

Living in Third Spaces  
Ohio Leadership Conference - 2019



**LSPS AUSTIN TX**

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# Social Location: Hispanic/Latinx/Mestizo/Hybrid Person from the U.S. - Mexico borderlands

- Baptized Lutheran
- Live in Liminal Space as a way of being in the world
- The place where I stand is a place I call: Interstice/To Stand Between
- Read the Bible through Hispanic/Latino/Mestizo/Hybrid eyes:
  - **Santa Biblia: The Bible Through Hispanic Eyes** by Dr. Justo Gonzalez
  - Cultural Lens/Perspective to the text
  - Exile
  - Diaspora
  - Displacement
  - Cultural Marginality (in the larger USA story and ELCA church)
  - Cultural ambiguity: Who am I in this sacred text/cultural space/story/church?

# Liminality Defined:

- Relating to a transitional or initial stage of a process or threshold ...
- A threshold for sacred encounter: *Encuentro* – the place of epiphanies ... new awareness ... new consciousness ...  
*concientización*
- Defines the Christian way of being in the world: Living in two realms, Living in the “Kin-dom” now but not yet fully realized ... for we are awaiting the promised future ... an in-between sacred third space ...
- Experienced as a state of being or a state of living in tension and ambiguity ... it is a both/and existential reality ... living in two cultures
- Often experienced at a geo-political or cultural boundary-crossing, where one stands on both sides of the border at the same time ...

# Intérstice Defined: “Standing in Third Spaces”

- A Third Space Between two cultures as in the space in a border fence/wall
- A Liminal Space between two identities: “Living in the Hyphen”
- A [holy] space of [Spirit] ENCOUNTER between [people; *imago dei*] nations
- *Nepantla*: the Aztec language (Náhuatl) term for “the space in the middle”
- A gap or BREAK in something continuous (life gaps: Living in ambiguity)



# Standing in “Third Space” (liminal sacred space)



# Philip preaches in Samaria Acts 8: 4-8



# People of Third Spaces identify with Samaria

Acts 8:4-8 Philip the deacon (see Acts 6) preaches in Samaria to great acclaim (signs and wonders followed his preaching ... and many were filled with joy)  
Acts 8:14 Samaria "accepts the word of the Lord ..."

My LATINO THIRD SPACE LENS goes into high gear in Samaritan contexts ...

Samaria is the place of "otherness," of racial mixture of Jew and gentile dating back to the conquest by Assyria. It's the place where "MESTIZOS" dwell, folks of a HYBRID mixture who become the "Third Other" by conquest and subaltern identity. We have our own Samaria In the Southwest borderlands where mixture of ethnicity, culture, language, theology, gender and geo-political Otherness marks the LATINX community of the many Americas as "perpetual other," folks who live on the margins of the powerful empire, on the edges of the church and in the shadows of our communities. We have heard FELIPE preaching "the good news" of God's acceptance of our "otherness" in our Samaritan borderland wilderness. We affirm with theological confidence: "EL NOS CONOCE MUY BIEN!" - He knows us!

Acts 8:26 Go down Philip! Let my people know!



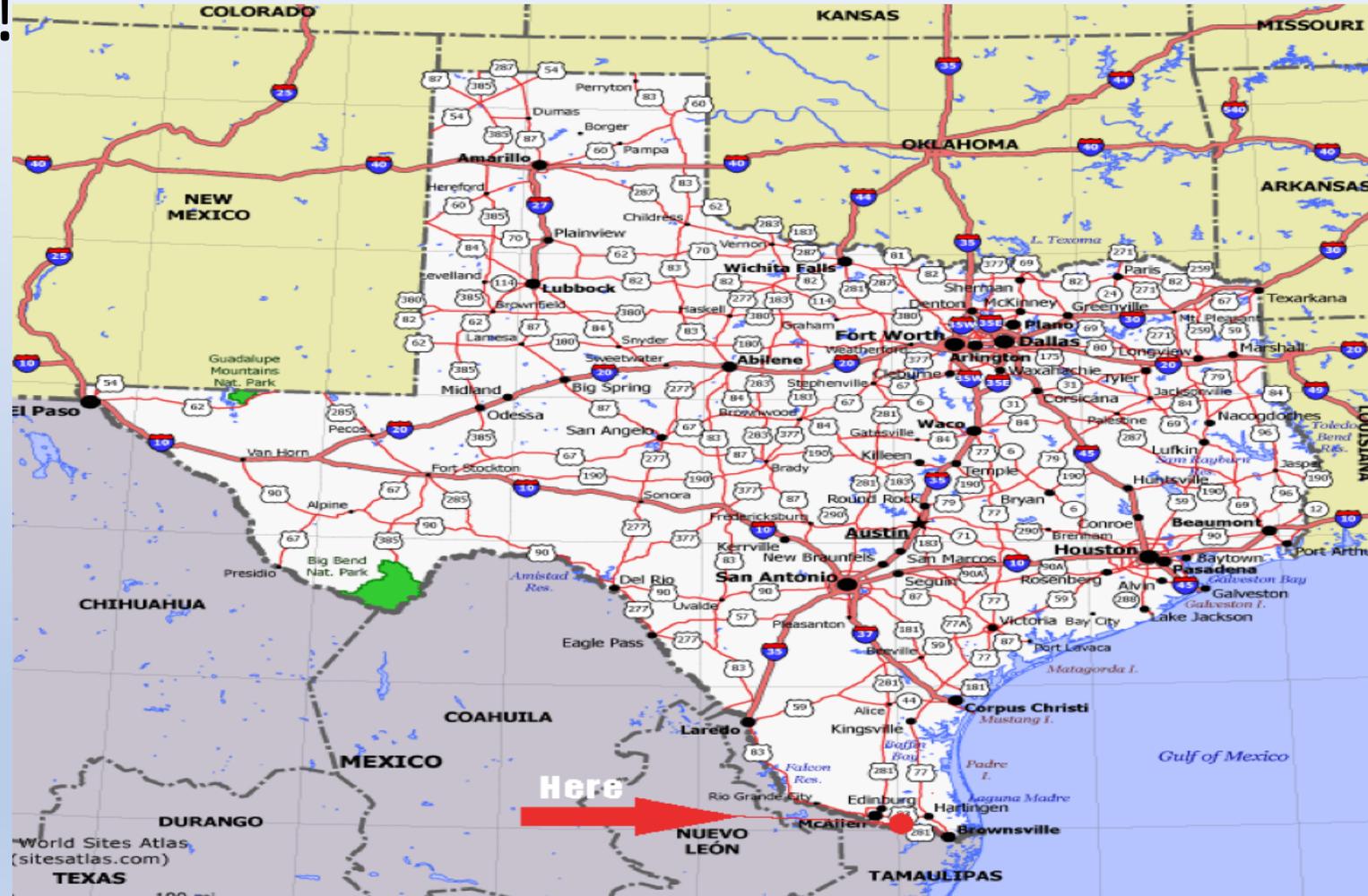
v. 8:29-35 Felipe preached the “good news” to “el/la otr@ the other... Go down Philip! Let my people know!”

**Borderland “other” folk** understand where Felipe has been preaching in Samaria. He’s been crossing all kinds of borders: geo-political, cultural, theological, ethnic, linguistic, gender borders. Remember the Samaritan woman speaking to Jesus at the well in the Gospel of John? She is the “other” woman with the five husbands in her past who becomes the evangelist in a story full of otherness. **THESE ARE STORIES OF ENCUENTRO** with the Sacred Other.

***Este Felipe***, he understands “***nuestra gente***,” our border people ... he is familiar with the otherness of Samaritan and African gender others because the Spirit has sent him to preach the good news to folks who live in HYBRID spaces as a HYBRID people...

“***Ni de aquí ni de allá***,” we like to say in Spanish ... We don’t belong over there and we don’t belong over here; **just like living along the U.S. Mexico borderlands. We live in a BI-NARY WORLD AND WE DON’T QUITE FIT IN IT! WE STAND IN INTERSTICE, IN THE HYBRID THIRD SPACES; LIMINAL SACRED SPACES of THE SPIRIT**

# Border as Interstice – Third Space is Church Space!



# The “Living Waters” of the Rio Grande: Living the age-old story ...!



# So what are the “good news” Philip tells us?

All the baptized are children of God, TOD@S! NO EXCEPTIONS!

The Gospel cannot be confined to a bi-nary world! It transcends it!

The Gospel is “AMISTAD con DIOS” in the Third Spaces of our communities

The Gospel crosses and transcends ALL borders of difference: cultural, ethnic, gender, geo-political, linguistic (¡Si SE PUEDE BAUTIZAR A TOD@S! All GENDER Identity and Cultural Other CLAIMS! In our Baptism, the Gospel affirms that ALL are created in the image and likeness of the Creator (Imago Dei) and in our baptism we affirm our God-given DIGNITY/DIGNIDAD!

The Gospel is HOSPITALITY to the XENOS (The Foreigner/The Alien) and the HYBRID “other” of our communities: the GENDER Identity “other,” the IMMIGRANT “other,” the THIRD SPACE “other,” the seeker of Dignidad ...

# The Border States as Third (Hybrid) Space

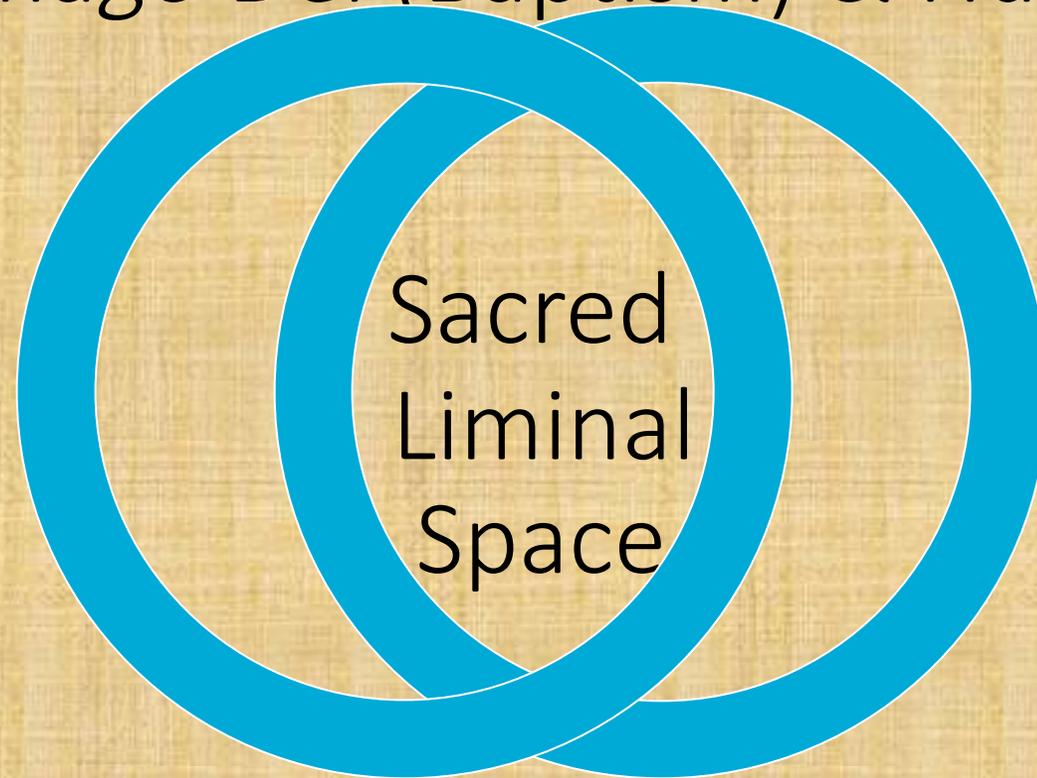




# Two Diverse Cultural Worldviews & Third Space

- Historical: Exchange Stories of Origin/Faith
- Linguistic: Language constructs Identity
- Theological: Word & Sacrament Third Space  
Affirm *Imago Dei* (Baptism) & Human Dignity

The U.S.



Mexico