

## **Re-Embedding Culture in Nature: There is life in Jesus but also in Buddha**

### **Psalm 65 (NIV)**

October 23, 2022

Seattle First Baptist Church

### **Introduction**

In Latin America and here, the suffering experienced in the margin is a political, economic, and spiritual issue. For people in the margins to cope with the reptilian brains of politicians and economist making pacts with big corporations is by following a Hero whose spirituality can instill values of life abundant and liberation.

Psalm 65 is an affirmation of life abundant founded in a theology of nature where joy, hope and regeneration bring a sense of awe to the experience of life. As a person born and raised in the margins where the major victims are women, children, LGQTB+ I have no other choice than to choose an spirituality that is all inclusive where ALL means ALL, and does not matter the pigmentation of your skin, or the class the system placed you, or the gender you choose.

Jesus the Christ is my hero because, he offers such a spirituality of equality where one can affirm: In Jesus Love is Love; In Jesus all life including BIPOCs lives matters; In Jesus The Apocalypse of Climate change is real but is not the end; In Jesus no human being is illegal; In Jesus all women have agency over their bodies; In Jesus all genders are good, whole and holy; In Jesus resurrection also means crucifying our reptilian brain focused on “our sins” and transcend to the human gift of consciousness where we live in love, compassion and cooperation for the regeneration and liberation of life, ALL life.

Today I want to invite you to consider why Psalm 65 is a joy to read from the margins and why we must be NOT afraid of the apocalypse of climate change, take a deep breath, relax, enter the joy of life, act in cooperation even with small changes towards liberation and love, together we are becoming an ecological civilization:

### **Only people change people**

It was the summer of 2005, things got so bad at the Baptist Seminary in Cochabamba, Bolivia where me and my late wife Iris were teachers or “Profes” as our students called us. My late wife Iris had a golden heart of compassion she wanted to inspire all to care for our students, she was a ball of fire and a lover of justice. The community wanted to fix the leaking roofs but for so many imposed reasons the work was not going to be done despite our efforts of raising several thousands of dollars.

Raising her voice in the meeting, she said I am leaving. You are oppressing our students, no one should live under leaking roofs. I resign, I am done in this place. I was a messy scene of protest and resistance. This is how our last day as full-time professors at the Seminary ended.

I was in the middle, like always since I was a child; I wanted to fix things, I knew that she was right, but I thought of our partnership with the Bolivian Baptist Union and most importantly, we at least were a supportive presence for our students, we were accompanying them. I quickly apologized and that open a small space for dialogue so, I said I will be right back we need to negotiate this.

I ran behind Iris, and she was crying, she said, we are done here, let us go back to the USA. I felt an apocalyptic cloud was hovering over my head.

I said, yes, of course, you are right, will do that, I gave her a hug look her at the eye and told her we are walking together this journey. She smiled and said, I know you will stay to try to fix this and also to teach your class, so, take a taxi home I will take the car, see you after your class.

She left with tears on her eyes, she called the boys who were at home and asked them, what do you guys want for dinner? They said we want Burger King. As she drove to Burger King to buy the food using the drive through, her frustration with an unjust system lead by a leader whose ego was driven by intellectual superiority, had turned him to live in his reptilian brain focused on power and domination over his own people. This leader would make us professors and students alike work hard. For four years with the help of the students the main buildings were transformed into an attractive space, and together with the cooperation of pastors, we had created a distance program that included the use of a radio program and internet to serve seminary students all over the country. The reptilian brain led this leader to boycott our distance program and to continue his systemic oppression of our students. Iris said that she prayed: Where are you God? I need hope, I am lost, this is a big storm, I feel in desolation, I am afraid, this is bigger than what I can handle.

Where are you God? please bring hope to my heart! Iris arrived at Burger King drive through and order two Whopper Jr. Combos with fries and strawberry milkshakes. It was sunset and the night was taking over quickly, suddenly under the light of a lamp post near the pickup window, there was a little boy who was attentively looking at people picking up their food. This boy was around 6 years old and dressed in Andean Mountains clothes, he clearly was not a city boy. She said, what is this boy from the mountains is doing here? Iris wiped the tears from her eyes, lowered the window of the car, and with a kind voice asked the boy: Are you hungry?

The boy was a little bashful, but Iris with a smile asked him, would you like to eat? The boy cross eyes with her and said, yes nodding his head. Iris said, wait, I will get you some food. When she arrived at the delivery window, she said to the attendant, I need another combo for that little Quechua boy at the light post. The attendant said, sorry madam you only order two. She told the attendant with a very firm voice, look dear friend, I am having one of the worst days of my life today, I am tired, I am frustrated, I am angry for the injustices that many people do here to the least of this. I want you to know that I will not move my car from here until you give me another combo for this boy!

The attendant was not in his reptilian brain, and he wisely responded, yes, madam, I can see you are about to explode, I will get you the other combo. Iris handed one of the combos to the boy who grabbed the bag and ran fast into the now night. Iris got her other two combos, and as she drove home, she said, God was in the face of that Boy.

When I finished my class, I called a taxi and as I sat down, I was already feeling the thick smog of this new storm we were in as ministers of God, I created in my mind a plan for retrieving, I was sure Iris wanted to leave the mission field. As I turned my head to the north, there it was, the beautiful Tunari, Mountain illuminated by the full moon, in my pain I felt a sense of comfort, I knew somehow things are not done yet, they are becoming.

In my prayer I told The Love of this Universe: So, what about this list I came up with of possible alternative jobs I can do when we returned to the USA? I could not stop thinking about Iris complete dissolution with the system, due to the reptilian brain actions of some leaders, it felt like breathing thick smog of many dreams burning. I was in my world when the taxi driver said:

We arrived sir, I looked at the house and the dining room light was still on, that meant Iris was waiting for me, we needed to talk, I paid the taxi driver and as I walked towards the house, all seemed so apocalyptic, desolation and anguish took over my being, my arms felt heavy, my legs were shaking. I open the door and sure enough, there she was, seating with a pad of paper at hand, a pen, a pot of coffee and a couple of cups. I said, when are we going back?

She served me a cup of coffee without saying a word, I washed my hands, and sat down in from of her. I look at her and said: I am ready to hear what you have to say.

Iris looked, so serious and making direct eye contact, I saw in her eyes a light. It was the same moon light I saw reflected on the Tunary Andean Mountain from the taxi window on my way home. Something had changed, and the sense of apocalypse I felt a few minutes before was transformed into a veil that was about to be removed to discover something new.

Iris' tears were now on her cheeks, but the light was still shining in her eyes, she said to me, I prayed in hope, I prayed to God after I left the Seminary. Please note that in Spanish Hope is Esperanza, which means esperar, to wait. And Iris said, there I was waiting in the car for the Whoppers the boys wanted for dinner and then, she said, I saw God in the face of a hungry kid.

Do you see Mario? This is a new moment, God is calling me to feed the hungry kids in this city, to care for them and offer opportunities to set free from the oppression of reptilian brain leaders and investors, would you help me? We both stood up and hugged, we were both crying and laughing at the same time. The new ministry eventually was called The House of Hope in Cochabamba, the house where you are waiting for God to invite you to a new adventure of creativity and liberation. La Case de Esperanza.

Only people change people, and the people from the margins are real people; people in the margins are not invisible, if we are willing to see their pain, we will be moved to compassion. We moderns separate from pain, we can see it in our cemeteries, but we also want to avoid pain with alcohol, with drugs, with pleasure and we allow our reptilians brains to take control of our behavior. Alcohol was meant for human beings to celebrate their gift of consciousness, to party, to dance, to sing to play, to be happy, indigenous cultures for millennia use psychedelics to learn about oneself and liberate the unconscious mind from pain in an act of finding truth and liberation.

We moderns forgot to get together to share our pain and sorrows, we need to go back to rituals in community and in nature, we are so busy trying to make a living that the only way we realize that our planet is experiencing apocalyptic moments it is when we breath the thick smog we experienced in Seattle in the last month; That is making us to awake to the painful reality that we are killing our planet just because a few powerful people acting in reptilian brain mode, made their fortunes. Pain is, in significant part, the path to awakening our natural given human consciousness and abandon the reptilian brain mode, the smoke, the hurricanes, the sea level raising are re-embedding nature in our culture even as apocalyptic as those experience are.

Now, I want to be very clear, I am not saying this to bring fear to you, I live crucifying my reptilian brain every day, I am not a preacher of doom and gloom. My hero, Jesus the Christ teaches that we worship the God of life and liberation that Psalm 65 is talking about. Jesus teaches that life does not end, it transforms. Therefore, apocalypses do not mean the end, it means unveiling, it gives us hope even in the middle of the storms. Remember, hope in Spanish is Esperanza, it means to wait because the God of life is at work in every moment and we are invited to the journeys of creativity where something new is unveiling, life is becoming, we are becoming, life is an adventure, in the doom and gloom new life is developing, life is indeed regenerating:

- I invite you to see hope in the power of nature to regenerate. Last week was the worst smoke we experienced and yet with just a few showers on Friday the air was cleared, and it was a new day, a day of joy and celebration. The women in our church were able to embed culture in nature.
- When we become aware of the pain and thus abandon the reptilian brain expressed in rage, oppression, apathy, and pessimism, we find that even with little participation we can get involved in helping communities to develop projects to improve water quality, housing, preventive health, better nutrition, clean energy. Never underestimate the small events of regeneration.
- Never underestimate the great contributions you are making by recycling, composting, saving water healing the planet by absorbing CO2 just by planting plants in pots. Life is amazing and little things collectively make a powerful impact of regeneration.
- Never underestimate the power of our participation in systemic change. Systemic change requires policy and policy requires us the public on board. And we know that the public will not get on board unless they feel something is wrong and the smoke is the organic way nature is getting re-embedded in culture, is an invitation to change policy.
- We are re-embedding nature in our culture when we do gardening, walk, eat more plants, visit those who are in the margins, invite friends to our events here at church where we practice a spirituality where all are included, ALL really means ALL.
- Visiting projects in small villages around the world is also a way to re-embed nature in our culture of consumerism, we become aware of the pain and therefore we are moved to compassion and action.

## **In Conclusion**

Psalm 65 is a song of hope, we may fail, but we can start all over again. Communities, of communities of communities of communities are racing to save the planet, and we are one of them; there are millions of small farmers around the world healing the soil and planting new trees or just living it alone. Green money investors are developing ways to invest in the intrinsic value of nature and not in extraction. There is reasons to be hopeful and care. We are a church who cares, we practice an all-inclusive spirituality, we know about of love, compassion, justice and Esperanza, here love is love and climate change is real and apocalyptic, but we know it is not the end, new solutions are unveiling, we are becoming, there is life in Jesus but also in Buddha and all religions.

This my beloveds is The Word of God for All of diversity, Glory be to God! Amen.

In Love, Compassion and Cooperation,

Pastor Mario-Seth Morales