

THURSDAY, MARCH 6

All these things my hand has made, and so all these things are mine, says the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look, to the humble and contrite in spirit, who trembles at my word.

—Isaiah 66:2



Over and over in the Bible, God calls to the outsiders, those whom the community or the world has marginalized: Sarah, the barren elder woman, has a child, Isaac; Ruth, the foreigner, mothers the Davidic dynasty; Moses, the adopted Egyptian, encounters God while fleeing as a murderer and returns a guide and a leader. Christ Jesus walks with prostitutes, parties with tax collectors, and heals the blind and the lame.

For those who have been consistently ignored, marginalized and even forgotten by the world, the idea that God might choose the lowly to be heard, to be noticed, to be preferred is something that bursts into reality like a gift, a possibility for transformation. God does not choose the poor in order for them to remain quiescent in their secret preferred state. Scripture instead shows us that the Samaritans, the prostitutes, the exiled are called to act out God's love in faith in the world, and in so doing, become the leaders we all wait for.

In our programs at Episcopal Relief & Development, we seek to emulate our Lord by listening to those who are often marginalized in places around the world, and to honor the gifts they bring to the table, to build their own savings banks, to carry their own mosquito nets, to ensure that their own children are nurtured and fed. Some call this asset-based community development. We call it discipleship.

—Abigail Nelson