

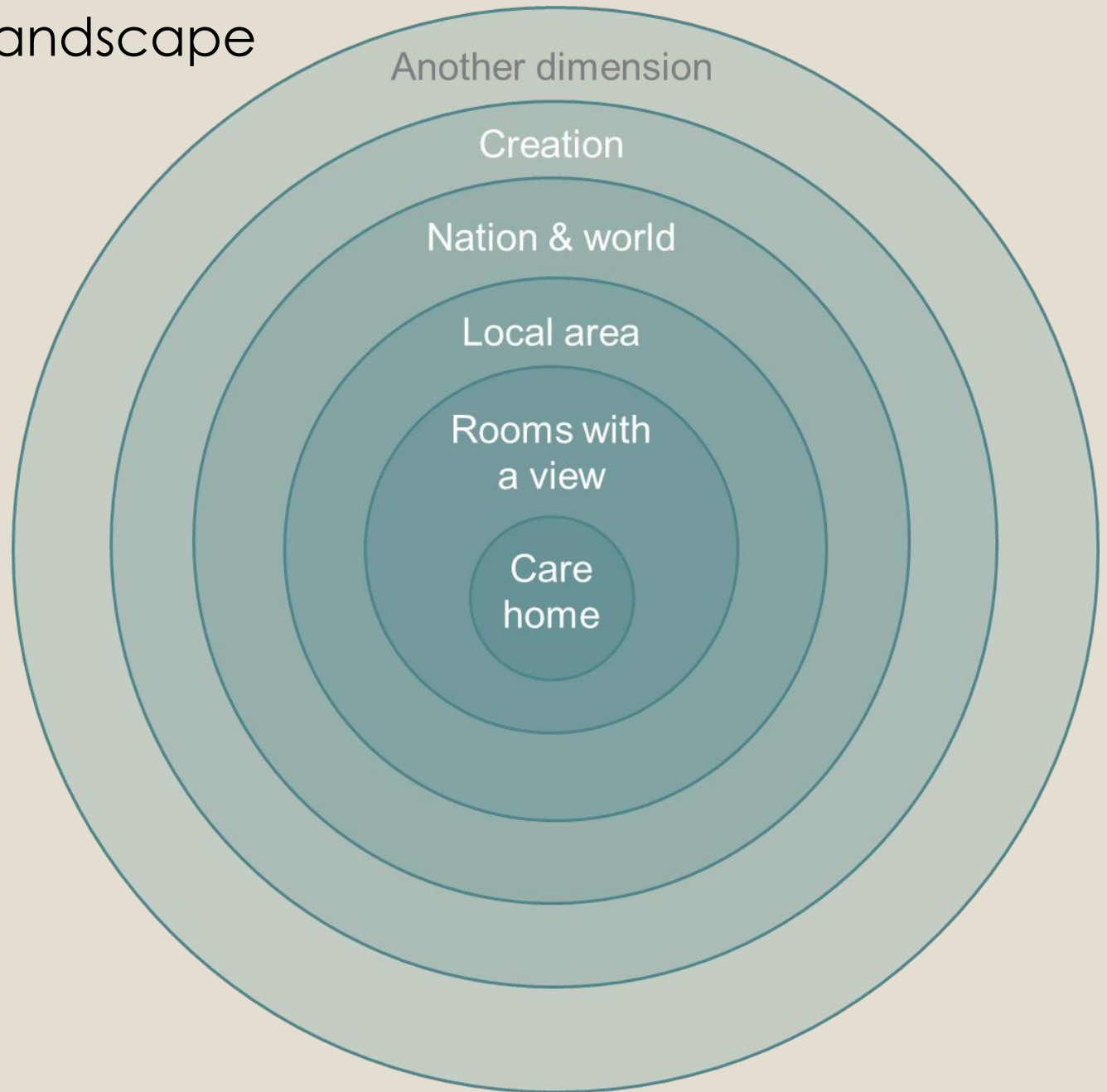
A dream of shalom:
community from the
perspective of older
people living in
residential care homes

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A community landscape



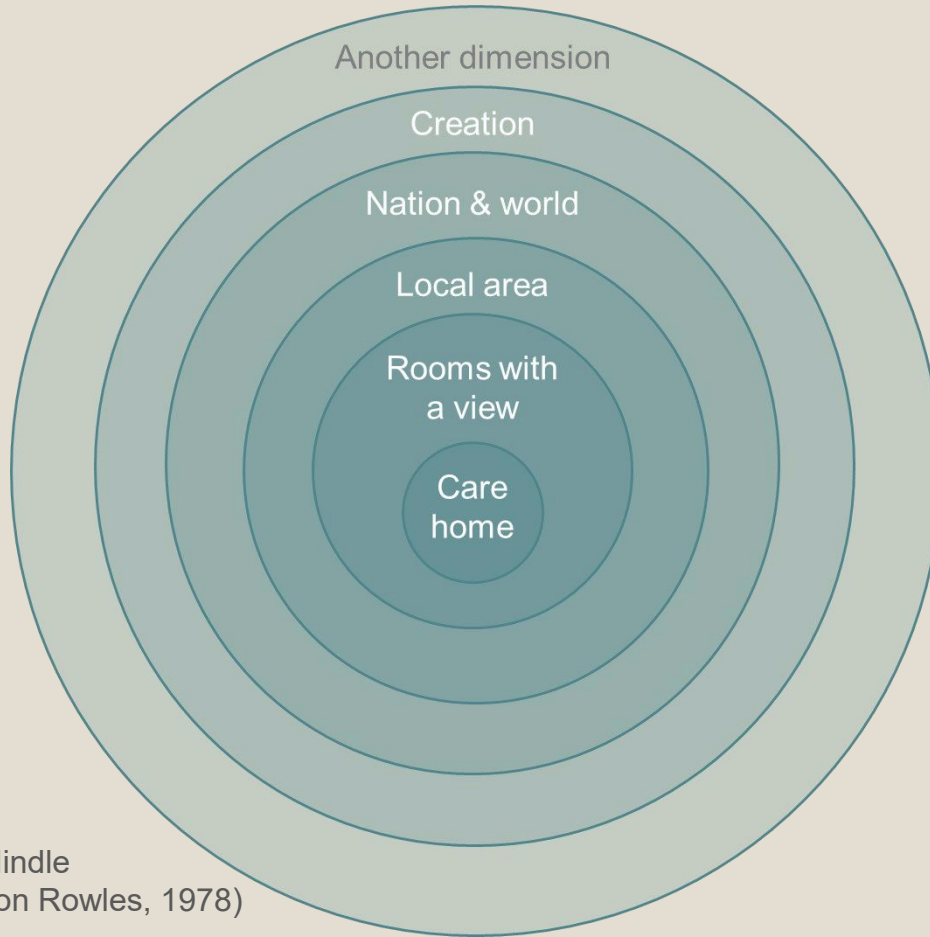
Shalom

- Shalom means “wholeness, completeness and well-being” and it affects “physical, mental and spiritual” aspects of life on an individual and a communal level (Wilkinson, 1980, p. 5).
- Shalom encompasses the whole of creation (Woodley, 2012, p. xix).
- Shalom is “in essence to do with the quality of a person’s life and quality of their relationships with God, with one another, and with the rest of creation” (Swinton, 2000, p. 58).

Swinton, J. (2000). *From Bedlam to Shalom: Towards a Practical Theology of Human Nature, Interpersonal Relationships and Mental Health Care*. New York, United States of America: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

- Wilkinson, J. (1980). *Health and Healing: Studies in New Testament Principles and Practice*. Edinburgh, United Kingdom: The Handsel Press Ltd.
- Woodley, R. S. (2012). *Shalom and the Community of Creation*. Michigan, United States of America: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

A community landscape and a dream of shalom



Helen Hindle
(based on Rowles, 1978)

Care homes: places of hospitality

- Reciprocal relationships with staff
- Giving and making a difference
- Being able to be both guest and host
- Making connections
- Activities
- Being known by name
- Mealtimes
- Being allowed solitude



Hospitable relationships:

- Are reciprocal
 - allow us to be both guest and host
 - value interdependence
- Reach out across boundaries
 - recognise kinship beyond blood ties
 - make friends with the stranger
- Call us by name
 - invite us to know others and to be known
- Permit solitude
 - and recognise when companionship is preferred.
- Invite all to the table



They may lead towards a sense of home, but this is not universally experienced.

Windows on the world: rooms with a view



Traffic Bus Stop
Carpark Flowers
Colours Church Birds
of Leaves Changing
seasons
Visitors
Staff Trees Squirrels

Other windows on the world

Letters Local church Local newspaper
Visitors Going out Friends National newspaper
Phone calls Cards
Care home outings Local nursery Family
Parish magazine school Neighbours

freedom

Windows on the world: towards a theology of liberation

“...through windows on the world, relationships may develop that provide liberation from those things that diminish our humanity.

Ensuring that older people living in care homes are able to belong to the wider community, are treated with honour and respect and are supported to flourish, not only liberates the older person, it liberates each one of us, and moves a community closer to shalom.

It is through loving, mutually-transformative relationships that communities are made whole.”

Hindle, H. (2023). Windows on the World: Towards a Theology of Liberation for Older People Living in Residential Care Homes. *Practical Theology*, 16(1), 6-19. doi:10.1080/1756073X.2022.2119661

Living in harmony with creation



Creation

The earth is our home.

God is present in creation and as we are drawn to the natural world, we meet God.

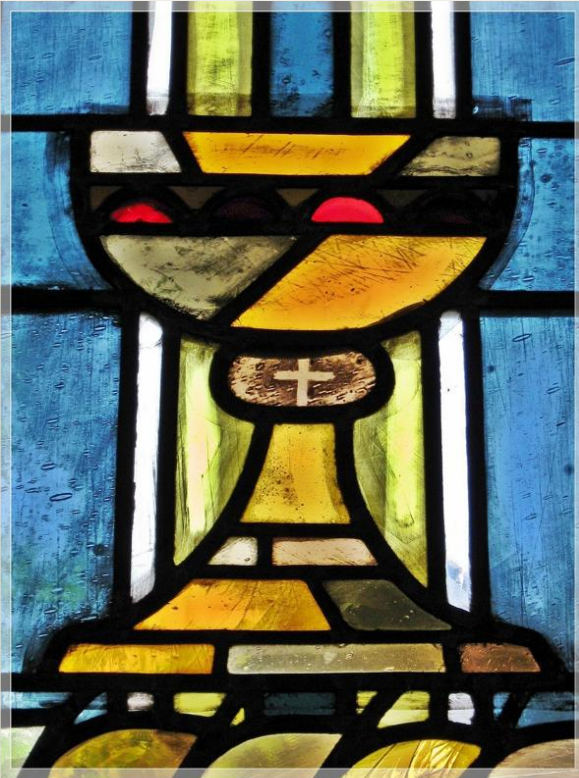
Responding to God's healing love as we meet God in creation has a positive impact on both our wellbeing and our relationship with each other and the whole of the natural world.

Being in right relation with creation includes valuing other life forms for their own sake.

Meeting God, being restored, growing in relationships through creation, and valuing creation for itself provides the basis for living in harmony. However, alongside this is the recognition that there is disharmony and oppression within the natural world.

Living in harmony with creation where we can involves respecting the different elements of creation, including each other.

Another dimension:
guided by wisdom into right relationship
with ourselves, each other, with God
and with the world around us



-
- health and wellbeing
 - interests and learning
 - faith, the past and preparing for end of life
-

Another dimension

Wisdom accompanies us within this spiritual dimension, drawing us into right relationship with ourselves, each other, the world around us and with God.

Wisdom stands in the liminal places and beckons us towards shalom.

Wisdom draws us towards wholeness when we are fragile.

Wisdom delights with us as we engage with the world around us.

Wisdom acknowledges the mystery of God, draws us closer to God and leads us into the way of life for the whole community.

Wisdom accompanies us as we explore the past, present and future, helping us to make sense of our lives, and reminding us of God's grace.

However, this is not only a personal experience. Wisdom dances with the whole community, drawing the whole community towards shalom.

Open access articles:

- Hindle, H. (2025) *Dancing with Wisdom Towards Shalom: What I Learned From Older People Living in Residential Care Homes*, Practical Theology DOI:10.1080/1756073X.2025.2471117
- Hindle, H. (2024) *Divine Hospitality and a Sense of Home? Theological Reflection Based on the Voices of Older People Living in Residential Care Homes*, Practical Theology, 17:4. 3370349 DOI:10.1080/1756073X.2024.2383032
- Hindle, H. (2023). *Windows on the World: Towards a Theology of Liberation for Older People Living in Residential Care Homes*, Practical Theology, 16:1, 6-19, DOI: 10.1080/1756073X.2022.2119661