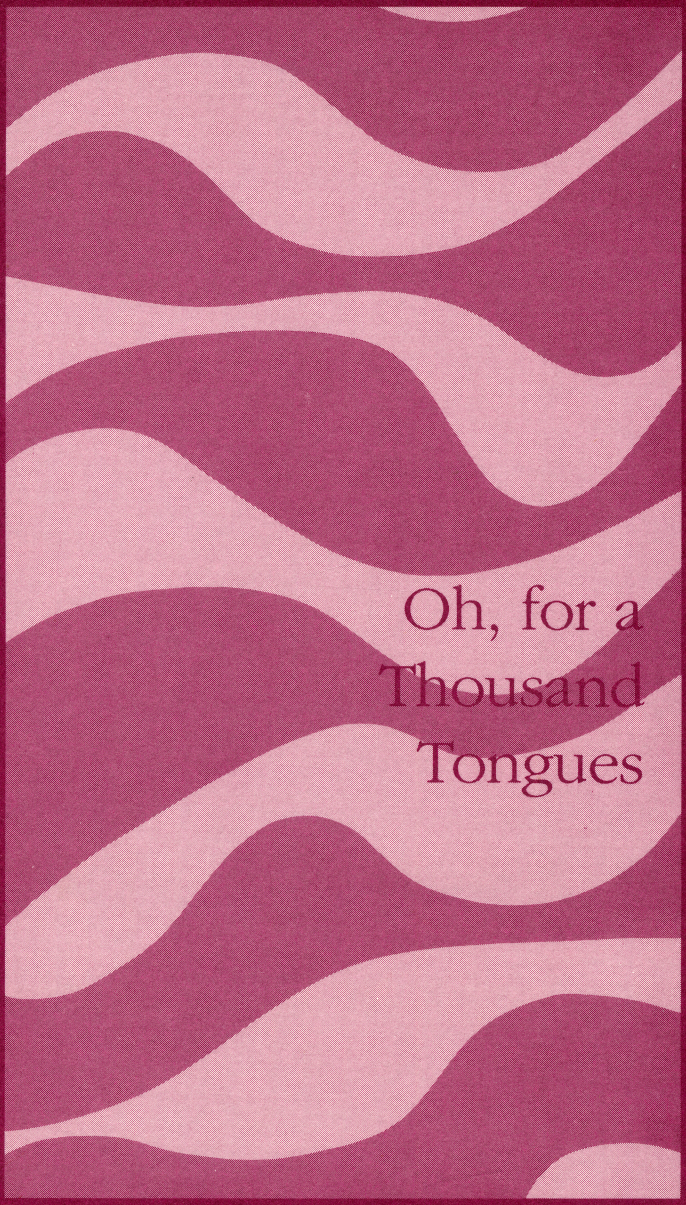
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CURRENTS

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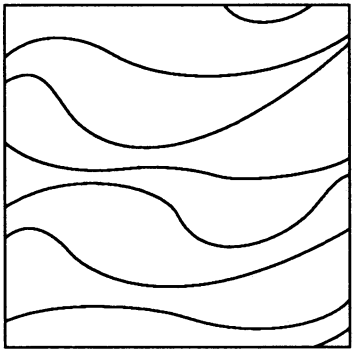
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The Day of Pentecost—Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Oh, for a Thousand Tongues

Two centuries ago, when Charles Wesley penned this memorable hymn, he was looking for 999 partners to add depth and volume to his own praise and witness. His metaphor taken literally is comic, almost grotesque—my fiendish mind imagines 1,000 animated, dancing tongues, with notes bouncing off into the sky. His metaphor is also really cross-cultural "Bible talk." "All day long my tongue will talk of your righteous help" (Ps 71:24); "My tongue will sing of your promise" (Ps 119:172). Back then tongues talked; today lips, mouths, and voices do.

Mark Bangert rings the changes on this hymn by hearing in the thousand tongues the music of a multicultural church, the risky, vulnerable process of learning to hear the world through the ears of another. Pentecost has set us free to be equals, to be guests and hosts, to give and to receive, and above all to hold on to our Lord Christ. Our musics represent and carry world views, political struggles, spiritual memory, and self-understanding. Nearly every aspect of a culture's music has some social significance and therefore is a doorway to knowing its people. This article was originally a keynote address for a conference at LSTC on music for a multicultural church.

Mellonnee Burnim, an ethno-musicologist, describes what makes Black music unique and what makes it religious. The development of the spiritual was an overt act of resistance to the subjugation imposed by Europeans. During slavery African-Americans claimed autonomy in spite of the system and claimed a unique musical identity. The heterophonic and polyrhythmic aesthetic principles of their music were rooted in the African past. She traces African-American church music through a number of phases: the folk spiritual, the arranged spiritual, and Gospel music, and she names its patron saints: Charles Albert Tinley, Thomas

Dorsey, and Mahalia Jackson. The church now has the opportunity to move beyond exploitation of Black music and beyond cultural domination to a true spirit of cultural sharing.

Victor Gebauer believes that it is God's gift of music—not music as human achievement—that may help our worship to become multicultural. Our appreciation of the other may also take on a different form if we explore more fully our common roots in the same Word of Jesus Christ. "Contrafaction" was a technique used by the Reformers to draw secular or even heretical music into the praise of God through transformation. By extensive cultivation of another person's musical experience, contrafaction can again take place. The new experience eventually becomes the vernacular for us. With eyes opened by grace we can understand each other's music as a gift just like our own gift of music.

Robert L. Brawley reflects on the perils of biblical interpretation across cultural lines. The Spirit sometimes graciously unscrambles our interpretations so that the saints hear according to the true will of God—regardless of what we say. Our exegesis ultimately gives way to the God who hears our sighs; God saves us from radical senselessness. What we do in interpreting the Bible ultimately yields to the God who hears our sighs. We seek a voice that resonates with others, not a voice that will silence all others. Hebrews might seem supercessionist if it is not kept in dialogue with Psalm 8, the voice of Genesis 1, and God's promise to Sarah and Abraham. Like harmonious voices in the scriptures, we seek a voice of interpretation that resonates with other voices.

Jay C. Rochelle describes Bonhoeffer's discovery that a strictly historical reading of scripture is not enough. He learned that scripture must become an authority over against the reader so that the incarnational miracle of Christ's birth can continue in the one who hears the Word. What the Word brings into being is the community, and where Word and community converge arises spirituality. Spirituality is the lived experience of the faith—the meaning of God in Christ, mediated through the Holy Spirit, and known in the community of faith. Our solitude is enabled by being members of a community. Christians do not brandish their faith, but they allow their lives to be informed by prayer, worship, and the cycle of the church year. This disciplined life is expressed by "righteous action" in the world.

Herbert Anderson urges us to stay in the darkness of Good Friday long enough to plumb its full meaning. When God is working silently under cover of darkness, when God is silent in the face of suffering, it takes a great leap of faith to believe that what God is doing is on our behalf. We are able to wait in the darkness because we know how the story ends. Even in the darkness, we know that the light of Christ is up ahead.

Fredrick C. Holmgren notes that some of the church fathers took Israel's prophetic critique so seriously that they ascribed exceptional wickedness to post-biblical Judaism. As a matter of fact, however, probably no nation was as sensitive to matters of justice as was Israel, and the Israelites preserved the severe criticisms of their own society and read them as the word of God. The acceptance of Jonah in the canon reminds us that there are people who are capable of listening attentively to the divine voice even when it speaks sharp, accusing words regarding wrongs that have been done. Such people also respond to God with exceptional repentance.

In recent months I have been telling everyone who will listen that a central task of the next generation of church leaders will be to "gather the faithful." Seminary trained me to "manage" a congregation and to care for an ongoing Christian community. Pastors in the next millennium will have to call back those who have drifted away, to tell the good news to those who have never heard it, or who have misheard it as the good news was distorted through small-mindedness or cultural imperialism.

We need partners—other tongues—in this great re-evangelization of the world. And we need the assistance of that gracious Master and our God if we are to spread through all the earth abroad the honors of the Name.

God, help us all!

Joyfully,

Ralph W. Klein
Editor

A Thousand Tongues: Babel or Pentecost

Mark P. Bangert
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Opening address at the Conference on Church Music in a Multicultural Church Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago October 13-17, 1991

"We are here to pray and think about love in connection with both our cultural diversity and the music that serves liturgical celebration."[1] With these words, respected Roman Catholic commentator Robert Hovda entreated church musicians a few months ago as they gathered to seek out new definitions of their callings. Our purpose for gathering these days has similar foundations. The hymn we have just sung invited us to yearn for a "thousand tongues," though we are aware that a thousand tongues means more than volume, perhaps a summons to attend to the evangelizing of the world. In a larger sense, a "thousand tongues" calls us to that profound biblically inspired vision of a thousand cultures gathered around the throne of grace—singing.

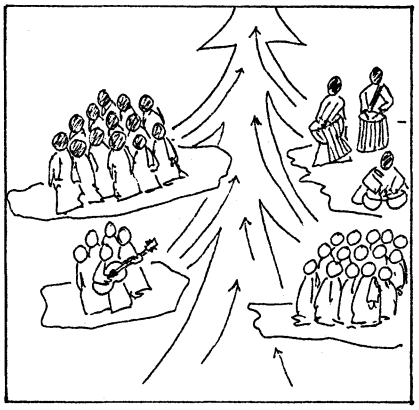
That vision, I suspect, is what brought you here. It's a vision clouded at times by apprehension, uncertainty, ignorance, even suspicion, but a vision we know ultimately to be bright and right. It is my happy task to provide a "key" in which all of our "tunes" for the next few days might be played and sung. I propose that the multicultural church conducts us with dispatch from Babel to Pentecost. So we will focus first on church music, then multicultural, and finally church.

Church music

There is much that unites us, but surely high on the list is our common dedication to church music. Music in, by, and for the people of God everywhere we recognize as a sign of the church, and more than that, as a powerful means by which the people of God apprehend the presence of Christ in their midst. To hail Jesus as "new song" is more than metaphor for us. We are agreed that the energy behind all church music is the music of the people, the song of the gathered—hymnody in the classic sense.

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[1] Robert Hovda, "The Amen Corner," *Worship* 63/5 (September-October 1991), 457.



Derivative music is supportive but not central. At the core of all church music stands that individual in whom Christ again is incarnated, singing with Spirit and voice God has given. We know that such a one is an endangered species.[2]

From many places and stations we have come here; we are Africans, African Americans, Hispanics, and Anglo-American/Americans. But that is only the beginning, for we are members of subcultures as well, Swedes and Germans, Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, Meru and Haya. As a gathering we are a miracle. But we are also, all of us, Babel-ers. You remember the Genesis story, how proud people tried to storm the habitations of God by building a tower that reached into the clouds, and how God dispersed them across the earth confused and separated from one another because of their diverse tongues. Before Babel, one language and few words; after Babel, a thousand tongues—we might say—and very few words understood at all.

From that dispersion we have come, survivors of the storming of heaven, bearing the scars of confusion and of incomprehensible tongues, Babel-ing and babbling to one another, at least so it seems. Let the Babel analogy further carry your imagination. It's not only languages that keep us confused and separated; musical repertories and their intricate systems of meaning also prevent our deep understanding and embrace of one another. Each of us lives in a different shadow of the musical tower of Babel.

Some of us know *that* there are other musics but have little contact and feeling for them. Some know these musics but feel unmoved by them or even estranged from them. Some seek more understanding, feel drawn to what is imperfectly known, but are nevertheless hesitant to leave the comforts of their own musical hearth where even seeming unintelligible utterances are perfectly understood. Others are already familiar in a new home and seek exploration of its walls of new sounds and its floor of new rhythms. And still others are comfortably at home in two or more dwellings.

Yet, the confusion of musical tongues remains for all of us, even for those fully at home in another tongue. For there are 998 more to go! However, we are hearty people in Jesus Christ. If Babel-ing is what we deplore, then this conference holds as its goal the progress of each participant's journey to another's musical home. Short of that, we remain deprived individuals in the shadows of the tower. One cannot ignore how much the quota approach has done for church music and for more inclusive worship. But a Hispanic song here, a spiritual there, and an African tune somewhere else will not save us from Babel-ing, nor will it, I suspect, really assist the task of evangelism, the spoken or unspoken reason for such variety. We are short of the goal if we

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[2] See Thomas Day, *Why Catholics Can't Sing* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 5 passim.

seek from the songs of God's people nothing more than exotic spectacles. With this conference we have declined the invitation to join the ranks of those in this country who are "into Gospel" because of the astounding display of "vocal prowess and communal celebration."[3] Church music, let us agree, is much more than cultural voyeurism or the compiling of clever inclusive repertories designed to impress ourselves about how we are no longer strangers to one another.

Instead, we seek humbly, graciously, and faithfully to be in the musical home of another in order that we might know and feel the new song of Jesus Christ in that person. For you see, it is not the song so much we seek as the singer, for in the singer we get to know our Lord.

Together we are all of us Babel-ers, one way or another. We desire to overcome our confusion of tongues and to do that by seeking the new Song, our Lord Jesus Christ, in a sister and brother whose differences have already been transcended by that Lord.

Multicultural

Chicago is a multicultural city but with few multicultural people. Years ago visionaries described this great city as a prime example of our "melting pot" nation, though what melts most often, as we city dwellers know, is the city itself—aflame from the heat generated by racial tension. The term "multicultural" may be a new euphemism, but it can also be a word of promise, designating a necessary change in attitude regarding how we live in an obviously shrinking world. We are being summoned to make such changes. In a recent issue of the *New York Times*, book reviewer Catherine Simpson from Rutgers University notes that multiculturalism is a big word at the presses, particularly at University presses. Pointing to a flood of books on minority studies such as women's issues and fast growing gay and lesbian issues, she concludes: "university presses are looking to the year 2000 when white Americans will be a majority minority."[4] If you want to be in tune with the mood of the country, the message seems to be, you had better know the songs of its growing cultures.

To some people this is threatening. In an open letter to the new German-born and European-trained director of the New York Philharmonic, critic Edward Rothstein warned Kurt Masur that there will be those who will demand multicultural programming for the orchestra—a demand Rothstein finds unimaginable. Yet he bemoans the crisis of the central European musical tradition. He sees the need for orchestras to take the lead in breaking down "the racial stratification that exists in New York concert halls."[5] But he proposes as means for that task the dissemination of great art music. While one might congratulate Rothstein for his missionary zeal, he seems imprisoned by high brow cultural imperialism which has little space for multicultural expression.

People, organizations, and lobbying groups enter the multicultural arena at varying points with a multitude of agendas. Babel too was multicultural since those dispersed knew that their confusion was centered in the multiplicity of cultures. Visions of a "thousand tongues," however,

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[3] Martin Johnson, "And the Sounds of Gospel Are Heard in the Land," *New York Times*, 22 September 1991, sec. H, p. 32.

[4] Catherine Simpson, "Multiculturalism: A Big Word at the Presses," *New York Times*, 22 September 1991, book review, sec. 7, pp. 1, 28, 29.

[5] Edward Rothstein, "To Masur, Welcome—And Advice," *New York Times*, 1 September 1991, sec. H, p. 15.

lead one to more lively understandings of what multicultural means. For us it opens up the challenge to invite one another into our musical worlds with the hope that in so doing we reflect the intent of God. By necessity our agenda at this conference includes other challenges as well.

Cross-cultural living is the risky, vulnerable process of learning to hear the world through the ears of another.

First, as musicians whose God-given and self-claimed calling is to generate and sustain the song of the people, we are compelled to nurture in whatever way we can the music of another's culture. Insight and challenges from one musical monoculture can and will tease another into new dimensions.

For instance, a conference such as this nudges me, an admitted neophyte in a multicultural church, both to search for what is American about Anglo-American church music, and to discover how Anglo-Americans lost soul and heart in their church music along the way from sixteenth-century Europe to the present time. Please help!

Africans may need help—if I may be so bold—to sustain and probe the traditions which are *theirs* and not those of their European and American forebears in the faith. How can we all help?

African-Americans perhaps need that support which will assist them to find inspiration both in protest—because of their victimization—as well as in the energies which emanate from a community gathered around bread and wine, the meal of freedom. Do we need to help?

Hispanics may have no greater need than to find able translators who can make the repertory available to non-Spanish speaking peoples. How can we help?

Then there is an agenda which can generate another conference entirely: helping Christians of Asia to embrace their musics as the song which is new in Jesus Christ.

Nurturing monocultures propels us to ever-widening orbits. Cross-cultural living is the risky, vulnerable process of learning to hear the world through the ears of another. Ethnomusicologists and missionaries will tell you how difficult that is. John Chernoff has written how he sought to study and master West African drumming during a six month period in Africa and stayed, instead, for three years in order to achieve just part of his goals.[6] Cross-cultural living is the art of being a guest in order to learn the ways of the new home. In the jargon of ethnomusicology, that guesting posture is described as the *emic* mode (learning from the inside), to be contrasted with the so-called *etic* mode (unpassioned investigation from the outside).[7] Most successful cross-cultural interaction occurs through a mixture of these two approaches. It should be clear that we have taken on the emic mode here because you have come to learn

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[6] John Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 1-23.

[7] See Mark Bangert, "Black Gospel and Spirituals: A Primer," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 16:3 (June 1989), 173-74.

these musics inside out. But there is another reason for the plan of this week's event. Our vision quite simply draws us to know the Christ in the other. Lest you think that will be easy, hear the experts.

Encountering a new culture produces culture shock, they say, together with disorientation, emotional dislocation, heightened insecurity, mild paranoia, extreme reserve, and fault-finding.[8] You can expect what is called the "noise factor," or information you are unable to process according to your accustomed means. Be on the alert for all of that, and let us pledge to assist one another! Further, the realists in endeavors such as this warn that cross-cultural contact is likely to create disharmony. In other words, you will know the vision is operative when you momentarily lose the key or the tune.

No doubt most of us will attain some measure of actual cross-cultural achievement during these days. Some may even reach a multicultural experience, though the possibilities for that are statistically prohibitive even among self-assured, stable individuals. Let us not waver, however, since that's the stuff from which the Spirit is molding her new creation.

Monocultural nurture, cross-cultural interchange, multicultural living together suggest one final possibility for those whose calling it is to shape and lead the people's worship in a multicultural church. In the long view of things and at the present rate of change, Christians might look for a time when they will worship and sing transculturally, that is, in a mode and with elements free of the many cultures we represent. With a degree of seriousness, some traditionalists advance the Latin Mass for such an assignment. A more realistic approach would take into account successful examples of merged cultural loans—jazz, for instance. Dreamers or not, adherents to this outlook massage our visionary mechanisms to considering at least the possibility of a trans-cultural liturgy and music. Yet, liturgies of the people and songs of the people are not simply dreamed into existence. Much less can they be mandated, so for the moment we may be left only with a tantalizing possibility.

Church

The text for us is the Christ-song of the people. Context consists most immediately in the Lutheran School of Theology, itself a multicultural community, at times cross-cultural, proof of which radiates from the pain, struggles, *and* joy we faithfully experience. But the wider context is church, the whole company of baptized believers. Each time we gather as two or three in the name of Christ our experience of church expands, matures, and increases our desire for still more of the same. But all of that—grand sometimes as it is—only faintly mirrors the vision from the end time. In Isaiah 66, the view of Zion's future originates in the very words of Yahweh:

> For I know their works and their thought, and I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory, and I will set a sign among them. (Isa 66:18-19)

Carrying on that tradition, the writer of Revelation exalts:

> And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to

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[8] David S. Hooper, "Intercultural Communication Concepts and the Psychology of Intercultural Experience," *Multicultural Education: A Cross Cultural Training Approach*, ed. Margaret Pusch (New York, 1979), 23.

> open its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom people for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God.
>
> (Rev 5:9-10)

Vision changes to reality at Pentecost. Tongues of fire provided a kind of glossalalia by which every person could understand. Confusion ceased. Babel was reversed as was Babel-ing and babbling. That took divine intervention, and its purpose was to lift up the Christ from the midst of all peoples. In ways individual and distinct divine intervention is what also brought us here—"This is our story, this is our song."

Before we get carried away, however, tempted to build tents (without carpet) on the mount of Black Gospel, *estribillos* (Hispanic refrains), and *ngomas* (African drums), the energies and potentials of Pentecost thrust themselves into our midst with two useful cautions.

First, the joy of church music in a multicultural church comes not from the fear of being left behind in a shrinking globe, nor from some external *compulsion* to take on reluctantly the tuneful habits of others. Joy in this vocation derives from unexpected gifts. Parthians, Medes, Pamphylians, Libyans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Poles, Swedes, Germans, Yoruba, and Haya are creatures in whom Christ has come to dwell. We welcome him, we welcome them. They bring to us, rather we bring to each other, distinct gifts which, should we pay attention, are gifts of our Lord himself. A people's song is such a gift.

The giving and receiving of gifts is complex and pan-cultural. In a book designed for novice missionaries, Anthony Gittins notes that gifts are incarnations of "patterned behavior embodying clear moral values."[9] A gift, he continues, is usually encoded in some way and is intended to stand for something quite more than what is apparent; further, a gift is an extension of its donor and invites if not demands a relationship between its giver and receiver. Two or more individuals are essential for there to be a gift. Pointedly he observes that unless we give we cannot be received, and that giving *and* receiving are obligations of both parties for there to be a true gift. Among Christians such giving and receiving is intensified by the Christ within.

During these days we are being invited to give and receive what is most near and dear about one another, the music by which we identify our self as self. Let me be the first to say that my head and my faith affirm that process but my heart and my body sometimes are recalcitrant sluggards responding only slowly to the Spirit's urgings to receive and give. Yet, I know there are great gifts out there ready to be given and received. I know, because I went to Africa and there met my Lord!

The first reality of the plain (after the Transfiguration), then, compels us to give *and* receive. Putting those social graces to work will yield unimaginable church musical wealth, through that's not the reason we are here. Wealth of song, wealth of such song, I am convinced, will one day be lauded, like divine intervention, as life-giving for an otherwise tired old enterprise of American church music, though neither is the reason why we are giving and receiving. Giving and receiving, quite simply, is ours to do because we are to welcome one another in Christ.

The second reality of the plain is that receiving the gift of another, or being a guest in another's culture, can lead—should one be serious about gift giving and receiv-

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[9] Anthony Gittins, *Gifts and Strangers* (New York: Paulist, 1989), 85-93 passim.

ing—to quite profound and complicated interchanges. Of course, Anglo-Hispanics and African-Americans can sing the popular South African song, "Freedom is Coming," and receive it according to whatever canons govern their own music. Our Christian disciplines of hospitality, however, press us to get closer to the music, its singers, their faith, their lives, and their hopes. And that's how it gets complicated.

Our musics, even our church musics, all have social significance. They represent and carry world views, political struggles, spiritual memory, and self-understanding. What has been said about language is surely true also of music: "Every language [read: music] and every well-knit sub-language incorporates certain points of view and certain patterned resistance to widely divergent points of view. [Therefore] the musical worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not the same world with different levels attached."[10] Receiving a new song, then, is complicated by radical systemic differences which are not immediately and easily understood or assimilated by someone from another culture.

Further, it is not always easy to gain right-of-way to a full understanding of a repertoire and/or its nuances. Indulge me an example from my own culture. Martin Luther's hymn, "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come," is sung with short eighth notes that commence three of its four phrases. "Pick-ups," you could call them, or upbeats. But the thoroughgoing German recognizes them as "hüpfen," musical remnants of little kicks which characterize some folk dances. True, folk dances are not part of my current musical life, but polkas and I have known each other, and they are the latest bearers of such core cultural memories. Ethnomusicologist Philip Bohlmann observes that core musical material may often be protected from immediate access,[11]

Receiving another's musical gifts is complicated by the deep social meanings inherent in a musical system.

whereas music at the boundaries of a culture is the first to be given and received. Our access to the core may be blocked for a time. We may never be given that song which Joas Kijugo, our visiting church musician from Africa, sings to his children when they are perilously ill, but should we be so fortunate we would graciously receive it as a gift from the very heart of his familial culture. It may take a long time to be given access to that dear space.

Finally, receiving another's musical gifts is complicated by the deep social meanings inherent in a musical system. The search for the encompassing "why" of all music currently centers in the intricate energies which move the sociological substructures of those who make it.[12] Interpreted and briefly stated for our purposes, this line

[10] An edited quote from Edward Sapir in Anthony Gittins, *Gifts and Strangers*, 77.

[11] Philip V. Bohlmann, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 59ff.

[12] Students of ritual will recognize similarities to the proposals of Claude Levi Strauss in *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Anchor Books, 1958), and in other works.

Pentecost has set us free to be equals, to be guests and hosts, to give and to receive, and above all to hold on to our Lord Christ.

of investigation invites us seriously to consider song or worship as means for the regular unveiling of how individuals in a culture or society can and should relate.

In a more recent and challenging study of popular music, John Shepherd provides us with mechanisms which can assist our best and most profound reception of musical gifts. He shows how the organization of musical structures is a correlate of the social reality that is symbolically mediated through the music of a society.[13] For instance, tonal centers and the hierarchy of pitches within a scale he finds to be symptomatic of a hierarchy in society itself, and of the accepted need for authority and strong leadership. Directions of melodies, whether up or down primarily, may signal music's origins and purpose for people. How a song was created and its changing style of performance (improvised harmony or none at all) may reflect actual ownership of the song. Whether or not accompaniment is specified, or a song's place in the ritual, may indicate function and the place of individuals in the hierarchy of ritual participants. In sum, Shepherd offers evidence to show how nearly every aspect of a culture's music has some social significance and therefore is a doorway to knowing its people. Gaining access depends on complicated and well-learned encoding procedures which extend and deepen our mutual giving and receiving.

Complications are challenges, not deterrents. The vision before us, or should we say the song being sung from the future, invites, yes, compels us to lend our voices, and to give and to receive with a readiness for discovery and with an anticipation for profound insights. In spite of our Babeling—which no doubt will be recognizable all along—Pentecost has set us free to be equals, to be guests and hosts, to give and to receive, and above all to hold on to our Lord Christ, about whom Martin Luther wrote:

> For God has cheered our hearts and minds through his dear Son, whom God gave for us to redeem us from sin, death, and the devil. The one who believes this earnestly cannot be quiet about it, but must gladly and willingly sing and speak about it so that others also may come and hear it.[14]

Let us, then, suspend all quietness.

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[13] John Shepherd, *Music as Social Text* (Cambridge, 1991), 102.

[14] Martin Luther, "Preface to the Babst Hymnal 1545," *Liturgy and Hymns, Luther's Works* 53 (American Edition, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965): 333.

The Nature of African American Music: A Chronology

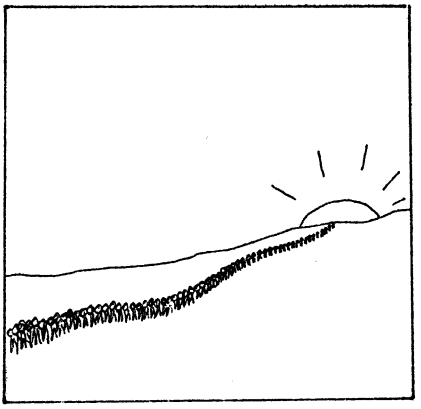
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I am honored to be able to share with you some of the insights I have gained over the years as a teacher, a researcher, and performer of Black music. I was asked to provide a history of Black music, with specific observations about "what makes this repertoire unique and notable." Certainly the discussion of Black religious music is an essential component in an assembly organized to explore the cultural mosaic that characterizes music on the American landscape. But more than likely in the minds of many of you, there are other questions lurking behind the discussion of the history and development of Black music. Just what is it, anyway? Is there really something that distinguishes this body of music which results from the unique cultural heritage of its creators? Even more to the point, since the music of the Black church is similar to many forms of Black secular music, just what, if anything, makes it religious?

These questions are not new. They are nonetheless as poignant and as critical to meaningful cross-cultural musical communication today as they were in the 18th century when the earliest forms of Black religious music evolved in this country. In the ensuing discussion, I will explore these questions, but I warn you: the answers will be neither simple nor finite. A penetrating analysis of Black religious music requires an exploration into the cultural consciousness, the ideological thrust, and the religious prism which informed the actions and attitudes of Black people in the United States since their arrival in this country. The story is both interesting and informative—and for me, at least, exciting and liberating. This is a story of a people engaged in a continual process of self-determination, a process conceived from within but forged by the forces from without.

The earliest form of Black religious



music to develop in the United States was what is commonly referred to as a "folk spiritual." The designation "folk" is necessary to distinguish this 18th century creation from that of the "arranged spiritual" or "concert version" which emerged following the Civil War. The folk spiritual was an outgrowth of slavery. It was a uniquely African response to an institution which waged a systematic, though unsuccessful, onslaught on the cultural legacy of Black people in America. When introduced to Christianity, African slaves reinterpreted the religious instruction through an African cultural lens. From a socio-cultural perspective, the development of the spiritual can actually be considered an overt act of resistance to the subjugation imposed by the Europeans.

Consequently, the Negro folk spiritual symbolized Black cultural identity and Black religious expression as it evolved on North American soil. The spiritual emerged in both the North and the South as a genre distinctively different from music which characterized Euro-American musical practice of the period. In both contexts, the critical factor allowing Blacks to articulate and advance a unique musical identity was that of autonomy. In the South the invisible church was a spawning ground. Whether in the gully, the field, or in their living quarters, African American slaves fiercely guarded their privacy, not merely out of fear of reprisal, but out of their collective desire to express themselves in a way that was uniquely meaningful to them.

The following testimony from ex-slave Lucretia Alexandra shows how Blacks often merely tolerated White religious leaders, preferring instead to conduct worship in their own time, in their own way. Now this, of course, is from a slave narrative, so it's in dialect. Don't be disturbed by the language or whether or not the subjects and verbs agree. Don't get hung up in that at all. This is Lucretia speaking here:

> The preacher came and he just say "serve your masters!" "Don't steal your master's turkey; don't steal your master's hogs; don't steal your master's meat. Do whatsoever your master tells you to do"; same old thing all the time. My father would have church in dwellin' houses and they had to whisper. Sometimes they would have church at this house. That would be when they wanted a real meetin' with some real preachin.' They used to sing that song in whisper and pray in whisper. There was a prayer meetin' from house to house once or twice a week.

And what were these "real meetin's" like? The elements of worship were closely akin to those of contemporary Black worship. There was prayer, communal singing, testifying, and sometimes, but not always, preaching. One of the most striking aspects of the worship was evident in the manner in which these elements were expressed. Prayer was described as extemporaneous, not read, typically moving from speech to song. Congregational participation in the form of verbal affirmations were not only

accepted but expected and highly valued. (So that's why if you want to say "Amen" tonight, as I heard my brother say "all right," I like that. It doesn't disturb me in the least, so feel free to do so!) Singing involved everyone present and was accompanied by hand clapping, body movement, and, if the spirit was particularly high, shouting and religious dance, both of which were peak forms of expressive behavior.

The following account by Sarah Fitzpatrick, an Alabama slave, reiterates the worship independent of Whites and illustrates the expressive freedom which Blacks often found in doing so. Again, don't be bothered by the language.

> Niggers want to commence to go to church by theyselves even if they had to meet in the White church. So White folks have their service in the morning and Niggers have theirs in the evening after they clean up, wash the dishes, and look after everything. You see, Black folks like to shout a whole lot and with the White folks all around them, they couldn't shout just like they wanted to.

Ecstatic worship, in which participants expressed themselves through shouting, was commonplace in the invisible church. And it was the invisible church because it did not matter what the setting was. It didn't have to be a beautiful cathedral; it didn't even have to be a place that had four walls. Church was defined by the coming together of the communion of saints, as we would say in contemporary language. So wherever there was a coming together of two or three with the intent of sharing their belief in Jesus Christ as the overcoming spirit, as the one who would deliver them, that was church. It didn't matter where they were. And in many cases slaves actually had to steal away—as in the song "Steal Away"—in order to have the opportunity to express themselves in a way they wanted to.

When they had church, and spirits became particularly high, sometimes services lasted far into the night, the length being determined only by the collective energy which fueled the group.

The following musical example was recorded in the Georgia Sea Islands during the 1960s, but it is representative of the kind of song that was probably sung during the 1700s. This is a folk spiritual. [Recording is played.]

Okay, what do you think you heard there at the end? How would you describe that piece if you had to tell somebody, "She played this strange song." What would you tell them that characterized it? Can you tell me one thing?

[Response from audience:] "I felt like I was hearing drums."

[Mellonnee:] It sounded like drums. How many of you think you heard drums? [Affirmative audience responses are given freely.]

[Mellonnee:] A capella. No drums. Hands and feet, absolutely. No instruments. There were laws written against the use of instruments in many of the North American colonies, but that did not stop the principle of percussive accompaniment in the performance of music created on North American soil. Instead, Blacks used the resources they had. So the hands and the feet became the substitute for the drums.

And in my research, going into Pentecostal churches, I found the very same thing when I went into little storefront types of churches. Where in other places you would have hymnals in the little holes behind the pews, there they had tambourines. You're talking about people who could *play tambourines!* Half of the instruments didn't have the jingles on them anymore; instead, they used the skin and played very complex rhythmic patterns on them. And then they also used the percussive sound of the jingles

on the side of the tambourine. So it's like using the resources, whatever is available, to create the sound that is desired for the music. This particular type of folk spiritual that I played for you in this example was a ring shout. There are certain characteristics in this that characterize a folk spiritual in general. I'll tell you about those first.

As you can imagine, missionaries who had introduced Christianity to Black folks in the United States weren't too excited about this...

First, it was communally composed. I've worked with all of you now, so you know what that means; it is not written down, but develops in the form of call-response. You heard the leader whose line was changing or improvised, yet the chorus part, we could sing it right now and you could all start in with: [sung] "We gonna have a time, a good time, a good time." I'm not going to sing it now so I can get through this paper tonight. The transmission process was oral. The text was syllabic, one pitch for one syllable. It was highly repetitious. You heard the text repeated over and over and allowed everyone who was present to participate. It was heterophonic. You heard a single melody, but you heard simultaneous interpretations of that melody. Changes occurred at the beginning and at the ending; so you heard what sounded like harmony, but that was intermittent harmony, so it's in heterophony.

You also heard staggered entrances in terms of the treatment of time. That is, first the lead singer started, then the chorus came in, then the hand clapping, and it wasn't until all of those pieces had come together that the dance was incorporated in the song toward the end. Staggered entrances; everything does not start at the same time, but there is a layering of the various components of the song just as we have sung it in contemporary religious music expression.

Next, it was polyrhythmic. You heard the different rhythms and the different portions or segments that were represented in the piece, with expandable units of time. This is another example of a song that could go on indefinitely. This was one of the songs that could be sung far into the night, until people were tired of singing it. Perhaps you noticed the timbre as well, that the voice was very strong, very full, and very penetrating. There was no concern with producing a beautiful and pure tone quality, but rather the concern was with singing from the heart. Again, it was about expressing what was inside, and communicating with each other and communicating with God.

The significance of this example lies in the fact that both the form and the aesthetic principles which governed the performance were rooted in the African past. The musical example is known as a ring shout. It's also called the running spiritual, or sometimes it's known as a shout. All those terms apply because of the element of dance which is incorporated into the performance. Now this is the way the ring shout occurred: people didn't just walk in at the beginning of a service and all of a sudden start to do ring shouts. But as the song developed and people became very involved in it, various

members of the group would move to the center of the room, join hands, and begin to move in a circle in a counterclockwise motion.

Now, as you can imagine, missionaries who had introduced Christianity to Black folks in the United States weren't too excited about this; not too pleased at all. In fact, the practice of the ring shout business was abhorred both by the Black and White Christian establishment. It was called everything from profane to downright heathenish. But because dance had been such an integral part of cultural expression among Blacks in their West African homeland, missionaries failed abysmally in their efforts to make Blacks cease and desist. Instead, a specific criterion was established which identified the ring shout as sacred. When dancing, participants did not cross their feet, so the members of the culture knew very well that what they were doing was indeed dance, but it was dance that was sacred; and there were cultural symbols that identified them as such.

The establishment of the independent African Methodist Episcopal Congregation, under the leadership of ex-slave Richard Allen, set the stage for the autonomy which fostered the growth of the spiritual in the North. After spreading from the White parent church in Philadelphia in 1787, Allen made a conscious choice to reject his denomination and, at the same time, erase its doctrines. Allen was quite satisfied with the plain and simple gospel of the Methodist church, which in his view well suited his own congregation because it was one which "the unlearned can understand and the learned are quite sure to understand."

Allen's selective identification with Methodism was further evident in his decision to reject the standard Methodist Hymnal, choosing instead to compile his own book with songs he thought had greater appeal for Black people. The research of Portia Maultsby and Eileen Southern details the innovations which characterize the songs in Richard Allen's hymnal. Texts were simplified, and refrain lines and choruses were routinely added to the basic four-line ABCD stanza. So he took that form and added to it refrain lines and choruses. Eileen Southern suggests that Allen likely wrote some of the texts for his 1801 hymnal, probably composed some of the tunes himself, and utilized popular songs of the day as well. In order to achieve his goal of generating congregational participation and assure freedom of worship for his members, Allen also instituted the practice of adding internal refrains, thus, in effect, producing call-response just as in the southern derived folk spiritual. Incorporating internal refrains also fostered the concept of whole group participation in the singing.

Now here's an example of what Portia Maultsby has categorized the "folk spiritual" that developed in the Northern contexts as a modified hymn. That is, Allen made changes in the standard hymn form to adjust to and meet the needs of his Black congregation. This is an example that you may know: "No, Not One." Do any of you know that? [The following is sung by Mellonnee:] "There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus. No, not one. No, not one." Now, what has occurred in this example of a modified hymn that I am going to play for you, is that opposed to the entire verse and chorus being sung, the chorus itself has become the song. The chorus itself has separated from the verse altogether and has become the song. And it is transformed and sung in the same style as you heard the first ring shout I played for you. [Recording is played.]

So you see how a standard form such as the hymn is transformed in the context of the Black church. From the Northern con-

text, again, you heard hand claps and foot stomps that were transformed into a ring shout. It was repetitious. But in this case you have the entire chorus being repeated over and over, syllabic, heterophonic, polyphonic, and polyrhythmic.

Non-Black observers of Allen's worship were frequently struck by the high level of congregational involvement and spirited singing. Not surprisingly, such early commentaries did not hesitate to register their displeasure at the AME song style. The following reference is from an 1819 publication by John Watson titled, *Methodist Error or Friendly Christian Advice to those Methodists who Indulge in Extravagant Religious Emotions and Bodily Exercises:*

> We have too a growing evil in the practice of singing in our places of worship. Merry airs adapted from old song, the hymns of our composing, often miserable as poetry and senseless as matter, and most frequently composed and sung by the illiterate Blacks of our society.

Eileen Southern speculates that Watson, a leading figure in the Methodist church in Philadelphia, was actually referring to Bethel, Richard Allen's church. Watson poses further that Mr. Wesley, the church founder, was equally displeased with those who chose to reject his hymnal for questionable substitutes. Watson noted that Wesley went as far as expelling three ministers for "singing poor, bald, Black disjointed hymns and singing the verse over and over again with all their might 30 or 40 times to the utter discredit of all sober Christianity."

In his 1957 book *Negro Slave Songs in the United States*, Miles Mark Fisher documents that "often Negroes were not permitted to enter Methodist church buildings at all since they disturbed the quiet and dignified worship by beating out the rhythm of songs with feet patted and hands clapping in place of African instruments." I could go on to give you multiple examples of how both the music and particularly the ring shout were looked upon with disdain by both the White and Black Methodist establishment, but I would like to give you one example of the response of Blacks to the attitudes that they were getting from the establishment. Bishop Hayne became one of the Black bishops of the AME church, and he wasn't too excited about the existence of these ring shouts in the AME church. In fact, he called them "horned-filled ditties" and "bush meetings," and he tried to make the singing of the ring shout disgusting so as to teach people "the right, fit, and proper way of serving God." Now remember, we're talking about the 19th century. I'm doing all of this so you can see how the same kinds of attitudes have not been dismissed, how they carry over into the 20th century. And these are the things we must confront, must respond to, if there really is to be a sense of musical equality within worship.

Well, Bishop Hayne was checking out various congregations by going to the services and he described how after the service the people formed a ring and they started clapping their hands and stomping their feet. He told the young pastor to go and make them stop, and the pastor tried but wasn't successful in doing so. Later that afternoon, Bishop Hayne told the young man he really had to get his congregation under control, and the young pastor said, "Sinners won't get converted unless there is a ring." And the bishop said, "You might sing until you fell down dead and you would fail to convert a single sinner, because nothing but the spirit of God and the word of God can convert sinners." The pastor replied, "The spirit of God works for our people in different ways."

Unquestionably, a perceptual rift between the folk and the educated elite was emerging.

Hayne's view of appropriate musical worship was clearly in line with those of Watson and other White Methodists. Those Blacks most likely to agree with his perspective were, in his view, those with some degree of education. Unquestionably, a perceptual rift between the folk and the educated elite was emerging. It is common knowledge to students of African-American music that prior to the efforts of the Fisk Jubilee Singers in the early 1870s, the Negro spiritual was known and respected almost exclusively by Blacks. With the formation of this group, however, the spiritual assumed a character and purpose which differed radically from its folk antecedent. The group of nine to twelve men and women, many ex-slaves, was established under the leadership of George White, the White university treasurer who viewed musical concerts as a viable way of raising much needed funds for the fledgling institution.

According to Black composer and Fisk professor John Work, "Mr. White decided on a style of singing the spiritual which eliminated every element which detracted from the pure emotion of the song." Finish, precision, and sincerity were demanded by this leader. While the program featured spirituals, variety was given by the use of numbers from the classical repertoire. Mr. White strove for an art presentation. The folk spiritual, created as an expression of African-American culture and religion, was now transferred to the concert stage. This change in function was accompanied by a change in performance practice. The hand clapping, foot stomping, and individual latitude and interpretation were out. Predictability, control, reserve, and the absence of over-emotionalism were in. The aesthetic values which characterized George White's own musical culture were now being superimposed on the Negro spiritual.

As Louis Sovary put it: "Singing spirituals in the field was one thing, singing them to sophisticated audiences was something else." Here is a 1913 recording of the Fisk University Quartet which illustrates the radical differences between the folk spiritual and its new offspring. [A recording is presented in a traditionally arranged rendering of "Roll Jordan Roll."] Did you hear any concepts, though, that were carried over from the folk spiritual? Tell me one, anybody. Call response is still there, very good, excellent. Anything else? Repetition is still there. It's still a capella. You're on it; your ears are tuned in, very good. So what the arranged spiritual did was utilize various principles of the existing folk tradition, on which Western European compositional techniques or principles were superimposed, along with Western European aesthetic practices. So this was not a song that could go on indefinitely, but rather end when the composer said, "This is the end of my arrangement of this piece." That was from 1915.

The Fisk campaign was an overwhelming success, and it generated a formation of similar groups at other Black colleges. This arranged spiritual tradition has come to symbolize the best in the Black college choir tradition. Generations of Black composers established careers developing folk melodies for performance on the concert

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stage. John Wesley Work from Fisk; William Dawson from Tuskegee; Undine Smith Moore (through Augsburg Fortress) published many of her songs; Nathaniel Dett, Paul Johnston—the list goes on and on. In 1916, Harry G. Burleigh is credited as the first person to arrange the Negro spiritual for solo voice. As soloist for St. George Episcopal Church in New York for 52 years, he experienced a continual need and desire to present new and fresh musical literature to the congregation.

"Deep River," a classic of the solo repertoire, is performed by famed operatic diva Jessye Norman in this following example. Some of you may have seen this from the PBS production, but in looking at this solo arrangement you will note its relationship to the choral arrangement and its outgrowth from that tradition. There's no good place to cut this, and I think you'd get ready to slash my throat if I did, so just enjoy this as an aesthetic experience because it is very, very powerful. [A recording of "Deep River" sung by Jessye Norman is played.]

While Harry Burleigh is credited the tradition of closing recitals with a group of spirituals, bass-baritone Paul Robeson was the first person to sing a concert exclusively devoted to Negro spirituals. Other Black musical pioneers who featured Negro spirituals prominently in their concert repertoires include contralto Marion Anderson, the first Black person to sing at the Metropolitan Opera, and Roland Hayes, regarded during the period from 1920 to 1940 as one of the world's leading contratenors. The solo-arranged spiritual holds a place of pride and prominence in Black worship today, especially in congregations with significant numbers of members who are college educated.

During the first three decades of the 20th century, the tradition of Gospel music started its slow but steady climb to respectability and widespread popularity among Black people in the United States. This new genre evolved in large measure because of major shifts which occurred in the Black cultural and social environment. During the years surrounding World Wars I and II, large numbers of Blacks moved from a rural, agrarian lifestyle to an urban, industrial one. It is in this context that Gospel music as we know it today evolved. But the foundation for today's traditional Gospel traditions was made in what I refer to as the transitional period from 1900 to 1930. Transitional Gospel music, simply defined, is that form of Gospel music which represents the transition from the spiritual, that is, the folk spiritual, to a completely new form of Afro-American religious music, Gospel.

Transitional Gospel music, I have determined, has three different styles. The first I will talk about was created by the grandfather of Gospel music, Charles Albert Tinley. He was a minister at Tinley Temple Methodist Church in Philadelphia. Even though he was a Methodist, he was also a member of the Holiness movement, which itself was interdenominational. What did that mean? It meant that the concepts of

the Holiness movement informed the type of worship they had at Tinley Temple. See if this sounds like the old folk church. They believed in singing and praying, all night long if necessary. The length of the service was not dictated by the clock. They believed in spirited congregational singing. They believed in extemporaneous prayer. All of those things characterized the music of Tinley Temple.

Tinley published his first Gospel song in 1901. It is now known as "We Shall Overcome," but then it was known as "I'll Overcome Some Day." His songs were written to complement his sermons. Tinley wrote over 53 songs, and many of those songs are included in books like *Songs of Zion* and *Lead Me, Guide Me.* Some examples are "Stand By Me," "We'll Understand It Better By and By," and "The Storm is Passing Over." All of these are Tinley songs. Now I want to play a 1927 example of Tinley's "Leave It There" so you can hear an example of what it sounded like in this earlier time frame. This was written by Tinley in 1916 and is sung by the Page Jubilee Singers. [Recording is played.]

What did you hear in this example that you did not hear in the folk spirituals? You heard accompaniment. So instrumental accompaniment is an essential thing included in the transitional period from the folk spiritual into Gospel music, okay. We are also no longer in heterophony in this example, but it is homophonic. Clearly we are in the hymn style. They are singing in parts, clearly defined parts, in the Tinley style. It sounded something like an harmonium. That was a 1927 recording, a very early one. You had solo, choir, and instrumental accompaniment for the first time in the transitional Gospel period.

But you also heard the internal call-response from the folk tradition. The larger structure was verse-chorus. But you heard [sung] "Leave it There" [high range], "Leave it There" [low range]. So internal call-response is what we call it at this stage, and Tinley used the basic I-IV-V-I chord structure characteristic of the transitional Gospel period. Many Tinley compositions are now standards in the hymnody of the Black church, even though it doesn't sound like it did in the 1927 example. The widespread popularity of these compositions was fostered by his role as pastor which allowed him to showcase his own compositions in worship. In addition, his songs were included in the 1921 landmark publication by the National Baptist Convention called *Gospel Pearls.* Do you all know this work? It is still in print. And what *Gospel Pearls* did was pull together a collection of songs that were particularly significant, meaningful, and popular in Black worship. The book was also circulated across denominations within Black culture.

But this is not the only type of transitional Gospel music. There were two others. The second kind that I want to talk about is "Country Gospel," which was a counterpart to Country Blues. This is another Tinley example that I am going to play for you. This example is from 1949, but it represents a style that was created during this transitional period, a parallel to country blues style, and I am going to let you tell me why as you listen to it. The song is "Stand By Me." [Recording is played.] Okay, why do you think that is called Country Gospel as a counterpart to country blues? First of all, the accompaniment. Typically, this style would be accompanied by acoustic guitar or by harmonica. Very good, what else? You hear the vocal style that clearly parallels the rural blues tradition. How many chord changes did you hear? Did you pay that any attention? Same chord all the way through. Just like James Brown, one chord. And that's very characteristic of

rural blues style, minimal chord changes and variable rhythmic structure that existed because it was a solo form. So we have the Tinley form which was choral, and now we have a solo blues form with accompaniment as well, and then a third form, which I refer to as a Holiness-Pentecostal style, which emerged in the 1890s within the Pentecostal denomination, the Church of God in Christ.

Here is one from Memphis, Tennessee. This example is actually from 1930. It's from Rev. F. W. McGee and his congregation and it's called "Fifty Miles of Elbow Room." [Recording is played.] What did you hear that distinguishes this style from the other two? You heard heterophony in this, but you also heard some harmony appearing more consistently. Again, that is why I use the term transition, a music in transition. What about accompaniment? You have piano, yes; there's a mandolin in there; there's a trumpet; the percussive piano style—beautiful. The full-throated timbre of the folk spiritual. Did you notice the hand clapping? When were the claps occurring? Did you notice what beats? Remember, this was 1930. On two and four, absolutely. So we have this whole array of instruments here. We have the song in terms of the vocal quality, the organizational play. How did we ever get these disparate kinds of forms to come together in some way? We credit Thomas Dorsey with being the father of Gospel music because what he did in the 1930s was pull all of these strains together.

Now this evolution of Gospel music not only resulted from Dorsey but from several other pioneers, and Chicago was a critical place for the evolution of traditional Gospel music as we know it today. There were several pioneers who came to Chicago as a result of the great migrations. Thomas Dorsey came from Georgia in the 1920s. Mahalia Jackson, a name you all know, came from New Orleans in 1929. Roberta Martin came from Arkansas in 1917. These three have roots in both sacred and secular musics. Thomas Dorsey was a son of a Baptist preacher. He grew up selling soda pop at vaudeville theatres and listening to great blues artists like Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey. He became a prolific composer of jazz and blues. He brought knowledge of both sacred and secular traditions to his compositions and to his playing style. Eventually, he was co-founder of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses with Sally Martin and Willie Mae Ford Smith in the 1930s.

Mahalia Jackson was raised as a Baptist. She sang in a church choir, and her home in New Orleans was next door to a Pentecostal church. She loved to listen to Bessie Smith, even though her aunt didn't allow her to listen to that "sinful" music. But she waited until her aunt was gone outside of the house, and then she would sneak in and put on the recordings. She talked about how she tried to form her lips and her mouth to shape in such a way as to reproduce sounds like Bessie Smith had done. She was a person who helped Dorsey to introduce his Gospel compositions to the public at large.

Traditional Gospel music is still transmitted orally, even though we can now talk about a composed form. It is homophonic, the voices move in parallel motion; in opposition to the folk spiritual which is syllabic, this music is melismatic, many notes to a single syllable. Gospel music is melismatic. The accompaniment can range from acoustic piano to any and all types of amplified instruments. There's still internal call-response, expandable units of time, and polyrhythm—all of those things we had been talking about in our rehearsal. And I want to play an example for you of Sister Willie Mae Ford Smith, to show you that it

is not simply a music of the younger generation, but to show you one of these Gospel pioneers and see how the principles that we have been talking about this week are exhibited in the form. [Recording is played.]

The musics in many ways represent the cultural legacy and therefore the cultural identity of Black people in America.

To an extent she has exhibited the concept of the folk spiritual. But in transitional Gospel music the arranged spiritual has come back combined with the integration of song and dance. Now this woman is on a trip! First of all, why didn't she just stand up there and save her energy? But that was part of the Gospel music aesthetic. And she didn't have to think about it as she sang "That's all right" [sung]. And then did you notice what the choir was doing in the background? They did what we were practicing earlier today and we were also in motion. "That's all right" [sung twice]. Note the integration of song and dance in the folk spiritual and in the ring shout.

So it shows the connections which bind the folk spiritual, the music of Blacks that was sung during the period of slavery, and what Black people continued to do in 20th century America. And I wanted you to hear her as opposed to a Gospel choir to show how the same principles are embodied, whether it's solo, choir, quartet, trio, small ensemble, Barrett Sisters, Robert Martin Singers, James Cleveland. It's a cultural aesthetic that is defined as what is significant in the music. Yes, it's still homophonic as I indicated to you, but various kinds of musical elements will change. The cultural principles which define how those elements are realized in performance do not change. They have remained constant over the years.

And finally, in 1968, contemporary Gospel music emerged. The context was the west coast, California. The Edwin Hawkins Singers' single, "O Happy Day," was picked up and played on underground radio, and it became an immediate hit. A year later it had sold over a million and a half copies. And as you can hear, even though now this example is considered traditional Gospel music, this was a radical departure from the sounds of the period. This is the original recording of "O Happy Day." [Recording is played.]

Did you hear any elements that you heard in the folk spiritual? Polyrhythmic, absolutely, very good. Anything else? Call-response is still there, yes. [Audience is providing answers.] Anything else? Repetition is still there. Anything else? It's in harmony, so that distinguishes it as Gospel music because it's homophonic. Syllabic in terms of the choral part. What about the solos? Very melismatic, absolutely; very, very melismatic.

So we have gone through the entire history and played a lot of examples for you. What on earth is all this supposed to mean to you? How do we pull it all together? This chronology illustrates the breadth and depth of the Black religious musical experience in the United States. I have sought to illustrate not only what types of musics Blacks have created, but also why. The musics in many ways represent the cultural legacy and there-

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fore the cultural identity of Black people in America. The musics were not created out of a sense of lack or out of any inability to satisfactorily reproduce the repertoire of Euro-Americans. The musics represented here are musics of Black people by Black people and for Black people—musics created by choice as a celebration, not of otherness, but of togetherness. The discussion is not meant to imply that all Blacks in every historical period in every denomination shared these musical expressions and aesthetic principles. No culture can make such a claim.

But if we understand culture as embracing the intangibles of beliefs, values, and attitudes, the musical examples alone serve to affirm the cultural continuity and resilience that distinguished African Americans from other groups in the United States. The African American musical tradition is rich, and indeed has pervaded virtually every aspect of the American musical fabric, from Gershwin's opera "Porgy and Bess" to "Saturday Night Live." Unfortunately, this embracing of Black American music has too often been exploited. The church now has the opportunity to redirect this trend completely; to move beyond cultural domination, cultural supremacy, and cultural alienation to a true spirit of cultural sharing. The time is right; the time is now.

Common Roots, Diverse Expressions

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Address at the Conference on
Church Music in a Multicultural Church
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What is it in the Lutheran tradition of church music which lets us hope we can celebrate one faith together? What common roots will bring our ethnically diverse backgrounds into flower as a celebration of common faith and life in Jesus Christ? What is a common root? How can we in our diversity worship one Lord Jesus Christ, in one place, at one time? We may discover sources for a common life in the Lutheran tradition (not merely the Lutheran repertoire from Northern Europe), in its theological commitments and consequent practice. In fact, that Lutheran heritage may be especially helpful in the search for common roots.

A call to share the Lutheran tradition should not be considered an exhortation to sing motets by Johann Walter, Luther's musical associate, or Bach cantatas—though that is certainly not discouraged! Lutheran tradition here refers to a theological perspective and a practical model which may guide our own developments. We are, after all, contributors to tradition, not merely imitators. Our roots help us grow; they do not tie us to the ground. It might also be helpful not to confuse the "Lutheran tradition" with the model of church music exhibited in mainline American Protestantism. In spite of many common characteristics, they are not at all the same.

There are three areas of Lutheran musical teaching and practice which might prove helpful to our multicultural explorations: 1) a recognition of music as the gift of God to people; 2) the centrality of the Word, who is Jesus Christ; 3) the process of contrafaction.

Music as the gift of God

Luther's understanding of music begins in his well-known phrase, based on early Christian sources, that music is a *donum Dei*, a gift from God. Music usually seems quite the opposite, namely a human activity, and Luther's position should not be taken for granted. Philosophy and musicology are largely restricted in their views to an anthropocentric understanding. The great musicologist Curt Sachs argues somewhat

> Music fulfills the purpose of its existence when God is praised and glorified.

polemically against any "myth" of divine origins. In fact, however, many traditional cultures believe music does come from God. In discussions of diverse traditions, Christians must avoid the temptation of speaking only in reference to political and cultural backgrounds and then forgetting that music must be primarily defined as a gift of God.

Luther draws on a medieval tradition in recognizing music as an element infused by God into each creature and into all the universe. He regards music as a creature in its own right, almost a personality with whom one must reckon and in whose company one rejoices. What humans play and sing is thus a participation in the music God has ordered in everything. At that level Luther speaks of *musica naturalis*. It occurs in the wind, animal songs, and folk song.

Musica artificialis (artistic or composed music), however, occurs when God's people join polyphonic voices in a musical round dance and thus begin to hear the astounding wisdom of God in all things. Music fulfills the purpose of its existence when God is praised and glorified. Any music in which such praise is obscured or which serves contrary purposes is in a real sense "denatured." It is unnatural; it cannot long survive. That is a first "common root": the praise of God draws all of us together from varied traditions.

The idea that all music is God's gift helped generate a magnificent Lutheran music practice which was continuously open to new developments. A first evidence of this occurs in the experience of Luther and his colleagues. Uniquely among the reformers, the Lutheran circle had a healthy interest in all good music, not just in a limited repertoire which seemed to identify with their own program. Luther praised and used the works of Roman Catholic composers, unlike the reformed circles in Switzerland. All music was God's gift and, to cite Luther's well-worn phrase, should not be left to the devil. We may take the Lutheran reformers' work as a model for today's multicultural challenge. They neither abandoned past traditions nor excluded the music of their time.

We must also note the deliberate program of composers like Michael Praetorius, Heinrich Schütz, even Johann Sebastian Bach. Both Praetorius and Schütz avidly studied Italy's music to learn the new styles and incorporate those idioms into the praise of God in Lutheran congregations. An interesting example occurs in the recitatives of the Passion settings, where Schütz combines not only old Gregorian conventions but elements of Italian monody and German song form. Italian monody was a thoroughly secular, almost alien style of music compared with German church music. The new Italian idiom had a different aesthetic. Schütz and his German colleagues, however, recognized the artistic and theological need to utilize the power of this music for the praise of God. Richly expressive moments in the singer's unaccompanied music arise from this fusion of styles, for instance, when Jesus cries, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani."

The church cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach are also a deliberate fusion of operatic emotion, French orchestral form,

and German church music. The first performances of the St. John Passion were a milestone of change for the churches in Leipzig because of this. Bach's work flowed out of the struggle over these matters in Hamburg. A certain circle of Pietists argued that Christian sobriety and rationality necessitated the rejection of higher art music in favor of simple music. Above all, the secular, often morally questionable idiom of Italian opera was dismissed by the Pietists. In Hamburg, however, the Lutheran pastor and poet, Erdmann Neumeister, provided texts for "cantatas" which opened the way for use of the Italian style. A conflict on this point spread across Germany. Some (e.g. Johann Buttstedt in 1716) cried out against the "trash in the church," while others took up the cause for the new style—again in the name of that "orthodoxy" which accepted Luther's open view of music.

What do we learn from this? The range of diversity in our own multicultural world makes this struggle over German and Italian music look like a private European family argument. Nonetheless, within the world of those church musicians the options may have contrasted as sharply as some of our own. Even within the framework of this conference, we are discovering just how much relationship there is between African-American and mainline Protestant hymnody. Nevertheless, the Lutheran commitment to cultivation of diverse styles may guide our own deliberations.

Diversity of music in the worship of the Christian community flows necessarily and intentionally from a Lutheran perspective on the nature of music. It is quite faithful to Lutheran theology and practice when psalms are set in idioms as diverse as Japanese or Filipino song. The ancient responsorial practice of the church anticipates the call and response practice of Black church music.

It is not Lutheran practice, however, to limit oneself only to the music of the present period, a limited cultural framework—a caution both for traditional Lutheran musicians and for other cultural enclaves. Our time and our culture cannot become a new limiting dogma. Lutherans never rejected past traditions; they cultivated them. It is, however, also not consistently Lutheran to limit church music to a recultivation of older styles and practices as if only the "classic tradition" is suitable for the high standards of worship. It is furthermore not Lutheran tradition to accept any low standard of performance or simplicity through an appeal to popular taste.

It is Lutheran practice, however, to cultivate the congregation's song as the basis (*cantus firmus*) of church music, utilizing many styles and techniques to elaborate that song. Schütz, Praetorius, and Scheidt deliberately revised their own earlier compositions to adapt to emerging Baroque, Italianate styles. Buxtehude recast the traditional chorales to the rhythms of the dance suite to create alternating variations of well-known hymns. The Black church's technique of changing traditional European hymns within their own performance practice is not so very different.

That brings us to a second lesson based on the concept of music as a gift of God. The location of music in the order of creation also offers another approach to the question of cultural diversity. Music, as God's creation, is good. Music functions to help creation sing the praise of the creator, particularly when music and the world reflect the perfect harmony of that first week of creative activity. These views, articulated by Luther, are based on centuries-older theories which assumed there was a divine order in all the universe, an order uniquely expressed in music. A world in good order existed in harmony—literally.

A world in disorder screams rather than sings. It screams with the rage of tribal wars in Yugoslavia and South Africa. It screams in the anger of sexual, marital, familial, and social conflict. When music functions within the fallen world, it degenerates into noise. All creation now *groans*, not sings, under sin (Romans 8). Saint Paul frets about the *silence* of those who want to pray and do not know what to say. There is confusion, not musical order, as the world waits for final deliverance.

Luther is perfectly consistent here when he notices the long faces and silence of those who still live, in futility, under the covenant of law and obedience rather than grace. Only in a world properly ordered by God is song possible. The German theologian-musicologist Karl Ferdinand Müller once told me, somewhat pessimistically, that church music was dead and the German Singing Movement ineffective because of two reasons. One was that Germans did not feel like singing so much after Auschwitz. The other was that German lifestyle was becoming more American in character!

Today we struggle for order, but as separated communities, even as individuals. Our various orders compete for dominance. We all fear the oppression of those who impose their version of order on us. We gasp for freedom from such oppression. We do not want someone else's cultural imperatives and view of world order thrust on us, generating conflict over which song should be sung in our churches and which style of worship is suitable for our own lifestyle. How can we who believe in one God, one created order (no matter how marred by sin!), and one Savior act as if there were various world orders which must compete with each other?

There is one God and one order. Yet all of us fall under sin and all our perspectives on the world's order are blemished. There is a powerful biblical hope, profoundly reflected among so many peoples of the world, that we might once again become kindred rather than enemies. Isaiah 2 envisions that time when all nations will gather together again at Mount Zion.

That unfulfilled vision still draws us and provides a useful perspective. We do have common roots, a common set of life experiences, a common world in which to live. We all know the life-critical relationship to water. We all know birth, death, joy, and suffering, no matter how different are our articulations of those experiences. Each of us has a different view on the order of the world. So it is with our exploration of each other's music. Church music will embrace all songs if its own voice is not to become so particular that it becomes bound to a single cultural imperative. We must help one another learn our different songs if we are to hear even a faint echo of the one voice drowned out in the noise of Babel. We need to hear not only the major-minor systems of Western music but the blues note as well, the rich rhythmic polyphony of African drumming, and the incredible richness of classical music from India if we want to begin to piece together again the pattern—however fragmentary—of order in the universe God created.

The Word which is Christ

Luther regarded music as next to theology, a necessity in every education. It was to be a handmaid of theology, and the highest function of music is the proclamation of the gospel. That Word which is Christ is the content of this song, both for proclamation and praise.

This close linking of music to the study of languages reveals Luther's own background in the academic humanism of his time. Languages were highly regarded. It

comes as no surprise, therefore, that the study of music shifted in Reformation schools away from its previous position in the mathematics curriculum along with arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. The Lutheran schools, however, made a shift, dividing music into theoretical and practical branches. Practical music teachers, finding strong support in Luther's understanding of the close relationship of language and music, now included music among the study of language arts, with grammar, rhetoric, and logic. In actual fact, the rhetorician in some schools was also the music teacher.

Eventually the schools generated a series of textbooks often bearing the title "musica poetica" for teaching music to the students in the school choirs. The first major text was the *Musica Poetica* of Joachim Burmeister in 1606. For more than a century German music was taught through this system, though there is strong scholarly skepticism as to how much these texts actually account for compositional practice. Bach himself studied from such a text during his term at Lüneburg and was considered by experts to be a master of rhetorical skill in his composition. The significant point is that such teaching was based on and parallel to the study of rhetoric. The compositional process was modeled on that used to develop a speech or sermon. Classical rhetorical figures such as *anabasis, anadiplosis, emphasis, parrhesia,* and *hyperbole* were given musical equivalents, thus creating a language of musical symbols for fairly specific moods or ideas.

To some degree, then, there was an understanding of music which linked it to the word; and the Word, as Luther never tired of pointing out, was the gospel of Jesus Christ. So too we may rediscover our common root in the Word of God regardless of the style of our diverse songs. We even may regard music as a form of communication

A world in disorder screams rather than sings.

akin to language and therefore find a way past the question of which style of music is proper for worship. That question has generally not been productive of good answers in the history of church music unless it has been answered in other than musical terms.

We cannot debate this issue and come to a resolution of the proper roles of popular or art music, European or non-Western styles, but a discovery of the linkage of word and music, following the example of the Lutheran tradition, does have some important possible benefits.

For one thing, we recognize that our discussion is resolved more clearly if we look to Jesus Christ. Paul's statement is a "common root" for us all. Colossians 3:16 (let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly... in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs...) points to the indwelling of Christ. It also points to widely differing styles of music. Traditionally these terms are taken respectively to refer to biblical psalms, newly composed songs of faith, and an exuberant religious singing which bordered on ecstasy. These widely different forms of music are useful because they are the method of teaching and admonishing in the Word of Jesus Christ, a model for using varied musics in the church today. Our multicultural challenge may take on different form if we explore more fully our common roots in the Word of Jesus Christ rather than if we take opinion polls on what the majority want to hear in

church next Sunday or debate about the "right" style.

Furthermore, we can proceed from attention to the Word of Christ to the recognition of the unity of word and music. Luther capsuled this already in his Christmas hymn, in which the angel announces the good news "of which I say and sing." Proclaiming the faith and singing are almost identical ideas for Luther.

Church music will serve its proper function, therefore, if we recognize the unity of preacher and musician, a pairing not usually noted as a model of unity! That, however, was the case in the early church. According to II Clement, the lector was the one who sang the scriptures and the psalms, then also preached. Only later was a separate office of "psalmist" described, and even later, Gregory the Great noted that good musicians often wanted to sing in the churches but were not attracted to the holy lifestyle of the deacons! Therefore he permanently separated the musicians from the ranks of deacons, assigning them as subdeacons—a demotion which Luther unfortunately neglected to undo formally during the Reformation in spite of his high regard for singers. Should preachers discover Luther's high regard for the kerygmatic function of music, they might discover in musicians of varied cultural backgrounds a deep capacity for assistance in making that proclamation. Such a situation would generate not merely an allowance of but a desire for diverse music.

Contrafaction

We conclude by exploring our common roots and possibilities in the Reformation technique of contrafaction. Simply stated, contrafaction was used by the reformers (and others) to draw "secular" or even heretical music into the praise of God through a process of transformation. In a simple example, one transformed an original text by substituting words and phrases which would make it appropriate for singing in the churches. Medieval hymns to Mary could be transformed into praises of the Son. The music took on a new connotation. We speak of *transformation* here in both text and music, not simple adoption of the secular for sacred purposes. Luther has been charged too often and too simplistically with simply taking any secular music, including drinking songs, into the church, and we hear that "we should, too!" Luther, however, also argued strongly for careful selection in what we sing and what music we should give to the young to sing and learn.

We may also link the process of contrafaction to memory and circumstance. How can I sing the old songs in the new place? So wails Psalm 137! There was no cultural context or cultic rationale for the songs of Zion there by the waters of Babylon. And today we struggle again with strange sounding music, feeling that its strangeness signals something quite different from the sounds pouring from our hearts in response to God. Many life-long Christians are still not used to singing jazz or rock in church, though neither is all that new. It still seems very inappropriate for many mainline churches to have a great pianist in the Gospel tradition rather than an organist leading the hymns. Conversely, some people in the Gospel tradition can sing only the songs they learned in childhood or only the music of their own ethnic enclave, and they feel alienated by a classic church tradition.

A distinction between "vernacular" and "cultivated" music traditions has become a staple in American music history, and that distinction relates to our "deep" cultural memory. When an element of our experience has American characteristics, we have a "vernacular" American experience.

Musicologists have distinguished this from a "cultivated" experience which must be developed though education and acquired taste, a tactic long argued to justify music education. We should train our people, it is assumed, to appreciate the fine or higher arts. We have regarded art music as a "higher" form of music and goal of our musical development.

We all instinctively recognize the value of our own "vernacular" experience or may claim a higher status symbolized by cultivated experiences. It is, however, vernacular experience of music which alone truly expresses our deeper, truer character. We really enjoy vernacular music. Richard Crawford has explored the vernacular category in American music writing. Drawing on Marcel Proust's writings, Crawford points out that all vernacular experiences draw on deep memory. We do not control these experiences; they control us. They are forced on us by circumstance; they become necessary to the achievement of any meaningful later experience. We develop an "inner book of unknown symbols" to which we respond involuntarily.

Cultivated experience, conversely, remains a supplementary experience. Academic or other highly "cultivated" persons may actually find it difficult to have vernacular experiences—which led Studs Terkel to exclude interviews with professors when preparing his Chicago study, *Division Street.* Still, cultivated tastes do affect our vernacular experiences, may even take on vernacular characteristics. And that last point is important.

The discussions of multicultural diversity in church music cannot help but take place in the context of racial, political, and cultural strife around us. We are fighting, in Crawford's, Proust's, and Hitchcock's terms, over our capacity to have authentic, vernacular experiences. Also in church!

Foreign languages seem chaotic when they strike no echoes in our memories.

Socially, we want the status of the highest social classes and discover too often that the price is the suppression of our vernacular experience. Then "traditional" (i.e. cultivated) church music is characterized as dull or meaningless. Foreign languages seem chaotic when they strike no echoes in our memories. "Your" music seems meaningless to me since it seems to have no meaning in my memory. These attitudes affect us all regardless of whether we are in a mainstream denomination, a white dominant culture, or a minority or ethnic community. What is strange achieves the status of meaningful experience only against the entire weight of my previous experiences and memories.

Crawford argues that extensive cultivation of an experience may indeed bring it to the point of transformation—a new type of "contrafaction." The new experience eventually becomes vernacular. That happened for me during adolescence. Without much prior experience, I learned of Bach cantatas. Hearing them today remains one of the most vernacular (i.e. deeply moving, memory-filled) of my experiences—no longer merely a learned taste. Further, without once singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing," I have listened to African-American church musicians explain how to do that song, what it means phrase by phrase. Now I am gripped each time I hear that hymn. It

is a cultivated experience developing into vernacular experience.

Both Luther's emphasis on the educational value of music and language as well as contrafaction provide guidelines for us. Our churches may become the places where deeply moving memories are contrafacted or given new content and significance as proclamation of gospel or praise of God.

We need to cultivate each other's music, therefore, so that we can arrive at a vernacular experience of each other's music. We can do that if we go through the work of reshaping the materials of our culture in a process of contrafaction. With eyes opened by grace we can understand each other's music as a renewed gift just like our own renewed gift of music. African drumming and dance, American hymnody, African-American congregational singing, the emotional power of Hispanic rhythms, must be transformed by association with sacramental realities, scriptural word, even the hymns which lie at the heart of Christian experience. This is not simply learning some new techniques. It is reworking the material so that it has a point of attachment in the deep memory of the whole church and slowly—even agonizingly—becomes the vernacular experience of us all.

Music is the great gift of God's creation and servant of the Word which is Christ. By contrafaction music could serve more than the cultures of this sin-sick world which know so little of real music. Together, coming from every corner of our ethnic diversities, we share the mission of creating a song about the redemption of the world. We sing to draw all people not just to Mount Zion but into the choir of angels and saints before the throne of God. Even the simplest reading of the Bible makes it clear that our song before that throne will be a multi-cultural experience.

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To Have and to Hold, and—in Time—Let Go: Ethics and Interpreting the Bible

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Ernest Somerville used to tell me: "After your sermons, people will compliment you. They mean well. Only don't believe them."

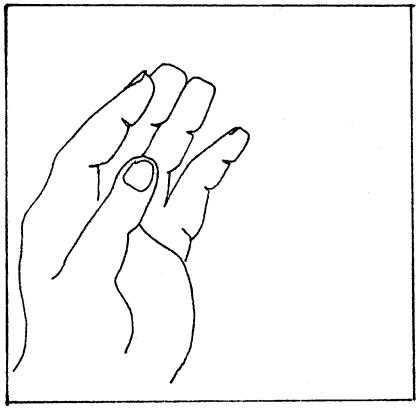
But that was relatively late in my ministry, and so, much earlier, when Don Chon Juárez told me I had preached a courageous sermon, I did believe him.

In the spring of 1967 I had been invited to preach in Príncipe de Paz, the only Protestant church in Río Verde, San Luis Potosí, México. The sermon was allegedly an exposition of Eph 5:22, "Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord."

I looked out on a congregation 80% female, and 80% looking at me with the bleak face of poverty. They had come in off dusty dirt streets filled with unsavory odors, most of them with odors of their own—a smell of smoke, never from tobacco but from open fires over which they cooked. Not one of them had on the least bit of makeup, no fragrances from one ounce bottles—not because it was a violation of mores but because it was beyond their means. If you heard anything from them, it was a quiet wish for the blessing of God to be upon you—"¡Que Dios le bendiga!" Their heads were covered with rebozos, colorless shawls, not a religious but a social symbol—the distinction of belonging to the lower class. I have long since tossed the sermon, but not the memory, because I had the dubious courage (or should I say nerve) to tell them that the subordination of wives to husbands was a divinely given order for our lives.

"Because I knew not when my life was good, and when there was a light upon my path, but turned my soul perversely to the wrong, O Lord, I do repent."[1] I repent of taking my very contingent interpretation of

[1] Sarah Williams, "Because I Knew Not When My Life Was Good," in *The Hymnbook*, ed. D. Jones (Richmond: Presbyterian Church, 1955), 237 (altered).



a biblical passage and acting as if it were absolute. I now see that making contingency eternal is often a strategy of the dominant class. And I repent of the positivistic presuppositions of the modern era that made many of us think that we could arrive at a final determination of the truth. In biblical studies we thought that final determination was the original meaning. Crusaders for the holy grail of original meaning, like speeding cars in the night overrunning their headlights, we overshot the prudent foresight that if once we got it right we could dispense with the Bible itself, and along with it our jobs, like once tuning a guitar, to weld the tuning pegs; or once setting the front wheels of the car, to stop steering; or once preaching the sermon, thereafter to play the videotape.

I repent of making interpretations absolute so as to exclude the voices of others. I repent of excluding the voices of others not because the ethic of hearing the voices of others derives nicely from the Presbyterian model of pluralism, but rather because it derives from a biblical model of prayer. By prayer I do not mean, I'm sorry to say, something like a disciplined form of verbal liturgy in which we observe the daily offices. I confess that I happen to be a practitioner of some of that, though a very poor one. I once tried getting up before dawn for prayer. It so ruined my demeanor for the rest of the day that after a week I gave it up. Rather, the model to which I refer is the ear of God turned to hear our cries. When the people of Israel were suffering misery in Egypt, the God who spoke to Moses on the backside of the wilderness said, "I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed I know their sufferings" (Exod 3:7). This is the image that the Psalms call to mind when they implore, "O God, incline your ear to hear me" (Ps 17:6), "Bow down your ear to hear me" (Ps 31:2). And in the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers with loud cries and tears (Heb 5:7).

When I was in seminary, one of my professors was urging our class to practice disciplines of prayer and deplored foxhole prayers as ones that didn't count. One of my classmates voiced the opinion that foxhole prayers were the ones that really counted. I think my classmate was right. The ear of God is tuned to hear our cries and groans. And in response to that kind of God, our ethic is not to silence the voices of others but to hear them. Therefore, I repent of making interpretations absolute so as to exclude the voices of others. "Because I held upon my selfish road, and left my neighbor wounded by the way, and called ambition duty, and pressed on, O Lord, I do repent."[2]

I repent, but I do not entirely repudiate what happened in Príncipe de Paz in Río Verde that spring. When we absolutize we stifle other voices, but we may not stifle altogether the voice of God. This too is based on a biblical model of prayer—Paul's paradigm of prayer in Romans 8. It too is the prayer of inward groans when we do not

[2] Sarah Williams, "Because I Knew Not," 237 (altered).

know how to pray as we ought. Then the Spirit intercedes for us according to the will of God. With respect to this text, Luther said: "It is... a very good sign if the opposite of what we pray for appears to happen."[3] When our prayers contravene the divine will, the Spirit, like a dish antenna unscrambling a satellite signal, transforms our prayers in such a way that God hears them according to the divine will.

Surely something akin to this occurs in biblical interpretation. We do not know how to interpret the Bible as we ought. But the Spirit helps us in our deficiency, and the Spirit intercedes so that the saints hear according to the will of God. This model means that biblical interpretation is more like prophesighing than prophesying. Not only does the Spirit unscramble our prayers for God, the Spirit also unscrambles our biblical interpretations so that the saints may hear according to the will of God. It was because of something like prophesighing that even with their heads covered with colorless rebozos and their voices silenced by a preacher telling them that subordination was a divinely given order, some of those poor women in Príncipe de Paz nevertheless lived their lives in response to the God who hears our cries.

I do not mean to give license for deficiencies in our interpretations. But rather than determine final meanings, what we do in interpreting the Bible ultimately gives way to the God who hears our sighs. Inasmuch as the Spirit unscrambles our prophesighing, God saves us from radical senselessness.

Understanding biblical interpretation as prophesighing means that we no longer seek one voice that will silence all others. Rather we seek a voice that resonates with others. Such resonance of voices is what we hear when the New Testament takes upon itself to allude to the Old Testament. I intentionally refer to the Hebrew Bible as Old Testament, not with a supercessionist attitude, but with a strategy to read the Old Testament with a sequel, the New Testament. When the sequel, the New Testament, alludes to its precursor, the Old Testament, we hear the resonance of voices.

Gerhard von Rad recognized something of this resonance in the retelling of tradition within the Hebrew Bible itself. Israel not only rehearsed the events of its history but continuously reinterpreted those events in such a way that dynamic contemporary understandings developed around the rehearsals.[4] Michael Fishbane has drawn, somewhat cautiously, a line of continuity between the modification of biblical texts in early Jewish interpretation and processes at work among biblical writers.[5] To illustrate, Jonah 4:2 alludes to Exod 34:6-7: "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands...." Whatever may have been the identity of the "thousands" who are the recipients of God's steadfast love in Exod 34:7, the text presumes God's steadfast love and faithfulness primarily toward Israel. In Jonah 4:2, however, the repetition of the tradition applies explicitly to the Ninehvites, archenemies of Israel.[6] Therefore, with the repetition of the

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[3] Martin Luther, *Luther: Lectures on Romans* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 240.

[4] G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1, *The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 111-12, 121, 141.

[5] M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), e.g., 6-19, 408-40, 525, 543; and *The Garments of Torah: Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 3-32.

[6] M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 345-47.

tradition in Jonah, there is both a recall and a transformation of the tradition in Exod 34:6-7.

We can prophesigh with resonating voices also because of the resonances of voices from the New Testament. To give a case in point, Heb 2:6-9 is a repetition of Ps 8:4-6. I quote from the Revised Standard Version with gender specific language only because it preserves more fully the resonance of voices. "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou carest for him? Thou didst make him for a little while lower than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet." Psalm 8 is a commentary on the creation in Genesis 1. Being made a little lower than the angels recalls the creation of human beings in the image of God. The formulation that God has put all things under the feet of humankind recalls human dominion over the rest of creation in Gen 1:26. So when one reads Heb 2:6-9, one hears the voice of Psalm 8, and one hears the voice of Genesis 1. Simultaneously, however, Hebrews reads Psalm 8 also as an allusion to Jesus. "You have made him for a little while lower than the angels" is taken as a description of the earthly existence and exaltation of Jesus. But Hebrews construes the subjection of all things under the feet of Jesus as a promise yet to be fulfilled. The New Revised Standard Version makes the language of Heb 2:6-8 inclusive by shifting to the plural. It therefore ends, "Subjecting all things under their feet." The result is a direct echo of Ps 8:6 and Gen 1:26: "Let humankind... have dominion." But Hebrews is more circuitous. The dominion over the rest of creation in Heb 2:6-8 is Christological. But that is not the end of the story, because Hebrews remembers God's promise to Abraham and Sarah, and further, Hebrews makes believers heirs of that promise (6:17), which Heb 2:5 construes as dominion over the whole world. Finally, believers will also participate in the dominion over the whole world because they have become partners with Christ (3:14).

Many interpreters take Hebrews to be one of the most blatantly supercessionist documents in the New Testament—fostering a Christianity that claims to displace Judaism.[5] But it can hardly be supercessionist without undermining itself. That is, Hebrews makes sense only so long as it remains in dialogue with its antecedents, like the voice of Psalm 8, the voice of Genesis 1, and the voice of God's promise to Abraham and Sarah.

Hebrews is no more supercessionist than Jonah or Psalm 8. To be sure it is revisionist. Quite literally, it re-visions. But it revisions only because of its grounding in other visions, or to mix the metaphor, because of its grounding in other voices. Like Jonah, it revisions by repetition, but repetition with variation, because it occurs in a new context. In this sense, to hear the voices resonate again is also a gain.

In response to the God who hears our cries, our ethic is to hear the voices of others and, like resonant voices in the scriptures, to seek a voice of interpretation that resonates with other voices. Our biblical interpretation, our prophesighing, is to have and to hold, because the Spirit helps us in our deficiencies so that through our prophesighing we respond to the God who hears our sighs. But in time, our prophesighing will give way to other voices. It is like human love itself, even at its optimum, "Till death do us part," "To have and to hold, and—in time—let go."

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[5] So, for example, J. Beker, "Romans 9-11 in the Context of the Early Church," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, Supplementary Issue, 1 (1990): 43.

Bonhoeffer: Community, Authority, and Spirituality

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It has been customary, since the appearance of the massive and definitive biography *Dietrich Bonhoeffer* written by his friend and student and literary executor Eberhard Bethge, to divide Bonhoeffer's life into three periods characterized by three moves. The first move was to become a theologian; the second, his discovery of the Word of God; and the third, his opposition to Hitler. Bethge's biography is structured in the light of these three moves.[1]

From his early years, Dietrich Bonhoeffer showed a remarkable intellect, and from the days of his confirmation he showed an unusual interest in the Bible. Apparently he set up his own schedule for reading through the Bible; in this way, he became one Lutheran for whom confirmation "took." His older brother Walter was killed in action in World War I in April, 1918, and his parents presented him with Walter's personal Bible, which Dietrich used throughout his life. This must be counted as a factor in his psychic makeup. As a teenager he read a book by Friedrich Naumann entitled *Letters on Religion.* Naumann's thesis was that genuine Christianity is an ideal which never touches down into the real lived experience of people. Bonhoeffer was haunted by this thesis, and it became grist for the mill of his own developing Christian faith. Bonhoeffer's struggle with this problem, which Douglas John Hall has called "the reality of the Gospel and the unreality of the Churches," was to lead to the union between faith and life he proposed in *Cost of Discipleship* and on into the Finkenwalde experiment. Finkenwalde is the town near the Baltic Sea where the Confessing Church sponsored a Predigerseminar (preacher's seminary: a center for the study of practical theology prior to entry into parish service in the German church), which Bonhoeffer served as director and chief teacher for the years 1935-37.

In his university years, Dietrich struggled with the liberal theology of his professors. In 1925 he wrote a paper for

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[1] Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

Professor Reinhold Seeberg (who, not insignificantly, was probably the most conservative of the well-known theologians on the faculty and became Dietrich's dissertation supervisor) in which he challenged the rule of historical criticism; he says, "the texts are not just historical sources, but agents of revelation, not just specimens of writing, but sacred canon."[2] Bonhoeffer discovered the authority of scripture through such studies.

To use the categories of Sandra Schneiders in her magisterial work, *The Revelatory Text*,[3] he had begun to discover the difference between reading the Bible for information and reading it for transformation. For Schneiders, there are two primary objectives in the reading of New Testament texts. One may pursue the historical task, the who, what, when, where of the text in its cultural setting. Under the historical task would also come the history of the interpretation of the text. This is the way to information. But one may also pursue the existential task, as she calls it, which is to ask what meaning the text has in the life of the inquirer. This is the transformational pursuit. It is significant that one can pursue the historical task without engaging in the existential task, but the reverse is not true; no one can engage in the existential task without asking historical questions of the text. In the relation between these two tasks, the hermeneutical event takes place. In the case of an historical reading, the circle of meaning remains closed within the scope of what sense and reference can be made to the historic period; in the existential reading, the reader enters in as referent and the text then receives authority as the guide to personal transformation.

In this early period as he became a theologian, Bonhoeffer learned that a strictly historical reading of scripture was not enough. This historical reading marks the liberal approach to scripture, which has been performed since the time of Kant, in which the human intellect stands over against the biblical witness and allows that witness to take effect only where the interpreter appropriates the text.

It was not until 1931-32, however, according to his own reckoning, that Bonhoeffer assumed the implications of his early paper for Seeberg into his own life. In a letter written from Finkenwalde and dated January 27, 1936, to a woman to whom he had been engaged, he writes:

> ...something happened, something that has changed and transformed my life to the present day. For the first time I discovered the Bible.... I had often preached, I had seen a great deal of the church, and talked and preached about it. But I had not yet become a Christian.
>
> ...I know that at that time I turned the doctrine of Jesus Christ into something of personal advantage for myself.... Then the Bible, and in particular the sermon on the mount, freed me from that. Since then everything has changed. I have felt this plainly, and so have other people around me. It was a great liberation. It became clear to me that the life of a servant of Jesus Christ must belong to the church....[4]

In reading scripture, content became central for Bonhoeffer rather than method. Scripture is not to be made relevant to us; we are to become relevant to scripture, to cite the famous dictum of Karl Barth with

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[2] Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 56ff.

[3] Sandra Schneiders, *the Revelatory Text* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), 11-26.

[4] *A Testament to Freedom*, ed. Geffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1990), 447f. (There is a discrepancy in the dating of the letter; I use Bethge's dating, p. 155 n. 76.)

which Bonhoeffer was in agreement. He wrote to his brother-in-law, Rüdiger Schleicher, in April of 1936,

> Is it... intelligible to you if I say I am not at any point willing to sacrifice the Bible as this strange Word of God, that on the contrary, I ask with all my strength what God is trying to say to us through it? Everything outside the Bible has grown too uncertain for me. I am afraid of running only into a divine counterpart of myself.[5]

Bonhoeffer sought to locate his life in scripture, not locate scripture in his life. This difference is crucial, central, all-encompassing. It makes all the difference

Bonhoeffer sought to locate his life in scripture, not locate scripture in his life. This difference is crucial.

which road is taken, and the two options are mutually exclusive. The question of authority arises, and the authority is given, audaciously, to a standing under the Word of God which will enable the understanding of our lives. The liberal sense of an objective, historical reading is rejected in favor of that reading which allows for the incarnational miracle of Christ's birth to continue in the life of the one who hears and does the Word. In this way, Bonhoeffer seems close to the contemporary work of the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, whose monumental *Truth and Method* is aimed toward healing the gap in hermeneutics between intellectual comprehension and existential commitment. For Gadamer, as for Bonhoeffer, I think we can say "understanding" is our total existential participation in the world. "Interpretation," then, is what we do when understanding breaks down. Interpretation is an attempt to make sense out of data whose immediate reference we have lost. This means we have no choice but to interpret texts, and that the interpretation is in some ways determined by the starting point.[6] For Bonhoeffer, the starting point was the revelation of God in Christ, which is evident in some of his—we might say, forced—interpretations of Old Testament texts in the light of New Testament texts. Later in his life, however, he learned how to read the New Testament in light of the Old.[7]

This existential interpretation of the Bible is used, if not expounded as method, in *Cost of Discipleship*, and already forms the basis for Dietrich's reading of Genesis 1-3.

> The Bible is nothing but the book upon which the church stands. This is its essential nature, or it is nothing. Therefore the Scriptures need to be read and proclaimed wholly from the viewpoint of the end (i.e. the parousia of Christ).... Theological interpretation accepts the Bible as the book of the church and

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[5] Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 155f.

[6] On this, cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Second Revised Edition (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 381ff.

[7] Cf. Martin Kuske, *The Old Testament as the Book of Christ: An Appraisal of Bonhoeffer's Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976); and *A Bonhoeffer Legacy*, ed. A. J. Klassen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), essays under sections II and III.

interprets it as such. Its method is this assumption; it continually refers back from the text (which has to be ascertained with all the methods of philological research) to this supposition.[8]

Bonhoeffer submits to a radical interrogation of his life by the Word; the Word stands no longer, as in the liberal dialectic, "for" him; now he is able to read scripture "over against" himself, that is, with a view toward hearing the judgment and the grace God would proclaim into his life. Scripture, and more importantly, the Word of God, which comes through the proclamation of the gospel, has become the authority.

The question of authority refers to the means we use to derive the truthfulness of a claim upon our faith. Put another way, the question of authority is the question of legitimation, both for the sources used to gain authority and for the persons who find their authorization through a source.

The question of authority may be different for us, but we must remember the context. In the charged atmosphere of the 1930s in Germany, the issue of leadership for one's life took front and center place on the stage of history. And so, from 1933, the third move in Bonhoeffer's life begins: his opposition to Hitler. Bonhoeffer's reaction to the National Socialist rise to government was immediate. In a radio sermon delivered only two days after Adolf Hitler's accession to power on January 30, 1933, Bonhoeffer spoke on the meaning of the "leadership principle (*das Führerprinzip*), in which he proclaimed the true Führer for Germany as being the one Lord, Jesus Christ, and all other concepts of leadership to be "penultimate." The sermon was never completed; he was cut off in mid-manuscript by the censors.[9] This theme of leadership would later emerge in the Barmen Declaration, the faith statement of the Confessing Church:

> Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and in death....
>
> The various offices in the church do not establish a dominion of some over the others; on the contrary, they are for the exercise of the whole congregation. We reject the false doctrine, as though the Church, apart from this ministry, could and were permitted to give to itself, or allow to be given to it, special leaders vested with ruling power.

This leads us once more to the place of the Christian community. In addition to the authority of the Word, Bonhoeffer also had to discover, as he put it in the letter to his former fiancee, the Church.

The search for community and the meaning of spirituality

Now "Church" as community (*Gemeinde*, to use the German term we will become familiar with, and not merely *Kirche*, which as in English can refer to the building and the institution) is a quality of experience with which Bonhoeffer was concerned since his earliest days. Already in that paper written for Seeberg he had raised the issue of the spiritual interpretation of scripture as a necessary concomitant to purely historical reading, and for him the Holy Spirit works within the framework of the community of faith.[10]

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[8] Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, trans. John C. Fletcher (London: SCM Press, 1959), 8.

[9] Text in *No Rusty Swords*, ed. Edwin Robinson, trans. John Bowden (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 190-204.

[10] Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 57.

The angles that come together in the triangle—community, authority, and spirituality—are now in place. Bonhoeffer discovered the Word as the center which brings the community into being; this is one angle. At the same time, he discovered his and all Christians' need for community; this is the second angle. Where they converge at the third angle, we locate spirituality.

Spirituality is the lived experience of the faith. Consequently the relationship of the church as experience of the gospel to personal, or individual, spirituality is vital. Christian spirituality is nothing else than the experience of the meaning of God in Christ, mediated through the Holy Spirit and known in the community of faith. To this spirituality Bonhoeffer moves with inexorable logic and under the weight of his experiences at home and abroad from the early 30s.

Bonhoeffer's solid return to the church had been noted with some surprise by Paul Lehmann and Reinhold Niebuhr during the year he spent in residence at Union Theological Seminary in New York in 1930-31. But this return to church had already been sparked by his visit and study tour to Rome in 1924, where he discovered the church and its importance in the lives of the people; and the return was further hastened by his experiences in the Black churches of Harlem during his study year. It is but a short step from this interest to the generally Protestant, and specifically Lutheran notion of the church as a community of faithful hearing and interpretation.[11]

The community, for Bonhoeffer as an evangelical Lutheran, is the place where the Word is proclaimed and received in audible and visible forms. The congregational life with which Bonhoeffer was familiar did not stress the sacramental side, the visible Word, as much as does contemporary Lutheranism in the United States. The Word was central, and the task of preaching was taken with utmost seriousness as a sacramental event in and of itself. For Bonhoeffer, the proclamation had its basis in the incarnation, without which preaching makes no sense, but on the basis of which we dare to believe in the ongoing incarnation of Christ through the Word; this we shall label a sacramental view of preaching.[12] "The basis of the preaching church," he wrote in his lectures on preaching at the Finkenwalde seminary, "is not flesh and blood, not customs and culture, and its form is not one of cultural unity, but rather its basis is the Word and its form is obedience."[13]

> Bonhoeffer submits to a radical interrogation of his life by the Word.

The community of faith (*Gemeinde*) is called into existence through the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments; this is a pure Lutheran definition, and Bonhoeffer grows into it over the course of his life. The community of faith gather around the Word, is gathered by the Word, and in this community we read and perform scripture. It is important to note that, from a strict reading, all institutional forms are subservient to the church as

[11] See Bethge, 33-44, esp. 43.

[12] Clyde Fant, *Worldly Preaching* (New York: Crossroad, 1991, 101f.

[13] Fant, *Worldly Preaching*, 113.

event in Lutheran reckoning. Church happens where the Word is proclaimed and the sacraments are administered; thus it is a phenomenon which is episodic before it is durative. That is to say, the church is an occurrence before it is an institution. Furthermore, it is quite clear from a reading of Luther that the church is not a *Schrifthaus*, a place solely for the interpretation of text, but that the church is a *Mundhaus*, a place for the oral proclamation of the Word. Such understandings lie below Bonhoeffer's understanding of church as community, as well.[14]

The dialectic between individual and community

Lastly, we consider the interrelatedness between the community and the individual, which Bonhoeffer saw as a dialectic between standing in silence under the Word and sharing the Word in common life. "Let him who cannot be alone beware of community. Let him who is not in community beware of being alone."[15] So writes Bonhoeffer of the dialectic between solitude and community, which includes also the dialectic between silence and speech.[16] Our solitude is enabled by being a member of a community. Prayer and scripture reading go together, as we meditate on the Word in our solitude. This word, in which we hear the Word of God, is the basis upon which our prayer rises and it is the call into community, where all individual spirituality is nourished through the sacramental life and folded into the proclaimed Word. We pray because we are returning unto God what God has given us; by so doing, we complete the ecology of faith, if you will.

While in prison, Bonhoeffer poignantly yearned for community. Bereft of most human contact and cut off from the community of faith, he reverted to what he called the hidden discipline. In the face of the loss of visible community, he had to live on memory and hope and through what channels of correspondence were open to him. This hidden discipline takes on a new shape in the devotional life. Bonhoeffer took the notion of the ancient hidden discipline of the church, whereby the mysteries were not revealed to the uninitiated until after their baptism, and referred it to the way Christians must live in the secular world: not brandishing their faith, but allowing their lives to be informed by prayer, worship, the cycle of the church year. This disciplined life is expressed in what he called "righteous action" in the world.[17] Bereft of the community of faith at the end of his life, he knew again existentially that which he had earlier known by experience at Finkenwalde and then had written about in *Life Together*,

> ...between the death of Christ and the Last Day it is only by a gracious anticipation of the last things that Christians are privileged to live in visible fellowship with other Christians. It is by the grace of God that a congregation is permitted to gather visible in this world to share God's Word and sacrament."[18]

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[14] There are many sources for Luther's doctrine of the Word, but a brief summary may be found in H. A. Wilson, *The Speaking God: Luther's Theology of Preaching* (Madras, India: UELCI Press, 1982).

[15] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John W. Doberstein (New York: Harper and Row, 1954), 78.

[16] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 78ff.

[17] On this, cf. Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, second edition, revised and expanded, ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 281, 286, 300.

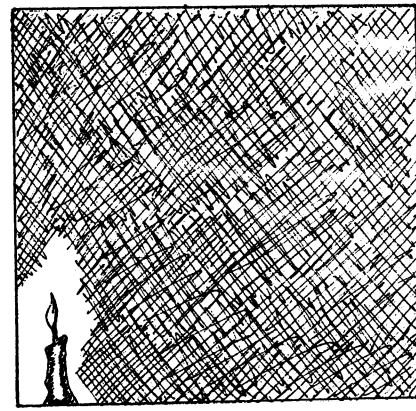
[18] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 18.

Waiting in the Darkness

A Good Friday Reflection

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In April of 1992 there was a report in the *New York Times* of a forty year-old father in the Bronx who killed his daughter and stepdaughter while they slept, waited for fourteen hours to ambush his wife and then killed himself. Some of you probably read it. It is a wrenching story of senseless suffering. It happens much too often that children are incidental victims of violence.



The stepdaughter, Carmelita, was fourteen. The previous year Carmelita had written the following poem for the school yearbook:

I lived my life in shadows of darkness
Behind the light, and full of sadness.
Where owls would howl, and stars would shine,
I worked all day from 9 to 9.
Sent to accomplish forbidden deeds
None of which I could succeed.
At night I sleep on cold, hard floors
With thin paper blankets near opened doors.
Each day I pray to the Lord above
To give me faith, hope and love.
And someday he shall set me free
From all the pain that lives in me.

This story of violence is horrendous enough. But the pictures in the poem reveal the kind of life most of us would rather not see. We do not like to know that children sleep with thin paper blankets near opened doors. We would rather not believe that parents ask children to do what is forbidden. It is not that we don't care. We do. But we feel powerless. And so we would rather not hear about things we cannot change. Edwin Brock has captured in a brief verse my feelings about seeing more than I can bear to see:

You will not see the world at first;
You will touch the flesh and you will cry.
Years later, you will cry because
You see too much and touch too little.

When we do clearly see human suffering in our midst, we usually want to know what we can do. When we are able to see how much evil there is in our lives, in our society, and in the world, when we can say it as Carmelita does, that we live our lives in shadows of darkness behind the light, and full of sadness, we want to know: What shall I do?—What can be done?—What must be done, to eliminate unnecessary suffering and violence and death? How do we begin to take back the night? How can we reclaim our neighborhoods? Or what can we do to make families safe and strong again? It is important for us to ask these questions because they are a sign that we have not given in to an inevitable cycle of terror and repression and violence. They are important questions for us to ask because they are against despair and apathy. They are questions of hope that call us to action.

But not today, on Good Friday.

There will be time for action after Easter, after the work of God is made visible, after we have again heard the word of promise that death and darkness do not have the last word. After Easter we must ask what we can do because there is darkness everywhere. After Easter, after we are reminded again that God will have the last word, after Easter when we know that the enemy we contend with is a dying dragon, then we will do what we can to eliminate unnecessary suffering—to be set free, as Carmelita said it, from all the pain that lives in me. But after Easter.

For now, however, in our remembrance of God's action, there is only silence and darkness and the agony of one man. For now, before we hear again the great Easter promise—for this time when we remember our Lord's suffering and death—it is important for us to stay in the darkness until the darkness is clear. We need to wait in the dark long enough to discover what God is doing under cover of darkness.

As the Gospel writers recorded it, there was darkness over the land from noon until three while Jesus was dying. We are not told why. Darkness in the daytime is usually the result of an eclipse of the sun or a severe storm. Whatever the reason for the sun's absence, what we know is that the redemptive work of God was done under cover of darkness.

In a sense it is not surprising that God's redemptive work was being done in darkness. Some things only grow in the dark. For that matter, all of us begin life in the dark. And the vital body organs that keep us alive all function in the dark. We need the darkness in order to rest and grow. God works in the dark as well as in the light. Perhaps it is just as well that we do not know fully the work of God on the cross. I for one would rather not see God suffer.

When we cannot see God working, when God's activity is hidden under cover of darkness, we can only trust that what God is doing is for us. There is a passage in one of the notebooks C. S. Lewis wrote after his wife died that captures something of our struggle with the hiddenness of God. God is always ready to receive our gratitude and praise. But turn to God when your need is desperate, says Lewis, "when all help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence. And the longer you wait, the more emphatic the silence will become. There are no lights in the windows. It might be an empty house" (*A Grief Observed*, 9).

When it is silent and dark, we don't know what God is up to. So we conclude that no God with an ounce of compassion could watch children be burned at Auschwitz or starve to death in Somalia or be shot to death in their yards by stray bullets or be addicted in their mothers' wombs or die on a cross. It seems self-evident to us that a compassionate God would not be silent in the face of such suffering. When God is working silently under cover of darkness, it takes a great leap of faith to believe that what God is doing is on our behalf.

The Book of the Dun Cow by Walter Wangerin (Harper & Row, 1978) is a powerful story of good and evil and the silence of God. The rooster Chaunticleer is the leader of the Coop. Life is peaceful except for the peskiness of John Wesley Weasel until the evil force Wyrm floods the land and Chaunticleer's three sons are drowned. In the night from the roof of the Coop Chaunticleer crows his agony.

Perhaps it is just as well that we do not know fully the work of God on the cross.

> "...by *your* will I am where I am. By *your* will things are what they are. Now by *my* will I demand to hear it from your own mouth: *Where are my sons?*" Chaunticleer drove hot air deep into his lungs. He roared [into the darkness]: "And by *my* will I demand to know now—it is most certainly time now to know: *O God, where are you?*" (p. 125)

When he was finished, Chaunticleer waited in the night in silence.

It is never easy to wait in darkness when God is silent. But it is necessary. We need to wait in the darkness because visions are born in the night. In the night I saw visions, the prophet Daniel reports. Unless we are able to enter into the darkness and wait until the darkness is clear, we are not likely to see what must be done. If we stop at the edge of darkness, as we might prefer, without some deep personal exposure to that which negates life, our hope will always be superficial. We will live by half-hopes. Our longing for a permanent summer resort far from the madding crowd is a

romantic illusion fueled by fear and apathy. The alternative is not easy, however. It is always costly to look into the darkness of human life, but it is the only way to a vision of what must be done. In his book *Unconscious God*, Victor Frankl reports this experience of darkness:

> In the solitary darkness of the "pit" where men had abandoned me, He was There. When I did not know His Name, He was there; God was there. In the darkness I had acquired a sense of my own unique mission in the world. I knew then, as I know now, that I must have been preserved for some reason—however small, it is something that only I can do, and it is vitally important that I do it.

We will see most clearly what we must do if we wait in the darkness, and the hope that will sustain us for that vision will be deep enough and strong enough because it was born in the night. Knowledge of the world's darkness is the precondition for authentic hope. Lighting a candle at mid-day is a little silly. But when we light a candle at midnight, we say to the darkness: We beg to differ.

So I invite you to wait with me in the darkness of this day if only for a little while—because we must. Visions that last are born in the dark night of the soul. I invite you to wait with me in the darkness in order to be renewed in our courage to dream again and so that our hopes and dreams will be real and as big as God's vision for a new heaven and a new earth.

One last word. We are able to wait in the darkness because we know how the story ends. We know that the darkness will not ultimately overcome us because we have the light of Christ. When we lived in Dubuque, Iowa, it was part of our Easter celebration to attend a vigil at a Trappist monastery. The ritual would begin in darkness as the monks chanted a psalm. Flint and stone were struck to light the tinder from which would be lit a single candle. It was this single candle that led the procession through dark corridors on the way to the chapel. And as we went, the Prior would sing, and we would respond: "The Light of Christ." And sometimes, when the candle was hidden because the procession turned a corner, some of us were in total darkness. Still we sang, "The Light of Christ."

It is always costly to look into the darkness of human life, but it is the only way to a vision of what must be done.

So it is. Even in the darkness, we know that the light of Christ is up ahead. And so we can wait. Until the darkness is clear. Until we have the courage to hope and dream again. And until we catch a glimpse of what God is doing under cover of darkness.

Israel, the Prophets, and the Book of Jonah

The Rest of the Story: The Formation of the Canon

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The prophet as a troubler

The proverb quoted by Jesus is true: "No prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown." Prophets pay a stiff price for proclaiming a message which speaks to concerns that lie beyond the everyday conscience of their society. The prophetic message, declares Abraham Heschel, is pitched "an octave too high" for the majority of people;[1] the prophets are "out-of-step" visionaries who unnecessarily trouble society.

Frequently the words of the prophets depicted God as the enemy rather than the assuring God who is for us and with us. Not surprisingly, the response to the prophets and their message was often hostile. Fortunately, not everyone was as hostile to prophetic criticism as was King Ahab, who put Micaiah ben Imlah in prison in order to silence his bad-news oracles (1 Kgs 22:27). On the other hand, some of the powerful stepped beyond Ahab in an attempt to still the voices that intoned a "Thus saith the LORD" in *their* community. Jeremiah, for example, was threatened with death; only the support of powerful leaders saved him (Jer 26:24). Uriah, his prophetic colleague, was not so lucky. He fled to Egypt, but the anger against him burned hot—so hot, in fact, that some of his enemies pursued him even to Egypt, captured him, brought him back to Israel and killed him (Jer 26:20-23).

Throughout Israel's long history, the prophets encountered continuing resistance and hostility. Proclaiming the "word of the Lord," they offered fierce, unsparing accusations against the people of Israel. Amos castigates the people of his day because they "trample on the poor... afflict the righteous," and Hosea adds that "their heart is false." Isaiah declares that their hands are "full of blood," while Jeremiah wonders if

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[1] See A. J. Heschel, *The Prophets* I (New York: Harper, 1969): 9.

there is "one person who acts justly" in Jerusalem. Ezekiel effectively depicts the depth of Israelite rebellion when he accuses Judah of being more wicked than Sodom.[2]

Some people have thought that these repeated prophetic accusations demonstrate Israel's extraordinary rebelliousness to the divine teaching. Some of the church fathers thought that this exceptional wickedness of the Israelites carried over into post-biblical Judaism. See, for example, the words of Chrysostom:

> It is because you killed Christ... that there is now no restoration, no mercy anymore and no defense. Long ago your audacity was directed against servants, against Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah.... But you have eclipsed everything in the past and through your madness against Christ, you have committed the ultimate transgression.[3]

Do not the Jewish Scriptures themselves confirm this judgment of Israel and the Jewish community?

The rest of the story

But before we read the Old Testament accusations in this manner, we should, as Paul Harvey says, "hear the rest of the story." And what is the full story? Let us begin with a question. What does it mean that in Israel there existed a strong prophetic movement that was, in the main, very critical of Israelite society—especially of the powerful in that society? Elsewhere in the ancient Near East there were prophetic communities, but in none of them do we see the existence of such a powerful prophetic critique of society as occurred in Israel. Does this mean that the people in these other societies were more moral than the Israelites—not in need of this critique? The evidence points in the opposite direction. It seems clear that when one considers the teaching of the Old Testament and the character of Israelite society, one can only come to the conclusion that in the ancient Near East there existed no society that was more sensitive to the matters of justice and kindness than the Israelite/Jewish society.

In Israelite society the prophets did not stand alone; there were significant numbers of people who shared their concerns. The divine oracle addressed to the despairing Elijah declared that there were at least seven thousand Israelites who remained faithful to God (1 Kgs 19:15). This announcement makes us aware of the existence of a prophetic *community* which stood behind the prophet (see also Jer 26:16-19). Without significant popular support, the prophetic movement could not have found root in Israel.

This is not to say that the prophetic attack on Israelite society lacked basis in fact. On the contrary, the prophets pointed to serious wrongs that were occurring in the Israelite community. Nevertheless, one must remember that these are the wrongs that happen in *every* society including present-day Christian society. It is because the sins of Israel are so similar to the sins of our day that Christian preachers can use the Old Testament prophetic texts to address the evils of our time. The evils of Israelite society were real and serious but also not peculiar to the Israelites. Contrary to the judgment of some church fathers, the Israelites were not especially or unusually evil! The prophetic message heard in ancient Israel is never out of date or irrelevant,

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[2] For the above scriptural citations, see Amos 5:11-12; Hos 10:2; Isa 1:15; Jer 5:1; Ezek 16:46-48.

[3] See Rosemary Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide* (New York: Seabury, 1974), 145.

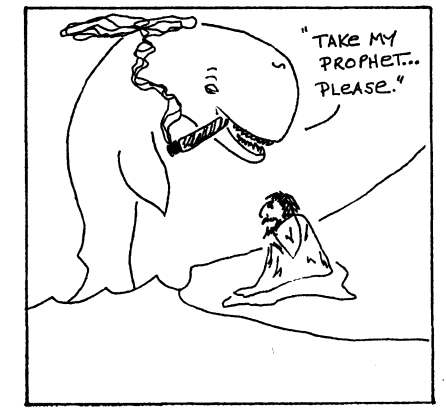
because the wrongs of the past are alive wherever and whenever people live in society.

Further, one should note that in Israelite society, as opposed to other societies in the ancient world, the prophets had the freedom to address these evils and to call for a turn away from such behavior. We know that some of the prophets were persecuted and killed. But the life of the Israelite prophet was not all that different from the experience of prophetic persons in other societies. The "prophets," for example, in the United States have not fared much better. Such people have been harassed, persecuted, and killed (e.g., Martin Luther King Jr. and others who worked for racial justice in the 1960s).

What are we to say then about these passages that so uncompromisingly criticize Israelite society? First, Israelite society was not a perfect society, but second, we need to admire this society in which rigorous criticism could be voiced! We can think of communities and institutions in our day where serious dissent is not allowed; in Israelite society dissent was possible, because many people had respect for the Torah tradition—for the commandments that were rooted in the Sinai revelation. It was a remarkable society that allowed a succession of prophets to exist (the few we know and the many more unknown) for over five hundred years.

Prophetic literature as scripture

But the real wonder of the Israelite/Jewish society is that these fierce prophetic oracles were preserved and later held to be Holy Scripture. What an amazing act! These severe criticisms of Israelite society were not destroyed, forgotten, or subjected to



paraphrased moderation, but preserved to be read as the Word of God. What kind of people subjects itself to this kind of self-criticism? Certainly not a people who lust after wickedness.

However, to subject oneself to self-criticism is dangerous. We know, for example, that if we speak too critically of ourselves or admit too candidly the truth of the criticism made of us, people might think badly of us; therefore, we learn not to be *too* honest or explicit when acknowledging our faults. However, Israel—Israel was *too* honest! She preserved these sharp, specific, accusatory words. She realized that there were great wrongs in her society, wrongs that continued on and needed to be addressed, and so she preserved these words and held them as Holy Scripture for all to read. Israel would not hide the passionate accusations of the prophets—would not pretend that the wrongs did not exist—would not moderate the prophet's scream. No, the accusations, "trample the poor... afflict the righteous... heart is false... hands full of blood... no one acts justly" *must* be included in Israel's Holy Scripture! What a remarkable response!

The Jonah cartoon

Prophetic criticism knifed painfully under the Israelite skin; it hurt! But it was preserved and became a part of the Jewish canon of scripture. But what are we to say about the inclusion of the book of Jonah as a part of Holy Scripture? It is one thing to be fiercely criticized by prophetic oracles, it is another to be *caricatured and cartooned* by the prophetic author who has given us the book of Jonah. This story of Jonah was probably written about 400 B.C.E., that is, during the post-exilic period when Jewish exiles, newly returned to the land after long years in Babylon, were attempting to re-establish the Israelite nation.

Together with the earlier prophets, the author of the book of Jonah was alive to the issues of his day. The issue that cried out for attention, concerned the character of God and his relationship to Israel and to non-Jewish peoples. During this time of crisis, when the community's *survival* seemed to be at stake, only Jews descended from families that were in the Babylonian exile were considered to be members of the new, divine community. God was the God of the Jews, and Jews alone were the people of God (see, e.g., Ezra-Nehemiah). Within this expression of belief, there was little room for a positive view of non-Jewish people.

Mindful of the situation in which the Jews lived, one can appreciate how this exclusive understanding of their relationship to God developed. The land to which the exiles returned had not recovered from the destructive march of the Babylonian armies in 587. The city of Jerusalem, with its falling walls and Temple ruins, was a bitter reminder of a beautiful past for which the returnees longed (Lam 1:1). But further, the small, fragile Jewish community was now under the rule of the Persian empire and was convinced that its future was threatened by the non-Jewish peoples who surrounded it. Many Jews thought that they would not be able to survive unless they gave first attention to their own existence and took action to guard their land from outsiders.

There are times when one should think of others and reach out to them. Are there not times also when one must think of oneself? When it is a matter of survival, it is time to think of oneself—isn't it? In any case, that appears to be the view of some authors in the Bible. In the books of Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel, and Revelation, we see the faith community under attack. During a time of threat it did not seem appropriate to talk about God's love for other people or of reaching out to them. Later on, when the threat is past, when the community has secured itself, then, perhaps, one may be able to speak about the wider concerns of God. In the time of threat, however, a community often believes it needs to pull together—needs to be a team; this is the pattern for success. A community struggling for survival finds it most difficult to hear the "octave higher"—to hear about repentance and about God's concern for other people. In such a circumstance it is especially painful to be subjected to a story that uses one's enemy as a model of pious behavior. Such a community does not "need" a book like that of Jonah which depicts cruel Assyria as a fine example of the repentant spirit.

As we have noted, the prophets were usually severe in their criticism of Israelite society, but though painful, it was probably easier to bear their rough, outspoken words than the story told by the author of Jonah who, seemingly with a malicious smile, cartooned his own community. Apparently, he had no sensitivity to the threat of survival faced by the Jews of his day.

Why did the author of Jonah choose this "unreal" and "unfair" story as a way of addressing the issues of his day? The story appears to be out of balance, one-sided; it characterizes Jonah (and Jews of his day) as uncaring and focused on themselves. The author shows no awareness of the threatening situation in which Jews found themselves—newly returned to the land and surrounded by non-Jews who seemed none too friendly to them.

Further, was it necessary for the author to use such sharp satire—cutting humor—to describe the stance of the Jews in his day? Why did he, for example, find it necessary to depict Israelite leadership as a rebellious prophet who finally ended up in Nineveh, but only under unusual pressure (being swallowed by a fish and "redirected!").

And what should one think of a *Jewish* author who depicts the capital city of Israel's ancient enemy as a "repentant city?" Here in the Assyrian capital, Nineveh, *everyone* immediately participates in repentance: people, king, and animals! The whole of Nineveh repents fully and completely even though there is no promise that repentance would save the city. How could a Jewish author depict Gentiles in such a positive manner—especially these Assyrian Gentiles who had brought North Israel to its end in 721? Is it not an irresponsible exaggeration?

And, once again, was it fair for the author to end the story by depicting Jonah, the Hebrew, as being more concerned about a small plant or tree (and Jonah's comfort under it!) than he was for the many citizens, children, and domestic animals of Nineveh? Can such an ending be anything other than a complete insult to the Jewish community? Does it not show a willful misrepresentation of the true situation in which Israel found herself—a people struggling for survival? One could understand this misrepresentation of the Jews if the story had been written by an enemy or an outsider. But to be so caricatured by an insider, a Jewish author—a member of the covenant community—that hurts, and that angers.

What should the Jewish community do with this "unfair," totally out-of-balance story?

What should the Jewish community do with this "unfair," totally out-of-balance story? No doubt there were those who wanted to trash it. However, remarkably, the book has survived. Jews had some hesitations about including Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and Ezekiel in the canon, but apparently there was no big controversy over the story of Jonah. The Jewish community preserved this author's caricatured, cartooned critique and held it as Holy Scripture! Extraordinary. Not the usual response of a community to this kind of critique. In official histories of religious organizations and secular institutions there may be included some critical comments—usually of a moderate kind—but only rarely do we find in "official/approved" histories a caricatured or cartooned representation of the institutional community. Usually the "insider, official author" of these histories puts the best foot forward, and if there is something negative that needs to be criticized, then the criticism is often moderated through "explanation."

But the book of Jonah stands as it is. There is no additional comment which contextualizes the book and author. The Jews who preserved this book and accepted it as Holy Scripture, were *too* honest. They did not think ahead (!) and realize that this book (along with the oracles of the prophets) would be used against them so that they would be depicted as an uncaring people, completely focused on themselves.

But if one forever wonders about what other people will do with what is said or written, then one has an eye more to people than to God. Wonderfully, the Jewish community that preserved the book of Jonah as scripture, kept the eye and heart directed to God.

Jonah and Yom Kippur

Still today the book of Jonah has an important place in the liturgy of Judaism. It is read at one of the most sacred festivals of the Jewish year, Yom Kippur. Here, at a festival that calls the Jewish community to repentance, the comic, cartoon story of Jonah serves as a reminder that God expects and respects repentance.

Even though Jews up to the present day have suffered at the hands of Gentiles, still they have retained the book of Jonah in the liturgy—a book in which the Gentile citizens of Nineveh become the model of repentance for the Jewish community. In this story the Gentile "outsiders" *do* the repentance that God asks from Jewish "insiders!"

Those who have selected this book for reading at Yom Kippur have gotten underneath the comic representation of Gentile repentant-piety and of Jonah's hardness of heart. The story is seen to point to a central element of religious life and thought that tends ever to be slighted, especially by religious communities that establish an exclusive relationship with God. That central element is repentance—the broken heart and contrite spirit. This passionate tract, made scalpel-sharp by cartooned humor, is received as the Word of God. Who could have expected that? Not only would it have been a surprise to the author of Jonah, but it is a surprise to all of us who know how hard it is to accept critique from those who appear to lampoon *our* views and life style.

The decision of the Jewish community—spread over hundreds of years—to include the prophetic writings *and* the book of Jonah in the canon, speaks a word of encouragement to the human situation. The acceptance of these books as scripture reminds us that there are people who are capable of listening attentively to the divine voice even when (especially when) it speaks sharp, accusing words regarding wrongs that have been done. Without denying the human capacity for terrible evil, the courageous decision to adopt these books as Holy Scripture speaks of that "other" aspect of humankind that is sometimes forgotten: the ability to respond to God with exceptional sensitivity and sincerity. Such people are present in every community, and they nourish hope in the midst of a world that often gives reason for despair.

In honor of Earl and Rosalie Dahlstrom

Book Reviews

The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2. By David T. Tsumura. Vol. 83 of the Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplementary Series, ed. D. J. A. Clines and P. R. Davies. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989. 201 pages. Cloth. $33.50.

The author intends to clarify the nature of the relationship between the earth and the waters in the first two chapters of Genesis. According to some recent scholars, that relationship is totally different in the two chapters. In Gen 1:2, the earth was a "watery chaos" prior to creation; water was an enemy of creation. In Gen 2:5-8, the primordial state of the earth was the "dry chaos" of the desert, and water became an "assisting element of creation." Does, however, Gen 1:2 sustain the assumption of "a primordial threat against creation"? What is the function and the meaning of the Hebrew term that is rendered as "mist" or "flood" in Gen 2:6? The author presents careful linguistic explanations and contextual analyses of the Hebrew terms *tohu wa-bohu* (RSV: without form and void) and *tehom* (RSV: the deep) in Gen 1:2, and the terms for earth and water and their relationship in Genesis 2.

He concludes that there are both similarities and differences in the nature of the relationship between earth and the waters in Genesis 1 and 2. It is inadequate to focus on the cosmological discrepancies between the two creation stories as former scholars do. A "chaos-motif" is not attested by Gen 1:2. It is misleading to assume in that verse "a primordial threat against creation" and hence, a sharp cosmological contrast to Gen 2:5-6.

The author offers an accurate analysis and an alternative view as opposed to previous scholarship. The reviewer finds his solution attractive. Beyond the specialized field of Old Testament studies, the book addresses issues that should also concern biblical theology, the theology of creation, and Christian preaching insofar as it is engaged in preserving God's creation—our world.

H. Michael Niemann
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Rostock, Germany

Archaeology and the New Testament. By John McRay. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991. 432 Pages. Cloth. $39.95.

This is a beautiful book with many black-and-white illustrations and maps (it's too bad that color was not used). John McRay is Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College Graduate School and has considerable experience in teaching archaeology and in actual excavations.

The intention of the book is not to include all sites mentioned in the New Testament or to be an encyclopedia of archaeological sites. The preface also states that McRay does not attempt to "prove" the truth of the New Testament but to provide information that will enable others to better understand and apply biblical teaching. No sociological analysis is offered.

The archaeological methodology is very well described.

The arrangement is quite unusual. After the methodological introduction, the first two parts describe the architecture of New Testament times and the building program of Herod the Great in an interesting manner (but practically without reference to the NT). Part 3 then applies some of these data to Jesus' youth and ministry in Galilee and to his ministry and last days in Judea. Part 4, entitled "Archaeology and the Church," deals with sites in Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome and contains a chapter on papyri.

In many areas, McRay offers more information than perhaps is needed. Not everything discussed is relevant to the NT; some pertains to much earlier and some to much later periods. Often Byzantine churches and other buildings

are taken as indication that they refer to the correct sites at which New Testament events took place. Some places to which he refers are not mentioned in the NT (e.g., Dodona). The Shroud of Turin is included. Other rather important places with archaeological remains (Cyprus, Crete, Malta) are omitted. Probably the author's own interests and experiences are reflected in the selection.

The architecture is described interestingly but in a strange division: 1. City Layouts and Civic Structures, 2. Religious and Domestic Structures. It seems to me that civic and religious structures are often so closely allied that the treatment should not be separated in this manner.

The author offers moral judgments (e.g., pp. 63, 149, 301) which seem inappropriate in this kind of book. There is some tendency to prove conservative opinions. Despite disclaimers (e.g., in regard to Peter's house in Capernaum: "It would not be prudent to apply the data beyond that," p. 166), it is quite clear that the author frequently assumes historical accuracy. Despite stating that his intention is not to prove the truth of the New Testament, the reader senses the author's conviction that archaeology does support many biblical data. Biblical statements in the four Gospels and Acts are taken as accurate without any discussion or argument. 2 Timothy is ascribed to Paul.

Although the Gallio inscription is discussed, it is not pictured. Sometimes, areas mentioned in the text are not shown on the maps (e.g., Paphlagonia). There is no discussion of the South Galatian (Province) vs. North Galatian (Territory) theory.

The last chapter discusses papyri and other NT manuscripts and textual criticism. Page 352 wrongly gives the impression that the Sinaiticus is a papyrus.

There are copious references to relevant literature in the endnotes. Helpful appendixes provide a glossary, some lists of emperors, etc., and an index. The author uses the abbreviations B.C. and A.D. rather than B.C.E. and C.E.

There are very few misprints, although on p. 284, the Greek font evidently did not kick in.

The book can be read through from beginning to end to great advantage, but it also can be used as a reference tool for archaeological information in relation to New Testament sites.

Wilhelm C. Linss
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

The Church in Latin America, 1492-1992. CEHILA. Edited by Enrique Düssel. Vol. 1 in *A History of the Church in the Third World.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992. x and 501 pages. Cloth. $49.95.

This volume dedicated to the Latin American region introduces the first of three projected ones on the history of the church in the Third World under the auspices of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT). The present installation is a well compiled and edited collection of monographs that gathers the contributions of well-known historians of CEHILA, the Commission for the Study of Church History in Latin America. Enrique Düssel, its president and editor, marks the hermeneutical principle that characterizes this historiographical effort: "We need to try to write, above all, the history of the church from the poor, for the poor and—the ideal to which we are still aspiring—by the poor themselves" (2). Perhaps more a declaration of intent, a direction, than a well thought out category, the statement nevertheless reflects well the concern of these historians to situate the ecclesiastical event within the larger socio-historical referential frame of the continent.

The volume is divided into three parts. The first consists of a "Chronological Survey" following roughly the now classical periodification advanced two decades ago by Düssel: its chapters sweep from the proto-history of Latin America (with special emphasis on the Amerindian cultures and religion), through the condition of Christendom under Spanish and Portuguese rule, the crisis of this model with the independence from Spain and the dawn of the Neo-colonial Pact around British capital, and finally to the period corresponding to Capitalist dependency. A second part is devoted to a "Regional Survey," a more in-depth analysis of the church in various regions of the Latin Ameri-

can world, including a short chapter on the Hispanic church in the U. S. The third and final section, "Some Special Subject," comprises a heterogeneous array of themes: Protestantism in Latin America, the role of the church in the defense of human rights, church base communities, the church and Afro-American slavery, and a schematic history of liberation theology, among others. A bibliographical appendix concludes the volume with an exhaustive list of titles and other resources—an essential reference for anyone interested in this area of study.

The merit of the book is twofold. First, the peculiar "liberationist" hermeneutical perspective, though not a homogeneous concept, provides nevertheless a sound coherency to the periodification and structuring of the material without compromising its scientific nature. Second, the careful scholarship underlying the authors' work renders a compact, yet well focused and balanced introduction to the subject. This constitutes perhaps the best volume available for those seeking a first yet substantial look upon the history of the church in Latin America.

Guillermo Hansen
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Anti-Covenant. Counter-Reading Women's Lives in the Hebrew Bible. Edited by Mieke Ball. Vol. 22 of Bible and Literature Series, ed. David M. Gunn. Vol. 81 of the Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series. Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989. 243 pages. Cloth. $42.50.

The authors realized how biblical stories changed while the culture took shape, and how the readers did as much violence to the stories as the stories did to the culture. This interaction is the focus of the book's papers. The topic of interaction between text and readership centered around the ideologies of gender, an issue which is acutely relevant in the case of a body of texts which has shaped our conceptions of gender to a large extent.

The book deals with not only the problem of the question of literature but also the question of *reading*. Reading is no more than actualizing possibilities in one's own mind and projecting them upon the object named "text." The author reflects upon the pre-text, and the reader reflects upon the text which is his/her pre-text. *Meaning* is a property of the act of reading. Both, reading and meaning, are influenced by the conventions of every reader's social group and historical period.

No scholarship is void of historical and ideological biases and of the blindness inherent in privileged positions. Through reading and interpreting biblical texts, women by virtue of their so far excluded positions can rearrange the texts in such a way that the accounts of women's lives as we find them in the Bible become more instructive, more inspiring than they were read so far. In the present book, readings by women are presented explicitly as readings without positivistic claims to truth. The aim of the papers is not to 'prove' how unequal is the distribution of power in biblical stories about women. Rather, they show a narrative structure which is the result of the authors' ordering of the pre-textual material.

In this volume anthropology as a discipline is an important one, with history, theology, and philology as less central discourses. The authors deal with, for example, the story of Abraham and Isaac's near-sacrifice, Deborah (Judges 4/5), (the) Tamar(s) of Genesis 38 and 2 Samuel 13, virgin daughter sacrifices (Genesis 19; Judges 11 and 19), Delilah, and Judith. Against the tradition the papers made visible the other side of male behavior—the experience of women whose traces are all but repressed from the texts. The authors successfully demonstrate the surplus result of feminist scholarship.

This stimulating book provokes in a positive manner. Biblical scholars and students will gain by studying it in the same way as teachers in religion and Christian laypersons.

H. Michael Niemann

Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion: A Contemporary Theodicy. By Wendy Farley. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990. 150 pages. Paper. $13.99.

Suffering, especially radical suffering, is the primary focus of this book. Radical suffering is undeserved suffering (i.e. child abuse and death camps) which dehumanizes and destroys people. Farley is dissatisfied with traditional approaches to theodicy because they emphasize categories of sin, retribution, and atonement. She argues that the classical theological tradition of Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin does not adequately deal with suffering except as a natural consequence of individual and/or corporate sin. In the end, all they do is justify the presence of evil and suffering in the world. Farley contends that traditional theology is incongruent when it says that suffering is God's punishment to the human race for its sin, even though some people suffer much more than others. Her intent is to offer us a contemporary theodicy that takes into account the pervasive presence of evil and suffering without justifying them.

Farley argues that theology must take suffering seriously because it indicates the tragic construction of the world. She explains what she understands as "tragic vision" by unpacking the prevailing themes of tragedy: "attentiveness to suffering, freedom and responsibility, a world order that distorts this freedom, and resistance to tragic suffering" (23).

Farley argues that in a tragic vision of the world, creation is good. However, it is finite. Hence, creation is ruptured, and evil and suffering are part of the very structure of creation. Evil and suffering do not enter into creation as a result of the Fall, but rather as a result of finitude. There is no hope of completely destroying or eradicating evil and suffering from the world. It is intrinsically a part of creation.

Even though evil and suffering are permanent fixtures of the tragic vision of creation, God has not abandoned the world. God is neither indifferent or powerless before evil. God is present and active through Divine Compassion. Farley prefers to use the paradigm of love to speak of God. Humanity experiences God's love through Divine Compassion which empowers people to actively resist evil and suffering. Divine Compassion is described as a power or a force. However, it is not a force that conquers and dominates the forces of evil and suffering. Farley is adamant about not replacing one form of domination with another. In a tragic vision of reality, the only appropriate method of experiencing and living out God's power of compassion is through resistance.

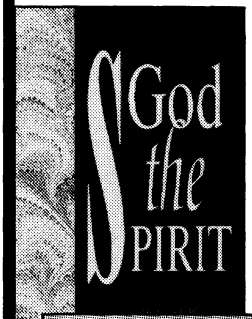
Resistance takes many forms. It can be as monumental as courageously attempting to dismantle a system of injustice, or as individual as making an attitude adjustment. The ultimate goal of Divine Compassion is to resist the erosion and ultimate destruction of the human spirit so that evil does not have the final word.

Farley's description of the tragic vision of creation is compelling. However, her argument for Divine Compassion and resistance is not as cogent. One problem is that she too quickly dismisses the strength and benefits of eschatological vision and hope. She is correct in demanding justice now. However, an eschatological vision of hope can and does empower people to resist the suffering and injustice of evil. It is possible to offer a vision of eschatological hope while keeping the future open. Also, her argument that evil does not have the final word would be much more cogent if she delved more deeply into the significance of the resurrection. One of the few times that she mentions the resurrection, she observes that "the resurrection suggests that evil is not absolute" (132). The message of the resurrection is much more powerful than a mere suggestion!

Despite these reservations, *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion* is very stimulating reading that raises many questions and issues. Farley draws on a wide variety of literature ranging from scripture to Tolkien. She presents her argument in a lucid, readable fashion that is assessable to the general reader. It is definitely worth reading, in parish or classroom.

Jeffrey S. Zell
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

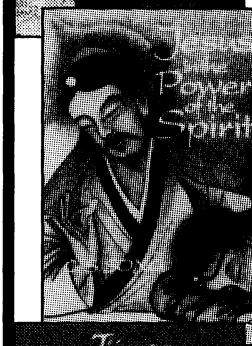
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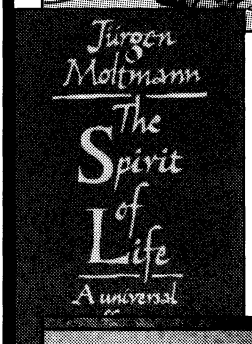
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The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin. By Andrew Sung Park. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993. 202 pages. Paper. $16.95.

This book tries to relate the concept of *Han* to the traditional European concept of sin, and in doing so, the author wishes to construct a broader and coherent doctrine of sin. The first half of the book analyzes the concept, the structure, and the roots of *Han*, which the author defines as "frustrated hope, the collapsed feeling of pain, resentful bitterness, and the wounded heart." Andrew Park writes that *Han* is an Asian, particularly Korean, term used to describe human suffering as the result of sin. He then provides examples of *Han* experiences in racial discrimination and economic and political injustices that afflict human beings and cause suffering in the world. The second half of the book deals with "justification by faith," "salvation," and "interreligious dialogue" in relation to the issue of *Han*.

Relating the concept of *Han* with the Christian doctrine of salvation, the author observes the traditional doctrine of salvation as "freedom from death and error" according to the early Greek church, as "freedom from guilt and its outcomes" for the Roman Catholic church, and as "freedom from the law and its anxiety-producing and condemning power" in classical Protestantism. However, the author argues, the traditional views of salvation and sin have been defined from the perspective of sinners, and have overlooked the *victims* of the sins of the world. Park states that the traditional view of salvation has meant the healing of sinners from the pain of guilt, fear, and death, but he insists that the healing must be relational, with compassionate concern about the healing of the victims of sinners. The author wants to see the definition of salvation as not only "freedom from sin" for sinners, but as freedom from *Han* for the victims of sin as well. According to the author, this freedom from *Han* can be achieved in the dialectic relation between sinners and their victims. Then he states that the purpose for writing this book has been "to demonstrate this shortcoming in the doctrine of sin and to suggest its complement through the notion of *Han*, in the hope of bringing forth a holistic vision of the salvation of both sinners and their victims."

However, it is questionable whether the traditional Christian view of sin and its salvation really ignored the victims of sin, or persons of *Han*. Christian concern with sin and sinners has always dealt with the consequences of that sin. To save the sinners as well as the victims of sin, the Savior came to the world and lived among the people.

The author is well acquainted with traditional and contemporary doctrines of Christianity. The book's scholarship is respectable, and it can be included in a required book list for the cross-cultural, missiological, and global perspective of theological studies in seminaries and colleges.

Wi Jo Kang
Wartburg Theological Seminary

God as Trinity. Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life. By Ted Peters. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993. Paper. 239 pages. $14.99.

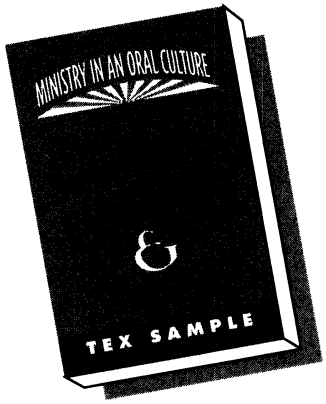
Sermons on Trinity Sunday are often an ambiguous experience for the theologian in the pew—and probably also for the preacher in the pulpit. Some pastors simply ignore, others badly fail, and again others capitulate before the task of proclaiming the gospel of the trinitarian God. For most, not the Trinity but the *doctrine* of the Trinity is a mystery, at best to be left alone. This happens to the detriment of us all, since the doctrine of the Trinity is nothing less than an essential interpretation of the gospel! The God of the gospel is the trinitarian God and no other. Without the Trinity there is no gospel!

Ted Peters, Professor of Systematic Theology at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, has written the kind of book that could make a real difference in the present homiletical and catechetical crisis concerning the church's doctrine of the gospel's God.

Peters' book fulfills three functions, which are identical with the three major parts of the book. First, he addresses a whole host of contemporary ecumenical, interreligious, and especially feminist issues which complicate and even

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block trinity talk in the churches. In regard to the hotly debated formula "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" he steers a course between those who understand it as a set of (patriarchal) metaphors and would like to substitute for it a "better," more inclusive set of metaphors, and those who understand the formula as the one, unexchangeable name that unmistakably identifies the God of the gospel. Peters provides arguments in both directions that are worth pondering, arguments that definitely offer more light than heat. While he acknowledges the metaphorical character of the trinitarian formula, he regards it as non-exchangeable, since it is tied to the event of revelation and salvation itself and identifies the God of the gospel with New Testament symbols. It is a very important chapter both for seminary education and for catechetical settings in congregations.

Second, Peters provides an excellent service to a variety of readers by laying out a map of the exciting and fascinating development of trinitarian theology, especially in the second half of this century up to the very present. He discusses the contributions of Barth, Rahner, Jüngel, Moltmann, Pannenberg, Jenson, Boff, LaCugna, and process theology in a very intelligible yet precise way, and organizes the various construals into a fascinating discourse. (The contributions of Torrance, Gunton, and some recent Eastern Orthodox voices would have been welcome additions in this section.)

Third, Peters modestly suggests one further element in this conversation about trinitarian theology. Following the eschatological thrust of Pannenberg and Braaten, he pushes beyond Moltmann, Jenson, and LaCugna in the direction of a temporalized eschatology and thereby eschatologized Trinity. God's being and saving activity, the immanent and economic Trinity, are conceptualized as strictly one, in a way that God's saving activity in its cosmic setting becomes a constitutive element of God's very nature: God's being is eschatologically and thereby temporally in the becoming-one with God's saving activity. In the eschatological kingdom of God the renewed creation will be in communion where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in mutual love. Peters' radically eschatologized and temporalized concept of the Trinity deserves serious—and critical—thought and discussion.

In his discussion Peters draws upon the reflections on "time" and "eternity" of contemporary astrophysics. With this move he shows how the gospel's God can be precisely understood in a way in which relationality and temporality become crucial, and that trinity talk can creatively draw upon the most recent scientific insights regarding "time" and "eternity" without fudging theological commitments and scientific hypotheses for apologetic reasons.

Peters has succeeded in providing a fine access to a fascinating and crucial current debate on a central doctrine of the church and in making an important contribution to that debate—and all of this in a clear and crisp style. This book should become a standard text for seminarians and religion majors in college and could serve as a very helpful tool for pastors a couple of weeks before Trinity Sunday!

Reinhard Hütter
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

The Seven Pillories of Wisdom. By David Hall. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1990. 137 pages. Cloth. $18.95.

In an interesting blend of wit and wisdom, David Hall gives seven reasons why Form Criticism receives negative marks on the agendas of today's new breed of literary critics. His chapters critique the methodological arguments adduced from "up-to-dateness, probable certainty, primitive culture, silence, creative background, consistency, and specialization." Hall writes out of a concern for the dominance of a "modern critical orthodoxy" that presents itself as scientific, but in his view all too often falls short of good scientific reasoning.

The double entendre in the title is indicative of his pithy style, which pokes fun as it prods thinking. "New Testament scholars, like penguins, are not so much alike as they may appear at first sight." "Form criticism has been practised by two main groups of people—biblical scholars and gamblers at racecourses" [racing forms]. His "form critical" lampooning of Bultmann at the end of the book is prime satire.

Much of what H. has to say is informed by familiarity with a broad array of literature and literary critics. To illustrate his point in various contexts, he freely cites work by authors ranging from William Shakespeare and G. K. Chesterton to Dorothy Sayers, Agatha Christie, and Dr. Seuss. His effective marshalling of documentation will make you think twice about the defences you use to support your understanding of scripture.

Steven A. Knapp
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Galatians: A Continental Commentary. By Dieter Lührmann. Trans. by O. C. Dean, Jr. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992. x and 161 pages. Cloth. $24.95.

Great books deserve outstanding interpreters. Galatians is well matched here. Dieter Lührmann, Professor of New Testament at Marburg University, writes a theological commentary on this *cri de coeur* of St. Paul. Bloodless commentary on a book such as Galatians would be a disaster. Lührmann says in his preface to this English translation that readers may feel that his interpretation is "quite Lutheran" because he takes "seriously Paul's claim in this letter that there is no other gospel than the one whose truth he had defended for the Galatians" (vii).

Lührmann's introduction to the letter is brief (pp. 1-6). He opts for the territorial (North Galatian) theory, locating the churches in the region of ancient Ancyra (modern Ankara). Since Paul assumes the Galatian churches will participate in the collection for Jerusalem in 1 Cor 16:1 but does not mention them in 2 Corinthians 8 or 9 or Rom 15:26, Lührmann dates the letter in the period between 52 and 56 C.E., i.e. before Romans. Galatians most clearly of all Paul's letters regards the antithesis between law and faith (and Spirit) as the standard for true Christianity. In Romans Paul adds discussion of topics that received no discussion in Galatians—though Paul does not desert the position taken in Galatians.

Lührmann divides the body of the letter into two quite unequal sections: 1:11–5:12, the gospel Paul preached, and 5:13–6:10, the standards for a "life lived in accordance with the Spirit given to Christians" (14), and calls attention to the structural parallelism with Romans. He argues that rhetorical or thematic inclusions support this structure.

The commentary proper is not a series of comments on individual words, though Lührmann certainly knows the Pauline vocabulary well, but integrated essays that trace the structure, OT sources, and theological significance of Paul's thought. An appendix reconstructs the Galatians' understanding of the gospel. Pastors will certainly find this a gold mine for preaching. Written originally for the Zürcher Bibelkommentar, a series that eschews much of the scholarly apparatus (frequent citation of Greek or Latin, footnotes and heavy documentation of modern scholarly opinion), this commentary is readable—and deserves to be read from cover to cover. To aid understanding Lührmann includes a graphic outline of Paul's career, while the publishers added a map of places mentioned in the volume and "A Select Bibliography" seventeen pages long compiled by David Lull. This is the second volume on the New Testament in the Continental Commentary Series from Fortress Press. (Jürgen Roloff's *The Revelation of John*, translated from the same Swiss series in 1993, is the welcome third volume.) It is a good addition to a series of growing importance.

Edgar Krentz
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text. By Charles A. Wanamaker. The New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmanns; Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1990. xxviii and 316 pages. Cloth. $29.95.

The Thessalonian letters have commanded renewed attention in recent years. The resulting studies and articles eventually result in new scientific commentaries on the Greek text. Wanamaker, Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town in South Africa, proposes to write such a commentary by appropriating the results of recent rhetorical

criticism and social scientific analysis of Thessalonica and the letters (questioning many older interpretations in the process).

At the same time W. has a quite traditional approach to the letters, arguing for the authenticity of both on the theory that 2 Thessalonians is actually the first letter Paul writes (not a novel theory, but one proposed many years ago by T. W. Manson, inter alios). Wanamaker therefore uses 2 Thessalonians to illuminate 1 Thessalonians, e.g. arguing that 1 Thess 4:11-12 is directed against the non-working people of 2 Thess 3:6-13. 1 Thessalonians, he holds, is a parenetic letter throughout (the position of A. Malherbe), without any apologetic or defensive purposes. There is no serious opposition of any kind to Paul in Thessalonica, which means the center of attention falls on chapters 4-5 for the modern interpreter.

The commentary is filled with helpful material and should aid pastors a great deal in understanding the flow of thought and details of Paul's language. Yet it falls short in some respects. On the assumption of the priority of the second letter, Wanamaker should have printed the commentary on it first in this volume. W. follows R. Jewett's rhetorical analysis of the letters without arguing the case that Paul has rhetorical schooling. Rarely does he mention the closest Hellenistic approximations to Paul's language and thought: Dio Chrysostom's Alexandrian Oration for 1 Thessalonians 2, Musonius Rufus for 1 Thess 4:1-8, Epicurean thinkers for 1 Thess 4:9-12, etc., and then often at second hand. W. interprets 1 Thess 4:13–5:11 as formulated essentially in the language of Old Testament and Jewish apocalyptic, without giving the total absence of citations of the Old Testament in the letter the attention it deserves.

W. has mined well the recent research on the Thessalonian letters but added little new to it. The commentary contains few surprises, given the attention to new methods. But it is a solid commentary that records and evaluates much of the recent research on these letters in a helpful manner. Readers who use it will be edified and assisted in proclaiming the gospel from these letters.

Edgar Krentz

Briefly Noted

The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality. By James Barr (Fortress, $11.00). B. has several axes to grind: he contests Cullmann's position that the immortality of the soul was not part of biblical belief, and he argues that nowhere in the Hebrew canon does Adam's disobedience originate evil or make it inevitable. In his view Genesis 2-3 deals with the loss of a chance of immortality which might have been seized upon by humanity. Hence Adam was mortal before the Fall and death is natural. Immortality of the soul in the older tradition did not involve petty self-interest (contra Stendahl), and the Bible was more interested in the soul and in immortality than modern trends suggest (contra Cullmann). He admits that the NT says little directly about the immortality of the soul. While fresh and helpful exegesis of the Fall and the flood stories is provided, there is also the usual Barr polemic. To my mind B. himself pays insufficient attention to the rejection of matter/creation that often accompanies theology about the immortality of the soul, and he underemphasizes the fact that life beyond the grave for Jew or Christian depends exclusively on God's redemptive power rather than on inherent human immortality. RWK

Ecclesiastes. Word Biblical Commentary 23A. By Roland E. Murphy (Word, $27.99). M. is a distinguished senior scholar, Catholic priest, and long-time leader in wisdom studies and professor at Duke. He writes of his own commentary: "It is one interpretation among many: somewhere between Qoheleth the preacher of the absurd and Qoheleth the preacher of joy.... Qoheleth remains as mysterious as his name [an office associated with an assembly], as the wis-

dom he sought (and failed, 7:23) to capture.... His work is often hailed as the bankruptcy of wisdom and invidiously compared with the chimera of pure orthodox faith.... This is more than ironic. Qoheleth has as much to say about the quality of faith as does any other biblical work. He tells us that faith means accepting God on God's terms." For the theme word usually translated "vanity" M. prefers the word "absurd" in the sense of incomprehensible. This volume and the commentary on Ecclesiastes by James Crenshaw in the Old Testament Library give pastors two excellent alternatives for this important and difficult work. RWK

Creation in the Biblical Traditions. CBQ Monograph Series 24. Edited by Richard J. Clifford and John J. Collins (Catholic Biblical Association, $7). After an introductory essay by the editors, there are two essays on Genesis, plus essays on Psalms, the divine speeches in Job, Prov 8:22-31, the book of Wisdom, Philo, and 4 Ezra. Reversing the judgment of Von Rad, that history rather than nature revealed God, these essays respect the theological value of creation in its own right. RWK

Deuteronomy 1-11. Word Biblical Commentary 6A. By Duane L. Christensen (Word, $27.99). C. analyzes Deuteronomy as "didactic poetry," which he believes was composed to be recited publicly to music within a liturgical setting. He bases this analysis on the counting of "morae" (the length of time utilized in saying the simplest syllable in Hebrew) and on a syntactical accentual method. Despite the plethora of statistics throughout the translation, it is hard to escape the impression that if Deuteronomy is not prose, prose does not exist! Equally unconvincing is the following proposal: "Since Deuteronomy was probably performed and sung in liturgical settings in ancient Israel, its form is essentially poetic. This fact suggests something about the very nature of Scripture and points to a hermeneutic whose comprehension supports Mosaic authorship [Am I missing something?]." The commentary contains the most complete bibliography on Deuteronomy, but it is much too full of chiasms, concentric structures, and (unconvincing) poetic analyses to be recommended for pastors and other church leaders. In my judgment the two best commentaries on Deuteronomy are those by A. D. H. Mayes in the New Century Bible Commentary and Moshe Weinfeld in the Anchor Bible (so far available only for chaps 1-11). RWK

Leviticus. Word Biblical Commentary 4. By John E. Hartley (Word, $27.99). H. tries to hold on to Mosaic authorship and the critical school that ascribes much of Leviticus to P or other priestly circles: "The Israelite community through the centuries augmented, amplified, and adjusted the ancient material [that originated with the revelation of Yahweh to Moses] to make it applicable to changing social situations." The excursuses in this commentary seem especially rich: whole offering, laying on of hands [ordination], offering of well-being [peace offering], atone, guilt offering, ritual purity, leprosy [not Hansen's disease, but "a grievous skin disease"], I am Yahweh your God, molek [a deity to whom child sacrifice was offered], calendars and pilgrimage festivals, and the year of jubilee. He proposes that the purity laws about menstruation in Lev 15:19-24 are "particularly beneficial to those women who experience great discomfort" during their period, but does not observe that the same judgments about sleeping with a woman during her menstrual cycle, which would be dismissed as culturally determined by most readers today, are also applied in chap. 18 to homosexual activity. RWK

Historical Atlas of the Middle East. By G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville (Simon & Schuster, $55). This atlas contains 113 maps from earliest historical times to today, including twenty-six from the 20th century (World War II, Arab-Israeli wars, Iraq-Iran war, and Kuwait in 1990). Brief commentaries on the maps help the reader follow the geography and politics, with special attention to the origins and spread of Islam (already map 14 depicts Arabia at the birth of Muhammad). There are city maps of Mecca and Medina, as well as of Jerusalem. By the time of

the Reformation, Islam had advanced as far as Bosnia and Serbia and created tensions which clearly have not subsided even today. A map of Islam in 1993 shows that it represents more than 90% of the population from Pakistan west, including all of North Africa, up to Senegal and Mauritania in west Africa. RWK

The Mosaic Map of Madaba. By Herbert Donner (Kok Pharos, $30.75). The Madaba mosaic, consisting of 700,000 or so stones, depicts a map of Palestine with Jerusalem at its center in the 6th century C. E. It was discovered in 1884 amid the debris of an ancient church, some 18 miles south of Amman. The original map, of which one third remains, measured about 93 square meters and is the most exact map of Palestine before modern cartography arose in the 19th century! Part of a church floor, the map allowed members of the congregation in bare feet to come into direct contact with the holy land, and the churches depicted in the map refer to church history as a continuation of God's salvation history. More than half of this guide book is devoted to detailed description and explanation of the map. Jerusalem in the 6th century was much like the old city today, with the same street network, except that the southwest and southeast hills were both within the city walls. The depiction of the Church of the Anastasis (Resurrection) is the only existing picture of the church erected by Constantine. Dominating the city is the Cardo Maximus, a colonnaded street that ran from the Damascus Gate on the north to the Zion gate on the south (from left to right on this map). A basilica on Mount Zion was called the "mother of all churches" because of the story of Pentecost. This book is an introductory guide for visitors who want to understand what they see and admire. RWK

Atlas of Medieval Jewish History. By Haim Beinart (Simon & Schuster, $55). This atlas gives the other side of the Near Eastern story in 116 maps, beginning with the barbarian invasions of the fourth and fifth centuries and continuing to the period after the Chmielnicki Massacres of Jews in Poland in 1648-1649 and the collapse of the Shabbatean movement. The Jews were actually more threatened in the early centuries by Byzantium and Christianity than by the barbarian invasions of the Roman Empire. Along the way one learns about the spread of the Jews throughout Europe, the Crusades, the Black Death, the Jewish expulsion from Spain in 1492—remember the year!—and the Inquisition. Shabbetai Zevi was a self-proclaimed messiah in the 17th century who later converted to Islam and severely disappointed many Jews in his revivalist movement. RWK

Priests, Prophets and Scribes. Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honour of Joseph Blenkinsopp. Edited by Eugene Ulrich, John W. Wright, Robert P. Carroll, and Philip R. Davies (JSOT, $60). Blenkinsopp is one of the foremost authorities on Persian period Judaism and has contributed much to Pentateuchal studies as well as an outstanding commentary on Ezra and Nehemiah. These eighteen essays celebrate his scholarship and ecumenism. As Robert Wilken notes in the Introduction, Blenkinsopp has always insisted that Jewish thought and interpretation should become an integral part of the study of the Old Testament. RWK

The Messiah. Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity. Edited by James H. Charlesworth (Augsburg Fortress, $40). The recovery of many of the pseudepigrapha and the availability of over 170 Dead Sea Scrolls have greatly expanded our knowledge of Judaism and the origins of Christianity and call for periodic syntheses. A symposium at Princeton in 1987 brought together scholars from all over the world to reflect on the concept of the messiah in first-century Judaism and earliest Christianity. Disagreements focused on messianology, eschatology, apocalypticism, and theocracy. The symposiasts agreed that Christ is the title most frequently applied to Jesus in the New Testament even though it is rarely found in pre-70 Jewish documents. They also agreed that the term and title "Messiah" in the Hebrew Bible

refers to a present, political and religious leader who is appointed by God. The title was applied predominantly to a king, but also to a priest, and occasionally to a prophet. The 25 essays in this book investigate the idea of the messiah from almost every possible angle. RWK

The History of Ancient Palestine from the Palaeolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest. By Gösta W. Ahlström (JSOT, $90; Fortress, $29). A. died after a brief illness in 1992, and his massive history was edited for publication posthumously by one of his students, Diana Edelman. He attempted to write a history of ancient Palestine in the same way that the history of any other country and its people is written—thus, no special importance or theological significance is given to the Bible (p. 52). In fact, this account at times assumes a negative, almost cynical view of scripture (pp. 376, 590, 775 and elsewhere) and claims that the biblical writers often looked down upon the poor (p. 845). In his eyes Hezekiah led his nation to the brink of disaster and Deut 17:18-20—the law of the king—was written long after kingship was over. What the prophets characterized as apostasy is hailed as the main stream: the religion of Yahweh did not exclude the worship of other gods and was largely an arm of the royal government (p. 477). Much of the biblical tradition in this telling arose very late, is non-historical, or both: Abraham became an important ancestor in connection with the return from Babylon (p. 540); Amos and Hosea represent post-exilic hatred of the north (p. 622); Deuteronomy presupposes a closed community that did not exist before the time of Ezra (p. 775); and the reform of Josiah was no real reform and whatever he did religiously did not survive (p. 788). Despite these flaws, A's history brings together an enormous amount of archeological evidence, including all relevant inscriptions, and is useful for its critical dialogue with other scholars, including especially the Albright school. The focus on Palestine rather than Israel gives a broader, sometimes more realistic understanding of the social, political, and economic events reported in the Bible. Both its length and anti-theological bias, however, will prevent it from being of much use to seminarians or parish pastors. Pricewise, the American edition is the only way to go. RWK

Ruth: A New Translation with a Philological Commentary and a Formalist-Folklorist Interpretation. By Jack M. Sasson (JSOT, $19.95). Sasson's reading of Ruth projects the title character as a competent, quick-witted, and controlling woman who knows how to get what she wants. Undaunted by the male-dominated society in which they live and the privation this causes them as a result of widowhood, Ruth and Naomi set about to rebuild lives for themselves in Israel by mastering the skills of diplomacy and reparte. They are enabled by the laws of Israel, and so achieve their ends, meanwhile demonstrating a capacity for power politics that befits the progenitors of royalty. Interestingly, Sasson does not depend upon feminist theology to arrive at this picture. Utilizing a blend of philology and formalist structuralism (a la Vladimir Propp), Sasson examines the nature of the relationships and interactions between the characters in the story, and identifies Ruth as the hero. His methodology is transparent and instructive whether or not one agrees with his conclusions.

Steven A. Knapp, LSTC

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Preaching Helps

The Day of Pentecost—Eighth Sunday after Pentecost, Series B

The Spirit, the Angels and the Preacher

What's huge and green and returns every year? The great season of Pentecost. It is so big that we trinitize it, spreading it over three issues of Preaching Helps. And even the first third is so sizable that we called on three authors to collaborate in order to get the job done.

Are these three things a parable? Has the season of Pentecost ever really gotten its due in the church? Have we stood in sufficient awe of its immensity and its potency? Or have we too regularly downsized and downgraded it? Too readily we attach to it words like "non-festival" and "ordinary." And those words, whatever the etymology or the intent, send the signal that it's time to call time, to take a recess, to yawn, to go on vacation.

Two big signs out there on the horizon argue for the real need we have of this season. "Spirituality" is a word that has swept across the continent and seeped into common parlance. Is this what we used to call "piety"? Whatever it is, and it surely takes many forms, people in large numbers are attracted to conferences on spirituality, to lectures and courses and books on spirituality, to appearances of the gurus of spirituality. Surprising numbers of folks are looking for a spiritual director.

The other sign is angelic. The sad place where Polly Klaas' body was found, just a few miles north of our seminary and town, quickly became a kind of shrine. Mourning her disappearance and death, troubled by the

violence to children in our society, hundreds traveled to the site where her body was discovered and left mementos. Far outnumbering flowers and crosses and pictures of children were angels. Angels in various forms: angels carved in wood, shaped from metal, pictured on paper, fashioned of cloth and cotton.

Interest in angels can be described as a spiritual response to the flat and one-dimensional secularism of our culture. As a yearning for the transcendent. Or it might even be the cry of the human heart for news that is better and more comforting than what folks are hearing in their churches.

Is it the perception of many in the pews that the prime seasons of the church's year are in the grip of God the Father and God the Son, and that the basic word of the Father and the Son is law and order?

The fascination with spirituality and angels is an opportunity for preachers (=spiritual directors and messengers of glad tidings) in this Pentecost season. Pentecost is all about the work of God here and now, about the gentle movement of God out of the past and out of the sky into our lives with healing and life-yielding energies.

The human trinity coming to our aid this issue are all seasoned teachers and preachers. **Dell Hutton** is Professor of Greek and Religion at Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, where he has spent most of his professional life after earning his doctor's degree at Harvard Divinity School.

Phil Baker is pastor of All Saints Lutheran Church in Novato, California. After earning his doctor's degree in systematics at Aquinas Institute (Dubuque), he taught in the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (1981-86). He served congregations in Iowa and Minnesota prior to his present ministry in California.

John Gunderson is a pastor at Iglesia Luterana Familia de Cristo, a multi-cultural congregation in Denver, Colorado, for the past seven years. He was a combat chaplain in the U. S. Army during the Vietnam War and has served congregations in Colorado, Oklahoma, and Minnesota.

Thanks to these three veteran angels.

May God spill healing and energy into you and through you throughout this long season. Keep it green and growing!

Robert H. Smith
Editor of Preaching Helps
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
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The Day of Pentecost
May 22, 1994

Psalm 104:25-34
Ezekiel 37:1-14
Acts 2:1-21
John 7:37-39a

First Reading

The words "wind, breath, spirit" (Hebrew רוּחַ [*ruaḥ*]; Greek πνεῦμα) are common biblical expressions for the powerful and mysterious activity of God. In the creation story we read: "a wind/spirit of God swept over the face of the waters" (Gen 1:2). And Jesus said to Nicodemus: "The wind/spirit blows where it chooses..." (Jn 3:8). In Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (37:1-14) we find a wordplay on the term רוּחַ: "I will cause breath/spirit to enter you, and you shall live" (v. 5); "Come from the four winds, O breath/wind/spirit, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live" (v. 9). God's powerful and mysterious action will revive the people of Israel from their exile in Babylonia and restore them to the purified and renewed land of Israel.

The Jewish festival of Booths or Tabernacles, commemorating the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites, provides the backdrop for Jesus' words in Jn 7:37-38 (cf. 7:2). During the festival, water was brought to the temple as a reminder of that provided by God in the wilderness (Numbers 20), and as a symbol of the coming messianic deliverance (Isa 12:3). Now, "on the last day of the festival" (Jn 7:37), Jesus invites those who believe in him to drink of the true water of life (cf. the "living water" of Jn 4:10-15). John's imagery is also fluid: Jesus is the source of true water (vv. 37-38); the believers become channels of living water (v. 38); the Spirit which believers were to receive makes it all possible (v. 39).

Although it lies outside the parameters of the lection, v. 39b is critical for understanding John's concept of the Spirit. The Spirit-Advocate, who is to take the place of the earthly Jesus among his followers (John 14-16), will not become manifest until after Jesus is "glorified," that is crucified, risen, and ascended (Jn 12:23; 17:1; etc.).

That the gift of the Spirit is a mark of the messianic age is made clear in Acts 2:1-21. The Pentecost "wind/spirit" (πνεῦμα) enables the church to proclaim "God's deeds of power" (v. 11) in the languages of the then known world. Pentecost marks the beginning of the church's universal Spirit-empowered mission. According to Peter's interpretation of the prophet Joel (vv. 17-21), the universal gift of the Spirit, which

transcends gender, generation, and social boundaries, is a sign of the messianic age and an assurance of salvation for all who call upon the name of the Lord.

Thus, in all three lessons for the Day of Pentecost, the focus is on the Spirit of God: that powerful and mysterious presence of God in our lives that enables us to drink from the living water which is Christ, and empowers the church to engage in universal mission. DDH

Pastoral Reflections

It must have been a scary time for the disciples. Acts says they were all in one place. They were going to hang together instead of separately, as they faced a hostile world.

Often it seems that the world is ruled by "creeping things" (Psalm 104), by Leviathan on the loose in the great wide sea. The wild things in Maurice Sendak's book, *Where the Wild Things Are*, were very scary until Max tamed them by staring into their yellow eyes without blinking.

I grew up in the North woods of Minnesota. To go into the woods at night was a frightening experience. It was the place of the wild things. I was always glad that we had an indoor toilet.

In the warmth of the dining room, I can still hear the reassuring voice of my father: "The eyes of all wait upon thee, O Lord, and thou givest them their food in due season. Thou openest up thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing."

We live in scary times. I write this five days after Halloween and four days after All Saints Day, 1993—five days after a child was killed with a handgun while "trick or treating" and four days after a friend and saint died of a heart attack... and one half day after the U.S. Senate voted 94 to 4 to spend billions for more jails and police. It is a scary time. Can we stare into the yellow eyes of the wild things without blinking?

Jesus promises new life to those who believe in him. The living water flows from Jesus to his disciples and from us to other people. Maybe we can stare into the yellow eyes of the wild things and not blink. A cool drink of living water calms the tempers and soothes frayed nerves. JG

The Holy Trinity
May 29, 1994

Psalm 149
Deuteronomy 6:4-9
Romans 8:14-17
John 3:1-17

First Reading

The *Shema Yisrael*, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone" (Deut 6:4), was and is Judaism's quintessential confession of faith. Yahweh alone is sovereign and unique. Thus Israel is to have ultimate commitment to Yahweh alone with total being (v. 5): "heart" (will); "soul" (vital being); "might" (physical power). These words are to be placed at the center of life where they can be constantly thought and acted upon (vv. 6-9). This lection not only underscores the dominant theme of Deuteronomy, loyalty to one God alone, but provides the confession of faith and the pattern of living for the pious Jew to this day.

Romans 8:14-17 is part of the climax of Paul's first eight chapters in Romans. The consequences of justification by grace through faith (3:21-4:25) are freedom *from* death (ch. 5), sin (ch. 6), and the law (ch. 7), and freedom *for* life in the Spirit (ch. 8). In vv. 15-17 Paul contrasts "a spirit of slavery" (πνεῦμα δουλείας), which leads to fear, with "a spirit of adoption" (πνεῦμα ὑιοθεσίας), which leads to sharing in the suffering and glorification of Christ. That the Spirit prompts us to cry out, "Abba! Father!" (v. 15), as did Jesus (Mk 14:36), confirms our adoption as "children of God" (cf. Gal 4:5-7).

Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, a strict interpreter of the Torah and member of the Sanhedrin, underscores the truth that the kingdom of God is entered not by moral achievement, but by a transformation wrought by God. One must be "born from above" or "born anew" (ἄνωθεν, vv. 3,7), which is subsequently explained as "being born of water and the Spirit" (v. 5). Entrance into the kingdom of God, Nicodemus is told, requires baptism and life in the Spirit.

The plural pronouns in vv. 7 ("*You* must be born from above"), 11 ("...*we* speak of what *we* know and testify to what *we* have seen; yet *you* do not receive *our* testimony"), and 12 ("If I have told *you* about earthly things and *you* do not believe, how can *you* believe if I tell *you* about heavenly things?") suggest that these are words addressed by the Johannine community to all would-be believers. All are challenged to believe that the Son of Man has descended from heaven and, having been "lifted up" on the cross (cf. 8:28; 12:32-33), has ascended to the Father (vv.13-15; cf. 16:28; 20:17). Whether or not the quotation concludes with v. 15 or extends through v. 21, Jn 3:16 contains "the gospel in miniature" (Luther). Whereas Deut 6:5 exhorts the people of Israel to love God with total commitment, Jn 3:16 emphasizes God's redemptive love for humanity.

The life of faith exhibits a rhythm of human response to divine grace. God's love for us, demonstrated in the cross, calls forth our faith and love for God. This cycle is nurtured by the Spirit which mysteriously "blows where it chooses" (v. 8). As a result, we too have been "born from above" through "water and Spirit." Pentecost continues! DDH

Pastoral Reflections

Nicodemus was a sensible man. He needed to become a spiritual man. But what is this kingdom that this man Jesus is talking about? New life was coming to him, and it was a surprise for such a sensible man. I experienced a new thing in the spring of '89. I was in my car east of Denver. It was a beautiful day. Suddenly the weather changed. A strong wind began to blow out of the northwest. That was not the new thing... it is a common experience on the Front Range. What was new was eerie and scary. The farmer's field to my right began to come alive. It undulated and throbbed with movement. Was it a lemming run? The fence line next to the road changed. Instead of a wire fence with posts at predictable intervals, there was a fuzzy barrier... or was it furry? ... was it ferocious? Hundreds, maybe thousands of alive things began to move in formation toward the highway... were they attacking me? It was—tumbleweeds! Hundreds! Maybe thousands!

They began to cross the highway! What would happen? Would they ruin the finish on my four–tone brown '69 Chrysler? My fears were premature. Most of them paused at the shoulder of the highway and looked both ways before making the crossing. Some bounced off the hood or were crushed under the frame of the four thousand pound car. So the only new thing that happened that day was that a few thousand tumble weeds, which were once in Weld County, are now in Adams County. Or was it? Maybe there was something new... a familiar song began to sound in my mind: "Help O Lord, the little ones... Who came forth from your hand... Who lost their way and... tumbleweeds... Now drift across the land...."

I had felt like a tumbleweed a few days earlier as I was heading east from Denver to Minnesota. The Gunderson family was gathering. Our father was dying. We came together... tumbling across the land.... There were hugs, conversations, prayers, laughter, tears.... Old photos passed around and new pictures were clicked. Slowly, but surely, life–giving breath began to sink deep down to bring life to the roots.

Next Sunday another family will tumble across the land. The Holy Spirit has called us.... The Son will be there.... Our Father sits next to us. There will be hugs, conversations, prayer, laughter and tears.

"...Help O Lord, us little ones... who came forth from your hand... Who found our way, tumbleweeds... Now blossom across the land...." JG

Second Sunday after Pentecost
June 5, 1994

Psalm 81:1-10
Deuteronomy 5:12-15
2 Corinthians 4:5-12
Mark 2:23-28

First Reading

Deuteronomy 5:6-21 presents the Deuteronomic version of the Decalogue. The commandment to "observe the sabbath day and keep it holy" (v. 12) requires of Israel that it image the Creator who labored six days and rested on the seventh (vv. 13-14; cf. Gen 2:2-3). The commandment to keep the sabbath day is rooted in humanitarian concern that all might rest (v. 14), and in God's redemptive activity in liberating Israel from bondage in Egypt (v. 15).

Mark 2:23-28 contains one in a series of "controversy stories" in Mark, in which Jesus is at odds with the representative leaders of Judaism, especially the Pharisees. At issue between them was what constituted acceptable conduct on the sabbath. When the Pharisees criticized the actions of the disciples for plucking heads of grain, Jesus stated that the principle for determining what is permitted on the sabbath is what serves human need. That was modeled first by David in Israel's history (vv. 25-26), and now by one who claims to be "lord even of the sabbath" (v. 28). David overstepped his right as a layman when he and his men, to assuage their hunger, ate the sacred bread kept in the central sanctuary (1 Sam 21:1-6). By implication, the actions of the disciples are legitimized by the principle stated in v. 27: "The sabbath was made for humankind (ἄνθρωπος in a generic sense) and not humankind (ἄνθρωπος) for the sabbath." Jesus' radical understanding of sabbath observance is rooted in his commitment to meeting human need. Responding to human need is the kind of activity that is most appropriate on the sabbath. As the basis for authentic sabbath observance, Jesus' humanitarian concern and redemptive activity (cf. comments on Deut 5:14-15 above) give rise to his claim to be "lord even of the sabbath" (v. 28).

In 2 Cor 4:5-12, Paul defends his apostolic ministry over against false apostles, who practice cunning and falsify God's word (4:2), and over against critics, who charge that his gospel is veiled, i.e., not clear (4:3-4). Paul's response is that authentic apostles proclaim Christ as Lord, and they understand themselves as servants (δούλοι) of God's people (v. 5). In his sufferings and perils, Paul shares in the death of Jesus (vv. 10a, 11a); but he also shares in the life of the risen, victorious Christ (vv. 10b, 11b), which in turn means life for the Corinthians (v. 12).

Making visible in our own lives of servanthood the death and resurrection of Christ is surely one way to image the humanitarian concern and redemptive activity of the one who is "Son of Man" and "lord even of the sabbath." DDH

Pastoral Reflections

I was headed south on Highway 13, hoping to reach Branston, Missouri (the 'Mecca' for Lutherans from Iowa, Minnesota, & Illinois) by afternoon coffee. My eye caught the sign "GORDON'S ORCHARD—1 mile." It was fall and a good time for apples. I stopped at an old barn, now a retail store, and lifted my leg over the rear fender of my Harley. As I was unzipping my black leather jacket a late model Chrysler mini van pulled up beside me. I nodded my head and politely said "Hello, nice day...." He responded, "Yawp, I never drive more than two miles over the speed limit or two miles under the speed limit." "Oh," I said, wondering what that was all about. Then I saw him nod his head towards the highway. There was a highway patrol car with its lights flashing and another car pulled over on the side of the road. The man repeated his statement. The man's wife stepped around from her side of the van and smiled. Her face wore no makeup or lipstick. It dawned on me that he was telling me in his 'sideways' way that if I would be traveling south toward the belt buckle of the Bible Belt, that I better watch what I do, or else! There were Arkansas plates on the van.

My eye caught the sweeping of a broom along the wooden floor of the covered porch. It

was Mrs. Morgan, and she was sweeping in our direction. The couple went into the barn, and Mrs. Morgan told me her story. It had been an extra hard season. They had to work hard because of the heavy rains and floods. They had to carry by hand the pumpkins out of the field, because the vehicles would be mired down in the mud. Every fall they had a festival for the children in the area. Her eyes sparkled. They made it in spite of the hardship. "Come over here and I will show you," softly coaxed Mrs. Morgan. We walked through a maze created by round and rectangular hay bales. There were pumpkins and gourds of all sizes decorated with faces of all kinds. I sat on a hay bale for a few moments. My anger and frustration seeped into the hay. Later I bought four apples, put them in my saddlebags, and enjoyed a different one for the next four days with good memories.

Mrs. Morgan knew what she was doing. She swept the porch in order to hear. She talked about her struggle to let me know I was not alone. She led me down the pumpkin path to give me an opportunity to focus on what was good and leave behind what was not so good.

Is there a Mrs. Morgan in our places of worship? There are more than enough people who never drive more than two miles over the speed limit or two miles under the speed limit! Light does shine out of darkness. Treasures are found in pumpkins! The life of Jesus can become visible in our bodies! JG

Third Sunday after Pentecost
June 12, 1994

Psalm 61:1-5, 8
Genesis 3:9-15
2 Corinthians 4:13-18
Mark 3:20-35

First Reading

Genesis 3:9-15 belongs to the Yahwist's masterful story of the temptation in the garden. In their attempt to escape the limitations of creaturehood, to "be like God, knowing good and evil" (v. 5), the man and the woman experience the destructive fallout of their bid for freedom. Bodily shame takes the place of innocence (vv. 7, 10), hiding and guilt take the place of communion with the Creator (vv. 8-10), alienation and finger-pointing take the place of mutuality and interdependence (v. 12). The man blames the woman, and indirectly the Creator (v. 12). The woman blames the serpent (v. 13). And the serpent, having no one to blame, receives the first of God's curses (vv. 14-15).

The Yahwist makes use of etiological legends, originally intended to explain why things are the way they are, to express the divine judgment. The curse upon the serpent in vv. 14-15 may have originally explained why it crawls in the dust rather than walks, and why people seem instinctively hostile to it. Implicit in v. 15 is the theme of moral conflict ("enmity... bruise") which hints at ultimate victory. But for centuries the church has seen in this passage the *proto-evangelium*, the first promise of salvation in the scriptures. Enmity between the offspring of the serpent/Satan and the descendant of the woman/Mary came to a climax in the death and resurrection of Christ. Satan may have "bruised his heel" on the cross, but Christ "crushed Satan's head" in the victory of Easter.

Mark 3:20-35 is part of a series of controversy stories in which Jewish religious leaders challenge Jesus' authority to forgive sins (2:1-12), eat with tax collectors and sinners (2:15-17),

pluck heads of grain (2:23-28) and heal on the sabbath (3:1-6), and cast out demons (3:22-27). Mark frames this last controversy with the attempt by Jesus' family to take custody of him out of concern for his sanity (vv. 21, 31-32). The pronouncement of Jesus with which this lection closes is a reminder that obedient response to the will of God takes precedence over all earthly relationships (v. 35).

Sandwiched between the references to Jesus' family is the controversy with the scribes from Jerusalem who accuse Jesus of being in league with "Beelzebul... the ruler of the demons," i.e., Satan (v. 22). Jesus' parables about the divided kingdom/house (vv. 24-25) and plundering the strong man's property (v. 27) not only refute the charge, but imply that in casting out demons he is pushing back the frontiers of Satan's domain. Mark connects the "Beelzebul" accusation of v. 22 with Jesus' saying about blaspheming "against the Holy Spirit" (vv. 29-30). The "eternal sin" (αἰώνιον ἁμάρτημα), one which is never repented of or atoned for, is utter rebellion against God which denies him as the doer of his own acts. In the Markan context, the "unforgivable sin" is to deny the presence and power of God when it manifests itself, as in the work of Jesus. DDH

Pastoral Reflections

Early in the morning, Kathy and I talk. They are good talks. It is our time together. Coffee, newspaper, TV news are side shows. The conversation one morning, not too long ago, was one to remember. An article in the morning paper caught my wife's eye. A man had been shot to death at the front door of his home as he attempted to protect his wife by trying to shut the front door in the face of a pistol packin' man with his hair parted in the middle. It more than caught her eye, for the murdered man had owned a local doll house store. Kathy had bought the kit for the doll house she was constructing from the murdered man. She was angry and disgusted. The article also disclosed that the killer might be the one that the dead man had complained to a few days earlier because he played his music too loudly from his powerful car stereo. There was a hint of fear in Kathy's voice. My response did not help, either.

I said something to the effect that we live in a scary and angry Denver right now. Nobody is exempt from violence. So, we should know for what and whom we are willing to take a stand. "What am I willing to die for?" I was intellectualizing, sermonizing, and commenting from a clinical and safe distance. Kathy was experiencing it personally. What if a killer comes to our front door and she is the one who opens the door?

Violence is so much a part of lives today. Wouldn't it be nice to bring back the tranquility of a couple of decades ago? If only we had all those planned prisons already built and police forces beefed up, then maybe that dream could come true.

Before you write your sermon this week, check this book out of your library: *Moments*, by Sheryle and John Leekley. It is a collection of the Pulitzer Prize winning photographs from 1942—1982. The volume is greater than the sum of its parts. There will be an emotional response. The vast majority of the pictures are violent. Raw violence! We solve our problems with violence. And our solution for violence is more violence. Is there any more violent place than a prison? There are exceptions in the book. Not many. Look up the picture for 1973. It's bloody, but it's not violent. It's messy, but creative. It is one of the exceptions. We like to solve situations in a violent way. It is deeper in us than we like to believe. Some say that Jesus is in the picture for 1973. I don't know... that's a pretty radical thought!

Take the book with you into the pulpit. Use the pictures as illustrations. Maybe its not such a good idea after all. Someone is bound to say, "Pastor is losing his sanity." Oh, I almost forgot... there are two pictures for 1973. The other one is entitled, "The Day it Rained Fire." JG

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
June 19, 1994

Psalm 92:1-5 (6-10) 11-14
Ezekiel 17:22-24
2 Corinthians 5:1-10
Mark 4:26-34

First Reading

Ezekiel's allegory of the cedar (17:22-24), composed against the backdrop of the first Babylonian sack and deportation of Jerusalem in 597 B.C., is a messianic allegory. It portrays a "branch" from the house of David (cf. similar messianic imagery in Jer 23:5-6 and Zech 3:8), established by Yahweh upon Mount Zion, to be an instrument of universal peace and security. Similar images of cosmic trees which provide shade, shelter, and food for all are found in Ezek 31:3-6 and Dan 4:10-12.

Mark 4:26-34 contains Jesus' parables of the seed growing secretly (vv. 26-29) and the mustard seed (vv. 30-32). Both parables are illustrative of "the kingdom of God" (βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, vv. 26, 30). They are parables of growth and contrast, emphasizing the mysterious development and cosmic proportions of God's reign being inaugurated by Jesus. According to the first, the growth of God's kingdom is beyond human understanding or control; it "produces of itself" (αὐτομάτη, v. 28). Without human intervention, but with human recognition, the reign of God will assuredly be realized at the eschatological "harvest" (θερισμός, v. 29).

In the second parable, the tiny mustard seed grows to become a gigantic shrub and provides shelter for "the birds of the air" (v. 32). The contrast is between the obscure beginnings and the cosmic proportions of God's eschatological reign. Jesus may have had in mind the biblical imagery of "the cosmic tree" as pictured in Ezekiel 17 and Daniel 4. Its messianic association and eschatological thrust made it an especially appropriate metaphor for his use. Jesus' ministry and his small band of disciples were the dawning point of God's coming kingdom where universal peace and security would prevail.

That Mark understands the parables of Jesus to be esoteric teaching, requiring private interpretation for full comprehension, is clear from the conclusion to the collection of Jesus' parables in vv. 33-34. This is in keeping with Mk 4:11, where we read that the disciples possess the "secret (μυστήριον) of the kingdom of God," while "for those outside, everything comes in parables...." In Mark's view, those who recognize in Jesus the one who ushers in God's mysterious and inevitable reign understand the "secret of the kingdom."

In 2 Cor 5:1-10 the apostle Paul writes of having received from God another mystery: not "the mystery of the kingdom" but "the Spirit as a guarantee" (ἀρραβών, v. 5). The presence among us of the Spirit is the "down payment" or "first installment" (cf. 2 Cor 1:22) of the eschatological inheritance that is in store for Christians ("building from God," v. 1; "heavenly dwelling," v. 2; "at home with the Lord," v. 8). Having the Spirit as a "guarantee" gives us the confidence to face death (vv. 6, 8) and the final judgment (v. 10). Even more immediately, such confidence enables us to "walk by faith, not by sight" (v. 7) while we are in this life. DDH

Pastoral Reflections

There are days when the unusual does happen around here. One Sunday morning we were unloading some people from the handicapped van and a late model expensive car drove slowly into the parking lot. The tinted window effortlessly disappeared and revealed a handsome young man who said: "What time is your worship? I am from Omaha and my wife and I would like to come to worship here this morning."

I told him the time and he said that he was going to pick up his wife and that he would be back soon. The window closed, the man disappeared behind the smoked glass, and I went back to the wheelchairs, thinking that he must be lost and that he would realize his mistake and go somewhere else to church.

Worship had begun when the handsome young man with the expensive car came into worship with his wife. His wife was Sherie! I had met her the previous Tuesday. She was a patient

at the rehabilitation center next door. Last Tuesday, she was wheeled into the rec room for Bible study and prayer. The attendant parked her chair outside the circle and shook his head. That meant that Sherie would not be cooperative but disruptive. She sat strapped in her wheelchair and her face constantly screwed up in pain. Her good arm was stretched out toward the rest of us, and saliva drooled from her mouth while uttering unintelligible sounds.

Sherie and Steve sat in the back. Steve held the hymnbook and bulletin so that Sherie could see. He pushed her wheelchair up to the communion rail at the far end. They were the last to receive. When I picked up the piece of bread for Sherie, I expected to place it in her mouth, but there was that good hand stretched out toward the rail and her body straining against the leather restraints. She took the piece of bread in her good hand and put in into her mouth and she said softly, "Amen." I held her hand and we received the blessing and I felt a soft squeeze.

You can't force the harvest. It will come. It will come in its time. Our actions are so small and insignificant. Just wait! JG

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
June 26, 1994

Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32
Job 38:1-11
2 Corinthians 5:14-21
Mark 4:35-41

First Reading

One theme seems to run through all three lessons for this Sunday. Whether one reads Job 38, 2 Corinthians 5, or Mark 4, the sovereignty of God resounds.

In the lesson from Job, we find a series of questions put to Job. The questions are not designed to chastise him. The questions should not be understood as an attempt to silence Job, or questioners today. The questions put to Job lead him into a deeper consideration of things. He is challenged to look beyond superficial and surface appearances and consider God's creation. "Tell me, Job, Who created the earth and the sea? Who put limits on the natural creation?" If one remembers the opening to Job one also remembers that limits were put on what Satan could or could not do. Neither creation nor Satan have unbounded power. Neither creation nor Satan are absolute or sovereign. All creation, animate and inanimate, is the work of God.

In the lesson from 2 Corinthians, the theme of God's sovereignty is again sounded. The God who created all that exists is the same God who in Christ was reconciling the κόσμος, i.e., all that exists. Two Greek words to be taken seriously in this passage, again underscoring God's sovereignty, are the words πάντων in verses 14 and 15, and κόσμος in verse 19. The God who created all that exists is the same God who in Christ acted for all. The God who created all that exists is the same God who in Christ reconciled all that exists and entrusts us with the message of what God in Christ has done.

In Mark 4, the theme of sovereignty rings again. Jesus is pictured as having power, authority, sovereignty over the wind and the waves. The

disciples, filled with great awe, ask one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (v. 41). What other response is there when confronted with power, authority, and sovereignty over Satan, earth, sea, wind, and all that exists, other than awe as we stand before the *mysterium tremendum*? PB

Pastoral Reflections

Ramases II was in town. He was the king who ruled Egypt when the Israelites were slaves. He claimed that he was a god. In the Denver Museum of Natural History were found massive granite images, gold bracelets, and a wooden mummy cover. Time, weather, and grave robbers had taken care of the rest.

At the same time there was a movie called "Chronos" and it was viewed on a giant IMAX screen. There were spectacular views of the Grand Canyon, pyramids, cathedrals, and the night lights of Manhattan. The film was done in time-lapsed photography, so everything moved at a speed much faster than life.

What caught my eye was the blur of Grand Central Station. People scurried to the ticket counters, floated up and down the escalators, and glided across the marble floor. Into that rush of humanity I viewed a pleasant surprise. The blur suddenly disappeared from certain people. I was puzzled. Then I realized why. People had stopped and they were talking to each other. I could see the color of their ties and the expressions on their faces.

Every day there is a blur at the corner of Colfax and Irving. Faces become fuzzy behind dirty windshields, the distant roar of the invaders in the arena, a smashed window in the Buick Le Sabre with twisted wires where there once was a stereo, and a bigger-than-life vodka bottle inviting you to the real joys of life.

Who is this Jesus anyway? Asleep at the helm in the middle of a gale. What can we expect from him in the midst of the blur? Can I trust him?

When will we ever learn! There are times when the blur disappears. Expressions on faces have registered. Bread is broken. Words are heard. Shoulders bump. Languages learned at Cheltenham across the street. Food is gathered and cooked and boxed and bagged and shared with conversation. Clothing and cloth is sorted and sized and sewed and sent out. People connect.

Why? Because the Lord answered: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped!"

I wonder if in the year 4094 there will be a place in Metropolis City where the accomplishments of Familia de Cristo II will be on display? I doubt it. What I do not doubt is that there is—and will be—a time and a place where the people from the corner of Colfax and Irving do now, and will, join with people of every time and every place and sing with each other:

"Santo, Santo, Santo es el Señor, Dios del universo. Llenos están el cielo y la tierra de tu gloria. Hosanna en el cielo. Benito el que viene en el nombre del Señor. Hosanna en el cielo. JG

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
July 3, 1994

Psalm 30
Lamentations 3:22–33
2 Corinthians 8:1–9, 13–14
Mark 5:21–24a, 35-43
or Mark 5:24b-34

First Reading

One theme running through the lessons for today is the notion of interdependence.

Lamentations 3 notes the interdependence between the one lamenting and God. While acknowledging that nothing happens which is outside the purview of God, the writer asserts—contrary to what some people may think—that God does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone. Although troubles and griefs are a part of everyone's life experience, the writer perceives that there is more to life than heartache and

sorrow. The writer lifts up God's faithfulness and steadfast love. The writer declares clearly and resolutely that hope is not found in the experiences of life, but in God whose faithfulness is great. There is an interdependence between hope and God's faithful, steadfast love and mercy.

2 Corinthians 8 pictures the church in Jerusalem as being in great need. Paul points to the churches of Macedonia as examples of giving beyond their means, and he encourages the Corinthian congregation to do the same.

The churches in Macedonia could have focused on their own needs but chose to give voluntarily, even "begging for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints" (v. 4) It seems the people in the Macedonian churches understood their giving not merely in terms of giving money, but in terms of their involvement in the mission and ministry of the church. Their giving of money is perceived as an extension of their having given themselves to the Lord. Further, while their own needs were great, they recognize that the community of faith does not exist simply in its local expression. The community of faith, while having a local embodiment, is not understood to be an independent, isolated entity. The community of faith is seen to be catholic and interdependent. The local expression of the community of faith is interdependent with God and with other representations of the community of faith. The understanding of the church as interdependent communities—local congregations, synods, and national church—currently articulated by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is consistent with the words written to the Corinthian congregation. One might wonder how many individuals or local congregations beg for the privilege of sharing in the ministry beyond their doors through giving beyond their means!

The lesson from Mark 5 illustrates that Jesus was concerned not only about a little girl at the point of death but about a woman who "had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years." Health and wholeness in the physical realm is interdependent with health and wholeness in the realm of faith. Here as elsewhere, physical health and wholeness are restored, but not in isolation from faith. PB

Pastoral Reflections

Death was far from Ken Nyberg's mind early one morning in the fall of '65 as he drove to his duck hunting blind near Clay Center, Kansas. Sleep overcame him, and his car left the road.

Death was far from my mind as I sat in my new office as a new pastor of a congregation. One of my first phone calls was an invitation to Ken's apartment to help him plan his memorial service.

I was greeted by a blond Swede with a large frame. If he could stand, he would find me looking up to see his blue eyes. Ken did most of the talking. He would stop to drink from a long straw standing in a quart jar on the kitchen table. A car accident—paralyzed from the chest down—long and painful hospital stays—ten years to complete his degree at CU—graduation with honors—President of the Englewood JCs—chess player—poet—Avondale church council member. I was uplifted in his presence. "I'll bet a loaf of my Swedish Rye will interest him," I thought.

"I have a terminal disease"—the words pierced my brain. "It's bed sores," Ken continued. It was slowly explained to me. Bed sores that do not heal draw vital protein from the body and in return drip in poison. A leg amputation was the only cure in the past. Another one should be scheduled. "I have said 'No' to another amputation," concluded Ken.

A couple of days later the first letter I received at the parsonage was a copy of Ken's living will. I buried it in a stack of mail at church.

Two weeks later on a Tuesday night, the church was packed for the memorial service. There were three-piece suits from Englewood, Levi's in wheelchairs, a portrait on a table, and a white robe presiding at the Lord's supper. Words were only words, faces a blur, and memories painful.

Throw away your scripture inserts. Read the whole story! The healings of two women enlighten each other.

It was more than year after the death of Ken and many sessions of sitting in a tight circle with other Vietnam veterans that a second healing began. It was only then that I could write: "I remember my buddy Charles Elrod from Alabama. He died next to me in a rice paddy in the

Bong Song Plain, December 7, 1967. The hole in his forehead was small and neatly round. He lay there so quiet in the midst of the chaos. There was not much blood, but I gently wrapped his head in a battle bandage. I long to continue the conversation at the Table of the Lord in another place and another time that we began that morning around a C Ration breakfast and coffee."

In my study the day after Ken's memorial service, I read again one of his poems.

Silence
It was well to come
For deeper rest to this still room,
For here the habit of the soul
Feels less the outer world's control,
And from the silence
The world that time and sense have known,
Relinquishes control and leaves us—
He alone.

The phone rang. Thursia and I talked about new blue Advent paraments as a memorial. JG

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
July 10, 1994

Psalm 143:1-2, 5-8
Ezekiel 2:1-5
2 Corinthians 12:7-10
Mark 6:1-6

First Reading

The common thread running through the three lessons for this Sunday is that of a "thorn." And with the thorn there is God's grace. While the word itself is used only in the lesson from 2 Corinthians, it seems to me that it can be seen operating in the other lessons as well. In each lesson a "thorn" is used by God to provoke a response on the part of the people of God.

In the lesson from Ezekiel 2 we read of Ezekiel's commissioning. A title translated in the RSV as "son of Man" (over ninety times in Ezekiel) is translated in the NRSV as "mortal." Either way, the title is extraordinarily important in the Gospels, because Jesus uses it of himself.

Summoned to stand before God, Ezekiel is reminded through the designation "mortal" that before God he is finite, dependent, and, relatively speaking, insignificant. That which gives the prophet power and significance is the God who "in-spirits" him. ("And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me...," v. 2.) Empowered by God's spirit, Ezekiel is commissioned to go to God's people who had rebelled against God, a people who are impudent and stubborn. The people would prove to be thorns to Ezekiel. But more importantly, Ezekiel will be a thorn used by God to get the people's attention, and hopefully a desired response of acknowledging that they live by God's grace, not under their own head of steam.

In 2 Corinthians 12 Paul declares that the thorn in his flesh (no one knows exactly what this means) is given him to keep him from becoming too puffed up, elated, and self-sufficient. Paul writes that while he wanted the thorn removed from him—and who would not want this?—God said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness."

Mark 6 records a visit by Jesus to his hometown synagogue. He taught in the synagogue and many were amazed at what he said. They wondered where Jesus had received such wisdom. Where had he received the power to do what he had been doing? In spite of the wisdom shown, in spite of the power demonstrated, the people were offended at Jesus. Was Jesus the thorn God was using to get through to the people? Possibly.

The reverse may also be true. The hometown people may also have been a thorn reminding all God's people of their need to rely on God's grace. People's acceptance or rejection of them or the witness they bring is not the key issue. PB

Pastoral Reflections

Sherman Alexie, a Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian, has written a fascinating book entitled *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1993). In the chapter, "A Drug Called Tradition," there is a reflection that goes like this:

> *There are things you should learn.* Your past is a skeleton walking one step behind you, and your future is a skeleton walking one step in front of you... these skeletons are made of memories, dreams and voices. And they trap you in the in-between, between touching and becoming.... What you have to do is keep moving, keep walking, in step with your skeletons. They ain't ever going to leave you, so you don't have to worry about that. Your past ain't going to fall behind, and your future won't get too far ahead.... But no matter what they do, keep walking, keep moving. And don't wear a watch.... Indians never need to wear a watch because your skeletons will always remind you about the time. See, it is always now. That's what Indian time is. The past, the future, all of it is wrapped up in the now. That's how it is. *We are trapped in the now.* (pp. 21-22)

Jesus did not have much success in Nazareth. His skeletons hemmed him in on both sides. Maybe it is a good thing that I do not live in the Red River Valley any more. My preaching would be worse than it is in Denver! Is there anything we can do about the unbelief in a community that we are so close to?

Sherman Alexie concludes the chapter:

> Later that day we were parked in front of the Trading Post, gossiping and laughing, talking stories when Big Mom walked up to the car. Big Mom was the spiritual leader of the Spokane Tribe. She had so much good medicine I think she may have been the one who created the earth.... Big Mom smiled at me, shook her head a little, and handed me a little drum. It looked like it was about a hundred years old, maybe older. It was so small it could fit in the palm of my hand. "You keep that," she said." Just in case." "Just in case of what?" I asked. "That's my pager. Just give it a tap and I'll be right over," she said and laughed as she walked away. Now, I'll tell you that I haven't used the thing. In fact, Big Mom died a couple years back and I'm not sure she'd come even if the thing did work. But I keep it really close to me, like Big Mom said, just in case. I guess you could call it the only religion I have, one drum that can fit in my hand, but I think if I played it a little, it might fill up the whole world. (p. 23)

How do we express the faith in the middle of the unbelief in our community, where we are so well known? Maybe it is impossible. Maybe it *is* possible, and it doesn't work because we are too timid to tap the drum that could fill the whole world. JG

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
July 17, 1994

Psalm 85:8-13
Amos 7:10-15
Ephesians 1:3-14
Mark 6:7-13

First Reading

The three lessons for Pentecost 8 lift up the idea that God calls and chooses whom God will call and choose to do the work of God. It is by God's grace, and through God's grace *alone*, with the response to such grace being one of thanksgiving.

Those called and chosen by God—ultimately all of us who were set apart by God before the foundation of the world—need not be a part of the professional prophet's guild (Amos), nor need they be found on the clergy roster of any particular denomination. They need not have outstand-

ing intellectual capabilities or academic achievements. Amos was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees. Neither occupation held a place of prestige or power. The twelve disciples Jesus called had neither worldly wealth nor priestly position. While Paul had training at the feet of a renowned rabbi, he did not have the status of Peter. Nonetheless, they were all given power and authority to speak and act on behalf of God. For example, in the Gospel lesson, the disciples are given power over unclean spirits. They were assigned the task of preaching repentance to all, and Jesus told them to shake the dust off their feet as a testimony against those who rejected them. Ultimately, it seems to me, this is saying that whoever rejected them rejected the one who had sent them, namely Jesus.

In the lesson from Ephesians, Paul puts the emphasis completely and continuously on God. God has blessed with every spiritual blessing. God chose and set apart before the foundation of the world. God destined us for adoption. God's glorious grace has been freely bestowed on us. Grace has been lavished on us. God has made known God's will. In Christ we have an inheritance. We have been marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit.

The response to all which has been given by God and received by the people of God is praise (vv. 12 and 14) and thanksgiving (v. 3). As the Prayer of the Church puts it, "Help us to treasure in our hearts all that our Lord has done for us, and enable us to show our thankfulness by lives that are wholly given to your service" (*LBW*, 52). PB

Pastoral Reflections

"At what point does a hymn go from a song to food for the soul?

"The least you can ask from any church is that it works. It is open when you want. It teaches what you want to hear. It takes you where you want to go. It will bring you to your desired destination. ***Iglesia Luterana Familia de Cristo,*** *on the other hand, has to operate on a higher level. It has to reach deeper, to go beyond nuts and bolts, hymnbooks and bibles. We have to satisfy the soul.*

"Our heritage and our tradition demand it. Every working group has to look like it belongs to the church. Any two groups that work together have to really work together. And a hymn cannot be assigned to the job of merely filling space with music. It has to appeal to your soul as well as your ear. You'll notice that a hymnbook at Family of Christ does not look a whole lot different from the one in another church. It is not there simply to pay homage to a day gone by. It is there because true food for the soul doesn't age. Page through our hymnbook and you're greeted by brilliant music that fills your heart. Keep on going and you could get lost in the details. Guitar chords. Warm melodies. Inspiring words. What you won't see is the percussion marks because they are in the background. As it should be.

"This is a church. A place drawn in bold strokes. A place that delivers a visceral effect as real as the rhythmic beat of our twin conga drums. This experience is as close as you are to Colfax and Irving. It may seem less a building of bricks and mortar than a cathedral that uplifts the soul. And you might never look at a church the same way again."

These are the words I wrote for a brochure handed out in our neighborhood. Visualize the words on the borders of the page and a picture of our church in the center. Not bad, huh? I have to confess the idea was not mine. It either came from Madison Avenue in New York City or from a Lutheran in Milwaukee. Change some words in the text and place a beautifully chromed and painted Heritage Classic Harley Davidson Motorcycle in the center of page, and you've got the origin!

The disciples were prepared for their venture into the neighborhood. There is not much detail, but we do learn that their preaching tour was a success. A few years ago our text study group tried something different. We met in a different parish each week. After the study, we had lunch and then went out two by two and visited door to door in the neighborhood. Try it! You might like it! JG

The Righteousness Factor

Roger Fjeld
President, Wartburg Theological Seminary

Earlier this winter, our Academic Dan, Duane Priebe, offered a provocative comment about the way members of our church were dealing with ELCA's draft statement on human sexuality. He suggested that people seem to be staking out positions that declare who is righteous and who is not. His comment prompted me to think more generally about how people in our church deal with controversial social issues.

Time was when our churches weren't even sure we ought to be taking positions on such matters. We used to go through a preliminary process of debating whether we had any business debating a certain subject: then if we decided the subject was proper, we got on with the debate about the substance of a proposed statement or action. We have largely discarded that preliminary stage. We've given ourselves permission, even mandate, to take positions on many contemporary social issues. We probably even tackle some issues that should not and cannot usefully be decided through democratic process.

A curious thing happens, though, when we do take on controversial topics. We who regularly confess that we have no righteousness except that which Christ has given us, find ourselves declaring some people righteous and others unrighteous, on the basis of what they believe or what they practice. It is as though we remember our sinfulness in generic and liturgical conversation, then forget to bring that understanding with us into these divisive debates.

Someone will surely argue that it is God's righteousness we seek in these debates, not our own. At our best, that is surely true. We have permission, indeed obligation, to search for the truth in such matters and to label as false that which is false. But all too easily the appeal to God's righteousness gets mixed in with an assertion of our own righteousness. The tell-tale evidences abound: a vindictiveness in the name of a God who is not vindictive; anger in the name of a God who is patient and understanding of the human predicament; judgmentalism in the name of a God who forgives. The kind and quantity of passion tells a story that belies the piety of those who loudly protest that they are only trying to find or preserve the truth.

An example is the human sexuality debate about the proper understanding of Romans 1:26-27. There is a clear and very important difference of opinion among theo-

logians and within our church more generally about what that text says about God's intention for human sexual behavior. It is a crucial text. But those who want to use it to condemn behavior which others justify seem to forget that the larger purpose of that whole first section of Romans is to demonstrate that "every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For no human being is justified in his sight by works of the law since through the law comes knowledge of sin" (Rom 3:19b-20). The only righteousness possible is that which is promised as Paul offers the great hope, "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law" (v. 21).

Lutherans are good at saying this in Reformation Day sermons and in our liturgical moments of confession and absolution. We don't seem to carry that sense of our own brokenness into our debates about social issues. We who believe that God's righteousness is so far beyond our own that we cannot even compare them, suddenly come off sounding righteous in relation to what we perceive as the unrighteousness of others. We are obliged to address those issues which press us in our dual roles as citizens of the world and members of the Body of Christ, but surely we ought to address them with more humility; with more awareness that all parties to the debate are broken and every human attempt to declare the righteousness of God is tainted by our own pretensions to righteousness.

The debate about the human sexuality document would serve church and world much better, if those who argue for one position or another did not confuse God's righteousness with their own self-righteousness. We need lots more light and lots less heat, as we try to offer something which will provide guidance within the life of the church and a word of counsel to a world that has badly distorted God's intention for us as sexual beings.

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