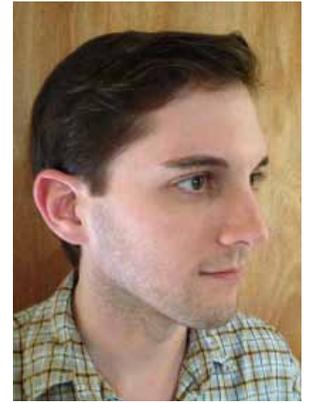


# Process & Faith *EDITORIAL*



Community organizing: what does it have to do with the church, much less process theology? For process-friendly churches, community organizing can become a natural ally. Given its bad press from various social quarters, we feel it is important to show how community organizing has a critical role to play in the creative transformation of our local and planetary relationships.

It is our hope that readers of this issue of *Creative Transformation* will initiate or deepen forms of community organizing in their respective communities-in-the-making out of inspiration of the real potential for transformation from what-is to what could-yet-be. This issue does not offer a how-to manual on community organizing but rather seeks to claim its relationship with a process perspective.

This issue has three primary pieces: theoretical explanations of persons-in-community vis-à-vis community building and development, hybrid overtures that link process thinking and community organizing, and a verbatim of what one type of community organizing looks like to put flesh on these philosophical bones.

We have included a previous article by John Cobb describing “person-in-community.” For some readers, it might be helpful to start this issue by reviewing this idea as an important refresher. In particular, this is the image that drives Stout and Staton’s initial connection with process thought and is the implicit motor at work in my article on mutual interest.

In the lead article, Stout and Staton give an overview of where the process approach is growing in local governance and community development work. In particular, they see resonances between Cobb’s person-in-community with Mary Parker Follet’s writing, which is gaining influence in public administration circles. When people are able to participate in their own self-governance through community groups, it offers them “the chance to make immediate changes to their daily lives and the lives of those around them.”

Their second essay contrasts what they call market/bureau-oriented development with asset-based/settlement house-oriented local decision-making. They see parallels between the Progressive Era and numerous issues facing us today, while also noting the spiritual grounding of the Progressive Era settlement movement. Going forward by looking to past models, they suggest that community organizing now take a “back to the future” approach such as through interfaith coalition building.

Reyes begins a more direct conversation at relating process, church, and organizing. He recognizes that communities are not simply something we exist in: they take building—“they are the relationships one makes,” all of which takes time and effort. He then explores notions of narrowness, width, and prehension to link process thought with the organizing technique of one on ones.

In my article, I propose that it’s okay for love to be an interested rather than a selfless activity, and since we are interconnected, seeking the well-being of others literally makes a difference to us. Through community organizing, we mutually expand the possibilities for both our own transformation as well as the communities in which we participate.

We are especially grateful to Michael Jacoby Brown for giving his permission for us to reprint an excerpt from his book, which gives a concrete example of a one on one organizing interview. This helps us move from the more theoretical to listening in on a model conversation. For those of us especially interested in application, his entry is especially key.

To complete this issue, Justin Heinzekehr reviews Catherine Keller’s most recent solo work, *On the Mystery*, and Marjorie Suchocki returns with her film review describing several movies on death and dying, one of which will be featured at the upcoming Whitehead International Film Festival.

Those who are interested in the nuts and bolts of organizing their faith community would be well-served to explore Brown’s book, *Building Powerful Community Organizations*, as well as contact a local organizing group in your area (such as PICO or the Gamaliel Foundation). There are so many creative possibilities awaiting our engagement, so many expressions of healthy communities asking for our participation: let us take up this call, actualizing divine potentials for our own value and for the value of others as persons-in-community!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Timothy".