Interreligious Cooperation to Provide Justice to Undocumented People: A Christian-Buddhist Engagement in Offering Hospitality to "Strangers"

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I. Introduction

For the past several years, there has been a huge political fluctuation regarding the nation's response to rising immigration crisis. What has happened in the U.S. politics of immigration during this period? On November 20, 2014, President Obama finally announced a major executive action on immigration policy with the purpose of protecting up to 5 million undocumented immigrants from deportation. The executive order has two key components: first, offering a legal reprieve to the undocumented parents of U.S. citizens and permanent residents who've resided in the country for at least five years by removing the constant threat of deportation; second, expanding the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that allowed young immigrants, under 30 years old, who arrived as children to apply for a deportation deferral.[1] On December 3, 2014, however,

1. Max Ehrenfreund, "Your Complete Guide to Obama's Immigration Executive Action," *The Washington Post* (Dec. 20, 2014). http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2014/11/19/your-complete-guide-to-obamas-immigration-order/

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Texas governor Greg Abbot and 25 other states with Republican governors sued the Obama administration in coalition claiming that "The president is abdicating his responsibility to faithfully enforce laws that were duly enacted by Congress and attempting to rewrite immigration laws, which he has no authority to do."[2] A year later (November 9, 2015), the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit in New Orleans upheld a challenge against the President Obama's plan in a 2-1 ruling. Major media such as *USA Today* called the panel's decision a "major blow to Obama," who planned to overhaul the nation's immigration system before leaving office; it was also a "crushing defeat for millions of immigrant families who hope to win protections."[3]

Since Donald Trump assumed Presidential Office on January 20th, 2017, as expected, a dramatic political controversy has erupted. For instance, President Trump signed an executive order ("Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States") on January 27, 2017, but a federal judge, James Robart temporarily halted Trump's executive order that bars citizens of seven Muslim majority countries (Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, and Iraq) from entering the U.S. On March 6, 2017, Trump signed a new and improved executive order banning citizens from six Muslim-majority countries (Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, and Sudan) from entering the U.S. for 90 days. President Trump's executive orders on immigration

2. Molly Hennessy-Fiske, "17 States Sue to Stop Obama's Immigration Plan," *Los Angeles Times* (Dec. 3, 2014). http://www.latimes.com/nation/nationnow/la-na-texas-immigration-lawsuit-20141203-story.html
3. Richard wolf and Alan Gomez, "Appeals court deals crippling blow to President Obama's Immigration Plan" (Nov. 9, 2015). http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2015/11/09/appeals-court-obama-immigration-plan/75491724/

also include other controversial plans such as building a border wall, deporting more people, and cracking down on sanctuary cities. The political turmoil on the legal status of the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program is the most recent crisis in the U.S. in early 2018.

The purpose of this paper is to engage in an interfaith dialogue and cooperation between Christianity and Buddhism concerning the current political devolvement with a view to promoting a broad-based political coalition, which I call "lifeworld politics." I argue in this paper that Christian and Buddhist communities should appropriate the forgiveness model of hospitality when they approach the current immigration crisis out of their shared belief in the solidarity with others. The specific goal of lifeworld politics is to provide an interreligious support in the spirit of hospitality to those who have long been waiting for immigration reform.

II. Anti-immigration Biopolitics and Double Victimization of Undocumented People

One of the most important aspects of the U.S. immigration crisis is that its origin is deeply structural in that it was caused by, in Iris Marion Young's terms, "structural injustice" of global economy, international politics, and historical dependency, rather than by individual migrant's opportunistic violation.[4] The case of NAFTA is

4. According to Iris Marion Young, "structural injustice" emerges when economic, political, cultural, and legal processes put large groups of people under systemic threat of domination or deprivation of the means to develop their capacities, while allowing

the most widely-known example. The free trade agreement signed by North American countries (the U.S., Canada, and Mexico in 1994) has brought a detrimental economic effect mostly to Mexican farmers and its agricultural economy, resulting in mass migration from Mexico's rural areas. Social scientist Dawn McCarthy summarizes her research saying, "NAFTA's devastating effect on Mexican agriculture has led to an unprecedented migration of people from the Mexican countryside to the United States, with serious consequences to the women and children left behind in rural Mexico(McCarthy, 105)". She provides specific data how deeply the Mexican agricultural economy was affected by the international free trade agreement. She writes, "Mexican agriculture has been a massive net loser in trade with the U.S., and employment in the sector has declined sharply, from 8.1 million employed workers at the end of 1993 to 6.8 million by the end of 2004 with the biggest losses (1.013 million jobs) among rural corn producers(McCarty, 108)". Since these farmers could not compete with the U.S. government subsidized agricultural produce such as corns and beans, they were forced to leave their farmlands in order to look for new jobs. According to Gustavo A. Flores-Macías, "migration between Mexico and the United States increased considerably and steadily after 1994((Flores-Macias, 436)." Other researchers, such as David Bacon, confirm that unlike the original promise made by the proponents of NAFTA that it would bring "first world" status for the Mexican people, it unfortunately prompted a great migration north.[5]

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others to dominate or to have various opportunities to exercise their capacities. See her *Responsibility for Justice* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011).

5. David Bacon, "Globalization and NAFTA Caused Migration from Mexico," *The Public*

On the U.S. side, these economically victimized people have been subjected to a whole new different victimization due to the anti-immigration biopolitics and huge economic interests of the U.S. private sectors such as international private prison industries (CoreCivic [formerly the Corrections Corporate of America] and the Geo Group for instance). Most conspicuous among anti-immigration biopolitical arrangements are the border militarization and the criminalization of all undocumented migrants. The U.S. government has spent billion dollars on border militarization in recent years, and there are about 22,000 Border Patrol agents today compared to 4,000 in 1992. The budget of the Border Patrol has been increased exponentially from $262 million in 1990 to over $3.5 billion in 2011, and the nearly $12 billion budget of the Border Patrol's parent agency, Customs and Border Protection (CBP), has been doubled since 2004.[6] According to *USA Today*, Trump's new proposed budget directs $2.6 billion to border wall followed by $1.5 billion for expanded detention, transportation and removal of "illegal" immigrants.[7] One should note here that the increasing border militarization has subsequently

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Eye (Fall, 2014). Bacon writes, "Indigenous people made up 7% of Mexican migrants in 1991-3, the years just before the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement. In 2006-8, they made up 29%--four times more." http://www.politicalresearch.org/2014/10/11/globalization-and-nafta-caused-migration-from-mexico/

6. See the statics at http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/border_security/border_patrol/usbp_statistics/

7. Bill Theobald, "Trump's budget directs $2.6 billion to border wall—and that's not all," *USA Today* (March 16, 2017). https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2017/03/16/immigration-trump-budget-calls-for-far-more-than-wall/99215124/ Theobald also writes that the staff increase would include 1,000 new immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel and 500 new Border Patrol agents. In his first executive order on immigration ban, he actually called for adding 10,000 immigration officers and 5,000 border agents.

rendered many undocumented people vulnerable not only to inhumane treatment of enforcement agencies, but also to increased death rate in regard to their choice of a more dangerous migrating route due to the increased border militarization. For instance, according to *the Guardian* report, in Brooks County in South Texas only, 87 bodies had been found in 2013, and 129 the year before.[8] These people perished while they were crossing the dangerous terrains of "no man's land."[9]

III. Interfaith Dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism on Immigration Crisis

How should people of religious faith respond to the current political devolvement with regard to providing justice to undocumented migrants in the U.S.? I attempt to answer this question by focusing on the concept of hospitality which both Christianity and Buddhism equally emphasize as one of their core ethical ideals.

Christian Understanding of Hospitality[10]

Since its historical birth in ancient Roman Empire, Christianity has

8. Melissa del Bosque, "Into the Wilderness." See the article at http://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2014/aug/06/-sp-texas-border-deadliest-state-undocumented-migrants
9. The case of the death of 9 undocumented immigrants found in a blistering hot truck at a Texas Walmart parking lot on July 23, 2017 is the most recent case that demonstrates how precarious these undocumented peoples' lives are.
10. A more extensive discussion on Christian understanding of hospitality can be found in the first chapter of my book, *Religious Ethics and Migration: Doing Justice to Undocumented Workers* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

been known for its theological emphasis and promotion of hospitality as a key ethical norm for those who were regarded as the "least" of the society. Although ancient Greeks and the Roman society also put a social-moral value on the concept of hospitality, there was a critical difference between them. For example, although Roman culture recognized hospitality as an important social virtue of civilization, its *ius hospitii* (the law of hospitality) was largely characterized by their emphasis on formal reciprocal obligations between the givers of hospitality and its receivers. In Roman society, because "a grateful response from the beneficiary was key to the ongoing relationship, the tradition emphasized the worthiness and goodness of recipients rather than their need(Pohl, 18)." According to Amy G. Oden, however, hospitality was differently regarded as an essential moral virtue in the early Christian tradition. She writes, "its meaning within the Christian biblical and historical traditions has focused on receiving *the alien* and extending one's resources to them(Oden, 14)." As Christine Pohl also succinctly captures, as opposed to the contemporary Greek and Roman types, the distinctive quality of the early Christian hospitality lies in its unique ethos which valorizes the offering of "a generous welcome to the 'least' without concern for advantage or benefit to the host(Pohl, 16)." As we will see shortly, the unconditional nature of Christian hospitality is resonated in a similar way in the Buddhist practice of pure hospitality.

The distinctive quality of Christian understanding of hospitality and its origin can be traced back to the biblical narratives of the Hebrew Bible. For example, Genesis 18 narrates a story according to which, Abraham offers exceptional hospitality to the strangers under the oaks of Mamre even though he never met them before.

In numerous passages, God (YHWH) demands that Israelites should remember how God was hospitable to them while they were strangers in the land of Egypt. For instance, Deuteronomy 10:19 reads, "You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." In the New Testament, Jesus himself reemphasizes the importance of hospitality as follows: "When you give a luncheon or a diner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind (Luke 14:12-13)." In Matthew 25:34-36, Jesus also says that those who would be blessed by God will be those who show hospitality to *the least* of the society and strangers. "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, . . . for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me(Pohl, 22)." Indeed, the entire tradition of Christian hospitality is marked by the act of showing hospitality to "the least of these" because Jesus himself identifies with them.

Besides the biblical teachings of both Hebrew Bible and New Testament, the precarious historical background of ancient world was also an important factor that rendered the early Christian church more radical in appropriating Jesus' ideal notion of hospitality. As Amy Oden points out, having experienced the political and social oppression in Roman Empire, the earthy Christians may have developed a sense of identification with exiles and refugees. Oden, thus, writes "Because Christians were at times under threat from civil authorities, the act of harboring refugees who were brothers

and sisters in Christ became imperative. Sheltering strangers was essential to the survival of Christianity in a hostile empire(Oden, 38)." The early Christian church's own social identification with the poor and the marginalized became a theological backdrop against which its radical concept of hospitality was conceived. One of the early church fathers, John Chrysostom thus regards the recognition of one's own status of being a stranger in this world as the "whole of virtue" for Christians. In his own words, "the first virtue, indeed, the whole of virtue, is to be a stranger to this world, and a sojourner (cited in Oden, 42)."

What we could discover from a historical review of both Greco-Roman and Christian traditions of hospitality is that the idea of hospitality has been almost exclusively modelled after the paradigm of "gift" in the Western world. In other words, showing hospitality to one's visitors has been traditionally understood as a form of gift offered by the host to the visitor. The host was a de facto giver or donor, and the visitor was givee or donee. The paradigm of gift has been dominant in Christian theological and ecclesial tradition, and in this paradigm, the idea of hospitality has been largely conceived in relation to the physical and spiritual "need" of those who would receive the hospitality of hosts. As Pohl correctly captures, "hospitality is a voluntary act, a gift(Pohl, 78)." Even though this traditional model of hospitality is still a dominant paradigm in today's Christian community, I introduce a new paradigm of hospitality as a quintessential Christian type, which I believe is in much need of today because of the changing global context deeply shaped by neoliberalism. I am not arguing, though, that the new paradigm of hospitality should replace the traditional gift paradigm. I develop

this new paradigm especially minding the rising global crisis of undocumented or irregular migration of people. It is my contention that the new paradigm of hospitality works better than the traditional gift paradigm of hospitality when it comes to the escalating crisis of undocumented or irregular migration of people. What, then, is this new paradigm of Christian hospitality? And how is this new paradigm possible?

The new paradigm of Christian hospitality is conceived in light of the Christian theology of forgiveness. Forgiveness lies at the center of Christian theology, and it presupposes the existence of guilt, violation, or debt. The new paradigm of forgiveness is possible when we consider that there is an "invisible debt" contracted between hosting citizens and visiting migrants. From a phenomenological perspective, when a migrant crosses the border without authorization, an invisible debt is established as a form of reciprocal moral sense although there is no contractual term agreed upon. To be more specific, the reciprocal moral sense is set in as follows: "you owe us your presence" on the part of the host to the visitor, and "I owe you my security and success" on the part of the visitor to the host. Invisible as it may seem, the invisible debt effectuates a negative economy between the host and the visitor. From the perspective of an invisible debt, migrants' presence itself becomes a debt owed to the hosting state because they are not meant to be there. On the other hand, as the owners of the territory, the hosting citizens take it for granted to claim their creditorship, which is usually expressed in the form of their political, economic, and cultural privileges.

A new paradigm of hospitality is then conceived as hosting citizens' full acceptance of visiting migrants by forgiving the invisible debt

owed by the latter to the former. Unlike the gift model, the forgiveness model of hospitality reconfigures the relationship between citizens and migrants as creditors and debtors, rather than as givers and givees. By forgiving the invisible debt, the hosting citizens provide hospitality to visiting migrations. In Matthew 18:23-35, Jesus tells us an interesting story of a debtor who owed 10,000 talents to his creditor. To our surprise, this debtor was also a creditor to another debtor who owed him only 100 denarii. The main message of this narrative is that if the debtor would be forgiven his 10,000 talents by his creditor, the forgiven debtor is expected to forgive his debtor who owed him mere 100 denarii. What is, then, the theological and ethical meaning of this story to us? To put it shortly, Christians who believe that their unpayable debt is forgiven by God are then expected to forgive others' unpayable debt owed to them. Indeed, the forgiveness paradigm of hospitality originates in God's incalculable and unconditional act of forgiveness, and the new paradigm of hospitality helps us imitate God reflecting God's act in this world.

The forgiveness model of hospitality becomes more convincing when we consider that many of these unauthorized migrants are in fact the victims of the structural injustice of global economy rather than the opportunistic law breakers. If many of these unauthorized migrants had to cross the border for their survival because of the unjust neoliberal global economy as we have seen in the case of NAFTA, and the hosting citizens would turn out to be the beneficiaries of such an unjust systemic change, offering hospitality (modelled after forgiveness) to these victimized people (commonly identified as "illegals") would become the hosting citizens' moral-political responsibility, rather than their prerogative right. What is due to

the undocumented victims of the structural injustice of a neoliberal global economy is then the long-waited legal-political appropriation of the forgiveness model of hospitality, rather than the ruthless and inhumane crackdown. The political appropriation of the forgiveness model of hospitality becomes the core tenet of the lifeworld politics, which I discuss later.

There may be some questions brought against this new paradigm of hospitality modelled after forgiveness. The first of these may be related to the idea of forgiveness itself. One may ask: Who forgives whom? Since forgiveness presupposes guilt, violation, or debt, this model potentially rendered the victimized migrants morally inferior to the hosting citizens. The Pauline concept of "law vs. grace" is helpful to answer this critique. To put it shortly, what rendered victimized migrants morally inferior as well as legally culpable is not their act, but the imperfect laws of the hosting society. The current immigration law of the U.S. is not perfect because when it was enacted, law makers did not take into their consideration the global structural changes caused by rising neoliberalism that has significantly impacted the global migration of people. Yes, these people violate the law of the society crossing the border without documents; but the real problem lies in the shortness and limitedness of the laws of the hosting society which fail to consider the global structural change, to which the hosting society deeply interconnected as its beneficiaries. From this perspective, what is needed to do justice to many undocumented people is not ruthless punishment or criminalization, but the political forgiveness of their "illegal" status by acknowledging the imperfect and limited aspect of the law of the society. Unlike other kinds, the political forgiveness in this case

is then established without repentance on the part of the undocumented. This argument will lead to the second question: Is it politically possible to appropriate the forgiveness model of hospitality? To this question, we should note that the Republican President Reagan signed a landmark immigration bill known as the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in November 1986, which effectively provided legal status to many "illegal" aliens who already resided in the U.S. The public media at that time called the President's executive movement "amnesty." The forgiveness model of hospitality is not merely an idealistic notion; the history testifies that it has been already demonstrated in real politics.

Buddhist Understanding of Hospitality

As we have seen in Christianity, Buddhism also valorizes the concept of hospitality. For instance, the word, *atithisatkāra*, whose literal meaning is "doing" (*kāra*) something "good" or "virtuous" (*sat*) for a "guest" (*atithi*), represents the core element of Buddhist ideal of hospitality (Rotman, 115). This term is found in Indian Buddhist Sanskrit text, and it is commonly translated as "hospitality." It is worthwhile to explore its more in-depth meaning. According to Andy Rotman, there is a complex history behind the term *atithi*, but it is regarded as being derived "from the Sanskrit root *at*, which means 'to go constantly,' 'to walk,' 'to wander'(Rotman, 115)." In other words, someone who is *atithi* means that he or she is not a permanent resident in one's home, who may be compared to what we commonly call migrants today. Interestingly enough, Rotman holds, as the antonym of *tithi*, which denotes a specific time, *atithi* can also refer

to "one who has fixed time for coming" or "one who has arrived outside the auspicious lunar days(Rotman, 115)." It becomes possible to translate the word as someone who "has arrived unexpectedly, at a random time; or worse, at the wrong time(Rotman, 115)." Thus, if Buddhists would attempt to implement the religious meaning of *atithisatkāra* into our contemporary world, it would mean that they are to welcome everyone including those undocumented. Rotman argues that although the act of welcoming unexpected visitors as a form of *unplanned* giving has traditionally received less attention compared to *planned* giving, many Buddhist narrative literature explicitly addressed its importance(Rotman, 115).

The Buddhist concept of hospitality exemplified by the Sanskrit word *atithisatkāra* denotes that its ethical modality is largely modelled after the gift paradigm as we have seen in the case of Christian tradition of hospitality. The act of *atithisakāra* is basically a form of gift: the gift of offering hospitality to unexpected visitors. We should note here that gift giving lies at the center of Buddhist ethics. As Peter Harvey correctly points out, the primary ethical activity for Buddhists is giving, *dāna*, which "forms a basis for further moral and spiritual development(Harvey, 198)." Diana L. Eck also notes that giving is the one of the first teaching subjects the Buddha offered to laity who were just beginning on the path. As she emphasizes, "It (giving) is not one of those virtues that are considered 'factors of enlightenment,' but giving 'serves as a basis and preparation which underlies and quietly supports the entire endeavor to free the mind from the defilements'(Eck, 375)."

In their article, "Hospitality: Ideologies, Characteristics and Conditionality in Theravada Buddhism and western Philosophy," Sarath

Munasinghe et al. highlight an important aspect of Buddhist hospitality by arguing that "In Buddhism, hospitality in the form of the 'pure gift' does not expect anything in return if the host wants to practice the volition of relinquishment(Munasighe et al., 175)." According to them, the aspect of expecting nothing from the givee is what makes Buddhist notion of hospitality distinguished from the Greco-Roman type of hospitality that is largely grounded on the reciprocal and thus conditional relationality between the giver and the receiver. The essence of Buddhist hospitality, then, lies in its non-discriminatory distribution of the gift of hospitality. Sarath Munasinghe et al., thus, write, "Buddhism . . . stresses the fact that giving should be practiced towards all living beings on a non-discriminatory basis(Munasighe et al., 175)". They, however, emphasize that the pure or unconditional hospitality is not possible without attaining a high level of personal and spiritual maturation in Buddhist training and learning. For example, when a gift of hospitality is provided with expectations, the giver of hospitality will not progress to become a "non-returner (i.e. an enlightened person)." However, as Buddha taught, "a person who gives without expectation, will not exhaust karma and will not return to manifested existence(Munasighe et al., 169)." This is the reason why in Theravada Buddhism, when it comes to giving, the intention is more important than the gift itself, and why "pure and clear intentions are considered the best motivation for giving(Munasighe et al., 169)." Of course, giving with any state of mind is still welcomed, but it is considered as a way toward developing the mind into a higher state. The Buddhist emphasis of unconditional hospitality as the highest form of gift certainly reminds us of Jacques Derrida's notion of "another

hospitality," which he lays out in his 2000 *Of Hospitality*. By dividing hospitality into two kinds, "the unconditional or hyperbolical on the one hand, and the conditional and juridico-political on the other," Derrida argues that the former is a categorical injunction to welcome the other without asking for a document, a name, a status, a context, or a passport(Derrida, 135).

It is important to note that the whole Buddhist religious life is structurally interlinked to the practice of gift giving in Buddhists' everyday lives. For example, the monastic *Sangha* depends on the laity for such items as alms-food, robes, medicine, and accommodation (Harvey, 199). The teachings and exemplary behaviors of the monks and nuns are also gift to the laity, which is no smaller than those offered by the laity because "The gift of *Dhamma* excels all gifts (Harvey, 199)." As Peter Harvey perceives, the acts of mutual giving characterize the relationship between the laity and the Buddhist monks and nuns, and the continuous and mutual *dāna* become the "merit" for both. In this respect, Harvey writes that "[t]he Sangha, moreover, is a potent field of 'merit,' so gifts planted in it are seen as providing a good harvest of merit for the donors. As alms bestow long life, good appearance, happiness and strength on the recipient, then these, in a human or heavenly rebirth, are said to be the karmic results of almsgiving(Harvey, 199)." Indeed, as Eck also writes, "The quality of generosity, seeded and supported by the practice of giving, is central to the religious life of Buddhist laity who offer dana to support the monastic life of the renouncers(Eck, 375)."

Above we have seen that the Buddhist concept of hospitality is a form of *dāna*, which is offered to both expected and unexpected visitors. Is there a different form of hospitality, which is modelled

after forgiveness in Buddhist tradition? The case of a Lao Buddhist festival seems to illustrate that the concept of hospitality modelled after forgiveness is existent at least among the Lao Buddhists. According to Patrice Ladwig, Lao Buddhists observe a religious festival known as "ghost festival" during which "disembodied and hideous specters are believed to be released from hell and enter the world of the living(Ladwig, 90)." These ghosts are believed to be locked up in hell due to their ethical failures and bad karma. Ladwig says that being mutilated and tortured, these ghosts have not only lost their humanity, but also constantly suffered from hunger and thirst. The purpose of the Lao Buddhist festival is then aimed at "caring for ghosts and supporting their reintegration back into the cycle of rebirth(Ladwig, 91)."

According to Ladwig, at the heart of this ritual relationship between ghosts and the living lies the Buddhist concept of hospitality and its transformative potentials. He thus analogically interprets ghosts as asylum-seekers, and the provision of the ritual by the living as a ritual hospitality. "Ritual hospitality is a precondition for enabling ghosts to escape hell, form a new body, and re-enter the cycle of rebirth. I compare them to rescued asylum-seekers and . . . [I] will propose that ghosts can here be understood as strangers to the realm of the living who through the crossing of an ontological boundary intrude into a world to which they usually do not belong(Ladwig, 91)." It is important to see that the act of providing ritual hospitality also transforms the living because "the confrontation with the horrible appearance of the guest is a chance to cultivate exemplary Buddhist values(Ladwig, 99)." This becomes a reason why Ladwig interprets the ritual hospitality is a form of gift. At the end of the day, what

characterizes the ritual hospitality is the moral economy of gift. In my view, however, the Lao Buddhist ritual hospitality should be regarded as form of forgiveness, rather than a gift.

These ghosts are locked up in hell due to their ethical failures and bad karma, and they are subject to all forms of punishment which eventually turn them into "horrifying and pitiful species of beings." From the logic of reciprocity, they are not deserved for receiving gift due to their ethical failures and bad karma. What is offered to them is thus more likely a forgiveness out of compassion or an "agitation (*samvega*), which can be understood as a call for hospitality and ethical cultivation(Ladwig, 99)." So what really transformed the living who offered the ritual hospitality is not the horrible appearances of the ghosts themselves, but the compassionate decision to forgive their ethical failures and bad karma on the part of the host. Whether it is a form of gift or forgiveness, what we discover from the case of the Lao Buddhist ghost festival is the realization of the Buddhist ethics of hospitality. It is thus right for Ladwig to say, "This demand of hospitality, the welcome they are supposed to receive, is driven by what I have called a Buddhist ethics of hospitality(Ladwig, 99)." Above we have briefly reviewed how Christianity and Buddhism have developed their own views of hospitality in a comparative way. Not identical though, their common understanding of hospitality as welcoming of the other, including the unexpected and the undeserved, provides us with a moment of interfaith cooperation with regard to the current immigration crisis in the U.S. In the followings, I attempt not only to explore their different social engagement to promote hospitality, but also to present a constructive proposal for an interfaith coalition

for immigration justice.

IV. Interreligious Coalition for the Lifeworld Politics of Immigration Justice

The Christian Sanctuary Movement

The case of sanctuary movement in the 1980s in the U.S. is an excellent example of how the Christian church should engage in pressing social problems such as immigration crisis based on its biblical-theological idea of hospitality. The sanctuary movement was launched in the early 1980s in southern Arizona. The movement was cofounded by a Presbyterian pastor John Fife and a Quaker Jim Corbett in order to meet the pressing needs of many Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees who fled their countries to escape from the brutal organized violence targeted against them. After encountering with Central American unauthorized migrants, Fife began to delve into international refugee laws, visited the Central American countries, and finally concluded that the need of these migrants was indeed genuine and urgent. At its peak, the sanctuary movement built up a significant membership, i.e., about 70,000 in the mid-1980s with 500 participating churches across the country (Cunningha, 372). From the beginning, the movement was biblically mandated by seriously following the teachings of the Hebrew Scripture such as Leviticus 19:34, which reads "The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." (NRSV) In 1988,

Salvadoran theologian Jon Sobrino argued that the sanctuary movement was not only theologically justifiable, but also ethically demanded as a biblical way of taking responsibility. He also enumerated three reasons why the movement is justifiable: "(1) sanctuary is theologically justified; (2) it is necessary ethically as reparation; and (3) it is a benefit not only for the refugees but also for U.S. religious communities and, indirectly, for all the American people(Sobrino, 164)."

About two decades later, in 2007, the New Sanctuary Movement was reestablished with coalitions of congregations in major cities throughout the country. Drawing on the original spirit of the Sanctuary Movement in 1980s, these new congregations opened their doors to provide refuge to those facing deportation in response to the escalated work place and neighborhood raids by the ICE agents. According to the official manual, "Sanctuary Movement 2014: Stopping Deportations," two goals are set for the movement. While the "immediate local goal" is focused on offering sanctuary to community members, congregants and neighbors facing deportations, the "national goal" is laid out as follows:

- Win affirmative administrative relief from deportations by expanding deferred action to all undocumented people currently residing in the U.S.
- Amplify the moral imperative to stop deportations by lifting up the stories of sanctuary cases and ensuring the prophetic witness of the immigrant taking sanctuary is heard at the national level.
- Continue to pressure elected officials to offer legal status and

> pathways to citizenship to the 11 million immigrants that are already in the U.S. and create a viable path for new arrivals.[11]

Like the original Sanctuary Movement, the New Sanctuary Movement was also grounded on key biblical passages (such as Leviticus 19:33-34; Isiah 1:17; and Luke 10:27) that mandate Christian church's building solidarity with the strangers as an expression of covenant faithfulness. The Sanctuary Movement of 1980s and the surge of the New Sanctuary Movement are good examples of how the Christian church can concretize its ethical ideal of hospitality (especially the forgiveness model of hospitality) in the world.

The Socially Engaged Buddhism

How would Buddhism demonstrate its ethical ideal of hospitality with regard to the current immigration crisis in the U.S.? We may find an answer to this question from two sources: the rise of "socially engaged Buddhism" and the case of Buddhist support system for Southeast Asian refugees. First, according to Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, socially engaged Buddhism first arose in Asian in the middle years of the twentieth century as a response to a particular problem, namely, the process of modernization that comes along with negative consequences such as foreign domination, widening inequalities in wealth and social status, market capitalism, materialism, and the ordeal of fratricide wars. In a nutshell, "socially engaged Buddhism

11. This document is available at: http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/sanctuary_toolkit-4.pdf

was born from the need felt by Buddhist leaders to help Buddhism make the transition from a traditional culture to a modern one(Bodhi, 13)." Although the engaged Buddhist thinkers such as A.T. Ariyarante, Sulak Sivaraksa, B.R. Ambedkar, draw upon such classic Buddhist principles as interconnectedness, selflessness, the four noble truths, and mindfulness, they also deploy them in different ways. As a result, a shift has been made in its focus from the attainment of transcendent liberation or a heavenly rebirth through the practice of conventional meritorious deeds to "the task of transforming the oppressive systemic structures that cause grave suffering for people in this present world of concrete experience(Bodhi, 15)."

In North America, with the establishment of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship in 1977, a self-conscious American form of engaged Buddhism took shape. North American Buddhists become involved with diverse projects aimed at relief and social transformation from protesting the war in Iraq to supporting human rights in Tibet, Burma, and Vietnam (Bodhi, 16). The rise of socially engaged Buddhism is linked to the rise of Mahayana Buddhism that place greater stress on the altruistic side of Buddhist ethics, exemplified in the Bodhisattva vow which involves "a determination to promote the material well-being and physical security of beings as well as their moral and spiritual welfare(Bodhi, 17)." One of the criticisms brought against socially engaged Buddhism is how the concept of human rights can be compatible with the Buddhist philosophy of no-self. Sallie B. King responds to this question saying that Buddhist ethics function quite well without a substantial self. For example, King holds, the first Buddhist lay precept is to abstain from taking life, and this can be done without referring to a substantive being possessed of

a self(King, 138). Since Buddhism emphasizes responsibilities rather than rights, and also takes a nonadversarial approach rather than adversarial stance with respect to conflict, its social engagement requires "only a functional person, not an ultimately real human self(King, 138)."

With regard to the Buddhist engagement in the case of immigration, we find a relevant example in Edward Canda's and Thitiya Phaobton's research work on Buddhist services for Southeast Asian refugees in the Midwestern United States during 1970s and 80s. Since 1975, more than 900,000 refugees from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam have been resettled in the United States, and a wide range of psychological and social services to assist these refugees were required in their culture-specific support systems(Canda and Phaobton, 61). According to Canda and Phaobton, although their services are not performed according to distinct specializations like the Euro-American human services categories, the Lao and Khmer temple staff and the sponsoring Buddhist association developed services "by combining the traditionally expected activities of the temple, such as religious celebrations, with ad hoc requirements of the refugee community (Canda and Phaobton, 64)." It is important to see that as we have seen in the case of Sanctuary Movement, the Southeast Asian temples' social engagement of hospitality was grounded on the Buddhist ethical ideals such as *karuna* (compassion) in Sanskrit and *metta* (loving kindness) in Pali(Canda and Phaobton, 62).

The Lifeworld Politics & the Christian–Buddhist Coalition for Immigration Justice

We have seen above not only the distinctive ethical concepts of hospitality idealized in both Christianity and Buddhism, but also their political-social activism to live out its moral ideal in different contexts. Since the goal of this paper is to go beyond the mere introduction of their distinctive concepts of hospitality and the description of their social ministry and engagement, the following question seems proper: How can we move from the interfaith dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism to a more proactive interreligious coalition for the sake of promoting humanity's common values such as peace, justice, solidarity, and hospitality? I answer this question by proposing the concept of "lifeworld politics" with the purpose of creating a new politico-socio-religious space in which both Christianity and Buddhism may gather together to develop an interreligious coalition to promote the said values above.[12]

First of all, what is lifeworld politics? The term, "lifeworld," is drawn from Jürgen Habermas, especially his *The Theory of Communicative Action* (vol.2). He develops the concept of the lifeworld as a paired concept with the system. Due to the lack of space, I cannot fully describe its theoretic background here, but the concepts of the lifeworld and the system are the theoretical extension and the conceptual revision to lay out the complex interconnection

12. I have developed this concept in my previously published articles: "The U.S. Immigration Crisis and a Call for the Church's Lifeworld Politics: Why Should Hauerwas Collaborate with Habermas on the U.S. Immigration Crisis?, *CrossCurrents* 64.3 (2014): 319-345.

between Marx's two development spheres: productive forces and the forms of social integration (Ahn, *Position and Responsibility*, 50). Comprised of culture and language, the lifeworld is a horizontal backdrop in which meaningful social action becomes possible. Social members often draw upon its "stock of knowledge" in their communications and the lifeworld supplies them with "unproblematic, common, background convictions that are assumed to be guaranteed (Ahn, "The U.S. Immigration Crisis," 327)." Habremas holds that there are three structural components which constitute the lifeworld: culture, society, and personality. Owing to these components, cultural knowledge, social integration and solidarity, and personal identities become possible. He summarizes, "The symbolic structures of the lifeworld [operated by language rather than money and power] are reproduced by way of the continuation of valid knowledge, stabilization of group solidarity, and socialization of responsible actors (Habermas, 125)."

The lifeworld politics is then primarily distinguished from the state's power politics or biopolitics in that the lifeworld politics does not aim to acquire the political hegemony or to bring regime change. The lifeworld politics subsequently rejects the absolutist ideological division between the church and the state, represented by the so-called the separation phrase commonly known as the "separation of church and state" or "wall of separation between church and state." The lifeworld politics overcomes this binary ideological division because of its rationalized, power-indifferent, socio-symbolic space called lifeworld. The lifeworld is not only distinguished from the church or the temple, but also differentiated from the state. The lifeworld, however, is closely conjoined with the public space in which religious

communities and the state may coexist while mutually affecting each other (Ahn, "The U.S. Immigration Crisis," 335). Since public spaces such as school forum, town-hall meeting, and public gathering are anchored in civil society, which also depends on a rationalized lifeworld as a cultural and linguistic background, the lifeworld is tied to the public spheres.

How does the lifeworld have to do with the public sphere and the democratic political system? It is important to note that two types of entity comprise the lifeworld: 1, systems like religion, education, and the family and 2, systems like science, morality, and art. In contrast, the democratic political system is composed of legal regulations, administrative control, or political steering. Between these two (the lifeworld and the democratic political system) lies what we commonly call the public sphere. The most important insight we could learn from Habermas's social theory is that the lifeworld meets the public spheres *halfway* because the public spheres also meet with the political system. In his scheme, the lifeworld politics organized and mobilized by the Christian church and the Buddhist *sangha* may affect the state's political system through the "halfway" connection of the public spheres (Ahn, "The U.S. Immigration Crisis," 335).

How could we then build up an interreligious coalition between Christianity and Buddhism with regard to the case of immigration crisis? What does it mean to build up an interreligious coalition? Building the interreligious coalition becomes possible in the form of creating strategic solidarity between these two religious communities for a specific humanitarian goal of reaching out and helping out the socio-politically marginalized and disenfranchised

in the society. To be more specific, if the strategic solidarity between these two religious communities would be enabled, then the Buddhist *sangha* would be able to join the network of the New Sanctuary Movement to support the rights of undocumented neighbors who are facing dehumanizing and even inhumane deportations. The Christian church also may stand together with the Buddhist communities to endorse and support the human rights of Buddhist refugees in the U.S. or in other parts of the world. The proposed interreligious coalition between Christian and Buddhist communities can be established locally, nationally, or globally. Indeed, by actively participating and promoting interreligious solidarity movement, the Christian church and the Buddhist *sangha* may help broad-based humanitarian civic efforts to overhaul the long-waited immigration reform.

VI. Conclusion

The neoliberal global order has changed our world significantly for past decades. One of its changes is the increasing number of undocumented or irregular migrant people. As a result of this global social change, there arise new and complex social problems such as the social integration of the strangers into the mainline society including the unauthorized. Above I have argued that religious communities such as Christian churches and Buddhist *sangha* are to build up interreligious coalition not only to live out the religious moral ideals such as hospitality, but also to provide justice to victimized migrant people. The concept of the lifeworld politics has been devised

in order to illustrate how the interreligious coalition among different religious communities can be possible. The current political-legal stalemate on immigration reform and the anti-immigration biopolitics represented by increasing border militarization and criminalization should not discourage religious communities; to the contrary, they should rather interpret them as the humanity's call to action to join the lifeworld politics of upholding the rights and dignity of our undocumented neighbors.

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Abstract

Interreligious Cooperation to Provide Justice to Undocumented People: A Christian-Buddhist Engagement in Offering Hospitality to "Strangers"

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For the past several years, there has been a huge political fluctuation regarding the nation's response to rising U.S. immigration crisis. Since Donald Trump assumed Presidential Office on January 20th, 2017, this political turmoil has gotten even more controversial. For instance, President Trump signed an executive order ("Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States") on January 27, 2017, which was then halted by a federal judge, James Robart. On March 6, 2017, Trump signed a new and improved executive order, blocking citizens of six Muslim-majority countries (Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, and Sudan) from entering the U.S. for 90 days. President Trump's executive orders on immigration also include other controversial plans such as building a border wall, deporting more people, and cracking down on sanctuary cities. The political turmoil on the legal status of the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program is the most recent crisis in the U.S. in early 2018. The purpose of this paper is to engage in an interfaith dialogue and cooperation between Christianity and Buddhism concerning the current political devolvement with a view to promoting a broad-based political coalition, which I call "lifeworld politics." I argue in this paper that Christian and Buddhist communities should appropriate the forgiveness model of hospitality when they approach the current immigration crisis out of their shared belief in the solidarity with others. The specific goal of lifeworld politics is to provide an interreligious support in the spirit of hospitality to those who have long been waiting for immigration reform.

Keywords: hospitality, gift, forgiveness, immigration crisis, Christianity, Buddhism, undocumented people, lifeworld politics

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국문초록

불법 이민자들을 공정하게 대하기 위한 종교간 협력: 기독교도-불교도들의 "이방인들" 환대에 대한 참여

지난 몇 년 동안 고조 되어온 미국의 이민 위기와 관련해서 거대한 정치적 변동이 있었다. 특히 도널드 트럼프(Donald Trump)가 2017년 1월 20일 대통령으로 새로이 임무를 맡게 되면서 정치적 불안정은 더욱 심화 되었다. 예를 들자면, 트럼프 대통령은 2017년 1월 27일 이민과 관련한 그의 행정명령("국가 보호를 위한 테러분자들의 미국 입국금지")을 발효했지만 곧 연방판사 제임스 로발트(James Robart)에 의해 중단되었다. 2017년 3월 6일 트럼프는 보완된 새 행정 명령을 통해 여섯 개 무슬림 국가들(이란, 리비아, 시리아, 예멘, 소말리아, 수단) 시민의 미국 입국을 90일간 금지 했다. 트럼프 대통령의 이민과 관련한 다른 행정 명령에는 논란의 여지가 있는 계획들, 즉 멕시코와의 국경지대에 거대한 벽 건설, 더 많은 불법 이민자들 추방, 이민자 보호 도시들에 대한 탄압과 같은 것들이 포함되었다. DACA(어려서 미국에 입국한 이들에 대한 예외조항) 프로그램의 법적 지위에 대한 정치적 논란은 2018년 초 미국에서 가장 최근에 불거진 위기이기도 하다. 이 논문의 목적은 기독교와 불교 간의 종교 간 대화와 협력을 통해 어떻게 이민자들을 도울 수 있는 정치적 연대를 도모할 수 있는지 연구하며 이 종교 간의 연대작업을 저자는 "생활세계 정치"(lifeworld politics)라 지칭한다. 저자는 이 논문에서 기독교와 불교의 공동체들이 용서의 모델에 근거한 환대의 정신에 근거한 타자들과의 연대를 통해 당면한 이민의 위기를 극복해야 한다고 주장한다. 생활세계

정치(lifeworld politics) 의 구체적인 목표는 오랫동안 이민 개혁을 기다리고 있는 사람들에게 환대 정신으로 종교간 지원을 제공하는 것이다.

키워드: 환대, 선물, 용서, 이민 위기, 기독교, 불교, 불법이민, 생활세계 정치

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