

Dale Turner served as senior pastor at University Congregational Church in Seattle for nearly a quarter of a century. One of his calling cards when meeting folks was just that: handing out cards. The size of business cards, they had no contact information. Rather, each card offered some brief bit of wisdom from Dale. One that he gave to my wife read something like: *Every once in a while, you have to take your mind out and give it a good shake to get rid of the dust.*

Such a shaking of minds underlies the opening of the parable Jesus tells of a shepherd and a lost sheep. Which one of you, Jesus asks, would not leave ninety-nine sheep behind to go look for the one lost. I suspect an experienced shepherd in that audience might have thought: *Leave ninety-nine unguarded and at risk to go after one wanderer? Where is your mind at, Jesus?* Of course, that is Jesus' point in this parable and the one that follows, both told to a deeply divided crowd bound only by mutual hostility. A new mind is needed to heal the divide.

It is not coincidental that the Greek word for repentance in the New Testament literally means, *to have a new mind*. But what kind of new mind? Exodus 32 provides a clue. Moses had pleaded for God to not destroy Israel in the wilderness for their sin. And what is God's response? "And the LORD *changed his mind*" (verse 14). In Hebrew, that verb translated as "changed his mind" carries the meaning of having compassion or being moved by pity or sorrow for another.

Taking the Luke and Exodus stories together: Jesus seeks, and God embodies, a mind moved by and turned toward compassion. And if Dale's calling card was right, it may take an occasional shaking of our minds to get rid of the dust that clouds our view and practice of compassion!

For Reflection and Action:

*Where might you need compassion's re-minding:
about yourself; in your relationships with others; in your openness to God?*