

FAITH & JUSTICE, from page 10

talking about people who are resisting occupation, and the story is that you don't escape occupation. You actually are within it, and finding hope within it."

Shuck compares the Christmas story to Trump's recent decision to declare Jerusalem the capital of Israel and, more locally, to gentrification in the Portland metro area.

"What is it that the Palestinians do?" Shuck said. "The resistance is staying on the land. There's an aspect of when all the forces are working against you, sometimes staying on the land is what you got. And that, I think, is a crucial part of resisting oppression and inequality, is sometimes just standing where you can until a tipping point is reached, where change can happen."

This Christmas story is only the beginning of a tradition of resistance in Bible stories concerning Jesus.

"Jesus was executed by the Roman Empire for sedition, and he was legally executed. So what does that mean? The Empire executes your founder. Where does that put you, in terms of empires? And it's certainly true that the United States is an empire."

Shuck sees many parallels between the Roman Empire of Jesus' time and the United States of today, with military bases all over the world in order to "secure natural resources and political advantage," Shuck said.

So what responsibility, in Shuck's view and the view of his church, do Christians have, in terms of oppression and resistance?

"I think we have an illusion about the U.S. as some kind of moral light on the hill, and the fact is our history shows otherwise, and we're not really honest with that. It's built on slavery, it's built on genocide. Telling those hard truths is an important part of what the church should do in order for it to reach the next step of being able to address them, and move beyond them, and heal from them, and make restitution for them."

Southminster has been involved in multiple social justice causes. They led the charge to get LGBTQ folks included in Presbyterian marriage vows, which passed in 2015 – a movement close to Shuck's own heart.

"That was an attractive part to me (of Southminster), because I personally have been involved in that a long time," Shuck said as he turned around and pointed to a framed wedding picture hanging in his office. "That's my daughter and her wife up there. Actually, that marriage was illegal from the Presbyterian standpoint. At that time, the Presbyterian church hadn't allowed ministers to do that."

Besides its advocacy for LGBTQ justice, Southminster has also been involved in interfaith dialogue, houselessness advocacy and awareness, and politics. They host events in partnership with the Muslim mosque across the street as well as the Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice.

They have done a pulpit exchange with Maranatha Church, a majority African-American church, hoping to build bridges in order to work together against racism. They have hosted different seminars, panels and film viewings to raise awareness and build connections with other communities. Southminster has hosted homeless advocates to speak, a trans* awareness panel, and seminars on the "Political Jesus," among others. They also supported Measure 97, which would have removed the cap on the corporate gross sales tax.

Shuck acknowledges that many other churches do not have the commitment to social justice or accepting views that Southminster does. However, he has boundless hope for people to change their minds when it comes to issues like LGBTQ justice and justice for houseless folks, issues that he believes Jesus, were he living today, would be fighting for.

"When people believe things about others, I never regard that as permanent," Shuck said. "I regard that as an opportunity; we can all expand our thinking. I think people have an amazing ability to change, and I've just seen so many people be able to change, and I believe that. But that doesn't mean that I'm Pollyanna about it, because there are some people who won't. And in those cases, you've got to stand your ground for what you think is right."

** An asterisk is sometimes added to the term "trans" to include not only trans men and trans women but a broad spectrum of transgender, nonbinary and gender nonconforming identities.*

TRIBAL LIAISON, from page 7

guess every other ethnicity except Native.

I spent 10 years in Montana, I went there for graduate school, and was over there working for a handful of years. And I was really excited to go to Montana, because I have tribal connection there, through my mom's side, but also because there is a clear presence of Native people when you go into that space. And for the first time I was somewhere where people knew exactly – they look at me and say 'you're Native'. And I liked that. It made me feel good. It made me feel visible, which I didn't have here in the city.

However, with that visibility – you look at Montana and their demographics, Native people are essentially the only minority, or the major minority there in the state – and with that comes that more direct racism. Which is very different than what I experienced as racism here, in the Portland area.

S.Q.: *Our region has become known for the fishing wars. Could cities like Portland play a more positive role in supporting fishing rights and fish runs?*

L.J.: There's always that opportunity. Every municipality has an opportunity to support tribal fishing rights, and access. I think when it comes to Portland, and the hope for some of the work that I'll do, is that Portland is engaging with the tribes when they need to be engaged in genuine and meaningful tribal consultation ... and making sure that the rivers are healthy, and that the fish is healthy to eat, that the city is engaging with the tribes in consultation, and being supportive of tribes being able to access and exercise their treaty rights.

S.Q.: *Do cities also have an obligation to this?*

L.J.: It's a good question, and what I appreciate about Portland creating my position, is that they want to know what their obligation is. That's part of the work that I will do in this role, is to lay

that out in a way that's clear and establishes the expectation.

What gets a little tricky is when tribal nations are being engaged, it needs to be government-to-government. And so the question of what does that mean – typically that means between the state and the tribes. As government-to-government. So how the city fits it, how the city fits into that, is a city engaging in tribal consultation in a way that respects tribal sovereignty and government-to-government protocols? So does that mean that the city should go through the state to the tribes? Or is it making an agreement with tribes that it's okay to engage city-to-tribe? And so those are the types of questions that I'll help provide some insight for.

S.Q.: *The rent crisis has been hard for everybody in Portland, especially low-income people. Has it had a particular impact on the Native community?*

L.J.: I can speak to that anecdotally, and through my own observation in hearing from friends and family in the community. It's absolutely affecting Native people – it seems to me that more and more from the Native community are being pushed out.

S.Q.: *What are some other issues you're looking forward to working on?*

L.J.: I'm excited to work in the community. This is a community that I care about a lot. And I know that Native people in the city of Portland have felt overlooked, under-represented, and not included. I'm looking forward to changing that. I'm looking forward to making sure that Native people from the community and from the tribes have a seat at the table, and that they're invited when the meal is being planned, not after it's been planned and served and they're on dessert.

I'm looking forward to helping my colleagues and other bureaus learn more about Native people in the area, and how they can be more inclusive of the Native community in the work that they do.

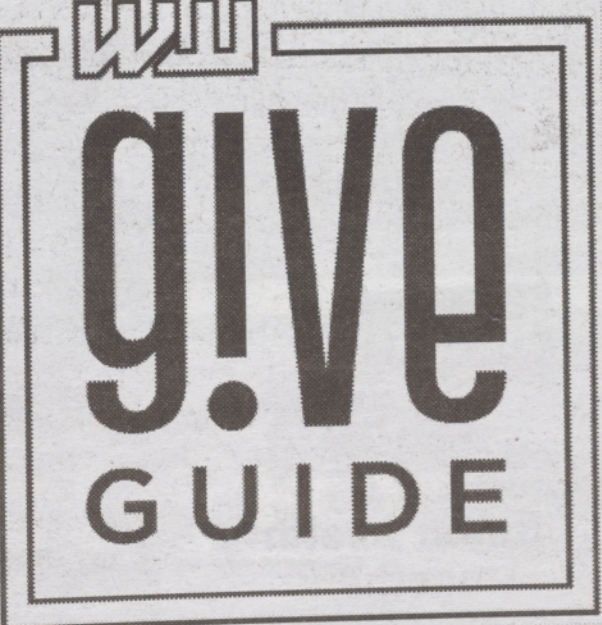
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