



## Signposts

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Rachel Yates

They do a thing in Idaho. It's really disconcerting. I'm not even sure it's legal. I'll admit that I've had to check the rule book on a few other things since I've been back. Yes, as it turns out, you can load the back of your pickup with people while driving around town. They don't recommend freeway speeds, but, your know, use your discretion.

So, I shouldn't be surprised about this other thing. Still, I find it unnerving. Let's say you're driving down a two-way residential street. If the house you want to visit is on the left-hand side of the road, you would normally park on the right-hand side and walk across the street to the house. You might even flip a u-turn, so you can nab a closer spot in front of the house. Here, there's a much more efficient way to get where you're going. People just cross the center lane facing the wrong direction and pull into a parking space on the left-hand side. When I drive down the average residential street, cars will be scattered on both sides of the road facing all directions.

Like I say, it's disconcerting. I navigate in part by the direction the cars are facing. When all the cars are facing me as I start to turn, I can quickly adjust to avoid going the wrong way on a one-way street. It even helps me know if the street is two-way or one-way. Now, all my trusted signals are disrupted. My navigation signposts are unreliable and disorienting.

In times of change, our usual way of navigating gets disrupted. "When the world is different than we expected, we become disoriented. When the tried-and-true solutions to our problems don't work, we get stuck. When we are faced with competing values that demand a decision which will inevitably lead to loss, we can get overwhelmed," writes Tod Bolsinger in *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* (p. 89). He draws on the history of Lewis and Clark searching for the Northwest Passage, a waterway to connect two oceans, and instead finding the Rocky Mountains, in which their canoes were largely useless.

In that moment when we realize our way of navigating has been upended, we have a choice. Our response can turn us back, or it can take us off the map to new discovery at the Spirit's leading. We've been navigating off the map for several years now. If we want to adapt to our changing landscape and not simply turn back, a key step is to claim our values...naming what is essential to who we are and why we do what we do. Sometimes we get so caught up in the "what we do" that we forget the "why." Reclaiming the "why" can free us up to imagine a new what, where, how, when, and with whom. We can leave our useless canoes behind. When our usual trusted signposts – often grounded on the whimsy of human behavior – no longer serve us well, we can choose to turn instead to the Source of Love for our "why" and a reminder of who we are and whose we are.

As for me, I've tried this new parking arrangement sporadically. It's safer, especially if I'm loading grandkids or dogs into the car. (I'm still not ready to put them in the back of the pickup!) I'm looking for other signals to guide my driving. I'm adapting. I pray that our ministries can do the same in uncharted territory.