

Growing in Grace: Formation Perspectives

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

Slowing to the Speed of Love: Finding Kairos in a Chronos World

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

I often reference Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama's book *Three Mile an Hour God*. Koyama tells us that love has a speed, reminding us that Jesus, the mortal incarnation of God's love, walked everywhere he went, strolling at the average human speed of three miles per hour.

Koyama's work invites us to question our own rhythm of life. In all of our modern busyness, are we taking the time to slow down to this three-mile-an-hour, relational pace? How do we truly move through the world, and are we present in those moments where we can be God's love in action?

These questions were at the front of my mind during a recent trip to Tonga. Each evening, at the drop-offs back at our hotel, we would make tentative plans for the next day's pick-up. The exchanges often went like this: "Okay, tomorrow morning, pick-up will be between half eight and a quarter to nine." "Great," we'd respond, "See you in the morning."

The next day, we'd be enjoying breakfast on the dining lanai, gazing toward the ocean. We would talk story about the previous day, discuss the history and politics of Tonga and Hawai'i, delve into philosophy and theology, or check in on our families. On the clock, 8:30 came and went, as did 8:45, moving toward 9:00 am, and still no ride. And we were all just fine. Despite the structured work lives we maintain in Hawai'i and our dependence on schedules, we were able to step away from Chronos (clock time) and enter Kairos (God time). It was a lovely experience to simply be present to one another, to dig deep into a subject, and to be entirely in the moment, rather than only exchanging niceties in passing.

Admittedly, as a "J" on the Myers-Briggs personality test, I thrive on structured clock time, schedules, and punctuality, and it took intentional effort to adjust to Kairos time in Tonga. But once I did, it became meaningful, grace-filled, and restorative.

As we juggle our scheduled lives, here are a few things to consider for living in the present with more intentional presence:

- **Practice "Three-Mile-an-Hour Moments."** Choose one daily activity, such as walking to a meeting, making coffee, or greeting a colleague, and intentionally slow the pace. Let this unhurried moment become a reminder that love moves gently, relationally, and without striving.

- **Create Small Kairos Pauses within Chronos Time.** Before moving from one scheduled task to the next, take 60 seconds to breathe, notice your surroundings, and acknowledge God’s presence. These micro-pauses cultivate spaciousness even on structured, busy days.
- **Offer Your Full Presence as a Spiritual Gift.** Whether in a conversation, a classroom, or a meeting, practice being wholly attentive to the person in front of you. Put down the internal to-do list and listen with genuine curiosity. Presence blesses both the giver and the receiver.

Let us all live more fully into our days and remember the words of Gen X hero and wise sage, Ferris Bueller, who once said: “Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.” (*Ferris Bueller’s Day Off* – 1986).

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: arakawa@episcopalhawaii.org.