

# Growing in Grace: Formation Perspectives

*Wem* WAIOLAHUI'IA CENTER for MINISTRY *For all God's people*

## Stepping Out in Faith, Not Fear

By The Rev. Cn. Andrew J. Arakawa, Canon for Ministry Formation

For most of this summer, I have been wrestling with Thomas Hobbes' stark description of the human condition from his book, *The Leviathan*, published in 1651, which describes life as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." His words reflect a view of humanity driven by fear, scarcity, and a survival instinct. We observe these dynamics unfolding in the daily news, in our communities, and within ourselves, which can lead us to feeling either isolated or succumbing to sectarianism. My contemplation on Hobbes led me to wonder how much of my personal and professional life is motivated by self-interest, and how much of our institutional life is driven by self-preservation. And yet, as people of faith, we cannot stop there. We must ask: how do we, as followers of the Way, live differently? How do we step out in faith, and not in fear, so that we can be un-siloed?

This is where formation becomes essential. Bishop Carlye Hughes of Newark, at the UnConference I attended, said that our ability to share our resources, our time, and even our hearts begin with "Formation, formation, formation." That rings true for me. Formation is not just about learning doctrine or studying scripture; it is the slow, patient shaping of our lives into deeply immersed disciples of Jesus, so we see abundance where the world sees scarcity, and generous relationality where the world urges competition.

Formation invites us to trust that we are more than Hobbes' bleak view of humanity. We are created in God's image, called into relationship, and given the courage to live as people of grace. By forming our lives of faith, we become people who risk love, who forgive, who share, who hope. Perhaps it is choosing collaboration over competition between congregations. Perhaps it is creating spaces where listening is valued as deeply as speaking. Perhaps it is embracing worship that is both rooted in tradition and open to new expressions of the Spirit.

Living this way invites us to pause and reflect:

- What does it look like to be the Episcopal Church in Hawai'i in the 21st Century?
- Where do you see our Church living in fear rather than faith?
- What practices in your community already form people for generosity, courage, and hope?
- What new practices might help us embody abundance together?

When we embrace these practices, fear loses its grip. We begin to trust that God's love is more than enough, and we discover that resources multiply in community. Formation prepares us not just to endure, but to live as witnesses of God's abundant grace.

---

*Growing in Grace – Formation Perspectives* seeks to cultivate a community of lifelong learners as disciples of Christ within our diocese. The articles offer resources, share formation stories, and give updates on the Waiolaihui'ia Center for Ministry. Please reach out to the Rev. Canon Andrew Arakawa if you have story ideas or resources that can add to this ongoing conversation: [aarakawa@episcopalhawaii.org](mailto:aarakawa@episcopalhawaii.org).