

Myths: 'We need to allow others to have their own myths'

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"What is ours is under attack, and the 'other' — however the 'other' is defined on a given day or week — is trying to take it away from us. And to win we must employ all means necessary to take it back."

This is, she said, "a key myth of the (Donald) Trump campaign and, apparently, the defining myth of a large segment of the white American population — a large enough segment to propel him to astounding popularity."

Whether cultural or religious, a myth need not be factual or historically accurate to work on the individual. Its power lies in how effectively it guides people's behavior, telling them how to be human, how to live a purposeful life. "It's about



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian
Tricia Gates Brown speaks during her talk "Understanding the value of sacred stories of mythologies" at the Columbia Forum Thursday.

who to be," she said.

And the best antidote to an unhealthy myth — like those that promote insecurity and xenophobia — is a healthy

myth, one that is life-affirming and helps to open one's heart.

"A healthy myth is a myth shaping people into the kind of people you want them to be, or

'To state the obvious: If all of our mythologies were the same, they would no longer be meaningful.'

Tricia Gates Brown
a Nehalem author

the kind of people that you deem healthy," she said, adding that she views "healthy" myths as those that shape the myth-holders "into people who are compassionate, nongrasping and peaceful."

Intellectual diversity

Brown, the author of several books, including a 2011 memoir, received her Ph.D. in theology from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. Though her background is in Christian-

ity, her spirituality was formed equally by Buddhism, she said.

Because of pervasive stereotypes about religious traditions, she has been tempted to completely distance herself from Christianity, a tradition whose myths, symbols and rituals speak to her.

She even considered changing the title of her memoir, "Jesus Loves Women: A Memoir of Body and Spirit," because many readers found it off-putting. For them, the word "Jesus"

conjured up unappealing images of pious, proselytizing devotees.

But this she couldn't do, for she would merely be catering to prejudice and religious illiteracy — a "lack of understanding of major spiritual and faith traditions, their diversity and their histories," she said.

Brown believes that, in the 21st century, people must learn to better embrace intellectual diversity. And perhaps, she said, if more people were consciously grounded in healthy myths, they could more easily let other people have theirs.

"The thing about honoring myths is that we can't just honor our own. We need to allow others to have their own myths," she said. "To state the obvious: If all of our mythologies were the same, they would no longer be meaningful."

Minimum wage: Measure stirs fears that increase could threaten small businesses

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"It is time for us as a state to do everything we can to help the needy," he said. "This is another tool to make that happen."

The controversial measure has stirred fears that the increase could threaten the survival of the state's small businesses.

Supporters of a ballot initiative to raise wages to \$15 in the next three years said the legislative plan raises wages too slowly given skyrocketing costs.

They have yet to decide whether to pursue placing the initiative on the ballot this year. They are continuing to gather signatures but plan to meet in the next couple of weeks to discuss whether there is enough support and resources for the ballot measure to succeed, said Justin Norton-Kertson, campaign manager for Oregonians for \$15 Now.

"We think this bill is grossly inadequate," Norton-Kertson said.

Demonstrations

The halls of the Oregon

Capitol echoed with fury while the House debated the legislation.

Demonstrators supporting the \$15 Now ballot initiative repeatedly disrupted the debate.

First, demonstrators filled the gallery of the House before House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, ordered them to be removed for interrupting Rep. Duane Stark, R-Grants Pass, during a floor speech and displaying signs.

Then, the demonstrators assembled in the front of Brown's office, located between the House and Senate chambers, and chanted slogans demanding higher wages and affordable housing.

A flier distributed around the demonstration indicated participants came from 15 Now, Portland Tenants United and several other groups.

Later, the demonstrators started pounding on the doors of the House chamber. Legislators in the back of the chamber said they couldn't hear the debate, and some expressed concern for their safety.

The debate stopped for



Paris Achen/Capitol Bureau
Demonstrators chant for higher wages and rent control outside Gov. Kate Brown's office during a floor debate on minimum wage in the state House of Representatives.

about 20 minutes until demonstrators quieted down.

No fiscal analysis

During more than five hours of debate Thursday, the House rejected proposals by Republicans to send the proposal to the ballot.

"Let the 2.2 million voters decide what is best for Ore-

gonians and for themselves," said Rep. Bill Kennemer, R-Oregon City.

Lawmakers also rejected a proposal by Republicans to send the measure to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means for a fiscal analysis.

The legislative fiscal office has said the total cost of the bill to state government is

indeterminate because the plan is phased-in and it's unknown how many wages will be affected each year.

"The decision by the majority party to bypass our budget committee in favor of an expedited approach to passing this bill is nearly unprecedented," said Rep. Greg Smith, R-Hep- pner. "We owe it to Orego-

nians to fully vet this proposal, figure out what it is going to cost taxpayers and make sure we have a plan for addressing those costs."

Rep. Tobias Read, D-Beaverton, said raising the wage also would save revenue because fewer people would need public assistance.

The minimum wage gradually would climb to \$14.75 in 2022 in the Portland urban-growth boundary, which includes parts of Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties. It will rise to \$13.50 in Benton, Clatsop, Columbia, Deschutes, Hood River, Jackson, Josephine, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Polk, Tillamook, Wasco and Yamhill counties, and parts of Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties outside Portland's urban-growth boundary.

In rural areas, the minimum would increase to \$12.50. Those areas include Malheur, Lake, Harney, Wheeler, Sherman, Gilliam, Wallowa, Grant, Jefferson, Baker, Union, Crook, Klamath, Douglas, Coos, Curry, Umatilla and Morrow counties.

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