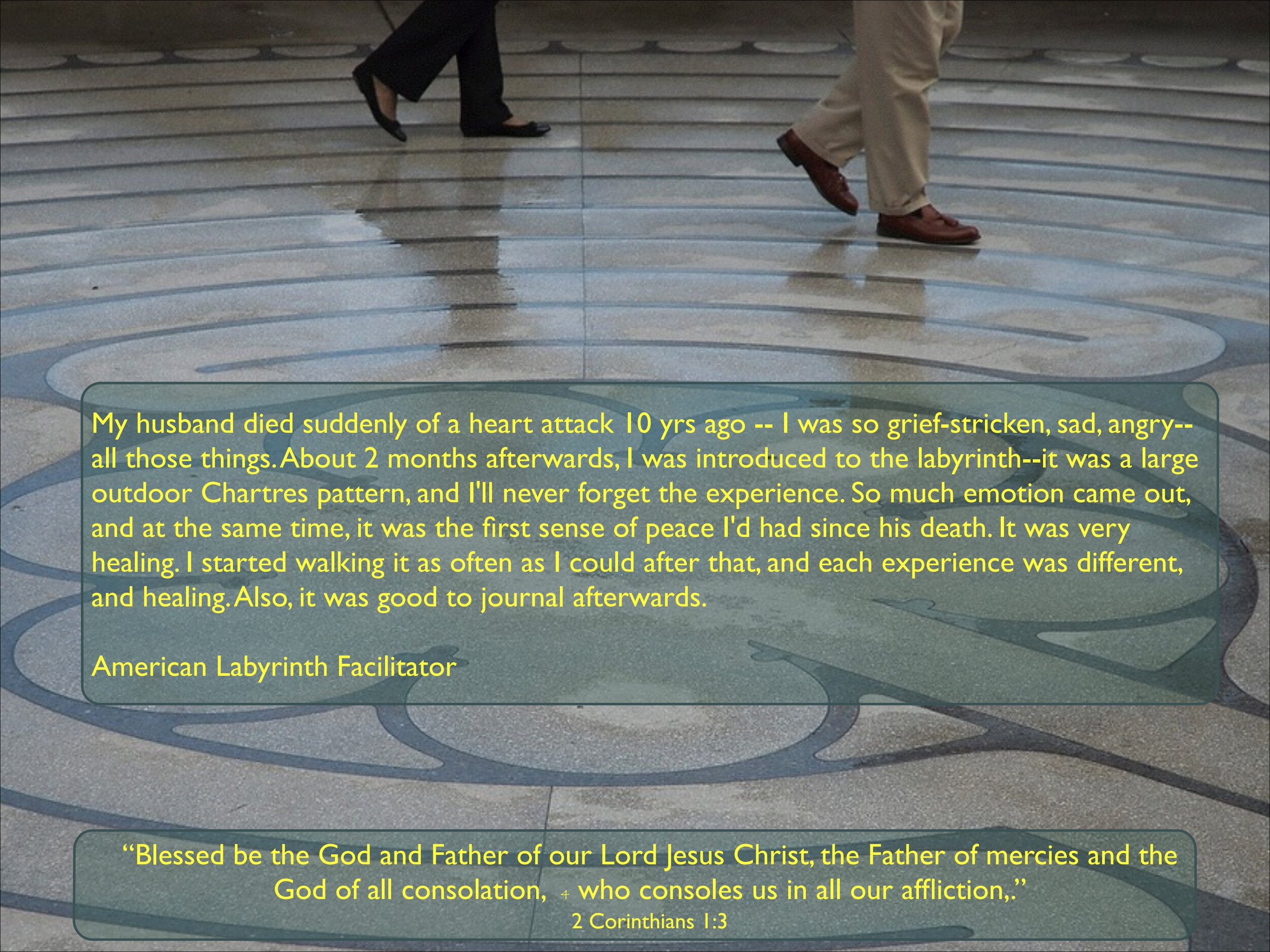


Labyrinths can be placed where people need to communicate with God about the burdens they are carrying.

“Cast all your anxiety on God, because God cares for you.”
I Peter 5:7

Societal Healing:
After using the labyrinth, people spoke of having prayed for their families, their churches, their country, and the world.



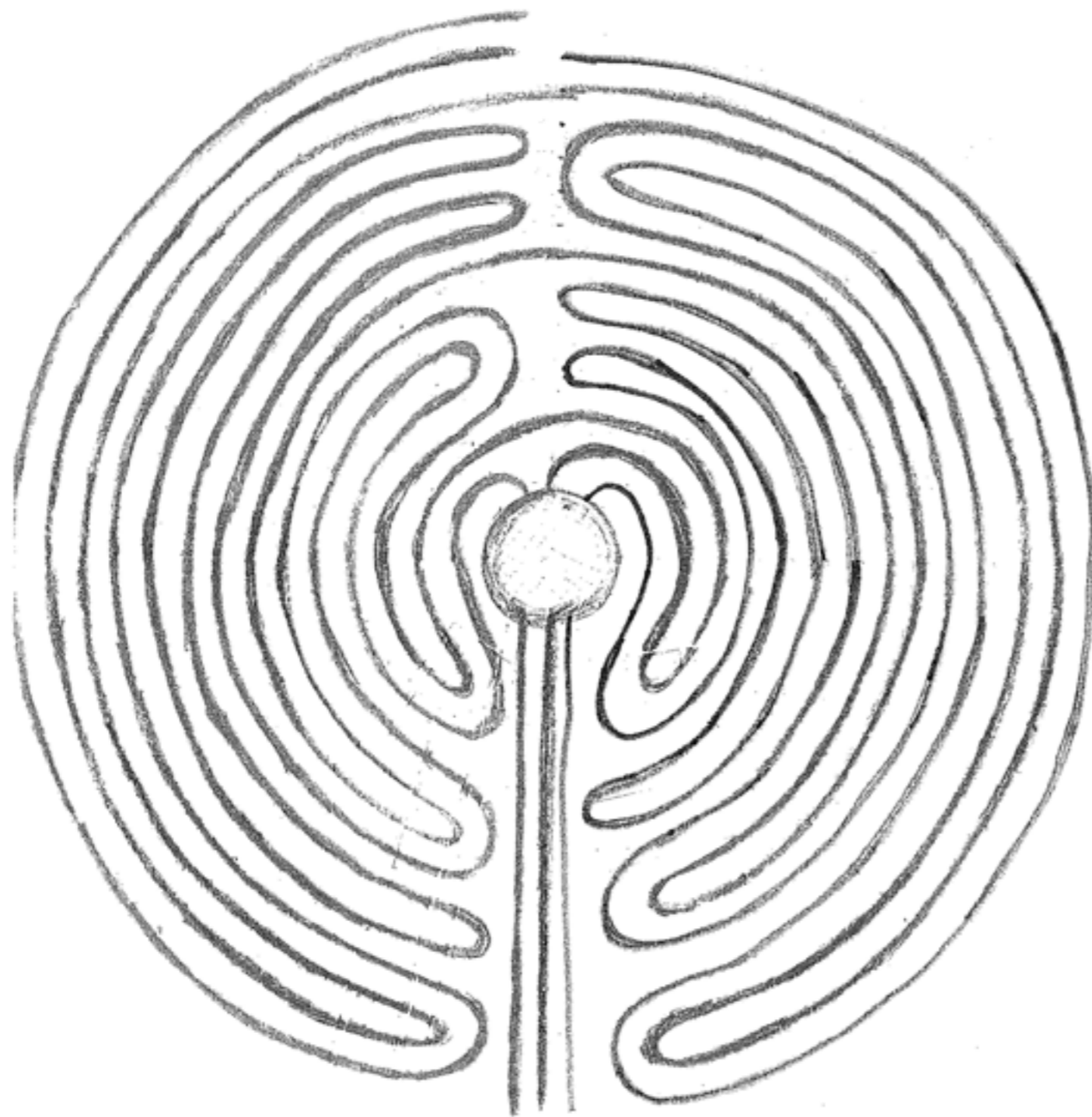


My husband died suddenly of a heart attack 10 yrs ago -- I was so grief-stricken, sad, angry--all those things. About 2 months afterwards, I was introduced to the labyrinth--it was a large outdoor Chartres pattern, and I'll never forget the experience. So much emotion came out, and at the same time, it was the first sense of peace I'd had since his death. It was very healing. I started walking it as often as I could after that, and each experience was different, and healing. Also, it was good to journal afterwards.

American Labyrinth Facilitator

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, + who consoles us in all our affliction,.”

2 Corinthians 1:3



When religious
groups need to find
healing with each
other,
Labyrinths can help
us to walk together.

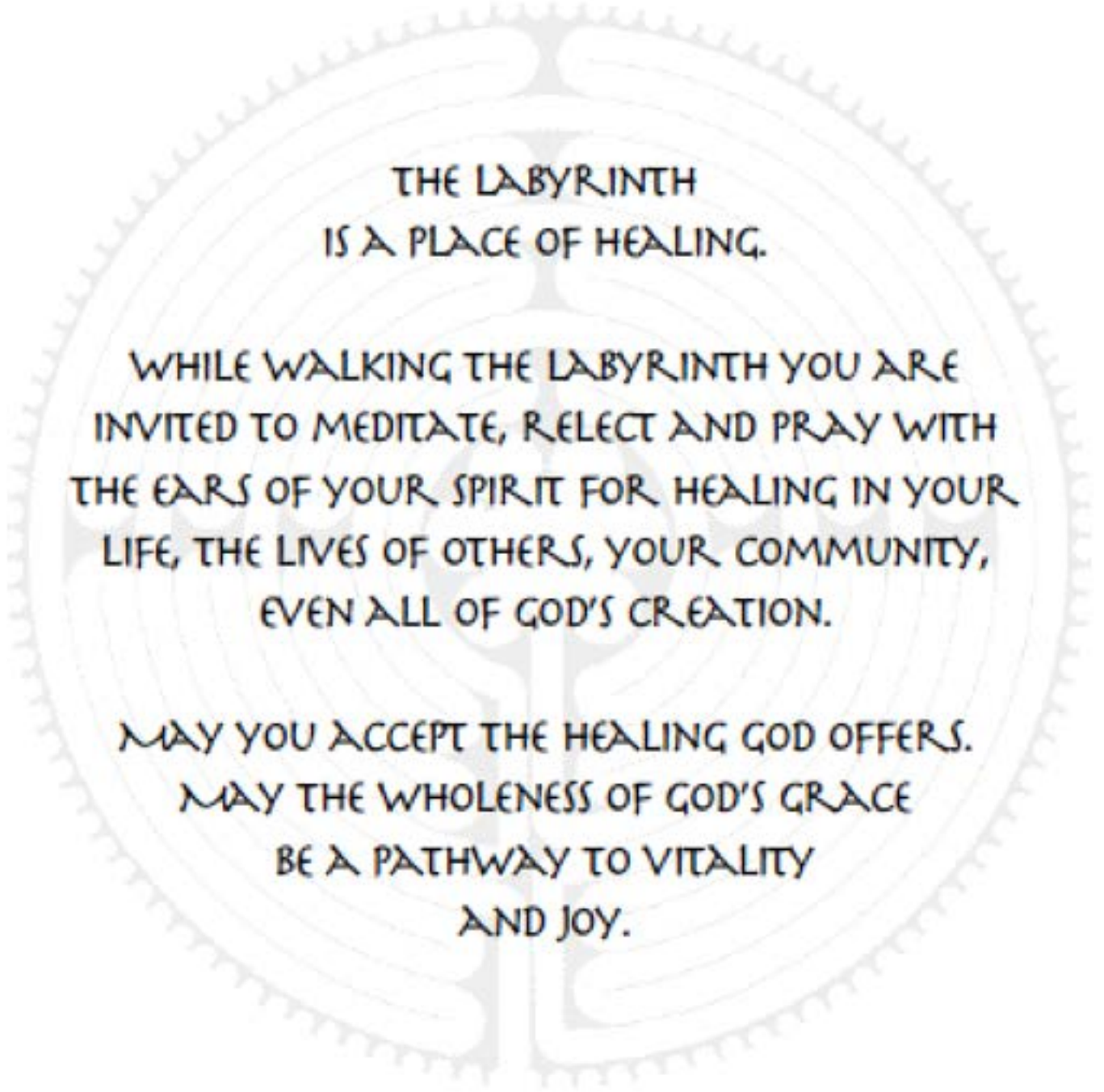
Pattern in process—
created by the Rev. Dr.
Cheryl Felicia Dudley

“Abrahamic Strands”
3 path labyrinth design



Religious Healing:

At an inter-religious event one man shared, “Without expecting it, while I walked the labyrinth I began to pray for my enemies-- people from a different faith tradition.”



THE LABYRINTH
IS A PLACE OF HEALING.

WHILE WALKING THE LABYRINTH YOU ARE
INVITED TO MEDITATE, REFLECT AND PRAY WITH
THE EARS OF YOUR SPIRIT FOR HEALING IN YOUR
LIFE, THE LIVES OF OTHERS, YOUR COMMUNITY,
EVEN ALL OF GOD'S CREATION.

MAY YOU ACCEPT THE HEALING GOD OFFERS.
MAY THE WHOLENESS OF GOD'S GRACE
BE A PATHWAY TO VITALITY
AND JOY.

UPON COMPLETION OF YOUR WALK, YOU ARE INVITED TO WRITE OR
DRAW YOUR COMMENTS, THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ON THE PAPER
PROVIDED.

Labyrinth Walk for Wholeness Sharing Communion and Anointing with Oil





I would like to express
my gratitude
to God
for this ministry of
healing,
to all the donors of
Faith, Hope and Love
Global Ministries,
and to all those
who use the labyrinth
as we seek the healing
that is needed in our lives
and in the world.

Shout to the Lord

My Jesus, my Savior
Lord, there is none like You
All of my days, I want to praise
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Songwriter: Darlene Zschech Published by: Integrity Hosanna Music!

Go in peace—to love and serve God!



Ministry website www.fhlglobal.org

Labyrinth resources by jill www.jillgeoffrion.com

Photo travel blog by jill www.throughjillseyes.wordpress.com

Journey blog by jill jillgeoffrion.wordpress.com

