**God Doesn’t Go it Alone**

**Narrative Lectionary**

**October 1, 2017**

Exodus 2: 24-25; 3: 1-15; 4: 10-17 Russell Mitchell-Walker

Have you ever been asked to do something that you didn’t feel confident in your abilities to carry out? Or maybe you have been invited to take part in something that you weren’t sure you fit in or were good enough for? A few years ago I had the opportunity and privilege to attend an event hosted by [Brian McLaren](http://www.brianmclaren.com), a key leader in the [Emerging Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emerging_church) movement. The Emerging Church is a movement within the church of folk who want to get back to being followers of Jesus like those in the early church, who are disillusioned with doctrinal strictness, limitations, and focus on property within the institutional church. This gathering was identified to be for those who were [Convergence](http://www.convergenceus.org) Initiators. Convergence being the bringing together of different traditions or movements. So there I was going to a Convergence Initiators event, with all these creative, gifted, amazing people who have started new ministries or were involved with innovative ways of being church. I felt out of place and inadequate, as a minister in a mainline church, (and was the only Canadian) but I had a desire to learn more about how we be church in this time of change and challenge.

I wonder if this is somewhat how Moses felt – unworthy and inadequate for the task God was asking him to do. God chose him to go to the Pharaoh, the leader of Egypt who has enslaved the Israelite people, and tell him to let my people go. Not only that, but Moses was also going to the home that raised him and educated him, to challenge them. Moses, a man with a stutter, felt utterly incompetent, and insecure for this task and calling. Yet God called him. God promised to be with him and when Moses complained further and came up with more excuses, God offered Aaron to support him as well. Moses was also told that God would provide him with the words needed.

What is interesting about this story as well, is that while God has noticed the suffering of God’s people, God chooses to act with Moses. We would think that God could have dealt with Pharaoh, but chooses to work with Moses. God chooses to use us as change agents. The message here is also that we are called to work with God to address the injustices in the world. This is our calling as well as Moses’. God does not go it alone. God is with us, and inspires and works with us. In noticing and bearing the Israelites’ suffering, God experiences it and is angry and despairing with the people. God is as upset as we are with the suffering we experience in the world. God does not intervene but bears it with us. God notices how humanity creates suffering of others and uses us or expects us to work with God to make it better, or depending on the context to be open to making meaning out of it for our lives. This can take time. In this situation with Moses, God works through Moses to effect change and liberate the people.

What suffering might we be called to address in our context today? There are many possibilities: [Residential school](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=10) survivors; [Murdered and missing indigenous women](https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Fact_Sheet_Missing_and_Murdered_Aboriginal_Women_and_Girls.pdf); [Black Lives Matter](http://janayakhan.com/black-lives-matter/), including those kneeling during anthems to protest the suffering of black people in US communities – realizing that many of our Rider players who are black are from the US; the inclusion and support of [transgender people](http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/trans-kit.pdf); those living with Mental Health and educating to reduce the stigma. Unfortunately, there are many areas of suffering in the world, in our communities, and we cannot address them all, but you may find you are being called to help in some area, even if you don’t feel confident to do so.

Moses in the midst of his feeling inadequate, did lead the people out of Egypt to freedom. God was with him and provided opportunities and abilities that he didn’t dream of. God works wonders when we are open to the possibilities presented to us. When I was presented with the opportunity to attend the Convergence initiators gathering I did feel inadequate. However as I thought about it, I realized that I was an initiator because at the time we were just starting [Skylight Festival](http://www.skylightfestival.ca) of Arts, Faith, Spirituality and Justice. An opportunity for exploring new ways of being church and widening how we experience faith and spirituality. At the Convergence gathering I met some amazing people and it has lead to opportunities I haven’t dreamed of. Building a relationship with people like [Doug Paggit](http://www.dougpagitt.com), author of Flipped and pastor of [Solomon’s Porch](http://www.solomonsporch.com) who has been very supportive of Skylight Festival. Many of the contributors for the first few festivals were Convergence Initiators from that gathering. In the new year, we you will hear from [Brandan Robertson](http://www.brandanrobertson.com) through an online medium as part of my Sabbatical coverage. Brandan is a Progressive Evangelical, bisexual Christian writer, activist, and speaker, best known for his writing and commentary on millennials, spiritual evolution, contemplative spirituality, and his work as an LGBTQ activist among evangelicals. The opportunity gave me the courage to approach speakers at [Wild Goose](http://www.wildgoosefestival.org) Festival, some of whom are quite popular or famous in church circles and talk to them about Skylight. God has very much been a part of this movement for me. God is leading me and us to something new. God has nudged me to take the course this year on [Leadership in the New Parish](http://theseattleschool.edu/programs/leadership-in-the-new-parish/). God is with us on this journey. May we be open to his leading and where God is nudging us to make the world a better place. May we all find the courage to say, ‘Let my people go’, where it is needed.