

Making Lemonade with Substitute Sugar: Towards an Ethics of Receptivity

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ABSTRACT

Using displacement data and oral histories that I began collecting after the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, this paper analyzes the experiences of families who made the small college town of State College, Pennsylvania home after Katrina. The communal significance of the church forms focal areas of ethical reflection for participants in my study. The ethics of receptivity put forward in this paper honors the faith these families relied on to take their bitter realities after massive destruction and make lemonade and gather around a communal table across differences to share a common meal. It also recognizes individual and institutional commitments to creating communities with the mutual openness for something and someone new.

Shannon was finally beginning to experience her life on the upside of previous challenges.¹ She had a good job working for the State of Louisiana and had recently received a promotion. She was training to become a personal trainer which would create additional income, she had a car which meant she no longer had to take multiple buses to get to work, and she was renting a decent townhouse where she and her three young daughters lived. As she described it, she felt that she was on her way up. On the evening of Friday, August 26, 2005, Shannon went to a restaurant and jazz club in New Orleans East with co-workers to celebrate with a colleague who had just received his master's degree. They had a great time commemorating his accomplishment; it was New Orleans, and celebrating good times was in their DNA. As she left the restaurant, she noticed that it was anything but a normal Friday night in her hometown. It was empty, the sights and sounds of New Orleans nightlife were absent, and she described the place looking scarce, almost like a ghost town, and not like the ones in the cemeteries on the outskirts of the city. It was windy – not cold

or humid, but windy. As they were walking to the parking lot, one of her co-workers said she was going to get gas. She told Shannon that with the storm coming they might be evacuated, so it would be a good idea to get gas before that happened. Shannon decided to take her co-worker's advice and look for gas on her drive back home.

Shannon drove to I-10, crossing the Mississippi River to get to the West Bank where her family lived. As she drove across the bridge, the wind was blowing so fiercely that she felt as if her car could be lifted up at any moment. She gripped the steering wheel and began to pray intensely that she would be able to get home safely. Hurricanes have been recorded in New Orleans since 1722, when the first major hurricane destroyed almost all of the buildings in the newly established town. From 1851 to 2004, Louisiana had been hit by 49 hurricanes²; so many families like Shannon's had regular traditions they followed when storms approached. Shannon's large family would gather at the most sustainable home, and as a child she looked forward to having fun. All of the cousins were able to play together as the aunts and uncles cooked. However, as an adult with the responsibilities of keeping her three daughters safe, she thought about it a little differently. The mother in her had to think about whether she had enough money to evacuate with her young daughters if they were forced to do so since she had not been able to create an emergency fund yet. Hurricanes are often unpredictable, so she had to think about whether it would be wise to miss work and the money associated with it for a hurricane that could easily turn and head in a different direction. That night, as she drove towards where her family was gathered, the gas station that she normally frequented was closed. She later reflected that should have been a red flag that the storm was more serious than others, but she simply drove around until she found a gas station that was open. Once she arrived at the house Shannon turned on the news and listened to the trusted voice of weatherman Bob Breck; it was then that she realized the strength of the storm which had become a hurricane and the course that it was taking directly towards New Orleans.

They had not packed, they were actually planning to ride-it-out like they had done many times before. Older generations within her family had endured Hurricanes Betsy in 1965 and Camille in 1969, so they did not see the need to spend a lot of time and money to leave their homes when they had been able to survive devastating hurricanes before. Shannon's practice was to leave the television on the news all night as they slept. Early Saturday morning she woke to the words "potential Category 5;" so the decision to ride it out was not necessarily the wisest thing to do, especially with young children. Once the other members of the family woke up they too began watching the news, and while she was thankful that she had a car that was operational, Shannon was concerned that she was not financially prepared to leave. According to the National Hurricane Center, catastrophic danger was expected with a Category 5 hurricane, with winds 157 miles or higher, including the destruction of a high percentage of framed homes with total roof failure and wall collapse. Fallen trees and power poles could isolate residential areas, making recovery a challenge. A storm that size might result in power outages lasting weeks or possibly months, and most of the area impacted would be uninhabitable for weeks or months.³ If it maintained its course and hit New Orleans directly, Hurricane Katrina had the potential to be one of the most devastating hurricanes in the city's history. The more she listened, Shannon decided that she would have to leave.⁴

In this paper I use oral histories, ethnographic research, governmental reports, church newsletters,

and supplemental local and national media reports to construct an understanding of what happened when persons like Shannon and her family left New Orleans and found themselves in cities and towns throughout the United States. For many who left, their lives were completely disrupted as they were forced to make their way to new places while experiencing some of the bitterest and most devastating losses imaginable. As they entered new communities, some stayed for a temporary period until they were able to return to New Orleans while others made a more permanent, though unplanned, move. The bitter losses were lemons that had been handed to them. The ability to look at what they had been given and connect to a life-giving substance within them marks the beginning of a construction of an ethics of receptivity, experienced through faith and mutual openness to change. Beyond the generally shorter-termed obligations of hospitality, this ethics of receptivity enabled resiliency for displaced Katrina survivors as they re-established their lives in communities outside of the south. More specifically, this paper analyzes the experiences of families who made the small college town of State College, Pennsylvania home after Katrina. The communal significance of the church forms focal areas of ethical reflection for the participants in my study. The ethics of receptivity put forth in this paper honors the faith these families relied on to take their bitter realities after massive destruction and make lemonade. It also recognizes individual and institutional commitments to creating communities with mutual openness for something and someone new.

Like many throughout the United States and around the world, I sat glued to my television set in late August 2005 watching the devastation that followed the breaching of levees in New Orleans. I watched in unbelief as multiple days passed and people were still trapped inside their homes, on roofs, roads and bridges, and in the Superdome. Like many I joined in with relief efforts, attempting to help in the ways that I could from afar to send food and water to the gulf region. Anti-black racism and generations of poverty laid the foundation for structural violence that resulted in tragedies for marginalized American citizens. As I heard stories about police officers who created a blockade on the bridge to Gretna to prevent people from New Orleans from walking to higher and safer ground I was sickened to see the depth of the racist and classist hatred that was being uncovered in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.⁵ The storm had been churning since August 24th, building in strength the longer it stayed in the ocean. By the time it hit land around 6 a.m. on August 29th, Katrina had been downgraded to a Category 4 hurricane that maintained a high potential for destruction, but in reality, the damage from the hurricane was relatively minimal.

The winds raged, but they were not as destructive as they could have been. Many who stayed recall feeling relieved that they had not left New Orleans, because the storm did not hit them directly with the full force that was expected. However, the destruction that we all came to see and know was a result of human and political ineptness that ignored reports and predictions as outlined one-year prior through the FEMA simulation of a category 3 hurricane, "Hurricane Pam." This lower level simulation predicted massive flooding over the levees, high fatalities, and a major housing and transportation crisis as a result of the old and inadequate levee systems.⁶ With the knowledge that the storm surge in the model toppled the levees one-year prior, the late decision to call for a mandatory evacuation of New Orleans and the ill-preparation to help the tens of thousands of residents who did not have personal transportation that would enable them to evacuate seemed incomprehensible, but some things quickly became clear. In the last days

of August, just as school was beginning for many in the United States, we watched 24-hour television coverage in shock and horror and learned a lesson that curriculums had ignored and communities had become numb to. School was in session as we sought understanding while watching the lives of our fellow citizens being bounced from the responsibility of the city, to the state, to the federal government in what historian and social critic Manning Marable described as an unnatural disaster that reconfirmed racial hierarchies in the United States.⁷ Nearly seventy percent of the population was comprised of poor and working-class Black people.⁸ The images that we watched made it clear that in a place like New Orleans, there were significant issues of race and class that caused ruptures in the fabric of a city that we could no longer see as the big easy, but the big uneasy.⁹

Through the storm, the winds and rains uncovered the class differences at the center of the division between those who could leave and those who could not, those who could rebuild and those who could not even return.¹⁰ As historian Peniel E. Joseph wrote shortly after the devastation, “Despite the ferocious rage, Katrina is not solely responsible for the untold devastation that was visited on the poor people of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region. She is only guilty of exposing the cynicism of an American political system that allows masses of the poor, especially the black poor, to endure lives of quiet desperation amid a land of plenty.” He continued, noting that “in addition to inflicting incalculable horrors on the region in the form of death and misery, [Hurricane Katrina] opened up the vortex of race, class, and citizenship that provides a backdrop to this unfolding national crisis.”¹¹ School was in session, and we were all learning a lesson. Many scholars like Carolyn Yoder note the structural violence that reinforced the inequities, stating, “The ongoing violence of poverty and systems that make people unable to meet basic needs such as healthcare is called structural violence and is a cause of trauma. Often these structural-induced traumas go unnoticed until an event such as Hurricane Katrina graphically exposes what has existed all along.”¹² Largely the result of policies that confined poor households to areas with limited educational and economic opportunities, there was little prospect of upward mobility and socio-economic change. Poverty was concentrated in extremely poor neighborhoods, such as the lower Ninth Ward, which did not receive infrastructural investments that would protect those living there if the predicted destruction happened. Geographically relegated to the shadows of the levees, most families could not afford expensive flood insurance, therefore placing the most economically vulnerable on the most physically vulnerable land.¹³ The dismal Orleans Parish school systems, which boasted the second lowest math and reading scores in Louisiana, were filled with students from poor families who could not place them in the higher performing private schools. Many of these students left school unprepared to attend college or obtain a job that would enable them to move out of the poverty that held a firm hold on them.

Hurricane Katrina has a lot to teach us not only about preparing for natural disasters, but also about directly addressing the policies and practices which continue to exert structural violence among those who are the most vulnerable within our nation. The catastrophic event forced the United States to critically analyze our response to difference (especially racial and class differences) as well as our response to forced geographical change, and the media coverage exposed our decisions and the impact on American citizens to the broader world.

RECALCULATING CHANGING COURSE WHILE EVACUATING

For those of us who rely on GPS navigation systems to guide us to our destination, we have become accustomed to hearing a voice let us know when we are heading in a direction that will not help us reach the goal. "Recalculating." The recalculation allows us to make a course correction from whatever spot we are in to help us reach the destination in the most efficient manner. State College was not the initial destination for any of the persons that I conducted oral histories with. Albert was born in 1923 and he had lived in New Orleans for all of his life. He had lived through the devastation of Betsy and Camille and the many other hurricanes that impacted the city. However, as Hurricane Katrina approached, at the prodding of his family, he along with his wife Azalea, his niece and her daughter made hotel arrangements in Tallahassee, Florida. As I have stated previously, hurricanes in New Orleans were certainly not anomalies and many families maintained practices of either staying or leaving for a short period of time until the danger was over. Albert and Azalea were planning to drive the six hours to Tallahassee the day before the hurricane hit, when their son, a surgeon in State College, Pennsylvania told him to not go to Florida but to turn around and drive to Georgia where Albert's nephew lived. While resting after the long drive, Albert's nephew told him to look at the television. When he saw the St. Bernard Market, a landmark not far from his house was completely under water, the massive destruction by flooding made it clear that the one or two-day trip that he packed for would become much longer.¹⁴ Recalculating.

Lydia was also born in New Orleans and had lived in the city for all of her life. When Hurricane Betsy hit in 1965, she and her family lived in an area of the city that was geographically higher, so they were not impacted by the breach of the levees. As Hurricane Katrina was making its way towards New Orleans, Lydia along with her two daughters, son-in-law, and granddaughter started driving towards Texas. The roads were packed as thousands tried to leave the city at the same time, so they turned around and drove to Mississippi where they watched the news in horror as 80% of the city that they loved was flooded by water when the levees that were supposed to protect the city were breached. After spending four days in Mississippi and realizing that they would not be able to go back to New Orleans at any time soon, they headed north to State College, Pennsylvania, where Lydia's daughter Michelle was in a Ph.D. program in the School of Education at Penn State University through a partnership with Xavier University in New Orleans. When they left New Orleans to head to Texas for a couple days, only to turn around and stay in Mississippi for four days before driving to central Pennsylvania, none of them would have imagined that they would live in State College for seven months before they could return home to assess the damage and determine when or if they could return for good.¹⁵ Recalculating.

Once Shannon decided that she would leave in advance of the hurricane hitting land, she struggled to convince her mother, who did not want to leave her cat, to go with them. Shannon's sister was working as a dormitory monitor at Xavier University and planned to stay with the students to make sure that they were okay, so she let cousins use her car so that they could leave the city. However, when the administrators at Xavier told her to try to evacuate with her family, she called Shannon who was just about to enter the counter-flow as a part of a caravan of family members on their way out of New Orleans. After

turning around to pick up her sister, the family began the normal five-hour drive to a cousin's home just outside of Memphis, Tennessee. In this time of turmoil and despair Shannon's cousin opened his home, which he had previously placed on the market to sell, to his family so that they could evacuate there. Along the drive Shannon and her family experienced people further exploiting a devastating situation such as businesses charging \$10.00 for a bag of ice. When they finally arrived in Tennessee, 18-hours later, there were nearly 50 family members, including Shannon's cousin's in-laws, under one roof. They gathered around televisions and watched the massive destruction unfold in their beloved city, realizing that the one to two-day evacuation they expected would not turn out like planned. Recalculating.

Recalculations operate as a tool of survival by keeping track of where the person is, even if they are not on the initially designated route. Built within the feature of literal and figurative recalculations is the understanding that there may be more than one route to the destination when intentional or unintentional detours happen. For Global Positioning Systems with live updates that capture accidents, road construction, and other hazards, it also acknowledges when the destination is no longer a possibility and may provide another end goal. Lydia referred to this in a way as she now trusts and knows that whatever situation and location she finds herself in she will be content, drawing on the writings of the Apostle Paul.¹⁶

For those who were able to leave ahead of Hurricane Katrina as well as those who were trapped in New Orleans and other areas of the gulf region and left when they were able to, most found their way to big cities, including Houston, Texas, which received nearly 250,000 evacuees, and Atlanta, Georgia, where nearly 100,000 evacuees traveled.¹⁷ However the displacement data generated through the support payments provided through FEMA shows that the women, men, and children from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida who survived Hurricane Katrina were spread throughout every state within the nation.¹⁸ For many there had been an unexpected recalculation of their destinations and they found themselves in small towns without the cultural connections that they were accustomed to.

The question for me is not why did people that I interviewed go to State College, a small central Pennsylvania town that lacks cultural variety so richly steeped within New Orleans with its 40,000 residents, over 47,000 students, and even more white-tailed deer. The why of State College is a logical answer. Like many who migrate to other locations in times of turmoil, each person I interviewed had a connection to someone who was living in State College, the majority as graduate students at Penn State University.¹⁹ Many who evacuated from New Orleans and other areas impacted in the Gulf region went to State College and stayed from a week, a few months, or up to three years in order to complete a degree after transferring to Penn State. The real question for me is not why some chose to go to State College, but why did they choose to stay. The people who I interviewed have been away from New Orleans and in State College for more than ten years after Hurricane Katrina, with the majority congregating at Albright-Bethune United Methodist Church, even after there were opportunities to leave and move back south.

BEING OPEN TO RECEIVE: SMALL TOWNS AND BIG HEARTS

A naturally hard worker who valued her independence, Shannon found that she had to be open to receiving from a community that she did not know and had not planned to find herself in. She described how many of the people in the small town of Tennessee that she and her family initially found themselves in brought clothing, furniture, refrigerators and freezers full of food to the home that was previously vacant as her cousin prepared to sell it. Each day someone from a different church would bring by food and meals for the 50 plus people who were under the one roof. It was not quite the food that she was accustomed to, it was not quite seasoned the way she preferred, but she found herself on the receiving end of the generosity of many people in a space that she never expected to find herself. As Katrina hit, the new school year was starting in New Orleans and after spending \$500 on school uniforms and \$300 on supplies, Shannon had to start over in a new community without any resources.

Shannon began to find a sense of normalcy and started to love Cordova, Tennessee, a town just east of Memphis, and she became comfortable there because the people were nice. The church communities were open and welcoming. She found a temporary job and enrolled her daughters in the local school system, and thought that she might be able to make a home in Cordova. That was until FEMA made the decision to remove the resources that provided support for persons who had been victims of Hurricane Katrina. Shannon once again found herself needing to find a place to live, and after unsuccessfully trying to find something in New Orleans, she made her way towards State College, Pennsylvania upon the invitation of a friend who was in graduate school at Penn State.

STATE COLLEGE AND THE PENN STATE COMMUNITY

In the fall of 2005 there were seven students participating in the collaborative program with Xavier University and Penn State University's College of Education.²⁰ As these students watched the path of the hurricane adjusting itself to make direct contact with New Orleans, they became concerned. The devastation from the flooding revealed a beloved community that their families could not immediately return to, so these students opened their doors and began to work with the University and township to secure a place for those who would need more than a couple days lodging in a hotel.

Within days, graduate student family members like Lydia made their way towards State College. Arrangements were made to enroll children in State College Area District schools, provide free or prorated housing, provide furniture, clothing, and other resources to help acclimate them to a new community as quickly as possible. Penn State's president at the time, Graham B. Spanier, announced that they were opening the 24 campuses of Penn State to students primarily from Tulane University who had been impacted by Katrina. As he explained, many of the students had previously applied and been accepted to Penn State but chose to go to a southern school, so it was easy to access the records of about 50 students who would join Penn State as undergraduates. In the press releases from that time it is interesting to note that Spanier did not mention helping undergraduate students from the historically Black Universities of Xavier and Dillard minimize the disruption to their education even though Penn State already had a relationship with Xavier to recruit more black graduate students to the field of Education. The Penn State

University community rallied together as students raised money to help persons locally who had been impacted, and leveraging the 100,000+ crowd during the season opening football game, they collected money for the Red Cross. Unlike many who left their homes quickly to evacuate in advance of the hurricane, Lydia grabbed medicine and important paperwork before she left for what she thought would be a few days. She could not explain why she took those items because she had never done it in previous evacuations. It was seven months before they could return to New Orleans, so those documents helped her begin the claim process with FEMA and her insurance company from almost 1,200 miles away.

ALBRIGHT-BETHUNE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Albright-Bethune United Methodist Church is a relatively new congregation that finds its origins as the result of the need to build cultural community in the small predominantly White town of State College, Pennsylvania. The church began as the United Black Fellowship, drawing primarily from faculty and staff members of the Forum on Black Affairs at Penn State University. Their first pastor, Rev. Cecil Gray, was active in the community, including serving as a strong supporter for the students as they challenged underrepresentation on the University campus. The early church was the result of a joint effort between local Baptist and United Methodist churches to help create a space where Black faculty, staff, and students at Penn State University could worship in a more traditional Black Church environment.²¹ As they found their way and formalized their ministry beyond the fellowship, the congregation utilized sanctuary space at the Wesley Foundation, the University Baptist and Brethren Church, and St. John United Methodist Church.²² Over time, the United Methodists continued to financially support the congregation and the second pastor, Rev. Bernice Stevens, named the church Bethune Memorial after Black educator, political leader, and Methodist, Mary McLeod Bethune. Through blending the congregation with St. John, the church was renamed for Pennsylvania evangelical Methodist Jacob Albright and Bethune and formally welcomed into the United Methodist denomination.

Persons who were a part of the early congregation describe being drawn to the people and familiar Black Church practices and not any particular denominational attributes. As a result, Baptists, Methodists, and Pentecostals worshipped and fellowshiped together in a Black Church tradition where they could hear the preaching, teaching, and singing they felt connected to. From its origins in 1988 through the time that the men, women, and children evacuated from New Orleans, there were six men and women who served as pastors or co-pastors. From July 2002 until June 2007, Reverend Marion J. Roddy-Hart served as the pastor of Albright-Bethune. An older Black woman who had a heart for people, she is described as being a strong woman who knew how to get along with the young and the old members equally. Many members attested to Rev. Roddy-Hart's skill for bringing out the gifts and talents of others in ways that would allow them to serve in the church.

Jennifer joined Albright-Bethune when her youngest daughter was one year old, and twenty-three years later, she is still a member of the church. She described the pastor during the time of Katrina, Rev. Roddy-Hart, as a powerful praying, Bible-based preacher who could make the connections between the text and the current environment using her "divine imagination." Pastoral care was also central to Rev. Roddy-Hart who often "adopted" and nurtured graduate students who were a part of the congregation.

As a pastor, she saw gifts in people and did not wait for them to volunteer to participate in the life of the church; she simply asked them to lead in prayer, scripture reading, praise and worship, or whatever she discerned. It was under Rev. Roddy-Hart's leadership that Jennifer began to serve as one of the primary liturgists for the church. When she reflected on the church during the time the Katrina survivors arrived, she noted they were welcomed in without making a big deal about how or why they were there. She said, "When we saw a new group of people arrive, we just loved on them."²³

One name that three of the Katrina survivors I interviewed mentioned as a person who was openly receptive to them when they arrived was Carla, a member of Albright-Bethune United Methodist Church in State College since the late 1980s, so I knew I would need to interview her.²⁴ Carla, a white woman from Pennsylvania, began attending the church as it formed because she wanted her Black husband and bi-racial children to have a place where they could be comfortable with both cultures they had to navigate. She described the church during the time it was forming as primarily Black, but "very welcoming to everyone."

This welcoming spirit continued to be a characteristic of the church when it became a spiritual gathering place for Black people arriving in State College after Hurricane Katrina.²⁵ Carla does not recall any special preparations being made by the church, but because many of the graduate students within the congregation had familial roots in Louisiana, the church leadership, including her husband, and members said, "Just come and we'll do what we can." The members of the church took on a role that the Penn State community could not, that of spiritual stability for those whose lives had been shaken to the core. For most, there was a need to make State College a home for at least a year, while others were open and receptive to making a more permanent move. During the time of the transition from New Orleans to State College, Carla, her family, and other church members did all that they could to help make the move as seamless as possible. As Carla reflected on what that period was like for those who arrived after Katrina, she said, "I am just in prayer every time I think about them and what they must have endured and come through it with such grace and such love. They are just amazing people."²⁶

Another church couple, mentioned by three of the Katrina survivors, Blannie and Cathy joined what would become Albright-Bethune around 1989 shortly after moving to State College. Blannie started the monthly church newsletter, which is now in its twenty-fifth year. In it he captures a letter from the "Pastor's Desk," birthday and wedding anniversary announcements, local church events, community events, denominational news, and more. The monthly "A-B Newsletter" is distributed beginning the first Sunday of the month, so an issue was compiled and printed only days after the devastation took place on August 28th, 2005. In the September 2005 issue, Rev. Roddy-Hart's letter began and ended with a focus on the impact of Hurricane Katrina and the need to pray and act. She wrote,

GREETINGS IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST!

HURRICANE KATRINA is our burden that we must take to the Lord in Prayer. He said, "Rest all your care upon me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." We must pray, pray, pray. We must do all that we can to share in this horrible

disaster left by Katrina.

...

I AM GRIEVED and heart-broken that people were left, ignored, or whatever, for five (5) days without food, medication, or water until the news reporters made it public. Just in plain sight, nothing was moving in or out until September 2. This is a sad time for all. God is not pleased with this world. We must pray and give until it hurts. Please bring your gifts and food supplies to Albright-Bethune and we will take them to Mt. Nittany UMC, which is our pick-up site. Place all money designated for the disaster victims in the envelopes provided. I love you.
Your Pastor, Rev. Marion Roddy-Hart.²⁷

In comparison to the style and voice in subsequent letters from the pastor in newsletters I received access to, Rev. Roddy-Hart's transparency, urgency, and frustration are felt in this rushed missive to the congregation and is likely an indication of the types of messages she shared during worship services at that time. Her reference to a lack of action until September 2nd, the Friday before the Sunday that the newsletter was distributed, indicates that this letter was not drafted and crafted leisurely, but in the moment as lives still hung in the balance. We are able to hear the pain and cry for help from the pastor as she also criticized the global society, not simply local, state, and federal government's lack of action, for the citizens in the gulf region.

In addition to the pastor's opening letter and a message from the District Superintendent, there were three other features on Hurricane Katrina in the September 2005 newsletter, including the following request for support:

SUPPORT NEEDED - Several of our worshippers have been impacted severely by Hurricane Katrina. **Rod Stevenson's** parents drove to Augusta, GA, before their home was destroyed in New Orleans. They will move to State College to live with Rod and his family until their plans become firm. Also, **Vivian Smith**, one of our musicians, is a Dillard University graduate who needs your support. Her family had to evacuate from the New Orleans suburb of Kenner. **Meghan Sanders** is from Lafayette, LA which was not damaged as much as other areas, but her relatives also had to evacuate from Kenner. **Michelle Torregano** said that her entire family (5 households) has lost everything and will not be able to return to New Orleans for several months. Michelle said that the six other graduate students from Xavier University have also lost their homes: **Stephanie Preston, Larry Napoleon, Dawn LaFargue, Shanna Graves, Maurice McMorris, and Tania Porter**. Michelle asks our church for prayers during this difficult time. She also said that it is important to her fellow New Orleanians and her that the correct message gets out in terms of the media coverage. She said

that there's a small criminal element in the city, but the majority of the people (in the Superdome, on the Interstates, and at the convention center) are not looters. They are merely trying to survive. Michelle is also disturbed that the caption of a photo of whites read "they found food and water" but under a photo of African Americans was "they are looting." Please let all of our worshippers from this devastated region know of your concerns **and** take some positive actions to demonstrate your concern.²⁸

Messages like this section of the newsletter were shared weekly during congregational moments of announcements and concerns. The members were encouraged to not only pray and feel empathically for those impacted, but to actively live out their faith through tangible demonstrations. There were lessons of faith that the members learned as they observed the resiliency of survivors.

LESSONS

As a part of my interview process with survivors, I asked each participant to tell me what lessons they learned from Katrina as they reflected from their homes in State College, Pennsylvania ten years later. Lydia's lessons included her conviction that she has now truly learned to trust in God with all her heart, and although she misses her home in New Orleans, after Katrina she learned to be content wherever she was.²⁹ Family has always been important and as the oldest person in her family Lydia relishes time with the next generations. Although no longer in the area where most of the family has returned to in the south, she spends the Thanksgiving through New Year's holidays in Louisiana or Texas to be present with her grand and great grandchildren. Lydia also now talks to her children every day and relishes the simple joy of living.

Lydia's home was in the Ninth Ward and being built on four-foot pillars did not save it from flooding. Before returning months later she knew that basically everything was destroyed from the water. When I asked her about it, Lydia's response was, "It's just things." She said she misses the pictures and videos from her daughters' weddings, but she prayed about the losses and did not let it upset or consume her. As a result of her experience, like many others who experience great tragedies of physical loss, she does not keep many material things now.

Albert said that after Hurricane Katrina he realized that with so much devastation you have to learn how to both act and react. A key to moving forward is knowing how to get along with people. He said, "If you can get along with people you can go where you want. People know you are in town for the holidays and they want you to be around." I have observed this with Albert and Azalea with families from Albright-Bethune who make sure that the couple has places to go for holidays from Easter to Thanksgiving. He admonished me to remember to get along with others, particularly if you want to live a comfortable life. This reflected the position he took that enabled him and his wife to be received in the State College community as long-term members who migrated north during the wake of Hurricane

Katrina.

Shannon's journey continues to require adjustments as she makes and remakes a home for herself and her daughters in State College. She shared three lessons from Katrina that reflected the journey to where she is today.

1. Home consists of...my norm. Home is what makes me comfortable. What makes me confident, what makes me secure and safe and happy. Home essentially is within me. Because after everything else has been destroyed, after I've lost all, lots of memorabilia, after I've lost everything that physically signifies and resembles that which I can identify as my historical past, all I have left is what's within.
2. Always find your inspiration, and from that, save something on the side. Meaning, monetarily you want to have ... some sort of financial cushion to be able to escape from whatever that threat may be. Mentally, it's extremely important to be able to find your inspiration, save something on the side. One of the biggest things that I have adapted to is, no matter what I go through, I always look for the lesson in the message ... sometimes you don't get a chance to experience the lesson, sometimes you are the lesson.
3. 'When life serves you lemons, find a way to make lemonade, even if you have to use substitute sugar. You find a way to make your lemonade.' First you acknowledge the reality that you are dealing with lemons – loss of life, loved ones, dealing with change. But lemonade is your hope, faith, and perseverance – the inner motivation to keep going.

Shannon's lessons are rooted in her upbringing in New Orleans, but shaped by her lived experiences in Cordova and State College. As she continued to reflect on her journey and her memories of home, Shannon was very descriptive about the foods she missed from New Orleans including specific brands. When she first arrived in State College, there were brands from home that she could not easily find, including spices and sugars, but her resilience was connected to her ability to make a substitution to create something similar to home. It was this response from Shannon, "When life serves you lemons, find a way to make lemonade, even if you have to use substitute sugar," that opened my understanding of an ethics of receptivity. It is one where the person must be open to receiving what the new person or place has to offer, even if adjustments have to be made to obtain a new sense of normalcy. An ethics of receptivity requires improvisation where the person becomes open to accepting a close approximation utilizing the resources available in the new location, such that lemonade made from the bitter lemons of life may be sweetened with Stevia instead of Domino sugar.

RECEPTIVITY VERSES HOSPITALITY

Scholars such as Christine D. Pohl, N. Lynne Westfield, Arthur Sutherland, and Letty M. Russell have written about the theological constructions of hospitality as a Christian practice.³⁰ Pohl's act of recovery traces hospitality as a Christian tradition and argues that hospitality was a moral practice in ancient times. It "addressed the physical needs of strangers for food, shelter, and protection, but also included recognition of their worth and common humanity."³¹ Hospitality was also marked by boundaries involving "some space into which people are welcomed, a place where unless the invitation is given, the stranger would not feel free to enter."³² Pohl's requirement of an invitation to allow the stranger to feel welcome is possible in individual settings, but more challenging in communal ones where boundaries and corresponding calls to cross them may not be clear.

Sutherland defines Christian hospitality as "the intentional, responsible, and caring act of welcoming or visiting, in either public or private places, those who are strangers, enemies, or distressed, without regard for reciprocation."³³ Like Pohl, for Sutherland there are thresholds and boundaries associated with hospitality such that "the offer and acceptance of hospitality can take place anywhere there is space to share and the authority to share it."³⁴ The welcome, however, does not require reciprocation and therefore can produce an unarticulated dependency associated with actual or perceived imbalances of power. While there may be a sense of extending a welcome it does not necessarily result in an equitable sense of belonging.

Westfield's hospitality is understood through the practices of black women and the use of "concealed gatherings" as womanist spaces of resilience and not simply survival. For Westfield, this communal space reflects a deep sense of both being and belonging.³⁵ This womanist practice of hospitality among Black women consists of giving and receiving through shared intimacy, reciprocity, and safety.³⁶ This intra-group hospitality may not fully apply in mixed encounters.

Russell's concept of just hospitality explores "the practice of God's welcome by reaching out across difference to participate in God's actions bringing justice and healing in our world of crisis and fear of ones we call 'other.'" Just hospitality requires the recognition of the "other," the stranger, and not simply an embrace of the neighbor.³⁷ Using a feminist hermeneutic of hospitality clarifies in God's sight that no one is the "other."³⁸ Hospitality, as God's welcome, can reflect unity in Christ without uniformity.³⁹

These practices of hospitality are often linked to biblical constructions and admonitions to show hospitality to strangers because in doing so you may entertain angels.⁴⁰ However it is not only angels who may be in your midst while providing for strangers, but it may actually be an unrecognizable Jesus with whom you share when you feed, clothe, and care for the stranger you encounter.⁴¹ Among Jesus' many teachings in Matthew 25, he includes the practice of hospitality towards those who are in need but are not recognized as a part of the community.

36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave

you something to drink? 38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39 And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' 40 And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

This practice focuses on the person who had the resources to provide to the one who was in need. Nothing is noted about the posture and position of the person to whom the services are provided and whose needs are met; the evaluation and judgment is on the giving and not the receiving. Jesus' teaching also suggests a much broader family system that includes persons who may live in the greatest physical and social need.

As Pohl argues, today the activities associated with historic and biblical hospitality often fall within the realm of separate institutions where professionals are paid to provide services including protection, education, care for the sick and aging, and meeting the physical needs of strangers.⁴² Within modern hospitality that is extended in personal versus professional spaces, there is a giving and receiving component for the host and the guest, for which there is a clear distinction between a person who is in a position of authority to provide and another who is in a position to receive. Personal hospitality also implies preparation and catering towards the desire of others such that a good host will know if their guest prefers orange juice or apple juice, coffee or tea, and will have that available for the morning beverage. This preparation is a result of a knowledge of preferences and "comforts of home," which is best known through relationships.

Receptivity requires the reciprocal openness to receive, where even those who are in perceived positions of power or authority must not only give provisions but also welcome in and receive individuals with different cultural experiences and expectations for perhaps an extended period of time. Risk, vulnerability, and openness are required on both sides for receptivity of others to enable a mutual strengthening of the expanded community. There is also a temporal element where receptivity requires a potentially permanent change for the future long-standing member of the community, compared to the shorter-termed welcome of hospitality towards an accepted visitor. The person on the traditional receiving end must also be open to being received by a new community that may not meet their actual needs or be aware of their preferences. Receptivity implies a radical welcome that actively reaches out towards persons to welcome them in and makes adjustments in their own cultural society to ensure that the initial openness has the potential to become permanent, not temporary until the visitors leave and things "get back to normal." Receptivity requires adjustments for both sides over time to create a place where the community can become a permanent home.

Receptivity therefore is also encountered from a place of empathy from both sides: one for the giver and the other for the receiver; one for the person in perceived power and the other for the person who does not appear to have power. Carla reflects on what it must have been like for those who arrived in State College from New Orleans and said, "To think about transferring from one area. If I were doing it on the other end, to go back to Louisiana from Pennsylvania. If I were the person going to Louisiana, basically

leaving everything that [was] Pennsylvania behind; I would not nearly handle it as well as they have all handled it.”⁴³

As the name of the town indicates, State College was literally formed around Penn State University and most activities from academics, athletics, arts, and more revolve around the institution. Despite there not being Mardi Gras balls to attend or the opportunity to join a second line as a brass band parades down street, when a person is open to different experiences, from games, concerts, plays, and lectures, there are things to do in State College. Blannie often takes Albert to events at the University and in the community, which provide access to interactions with leaders including the mayor and University president. These types of interactions slightly replicate positions Albert found himself in as an elder statesman in his area of New Orleans. Because the town is small, Albert has become known throughout State College and can walk into places and be greeted with familiarity and respect, something he cherished about his role as an active leader in social clubs and political arenas in his hometown.⁴⁴ He proudly shares how he and his wife were sought after for newspaper interviews when they arrived in State College, and a decade later he is still invited to local schools to share his life experiences with students. Albert’s receptivity to the new town has been met by the town’s receptivity to him.

Now that they no longer drive, Cathy is one of the members of Albright-Bethune who takes Albert and Azalea places including the store, the post office, or the weekly senior social at the church. While still quite vibrant, Albert and Azalea are now in their 90s, and Cathy, a native of North Carolina, expressed that growing up in the south you were taught to respect your elders. She described the nonagenarians as “good people to be around...He helps you to have fun and see things differently.” In the spirit of the biblical reaping what you sow, Cathy said, “You realize that one day, if I live long enough, someone will be there,” so “Respect elders. Do what you can. Learn from them. Put yourself on the receiving end.”⁴⁵ Even as she gives, she too is open to receive what they have to offer. Receptivity is not simply a matter of openness. It requires an ability to be in ways that have possibly not been considered or offered before. Receptivity involves a process of becoming where the person responds to and may be transformed by what is encountered and the encounter is itself no longer the same because of the person.

GATHERING FOR GUMBO AND MAKING LEMONADE WITH SUBSTITUTE SUGAR

GUMBO

One of the most consistent things missed about New Orleans noted by the individuals that I interviewed was the communal aspect of their city represented by the coming together of family and friends around a large pot of gumbo. When I entered the State College residence of Albert and Azalea, he gave me a tour of their townhouse and showed me pictures of his family and those who were like family. All but a couple of the pictures were recent, moments captured within the last ten years, but a couple were of older family members now deceased, which he was able to save as a result of their high placement on the walls of the twenty-room house he owned in New Orleans. The pictures reflected the joy of family

coming together. As we walked through the kitchen, he paused to show me his “seasonings” of herbs that he was chopping and preparing, and he opened the refrigerator to pull out a large jar of garlic cloves that were central to his cooking. He showed me the large freezer where he stored his shrimp and other items until he was ready to prepare his gumbo. He was not able to find all of the ingredients as readily as he could in New Orleans, but he has found a way to adjust and make things work.

Gumbo brings many layered flavors together to create a warm and inviting meal that can be shared with whomever comes to the home. There is no headcount associated with gumbo. There is no need to purchase a particular number of filleted fish or know whether or a guest will like the drumstick or the chicken breast. A good pot of gumbo, prepared with love, welcomes everyone and easily stretches to meet the needs as its warmth coats and comforts while it is consumed.

In my first interview with Shannon, I asked her to describe life in New Orleans prior to Hurricane Katrina, and almost all of her descriptions centered on food. There was fried fish, fried pork chops, collard greens, macaroni and cheese, and candied yams after church on Sunday, and anyone was welcome to come by to eat, because there was always more than enough. There was red beans and rice with chicken on Monday, and similar meals throughout the week. She recalled many food-related memories from the typical crawfish boils, with corn, potatoes, gumbo, and shrimp jambalaya; to the specific Patton’s hot sausage in the “red and white container;” and Huck-a-bucks (frozen cups of juice or Kool Aid) on a hot day that older women would sell to make a little money to supplement their fixed income. Desserts, made using locally-processed Domino sugar,⁴⁶ ranged from sweet potato pone, homemade pound cake, and bread pudding with raisins. Eggnog, made from scratch in the big gumbo pot, was always a favorite, and cakes with delicious icing from McKenzie’s Pastry Shoppes were special treats for birthdays.⁴⁷ Food, and gumbo in particular had a special place in family and communal life in New Orleans.

Christine Pohl describes table fellowship as “historically an important way of acknowledging the equal value and dignity of people.”⁴⁸ Each person that I interviewed reflected on the ways that large intergenerational groups of family would come together in New Orleans around a shared meal. Communal celebrations involved large pots and open tables where everyone was welcome. Those New Orleanians who have remained in State College have opened their table in order to share with others in the community. Food contributions for culture days at the local high school fundraiser that I attended included jambalaya prepared by Shannon so that her daughters could share food from New Orleans. This is also experienced at the church pot-lucks at Albright-Bethune where the expectations of contributions of jambalaya and étouffée have become the norm.

During the annual Souper Bowl of Caring⁴⁹ fellowship at Albright-Bethune on Super Bowl Sunday, for three years I have observed not only the inclusion of gumbo as one of the “soup” options, but also that a table located in a place of prominence in the fellowship hall has been decorated for the New Orleans Saints even when they have not made it to the big game. The presence of the Saints table cloths, napkins, cups, and table decorations in central Pennsylvania has become normalized in what is more readily Pittsburgh Steelers and Philadelphia Eagles territory. During the annual Men Who Cook fundraiser held March 19,

2006, the “A-B Newsletter” announced a gumbo cook-off between Albert and Carla’s husband Terrell, with references to Albert moving to State College with his wife the previous year after losing their home of 65 years in New Orleans.⁵⁰ The welcome table has literally been extended and incorporated into the social life of the congregation.

ACKNOWLEDGING LEMONS

Some of the losses that were faced after Hurricane Katrina are still incalculable more than ten years later. Friends and family members died as a result of the lack of preparation and delayed actions by the city, state, and federal government that left thousands trapped in flooded areas without adequate resources. Even for those who evacuated before the devastation, many of their homes and treasured possessions were destroyed. Socio-historical loss and lack were experienced in the immediate aftermath when those who attempted to return home quickly found that the grounding spirit of their communities had been displaced along with the people. A bitter reality for many was the feeling of abandonment by the nation, President George W. Bush, and the President’s administration. Individuals, families, and other kinship groups who lived through the devastating destruction of the hurricane experienced real sour and bitter moments of life. They recognized they had been given lemons and they chose to do something with them.

The bitterness of lemons becomes noticeable when the citrus fruit is cut open and the juice is consumed or the flesh is eaten. The outer bright yellow peel of the lemon can actually be sweet and is often used as a zest to brighten the flavor profiles of food dishes. Lemons are associated with the hard knocks of life, however they also have cleansing medicinal properties. Lemons have healing benefits associated with their high quantities of vitamin C, utilized for centuries to help fight the common cold and flu, scurvy, and the prevention of other diseases as a part of a healthy diet. The ability to embrace the benefits of the bitterness of the lemons of life can enable those experiencing catastrophic change to become stronger and more resilient through the process.

MAKING LEMONADE

Months before Beyoncé Knowles Carter released her visual album “Lemonade,” Shannon described the concept to me that led to the main insight for this ethics.⁵¹ There is an act of receiving what is available in the place where you find yourself, and an act of acceptance that you will find a way to make things work even if you have to use something that is not a part of your normal experiences. As Shannon asserted toward the end of our first interview, “Lemonade will be my outcome!” It gives substance to the “go-through,” she said. Lemonade is flexible – sometimes sour, sometimes sweet, and sometimes tart. But when bitter lemons are what you have been handed, in order to make those experiences have productive meaning, make lemonade, even if, as Shannon concluded, you have to use substitute sugar when the brands/cultural elements you are accustomed to are no longer readily available. The practice of making lemonade can be a healing process that requires a willingness to not hold onto what has been given in its original form but to break and squeeze the essence out while finding the right balance of sweetness and replenishing water to create something new. An ethics of receptivity as evidenced by making lemonade with substitute sugar is a Romans 8:28 type of ethics that openly sees all things, including initially bitter things, working together for the good of those who love God.

Unlike larger cities such as Houston where over 100,000 former New Orleans residents have stayed for over a decade, created homes, and formed organizations such as the New Orleans Association of Houston (NOAH), life in State College is different. NOAH is a

“non-profit network of former New Orleanians and Louisianans organized to: 1) promote networking and connections for fellowship and social enjoyment; 2) provide mutual support of families and persons in their transition and adjustment to Houston; 3) facilitate the sharing and maintaining of the culture of New Orleans and Louisiana; 4) act as a forum to discuss issues of relevance to New Orleanians; and 5) engage in advocacy for Orleanians on issues and problems when needed. NOAH also actively supports New Orleans-focused businesses, causes, activities and other New Orleans organizations in the projects and work that they do.”⁵²

State College does not have these types of networks and support systems that have been able to be maintained beyond the initial years after Katrina.⁵³ Yet people like Shannon, Albert, Azalea, and Lydia remain there.

The one organization in State College that has been a central place of community for these four New Orleanians and others is Albright-Bethune United Methodist Church. The church created a space for a sense of new normalcy in a place that was otherwise culturally different from their home. The transition has not been without challenges along the way, but through their interviews those who have stayed in State College reflect that their faith was central to their lives in New Orleans and it informs their ability to adjust through the recalculations of migration and the re-appropriation of something bitter into something better. In church, at least there were songs that could remind them of home, there was a place for fellowship and the coming together around table both sacramental and social, and there were people whose radical welcome extended beyond the media focused window of the migration of Katrina survivors throughout the country to the current moment. Despite the itinerant nature of the pastoral leaders who have served at Albright-Bethune since 2005, the receptivity of the congregants has been consistent and their support has given Shannon, Albert, Azalea, and Lydia the strength to be receptive to making State College home.

Why does any of this matter? Over ten years ago the United States witnessed a national crisis unfold right before our eyes. The crisis that was uncovered through Hurricane Katrina not only has not been addressed, it has been revealed yet again through the racialized, gendered, and classed rhetoric and reasoning of many during and following the 2016 Presidential election in the United States, and the most recent destruction from back-to-back Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria in Texas, Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Today, many believe that we have been given sour lemons and although we are not migrating to new physical communities, we are being forced out of places, policies, and perspectives that we have been comfortable in and we must do the critical work of justice that creates the mutual respect and risk necessary to create a more ethical society. Our challenge is to become more

receptive to the positive possibilities of difference by taking lessons from persons who literally lost everything they had previously built their lives on, yet still found a way to gather various ingredients from their new environments and bring others together across differences. Their ethics of receptivity creates a communal table where a warm bowl of gumbo filled with the spices of life can be drawn from a large inclusive pot and lemonade made from the active squeezing of the lemons that have been tossed at them can become their outcome, even when they have to discover alternative ways to add spice and sweetness to the moment.

ENDNOTES

1 Oral history interviews conducted by author between October 30, 2015 and March 7, 2018. The first names of interviewees will be used in this article as approved through IRB #44705.

2 Barbara McCarragher, "New Orleans Hurricane History," <http://web.mit.edu/12.000/www/m2010/teams/neworleans1/hurricane%20history.htm>

3 National Hurricane Center, <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutsshws.php> The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane wind scale rates a hurricane's sustained wind speeds on a scale of 1 to 5, with five being the highest and potentially most destructive.

4 Interview by author with Shannon, November 4, 2015 and July 22, 2016.

5 Brock N. Meeks, "Gretna Mayor Defends Bridge Blockade: Action Trapped People Fleeing New Orleans in Wake of Katrina," September 25, 2005. http://www.nbcnews.com/id/9427111/ns/us_news-katrina_the_long_road_back/t/gretna-mayor-defends-bridge-blockade/#.WG8urLGZORs

6 FEMA Press Release, "Hurricane Pam Exercise Concludes," July 23, 2004. <https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2004/07/23/hurricane-pam-exercise-concludes>. What was supposed to be a twenty-day exercise was concluded after only five-days, leaving many scenarios and plans underdeveloped. See also, Madhu Beriwal, "Preparing for a Catastrophe: The Hurricane Pam Exercise," a statement before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, January 24, 2006, <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/download/012406beriwal>.

7 Manning Marable, "Katrina's Unnatural Disaster: A Tragedy of Black Suffering and White Denial," *Souls*, Vol. 8, No. 1, Winter 2006, 1-8.

8 I use a capitalized Black to reference the sociological group of peoples of African descent, and I also use a capitalized White to reference the group of peoples of European descent. If reference is made to a particular color such as a white crayon, I will use the word in the lowercase form.

9 Sheldon H. Danziger and Sandra K. Danziger, "Poverty, Race, and Anti-Poverty Policy Before and After Hurricane Katrina," *Du Bois Review*, 3:1 (2006), 23-36.

10 For a more comprehensive exploration of the realities of race and class in New Orleans before Katrina see, Chester Hartman and Gregory D. Squires (eds), "There is No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster: Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina," (New York: Routledge, 2006); and James R. Elliott and Jeremy Pais, "Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina: Social Differences in Human Responses to Disaster," in *Social Science Research*, vol. 32, issue 2, (2006), 295-321.

11 Peniel E. Joseph, "Left Behind: Backdrop to a National Crisis," in *The Sky is Crying: Race, Class, and Natural Disaster*, Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 125.

12 Carolyn Yoder, *The Little Book of Trauma Healing: When Violence Strikes and Community Security is Threatened* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2005), 12.

13 This was especially true for families who owned their homes and did not have to adhere to the expensive flood insurance requirements of mortgage companies. This was also expressed by Lydia, a Katrina survivor I interviewed.

- 14 Interview by author with Albert, December 6, 2016.
- 15 Interview by author with Lydia, October 30, 2015.
- 16 Lydia's reference appears to be made to Philippians 4:11.
- 17 Maria Godoy, "Tracking the Katrina Diaspora: A Tricky Task," NPR – Katrina One Year Later, August 2006, <http://www.npr.org/news/specials/katrina/oneyearlater/diaspora/>. Accessed February 9, 2017.
- 18 Many residents from the poorest areas were most likely to be transported to some of the most distant larger receiving communities. See Narayan Sastry and Jesse Gregory, "The Location of Displaced New Orleans Residents in the Year After Hurricane Katrina," *Demography*, Jun: 51 (3), 2014, 753-775.
- 19 While there are similarities, this form of migration within the United States does not relate completely to theories of refugees who are forced into exile and resettlement in different countries. See Egon F. Kunz, "Exile and Resettlement: Refugee Theory," in *The International Migration Review*, Vol 15. No. 1/2, Refugees Today (Spring-Summer 1981), 42-51, and Sreeram Sundar Chaulia, "The Politics of Refugee Hosting in Tanzania: From Open Door to Unsustainability, Insecurity, and Receding Receptivity," in *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2003, 147-166.
- 20 In addition to the seven graduate students from New Orleans who were a part of the collaborative doctoral program, Penn State identified over sixty students with hometowns in the areas of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama that were impacted by Katrina.
- 21 The Black Church as understood through the sociological definition and categorizations C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990)
- 22 St. John United Methodist was an older white congregation that became yoked with Albright-Bethune United Methodist Church before it dissolved.
- 23 Interview by author with Jennifer, March 7, 2018.
- 24 There were others who moved to State College from New Orleans, including Jamie who lived in State College for four months after his company, Spectrum Controls, relocated ten workers (seven men and three women) after Katrina to refit an old factory to make the ceramic parts they made in New Orleans before their plant was destroyed.
- 25 A small number of White men and women also arrived in State College after Hurricane Katrina, however my research only identified one woman who did not return to the south before the ten-year anniversary.
- 26 Interview by author with Carla, January 1, 2017.
- 27 Blannie Bowen, ed., "A-B Newsletter," Volume 12, Number 9, September 2005, 1.
- 28 Bowen, 2. The emphasis is original.
- 29 Her response reflected the scriptures Proverbs 3:5 and Philippians 4:11 (NRSV).
- 30 Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999); N. Lynne Westfield, *Dear Sisters: A Womanist Practice of Hospitality* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001); Arthur Sutherland, *I Was a Stranger: A Christian Theology of Hospitality* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), and Letty M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009).

- 31 Christine D. Pohl, "Hospitality, a Practice and a Way of Life," *Vision*, Spring 2002, 35.
- 32 Pohl, *Making Room*, 39.
- 33 Sutherland, xiii.
- 34 Sutherland, 41.
- 35 Westfield, 7.
- 36 Westfield, 49-52.
- 37 Russell, 101-102.
- 38 Russell, 43.
- 39 Russell, 80.
- 40 Hebrews 13:2 (NRSV)
- 41 Matthew 25: 31-46 (NRSV)
- 42 Pohl, *Making Room*, 56-57.
- 43 Interview by author with Carla, January 1, 2017.
- 44 Interview by author with Albert, December 6, 2016 and Blannie, March 4, 2018.
- 45 Interview by author with Cathy, March 4, 2018.
- 46 The Domino Sugar's Chalmette refinery in the St. Bernard Parish of New Orleans has been in existence since 1909.
- 47 Interview by author with Shannon, November 4, 2015.
- 48 Pohl, "Hospitality," 35.
- 49 In partnership with the local food bank, the church collects soup to donate throughout the month in collaboration with Souper Bowl of Caring, <https://souperbowl.org/welcome>. In celebration after worship congregants join in fellowship with homemade soups.
- 50 Blannie Bowen, ed., "A-B Newsletter," Volume 13, Number 2, February 2006, 3.
- 51 Beyoncé's "Lemonade" was filmed in New Orleans and other areas of Louisiana. Her grandmother Agnéz Deréon and her husband Shawn Carter's grandmother, Hattie White, both inspired the wisdom of lemonade that has been passed from generation to generation.
- 52 See <http://jessemuhammad.blogs.finalcall.com/2012/08/the-new-orleans-association-of-houston.html> - Accessed January 3, 2017 and Tracy Jan and Brittney Martin, "Houston Took Them in After Katrina. Then Harvey Hit." August 29, 2017, and https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/08/29/houston-took-them-in-after-katrina-then-harvey-hit/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.95344046ed9d - Accessed May 29, 2018.
- 53 Houston, Texas has more Hurricane Katrina survivors than State College has with the town and university communities combined.