

Shaping and Being Shaped

“There’s nothing that can guarantee that I can tell my children they can go outside and nothing bad will happen.”

—*Simi Buskila, whose 6-year-old daughter was wounded in a recent suicide bombing in Netanya, Israel.*

As we have all experienced, context matters. To consider the question, “What is shaping your ministry?” the answers to follow-up questions are key.

- Where are you?
- What’s happening outside your door?
- To what and to whom are you paying attention?

Seeking answers may open our hearts and minds to the promptings and calling of God. God’s call to faithfulness, to servanthood, to compassion, and to justice *is* the impetus for our ministry. We serve in response to the love of Jesus Christ.

Reading vignettes about the lives of people killed when the World Trade Center towers were attacked continues to be riveting. We marvel over the coincidences that brought a man who had been unemployed for four years to work in the South Tower that day. Or of the visiting German who stopped in at 8:30 a.m. for a one-hour meeting.

The stories give us clues about their lives and their loves. We meet a woman who had a passion for feeding the hungry; we learn about a father who raced home each evening to play and do homework with his children; we become acquainted with the dignity of a 21-year-old who was working in food service to earn money to go to college because he told his mother he wanted to “pay his share.”

But what is most fascinating is not the situations in which these folks found themselves, but the faith, character, and generosity they brought to their circumstances. As it turns out, **their lives, their choices, their contributions were shaping the context as well as being shaped by it.**

As you read about the ideas, the events, the modes of learning, and the convictions reported by folks contributing to this issue of *CR*, perhaps you will wrestle with questions that will help you discern the still small voice of God prompting and calling you. And perhaps you will test the authenticity of what you perceive in light of the needs of a world where in more places than not, no one can guarantee what will happen when 6-year-olds go outside to play.

So, what is shaping your ministry?

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