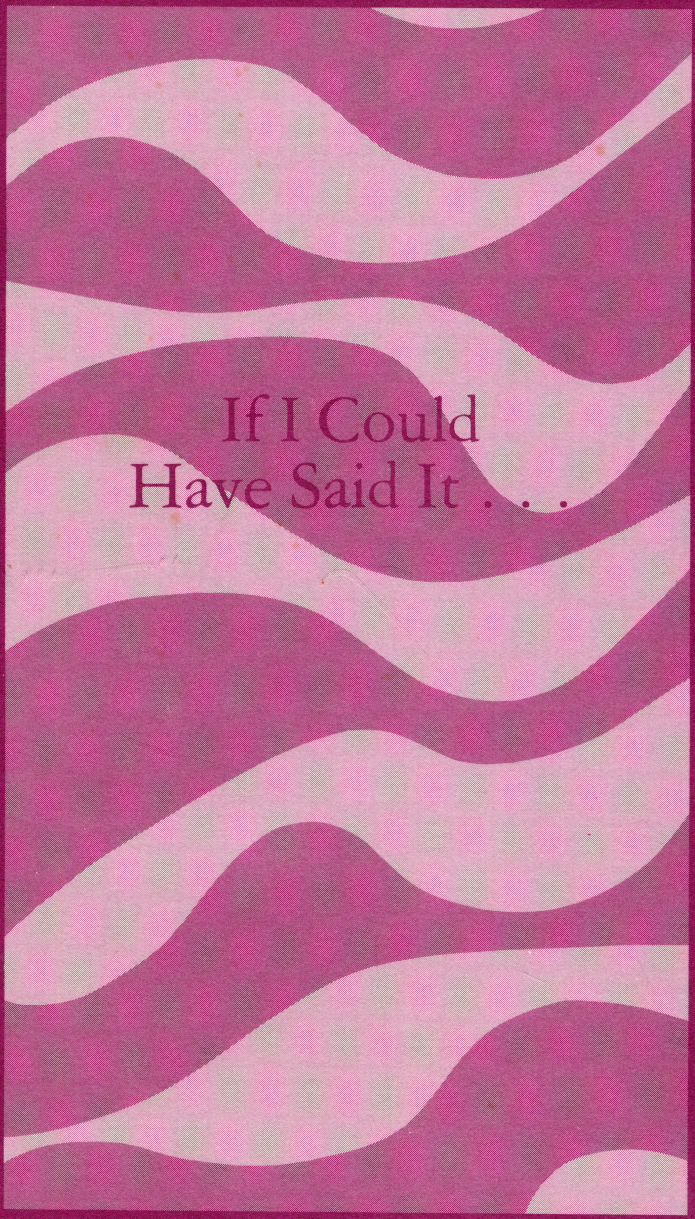
April 1991 Volume 18 Number 2



CURRENTS
in Theology and Mission

Currents

in Theology and Mission

Published by
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

in cooperation with
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
Wartburg Theological Seminary

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CURRENTS IN THEOLOGY AND MISSION (ISSN: 0098-2113) is published bimonthly, February, April, June, August, October, December by Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, a non-profit organization, 1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60615, to which all business correspondence is to be addressed. Annual subscription rate: $13.50 in the U.S. and Canada ($15.50 overseas). Two-year rate: $25.00 in the U.S. and Canada ($29.00 overseas). Three-year rate: $36.00 in the U.S. and Canada ($42.00 overseas). Second Class Postage Paid at Chicago, Illinois and at other mailing offices. Printed in U.S.A.

CURRENTS is indexed in *Elenchus, IZBW, NTA, OTA, Religion Index I* (formerly *IRPL*), *Religious and Theological Abstracts*, and *Theologische Literaturzeitung*.

MICROFORM AVAILABILITY: 16mm microfilm, 35mm microfilm, 105mm microfiche, and article copies are available through University Microfilms Inc., 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Currents in Theology and Mission*, 1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60615.

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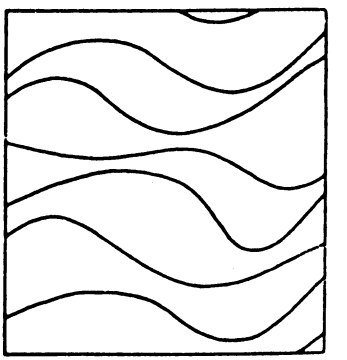
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Series B
The Day of Pentecost—Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

If I Could Have Said It...

Martin Marty tells the story of a young newspaper reporter who asked a top ballerina what she was trying to say. If I could have said it, she replied, I would not have danced.

The banks of lilies, the trumpets soaring over the wide-open organ, the Easter vigil and the sunrise service, even the turn-away crowds "say" it for us: He is risen! Indeed!

There's no better time to preach than on Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday, and in certain ways no more difficult time. How can one express the inexpressible? How can one articulate the incomprehensible? How can our analytical and logical minds make sense of it all? Much of Easter centers on the right brain.

Each year, on the Friday after Easter, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Luke in Chicago sponsors a Festival of the Resurrection, in which it confesses in music and art, through discussion and Eucharist, what Easter is all about. Almost all the articles in this issue were first heard at that festival, and they explore images of the resurrection. Our thanks to **Randall R. Lee**, editorial board member, who arranged the festival last year and collected the articles for your benefit.

David Morgan writes that the function of an image is to set up a relationship between the viewer and the referent. Meister Francke in the 15th century painted Jesus backing out of the tomb. The resurrection

event, in this interpretation, is hidden from unbelievers and is privy only to viewers who look upon the scene with eyes of faith. The Isenheim altarpiece by Grünewald shows Jesus pitifully suffering on the cross, his skin erupting with the same kind of ailments that the monks at that monastery treated. But on the same altarpiece was a luminous vision of the resurrection. If the suffering of the patients at this monastery were those of Christ, the glorious resurrection was theirs as well. Such images set forth in visual terms and illuminate in a uniquely compelling way the character of the viewer's relationship with what or whom the image depicts.

Linda Marie Delloff notes that connotative images complete our experience. The most basic human experiences are non-logical, non-definable, non-verbal, emotional, just as the most essential truths are more suggestive than specific or informational. Precisely because the resurrection so transcends logic it links religion and art, faith and imagination. Both the one who shapes the image and the one who receives it create meaning. Hence we must learn how to understand images as we combine the event itself and what it means.

Edgar Krentz examines the image of resurrection in a whole series of New Testament documents: Q, Luke-Acts, early hymns embedded in the epistles, Mark, Matthew, 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, Romans, and, finally, 1 Corinthians. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ—that's how Paul sums up his message in 1 Corinthians 15. The New Testament uses a variety of images to support that victory cry, and we who proclaim the resurrection for the world today need to ransack our imaginations for adequate images to express it.

George W. Hoyer, long-time editor of Preaching Helps, deals with imaging the resurrection in preaching. We preachers use our primal minds and our scientific minds; we seek the aesthetic and the objective. How does the image of the resurrection release gospel power? The problem is more or less humdrum: those who have been given life by the Lord's life fail to live that new life. But then comes the startling and powerful new image: Through his rising from the dead we have been

given the resurrection ability to rise to newness of life. This essay offers a series of images designed to help people preach in an imaginative way. It ends with a wonderful story from the Narnia tales that illustrates how our present possession of that life moves us to the living of it.

Mark P. Bangert shows how rising melodic lines serve as metaphors for energetic life and heightened emotion and how a Bach cantata comes across as a moment of musical resurrection. Why does music "work" on and for us? Part of the answer comes from the psychology and physiology of music. Antiphonal, or call-response, music from Africa can even be seen as the Christian community in action. Note the call-response between Jesus and Mary in the garden. Music, the gift of God, can deliver us into new and different time structures, keeping us tuned to the age in which we live already-but-not-yet.

Marc Kolden preached a resurrection sermon at Luther Northwestern based on the puzzling text "We are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand." He unpacks the unlogical and powerful image of the "people of God's pasture" in an unforgettable way. It would be gilding the lily to tell you about it in advance.

These articles are intended to drive you into reverie as you rummage through art books, "see" what Bach's music does to you, and meditate on the final witness for love and life an embattled farmer gives for his wife.

Maybe you can't sing like angels or preach like Paul. But maybe the Holy Spirit this year can express through you an Easter image that sets forth in a uniquely compelling way your relationship with the one who did after all rise.

Imagine that!

Ralph W. Klein
Editor

Imaging the Resurrection: An Art Historical View

David Morgan
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Debate over the nature and role of images in spiritual life has persisted through centuries of Christian belief. Definitions of what an image is and how it works depend entirely on how one evaluates its power.

That images possess power, however, is something which both partisans and opponents of images ought to agree on. Whether the image is representational, symbolic, or purely abstract, this power consists of the image's ability to satisfy the human yearning for relatedness: the desire to articulate the character of one's relationship to some reality by focusing his or her vision on an image in some way related to it. In imaging a particular subject, the artist offers the viewer a way of bringing the sacred reality into the space and time of human need. The fulfillment of the desire for relation has given the visual arts a prominent and powerful role in private devotion and public ritual—the two most common sites of encounter between the sacred and the believer. The image brings a physical presence before the viewer that is neither purely transcendental nor purely immanent, but an intermediate reality, a bridge, as it were, which establishes a compelling link between the 'here' of the viewer's body and the disembodied 'there' of the sacred 'other.'

Since the earliest centuries of the church, images have shaped the presentation of its central event, the life of Jesus. To understand their relationship to Christ, believers have undertaken to represent nearly every aspect of his tenure on earth as well as a good deal of his life hereafter. One episode in this narrative whose depiction has received an intriguing diversity of treatment is the resurrection. What the resurrection meant at different moments, how it was understood and proclaimed, is directly conveyed in the ongoing creative process of depicting the event in the history of the church. The following survey of important monuments will show that images of the resurrection visualize a relationship between

the resurrected Christ and each image's audience. The function of the image in every case is not merely to illustrate theological propositions, but to set up a relationship between the viewer and the referent *in the image, by virtue of the image*, and thereby to disclose visually what theologians for their part rely on words to convey.



Given that the images we use configure our relation to what we image, it is rather shocking at first sight to realize that in the first one thousand years of eastern and western Christianity there are virtually no images of the resurrected Jesus emerging from the tomb. Not until the beginning of the second millennium do depictions of the risen Lord at graveside appear and go on to become one of the most common motifs in Christian art. Why is this so? We know of course that Christians before the year 1000 affirmed the corporeal resurrection of Jesus. Did they lack the necessary artistic wherewithal to portray such a miraculous event? Hardly. Depicting miracles was the stock-in-trade of early Christian and medieval artists. Was there a taboo against images of the resurrection, was it possibly deemed best not to depict this all-important miracle? One can imagine an iconoclast in the east making such an argument. But in fact no such claim was made.

The reason, it appears, that the risen Jesus was not pictured emerging from the tomb is that this particular image was not how the church understood the meaning of the resurrection.[1] The significance of the resurrection was not visualized in terms of the bodily reinstatement of Christ at or near the tomb as portrayed in the narrative of John. In fact, although it alludes to the tomb, the earliest artistic treatment of the theme was a symbolical reference to Christ's victory over death—as shown on a fourth-century sarcophagus in which the *chi rho* was framed within a triumphal wreath atop a cross and accompanied by two soldiers. This motif was derived from pre-Christian imperial imagery in which the wreath symbolized the emperor's military victories. This pagan symbolism was transformed by Constantine in 312 when his vision of the cross, or *chi rho* according to other sources, led to his victory over an imperial rival and to the official Christianization of the empire. Constantine set up a *labarum* or trophy with the *chi rho* and had it protected by soldiers. The image can be found on coinage of the day. Early Christian artists borrowed the motif and modified the military guard to portray the soldiers mentioned in Matthew 28:4.

Other early Christian visualizations of the resurrection, particularly those in the Latin west, focused on the ascension of Christ as the proclamation of his victory over death. It was not Christ's emergence

[1]See Wolfgang Braunfels, *Die Auferstehung* (Dusseldorf: Schwann, 1951), xi.

from the grave, but his glorification and apotheosis which asserted his power and enacted his vindication. This is found in an ivory panel from the end of the fourth century which shows the two Marys at the tomb with an angel and Christ above being welcomed into the celestial realm by the hand of God.

In eastern Christianity up to the seventh century the resurrection was alluded to by depicting the events following the resurrection. Thus, the passion cycle treated in a group of early fifth-century ivory carvings shows a vacant tomb followed by an image of the risen Lord appearing to the disciples, offering his wounded side to a doubting Thomas. This illustrational hiatus may have been an attempt to depict the gospel accounts at face value, since none of them offers narrative concerning what actually transpired after Christ's death and before his appearance.

Beginning in the eighth century in the east, the theme of the *anastasis* (Greek for resurrection) became the primary mode of understanding the significance of the resurrection. As such, it represents a major development in theological speculation since the event is not related in the Gospels and only scantily referred to in 1 Peter 3. Christ is shown in hell rescuing Adam, the representative of humanity. As time passed, a host of Old Testament biblical personages appear with Adam, including Eve, their sons, and Moses. The same motif is found in the west, but it never received the attention that it did in the east where by the eleventh century the *anastasis* or harrowing of hell had become the unrivaled image celebrating the Easter faith.

It was during the eleventh century in the west that the motif of Christ emerging from the tomb was taken up as the essential image of the resurrection. An earlier depiction has been dated to around 830 in the *Utrecht Psalter*, a Carolingian document which includes an illustration of Psalm 19. Verses four and five state that God has set a tent in the heavens for the sun, "which comes forth like a bridegroom leaving his chamber...." This was taken as a mystical reference to Christ, and in the instance of the *Utrecht Psalter*, as a reference to the resurrected Christ who is shown there aided by two angels after the apocryphal Gospel of Peter in which two angels are said to have accompanied the risen Christ.[2]

But the first direct attempt to depict Christ arising bodily from the tomb occurred around 1020 in the *Evangeliary of Henry II*, where St. Mark is shown gazing on the resurrected Lord, who stands in an open sarcophagus.

Why did this occur at this time? It is interesting to note that the dead Christ on the cross became a popular subject in the visual arts only in the ninth and tenth centuries following the iconoclastic controversy in the east.[3] This type of Christ diverged from earlier depictions which represented him with eyes open. It has recently been proposed that artists avoided images of Christ on the cross with his eyes closed because of the ongoing debate over Christ's

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[2]See Hubert Schrade, *Die Auferstehung Christi*, in his *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*, vol. 1 (Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1932), 39.

[3]For discussion of this subject, see Braunfels, *Die Auferstehung*, xi; John R. Martin, "The Dead Christ on the Cross in Byzantine Art," in *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend, Jr.*, ed. Kurt Weitzmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 189-96; and Anna D. Kartsonis, *Anastasis. The Making of an Image* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 34-39 and 40-67.

nature.[4] To show the crucified Christ dead risked the suggestion of an unorthodox denial of the hypostatic union of his two natures in death. In fact, iconoclasts asserted that any depiction whatsoever of Christ denied his divinity since God is imperceptible and therefore incapable of being represented.[5] But with the refutation of heretical views by the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680-81), the polemical writings of such defenders of images as John of Damascus and Nicephorus, and the eventual victory over the iconoclasts in 843, it became safe to visualize Christ with his eyes closed on the cross, a motif which began to appear with frequency in the ninth century. Moreover, as John Martin has suggested, depicting Christ dead on the cross became a pictorial vindication of Orthodoxy,[6] what amounted to a proclamation of the propriety of visualizing Christ and revering his iconic presence in the Orthodox liturgy.

With the depiction of Christ's death on the cross came the special need to portray his return to life. Accordingly, in the east the *anastasis* appeared and took shape as the visualization of Christ's resurrection. In the west artists fixed their attention on the tomb.

As the medieval period waned and the Renaissance appeared, the methods of treating the resurrection underwent considerable change. The rise of more naturalistic techniques of painting led artists to visualize the resurrection with greater psychological subtlety and with more naturalistic attention to the miraculous nature of the event. In 1424 the Hamburg painter, Meister Francke, completed a passion cycle for the altar of St. Thomas, in which he included an exceptional panel of the resurrected Christ shown climbing from the opened tomb. With brilliant ingenuity, Francke envisioned the risen Jesus with his back to the viewer, precariously straddling the side of his sarcophagus while a negligent detail of soldiers lay fast asleep. By concealing Christ's face Francke succeeded in suggesting in unprecedented visual terms that the event itself is hidden from unbelievers and privy only to those who, like viewers before the altar of St. Thomas, look upon the scene with the eyes of faith. The viewer is brought into a privileged relation with the event of the resurrection, while the sleeping pagans are excluded. A wonderful sense of surprise in the image enhances the intimacy the viewer feels by being included in this rare glimpse of a mystery of faith.

Quite a different strategy for achieving a vital bond between the viewer and a depiction of the resurrection is at work in the great masterwork by Matthias Grünewald, the *Isenheim Altarpiece* (1511-15). This work was commissioned for the monastery church of St. Anthony, Isenheim, near Colmar, where the community of monks specialized in treating ailments of the skin. Grünewald's pathetically tortured treatment of the crucified Christ, whose flesh is pierced by thorns, ruptured in sores, and turning green with putrefaction, was complemented by a luminous vision of the resurrection. Here the risen Lord appears as a message tailored to the local audience: a consoling transformation of corporeal suffering into the celestial light of the resurrected "spiritual body." Since the suffering so awfully visible in the body of Christ was the suffering of the patients at Isenheim, the promise of a transfiguring resurrection was theirs as well. Once again, the viewer's relation to the image was a reflection of the viewer's relationship with Christ.

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[4]Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 34-39.
[5]Martin, "The Dead Christ," 193.
[6]Martin, "The Dead Christ," 194.

In the first half of the seventeenth century artists in Europe turned toward more and more dramatic means of depicting biblical subjects in accord with a sweeping Baroque sensibility at work in literature and the visual arts. The work of the younger Rembrandt manifests this taste for theatricality. His *Resurrection* (ca. 1636-39) depicts a winged angel in dazzling raiment who has suddenly appeared in a burst of energy and thick clouds of smoke to wrench away the lid of Christ's tomb. The lid topples into a flailing crowd of soldiers taken utterly by surprise. From within the grave rises a groggy Christ awakened by the thunderbolt and flash of light from above.

In his old age, in the midst of years of bankruptcy, Rembrandt returned to the theme. In *Risen Christ* (1661) the pyrotechnics and Baroque trumpets are gone. In their place is the quiet reflection of a mature artist seeking a different audience. Christ is seen personally, as a portrait shrouded in darkness, gazing deeply into the viewer's eye. If we are gripped by the sheer spectacle and dynamism of the earlier work, the later image speaks to us in silence and intimacy.

With the decline of ecclesiastical patronage and the rise of the middle class civic and increasingly secular market for artists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the representation of religious subjects diminished in number and artistic importance. Although one can certainly find the subject treated by significant artists after 1800, scenes of the resurrection no longer possess the aura of pre-modern piety which makes works like those of Francke, Grünewald, and Rembrandt seem so genuine. On the one hand, it may be the reactionary revivalism of the German Romantic painter Friedrich Overbeck, who painted his *Easter Morning* (1818) in the manner of Raphael, or, on the other hand, the uninspired costume-painting realism of the enormously popular French painter, Jean-Léon Gerôme. Where Overbeck sought to visualize the resurrection for modern viewers in a narrow-minded (and Germanically anti-modern) interpretation of an archaic style, Gerôme hauled in the familiar studio apparatus of academic realism with all of its historicizing and uncompelling attention to archaeological detail. If Overbeck took the viewer back to early sixteenth-century Italy, Gerôme anticipated the unmitigated visual boredom of Sunday School and church bulletin illustration that has dulled the visual sensibilities of twentieth-century Christians.

> The viewer's relation to the image was a reflection of the viewer's relationship with Christ.

Happily, the theme of the resurrection has fared better in the hands of a few twentieth-century painters. Stanley Spencer's marvelous treatment of the resurrection, now in the Tate Gallery, London, acts as a welcome antidote to Gerôme's historicism. Spencer located the passion of Christ in his native English town of Peckham and likewise depicted the final resurrection of the dead in the graveyard beside his church. Contrary to what one might expect, this is a pictorial practice with an old and venerable tradition. Since the Middle Ages, artists

have placed biblical events in a contemporary setting and thereby visualized a more immediate relationship between the contemporary viewer and the event. The resurrection does not belong to a distant place and time, but to the present world of the picture's audience.

A final artist, the painter Siegfried Reinhardt, whose work is well known in Lutheran circles, has handled the resurrection within the pictorial idiom of contemporary culture. Reinhardt's 1959 painting entitled *Light* merges a crucified and resurrected Christ into a shifting, transparent collage of images that recalls the visual acrobatics of television and modern advertising. Reinhardt appeals to a distinctly twentieth-century American visual literacy by creating a work in which frames of time are juxtaposed in a flutter of visual fragments accompanied by the sonorous tones of a saxophone. This quick shuffle of images situates the resurrection within modern visual consciousness and lodges it there with the surreal incongruency of a bald sax player. The image resonates, and we take away with us the persistent flash of Easter morning.

I began this essay with the suggestion that images possess the power to set forth in visual terms and illuminate in a uniquely compelling way the character of the viewer's relationship with what or whom the image depicts. There remain two aspects to this relationship which I have not discussed, but which must at least be briefly mentioned in order to underscore the need for imaging faith.

First, in advocating the power of the image to establish on visual terms a compelling relation between viewer and referent, I do not seek to replace theology or dogma with aesthetic experience. It is important to stress that this relation is not

Were it even possible to deprive the religious life of its aesthetic dimension, such a life would be fundamentally incomplete.

accomplished without reference to the words and concepts of religious belief, for it is these which predispose the viewer to experience the image in a particular way, to see in it the significance that he or she may see. Concepts and images are rarely separate devices, but complexly interwoven. It is difficult indeed to isolate even the most abstract proposition from some sort of image or metaphor; likewise the total significance of the experience of an image must include the conceptual apparatus which we employ to evaluate it, characterize it, or re-invoke it. Whatever we image is accompanied by concepts, whatever we say is impregnated with images. To insist, therefore, as many Protestants and iconoclasts have done, that the gospel is properly conveyed only by preaching in words, is to ignore the vital performance of imagery not only before our eyes, but in spoken language (such as the Gospel narratives and all good preaching) as well as the images that animate all compelling thought. I believe this interpenetration indicates a complementary and interdependent relationship between concept and image such that, were it even possible to deprive the religious life of its aesthetic

dimension, such a life would be fundamentally incomplete and incapable of articulating as fully and provocatively its desire and experience.

Second, it is evident from our consideration of depictions of the resurrection that accomplished artists work with a keen consciousness of the audience which their images address. Grünewald did not create his *Resurrection* in abstracto, but within the living context of a local community of monastic caregivers and their dependents. This suggests that the relation a sacred image establishes between its referent and a viewer has as a vital and resonant correlative the relation which the image sets up between viewer and viewer. The image makes present not only the divine other, but other viewers who share a searching gaze. Images of faith turn believers toward one another even as they turn them toward the divine. One's presence before God includes one's presence in the community of faith. It is for this reason that icons in the east and organ music in the west occupy such a prominent place in the liturgy. These aesthetic forms can work at the very center of the worship service because they serve to bring the community together, to focus its corporate eye, to tune its collective ear, into a single, embracing presence.

Each of the constructive depictions of the resurrection discussed here seeks to establish a relation with the viewer which will serve as the medium for making the event one that is convincing and immediately relevant. The power of images to stare back at us is the power to reveal what can only happen in the mysterious space 'in between' God and humanity, person and person. This intermediate space, which is the source of the power of the image, is charged with the presence of the 'other.' Here we encounter the limits of the self and the mysterious presence of what lies beyond. It is in this dismantling of one's self before the luminous advent of the other that truth happens, where spirituality truly resides. And cut off in time and space as we are from the historical Jesus, it is the role of the image to transform this distance into vision, into a peculiar way of seeing that will bring this mystery near and illumine our relations with one another.

The Resurrection: Link Between Faith and Art

Linda Marie Delloff
Saddle River, New Jersey

I spend essentially all of my work time (and much of my other time as well) in the self-conscious use of words: writing them, speaking them, analyzing them. I make my living with words and, to a great extent, I live through words. Yet what I will use words to discuss here is first, that we are all too dependent on words, especially in the church. Second, I will use words to talk about another phenomenon—one that does not necessarily use words: the creation and understanding of images.

This is one of the great ironies of the human condition—that in many ways, our methods of communication are self-limited. That is, we need, or think we need, one method of communication to 'explain' another. Yet that limitation is also illustrative of the promise and potential of the human condition: for, in fact, our various means of communication *can* be used to illustrate, explain, or describe other such means. Words can describe music, music can describe words or visual representations, visual representations such as painting or sculpture can illustrate words or music (though that latter relationship is a bit more difficult to facilitate). But we often take negative advantage of the relationship between words and other forms of communication—in fact, using words almost as a crutch to 'explain' other forms of communication when they do not need any such explanation.

I am first going to discuss images generally, then the resurrection specifically and its depiction in images. There are actually many types of images. In some ways they are all related to one other, and in other ways some of them are near-opposites of one another. All uses of the word "image" derive from the same Latin root: *imago*—as do some other very important and related words such as imagination, imaginable, imaginative, and imaginary.

In one definition, an image is described as "an exact likeness" or "a tangible or visible representation." In contrast, another definition tells us that an image is "an idea or concept" or "an impression" or "a mental picture of something not actually present." Obviously these two definitions describe near-opposites. On the one hand, an image can be the most exact duplication, such as a

photograph; or it can be the least exact—a merely suggestive representation.

What kind of images constitute the present topic? For the most part, the second kind: ideas, concepts, impressions, suggestions. These we can call connotative images—as opposed to the denotative images to be seen in a mirror, or a snapshot. Connotative images are appropriate to art because art is not an exact representation of anything—even when it is representational.

This is most obviously true in art forms that do not use visual images, i.e., how could music produce an exact image of "La Mer" (Debussy) or the "Fountains of Rome" (Respighi) or the "Mysterious Mountain" of Alan Hovhaness? It is less clear with arts of the word, though more so with poetry than with fiction. For poetry creates images not only through words but, in a way, through the elimination of words, the distillation of meaning into few words. That is, it is generally purposeful in using fewer words than does literature to convey an idea; indeed, it uses words to stand for other words or groups of words, as well as for ideas.

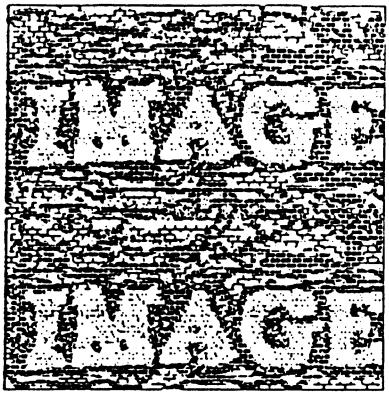
So, one reason art uses connotative images is because it is *not* the thing it represents. And because it wants to maintain a certain distance from the thing it represents so that we are sure it is art and not that thing (though some contemporary artists play games with these ideas, creating art that is 'the thing itself' and challenging us to understand why it is art).

But why have art at all? Why not just represent things or ideas in specific, denotative ways—in precise words, or in some mathematical formula? The answer seems to be that, in spite of (perhaps partly because of) our overdependence on language, we need other, more connotative, images to complete an experience. Or even just to enrich an experience. Words are simply not enough, especially in their denotative use. Actually, visual images and music may even have pre-dated language. Drawings appearing on pre-historic cave walls, and musical instruments found among other exceedingly ancient pre-historic artefacts, raise this possibility.

Some scientists and psychologists posit that images might present themselves to an infant's mind before the understanding and learning of language. Of course we cannot know this, at least as things now stand, because, in another of those ironies of the human condition, infants do not have language to tell us about any images they might have. Nor could they understand our posing such a question to them in any form other than language. In fact, once infants have begun to learn language, and are strongly encouraged in its use, they may begin to lose the capacity to think in images, thus limiting their (our) ways of understanding the world once they (we) become adults. (It would be interesting to consider to what degree an artist's images might in some way be 'memories,' but that is another topic.)

In this regard, it is truly strange that the Protestant church has traditionally been so resistant to artistic images and so dependent on the specificity of words. It is strange because the very act of religious faith is to a large extent a connotative act—at least more so than it is a denotative one. The majority of human beings who claim to "have faith" did not come to faith through logic or reasoned argument. They have not based their decision to believe on a series of demonstrated facts. Often they have faith despite the available facts, not because of them. They may make a 'wager of faith' or a 'leap of faith.'

It would seem natural for the church to embrace the arts as 'speaking the same language' as faith, if you will—that is, language based on inclinations of the heart and soul. Yet we know that the Protestant



church has never clasped art in any such embrace.

To summarize, I have suggested that the most basic human experiences are not logical, verbal ones, but more likely non-logical, non-definable, non-verbal, emotional ones. And that is what many images are as well, at least the connotative ones we are speaking about.

Now, if an image—even a 'representational' image—is not exact, but is connotative and suggestive, how are we supposed to know 'what it means'? In fact, who gives 'meaning' to the image? The very fact that we so often ask that question, especially of art, i.e. "What does it mean?" suggests again how much we are dependent on language and how far away we have moved from other valid and vital means of communication—communication through feeling, through look, through touch, for example. Instead, we want everything 'explained' to us. And we want it explained in words, not in some other medium. We are very uncomfortable if we cannot figure out what something 'means'; we are reluctant to allow a thing or a creature simply to be.

At any rate, a work of art may, in fact, not have a specific 'meaning.' But even one that does still communicates in images, and always loses a bit of meaning when 'explained' in denotative words, just as does one language when translated into another, no matter how excellent the translation.

Thus, when we ask "who creates the meaning of an image," and hence of an artwork, we are asking a complicated question. Certainly the artist 'creates' a meaning. But in a way, that is like the cliche question of the tree falling in the forest. Does it make a crashing sound if no one is there to hear it? Similarly, does an artwork have as much—or, for that matter, any—'meaning' if no one besides its creator ever sees or hears it? For we have already said that art is a means of communication.

One might cite the stereotype of the reclusive artist who paints or composes "only for himself," supposedly. But I would hesitate to make such a statement categorically. I think such recluses, like other artists, often create for someone or something beyond themselves, even if that person or thing, that object, is itself one of the imagination. The very phrase "expressing oneself" implies an object, a relationship. Thus, an artist could create for another human being or beings whom she knows; for a desired but unattainable human being like Dante's Beatrice; for an imaginary being. Or for God. The fact that the artist never takes the next step of communication—that is, presenting the work of art to anyone—does not mean that the act of creation was not communicative. To set it down on staff paper or canvas made it communicative.

Another type of communication occurs when a viewer or listener meets the images in an artwork. At least it occurs if that viewer or listener brings something to the work, and does not expect to be 'edu-

cated' or 'informed' without any personal effort. Thus, the answer to the question of who creates meanings for images is a dual answer: both shaper and receiver create meanings. Meanings become richer as they are shared and enhanced by interpretation.

This is certainly not to say that there is no such phenomenon as 'lasting meaning.' Of course there is—and in fact, I am one who would say that the images in a painting that spends its life facing a wall still have meaning. But they have infinitely more meaning once they become shared with others.

If one stops to think about it, history itself is the cumulative, tacit decision by succeeding generations to agree to accept a certain degree of received meaning from previous generations—instead of recreating it for themselves. What human beings cannot resist doing is adding layers to those inherited meanings; that is a basic aspect of human nature. For the most part, that addition is a constructive process, though often not entirely—and sometimes, quite the opposite.

Thus, we have said that art is communicative, and that it uses images of one sort or another to convey meaning. It is helpful, though not conclusive, to take the examination one step further and to ask: what comes first, an idea, or an image? an idea of something, or an image that one 'turns into' an idea—at whatever level of understanding one's age and circumstances may allow?

This question is surely as difficult to answer as the one about infants having images. On the one hand, can one 'have an idea' without expressing it—in some kind of images, verbal or otherwise? On the other hand, is there any image that does not somehow represent some idea, even if that idea is not as specific as an 'object'? It might, for example, be an emotion—anger, for instance, and the image might be fire or a thunderstorm, or loud crashes of cymbals (no pun intended) or two fields of color colliding violently with each other.

Actually, we do not need to worry too much about answering this 'chicken and egg' question concerning ideas and images. But we should not ignore it. At the very least, turning it over in our minds ought to awaken us to the various possibilities and make us realize that there are *processes* contributing to the creative act; processes that don't just start when the painter puts brush to canvas, or the poet puts pen to paper, or Paul Manz sits down at the keyboard. These are usually the last steps in a long creative process. At the same time, we cannot hope or expect to know exactly 'where' (that is, in the human mind? the soul? the heart? the spirit?) the ideas, images, or processes originate.

How might we best 'use' images? How can those of us who contemplate images created by others appropriate or understand them, especially if this process does not seem to come naturally, as many people say is the case for them? I noted that art is communicative, and communication is definitionally a two-way street. Consider translation again as a model. If one wants to learn a new language, one would have a difficult time starting by trying to read an entire book in that new language (though some people have actually taught themselves languages in this way). Instead, one would work gradually and progressively at translation, with units of that language—some of them structural or grammatical, and some of them units of meaning.

In the same way, images are units of meaning in the language of painting or sculpture, or music, or poetry. (And an image itself may be composed of smaller units of meaning.) Expecting a painting to 'make sense' immediately is like expecting to be able to read, say, Camus's *L'Etranger*

in French without previously knowing that language. Why should we expect visual or musical art to be any easier, to be instantly accessible? But many people give up if they do not understand a work of art immediately, in ways they would never give up attempting to master some other new skill or language. (Of course there are many people, especially Americans, who are just as lazy about learning foreign languages.)

People say, "I want a picture, not an image. I want words with my music. I want art to look like something."

Well, it does actually. It looks the way human beings feel.

Human beings need images. Images are their natural language—one they don't have to be taught, though they do not realize that. And they resist it because ambiguity can provoke anxiety.

Can any idea be more ambiguous than that of the resurrection? Or what do we mean by "an image of the resurrection"? Does it mean a portrayal of some sort of ghostly spirit (what Joe Sittler used to call, among other things, a gaseous presence) rising from the body of Jesus Christ and ascending toward heaven? Or does it mean depictions of an empty tomb with the rest left up to the imagination? Or can it be represented by ascending scales and increasing volume in a musical composition, or a statue with arms upraised to heaven? Well, some of those might work, especially as denotative images. But they run the risk of being so specific (not to mention cliched) that they cease to function as images.

What 'works' as an artistic image of the resurrection is something that inspires us to think not only of the event itself, but of what it means. "Ascent," for example, is not per se a meaningful concept. Something so obvious, so denotative as the examples I suggested do not readily work because they are a simplistic attempt at rendering a complicated concept. Note I said simplistic, not simple. Resurrection is both a simple and a complex concept, but it is in no way simplistic.

Human beings need images. Images are their natural language—one they don't have to be taught, though they do not realize that.

Yet in neither case is it 'specific.' Thus, it could only be represented in an image—a connotative image. It is not specific, nor is it something of which human beings have an idea based on personal experience. That is also why it is at once so difficult and so exciting for artists to create images of the resurrection. They must use their imaginations to their fullest extent, perhaps more so than in conveying some other religious ideas.

Consider the idea of creation, for example, or of forgiveness. All of us have some experience of those realities in our own limited human world. We all know what it is to create something, whether a garden, a cake, a model airplane, or a Christmas wreath. And—I hope—we have all forgiven and been forgiven by other human beings. Thus we have some notion of God's forgiveness, and of grace. But of resurrection we have no such notion. That is why we are thunderstruck by the idea (and certainly why some simply cannot accept it).

How do we image such a phenomenal, stupendous idea? Jesus Christ, crucified and died, IS NOT IN THE TOMB. "He is not here; for he has risen, as he said." What does that mean? And how could an artist possibly create an image to convey what it might mean?

A real work of art, whose image or images somehow tell the truth about their subject matter, will probably be more suggestive than specific or informational. It will be that way because that is what most essential truths of life are: more suggestive than specific. Otherwise we would not spend our entire lives searching out those truths. The concept of the resurrection is suggestive, provocative, non-demonstrable; something that leaves us with more questions than answers. The idea of the resurrection fills us with profound, deep, and, for me at least, non-specific and extremely complicated emotions. Thus I do not want it represented in images that are otherwise.

Above all, though, I do want it represented. That is, I want it, to paraphrase Luther, "spoken" but also "sung, painted, and played." I also want it molded, sculpted, danced. The resurrection, as one of the most basic ideas of the Christian faith, must be communicated as faith is: through feelings and imagination.

Along these lines, I will make a suggestion about using images. A way in which we can enrich our faith through understanding other "languages"—all sorts of languages, not just other tongues.

Sometime soon when you are at prayer, try to pray in images. I do not mean first to conceive an idea in words and then consciously "translate" it into images. Rather, take a leap and seek the image straight off. It might at first be a very straightforward and specific image, that is, a denotative image. For example, if you are giving thanks for family or loved ones, do not "say" their names, even silently, but instead conjure up the image of each one's face and "feel" how grateful you are, instead of saying so.

Or if you feel joy about something, and you want to thank God for that joy, try to put the joy itself into an image, an image of something that would give you great joy. It might perhaps be a "sound" image rather than a visual one; for me, one such is the sound of a rushing mountain stream or waterfall. Let me emphasize, I am not talking about giving thanks to God for a waterfall, and accompanying that thanks with an image of a waterfall. I am talking about putting your thanks into an image instead of into words. Your thanks *become* the waterfall, though that for which you are thanking God may have nothing to do with waterfalls. It may be recovering from an illness, for example, or something as "commonplace" as having enough food to eat.

The resurrection is as far from commonplace experience as it is possible to be. But however one understands the resurrection—literally, symbolically, something in between—one cannot be a Christian without taking account of it. It is a basic element of faith. We have said that faith itself is not primarily logical. And no one—even one who believes in a literal resurrection—would say that it was a "logical" event. What more perfect example, therefore, to use as an illustration of the vital link between religion and art, between faith and the imagination?

Images of the Resurrection in the New Testament

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The Christian gospel is an Easter gospel or it is not gospel at all. Peter preached the resurrected Jesus on Pentecost and the church came into existence. The early church began its proclamation and its reflection on Jesus and the world at the empty tomb. When E. C. Hoskyns lectured on the theology and ethics of the New Testament, he began by saying that all ethics begins at the empty tomb. And he was right. If there is no proclamation of the resurrection, then there is no gospel, no church, and no Christian theology. The early church is the child of the resurrection.

There are tensions about the resurrection which one notices almost immediately. The first is the tension between the very human Jesus who lived in Galilee and the resurrected Jesus, the Lord whom the church confessed. Jesus called people to believe in God, whom he addressed as "Father." The earliest Christians confessed Jesus as the "Lord" of the church. While the formulation of the question "How did the preacher became the preached?" is modern, the question certainly imposed itself on early Christians.

This question was raised by a second, more severe tension, that between the cross and the resurrection. Jesus died by crucifixion, what Cicero called the *crudelissimum taeterritumque supplicium*, "that most cruel and disgusting penalty." The early Christian theologian Origen of Alexandria followed him in calling it *mors turpissima crudelis*, "the most shameful, cruel death" (Commentary on Mt 27:22ff.). Jesus died a criminal's death. What does the resurrection imply about the death on a cross?

The Roman historian Tacitus was very clear. In his *Annales* 15 he describes the great fire of Rome, which raged for six days in 64 C.E. Of the fourteen districts of the city only four remained completely untouched; three were totally destroyed. The other seven were reduced to a few scorched and mangled ruins. Nero immediately took action. He built a new palace for himself (the so-called Golden Palace). His architects laid out a city plan for the rest of the

city. Streets were broad, store fronts regulated as to height, colonnades required in front of many buildings. The cleared rubbish was dumped in the Ostian marshes. Building codes required fireproof stone.

> So much for human precautions. Next came attempts to appease heaven. After consultation of the Sibylline Books, prayers were addressed to Vulcan, Ceres, and Proserpina. Juno, too, was propitiated. But neither human resource, nor imperial munificence, nor appeasement of the gods, eliminated sinister suspicions that the fire had been instigated. To suppress this rumour, Nero fabricated scapegoats—and punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called). Their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judaea, Pontius Pilatus. But in spite of this temporary setback the deadly superstition had broken out afresh not only in Judaea (where the mischief had started) but even in Rome. All degraded and shameful practicers collect and flourish in the capital.
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> First, Nero had self-acknowledged Christians arrested. Then, on their information, large numbers of others were condemned—not so much for incendiarism as for their anti-social tendencies. Their deaths were made farcical. Dressed in wild animals' skins, they were torn to pieces by dogs, or crucified, or made into torches to be ignited after dark as substitutes for daylight. Nero provided his Gardens for the spectacle, and exhibited displays in the Circus, at which he mingled with the crowd or stood in a chariot, dressed as a charioteer. Despite their guilt as Christians, and the ruthless punishment it deserved, the victims were pitied. For it was felt that they were being sacrificed to one man's brutality rather than to the national interest.[1]

So Jesus died a criminal's death—and Christians had to face up to that fact. How could Jesus be the one they preached, given that death? Their response to that question affected their understanding of the resurrection. And that leads to the variety of images used for the resurrection in the New Testament.

Jesus: teacher and judge

One way to deal with the death of Jesus was to disregard it. There were a number of ways to do that. One might concentrate on Jesus as a wise teacher, whose preeminent wisdom called for fidelity to his words. Scholars theorize that a source underlies much of Jesus' teaching in Matthew and Luke that is not in Mark. They call it by the conventional name "Q," an abbreviation for the German word *Quelle* (= source). While its existence is a theory, that theory is supported by the discovery of a collection of Jesus' sayings in a papyrus fragment from Oxyrhynchus in Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century and of the Gospel of Thomas in this century. Q was primarily a collection of Jesus' teachings, with only two or three narratives in the whole. None of Jesus' sayings refer to his death or resurrection; many talk of the role of the Son of man as the eschatological judge. There is no passion or resurrection account in Q, so far as one can infer from the Gospels. He is simply the wise teacher. The book of James is similar to Q. It knows Jesus (1:1 and 2:1 are the only references to him in the book) but never mentions his death or resurrection. James has many subjects and phrases that remind one of Jesus' teaching in Matthew, especially the Sermon on the Mount

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[1]Tacitus. *The Annals of Imperial Rome.* A new translation with an introduction by Michael Grant (Rev. ed. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1959), 354.

in Matthew 5–7. James' presentation of Jesus agrees substantially with that of Q.

Other writers stress Jesus' expected return as the judge of the universe and disregard almost totally his death and resurrection. 2 Thessalonians is the parade example of that response. When Jesus comes from heaven with the angels in a flame of fire, then those who do not know God and disobey the gospel will pay the penalty (2 Thess 1:7-9; cf. 2:8). 2 Thessalonians never mentions Jesus' death or resurrection. 2 Peter, 3 John, Jude, and Titus are other books that do not refer to Jesus' resurrection—though one might argue that some of these books presuppose it.

The resurrection confers new authority and dignity on Jesus by telling what he is currently doing, ruling in the presence of God.

Resurrection as reversal

There are passages in the New Testament that recognize that the crucifixion was an evil done to Jesus by evil people. Luke–Acts stresses that aspect of Jesus' death. Luke's account of the trial and crucifixion makes clear that Jesus was totally innocent of the charges raised against him. Luke alone presents the trial before the Sanhedrin as taking place in the morning (Luke 22:66, a verse without parallel in Matthew and Mark). Some scholars think a night trial, as in Mark and Matthew, was illegal. There are no false witnesses brought in to accuse Jesus in Luke 22. Instead, the high priest simply asks him the question, "Are you the Anointed One? Tell us." Jesus does not answer that question, but points to the future enthronement of the Son of man. When the whole court asks, "Well then, are you the son of God?" he replies, "You say that I am"—an ambiguous answer. At the end of the trial there is no formal pronouncement of guilt (Lk 22:71, in contrast to Mt 26:65-66, Mk 14:64). Pilate pronounces Jesus innocent three times in the Roman trial (Lk 23:4, 14, 22) and claims that Herod agrees with that verdict (23:15), yet he gives in to the shouts of the crowd (23:23). In Luke one of the two criminals crucified with Jesus also testifies to his innocence (23:41), while the centurion at his death says, "This man actually was righteous" (i.e. innocent, 23:47).

All that is the backdrop for the sermons in Acts. Peter asserts in his Pentecost sermon that "you" Israelites "through the agency of those outside the Law (Torah) killed him by nailing him up," but "God raised him by loosing the birth-pangs of death" (Acts 2:22-24). He concludes the sermon with the words, "Let the entire house of Israel therefore know most certainly that God appointed him Lord and Messiah, this very Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36). The implications are clear. Jesus' Israelite opponents are responsible for his evil death—and it was indeed evil. But God reversed that evil by the resurrection and thereby appointed Jesus the expected Messiah and Lord of the universe. The resurrection is the undoing of the crucifixion; it makes the guilt of those who crucified Jesus publicly evident. Peter makes the same point

in Acts 3:13-15: "The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors, glorified his servant (or "child"—the word is ambiguous) Jesus, whom you handed over and denied in front of Pilate, when he made the decision to release him; but you denied the holy and just one and asked that a murderer be given you as a gift and you killed the leader of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses." There are similar interpretations of the resurrection in Acts 5:30-31 and 7:52-53. Such an approach was useful in proclaiming Jesus in the Roman world, which claimed, "Roman, remember that you rule the nations with power and impose the rule of peace, in order to spare the abject and beat down the proud in war" (Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.851-53). Justice miscarried, corrected by God's act of resurrection, might make Jesus' crucifixion understandable in the Roman world.

Paul cites an early Christian creed in Romans 1:3-4. It too suggests that the resurrection is the key event in Jesus' life. He "came into existence from the seed of David in the realm of flesh, but was marked out as Son of God in power in the realm of holy spirit from the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord." The citation opposes the titles "Son of David" (anointed king) and "Son of God" (here understood as heavenly being). The resurrection confers new authority and dignity on Jesus by telling what he is currently doing, ruling in the presence of God.

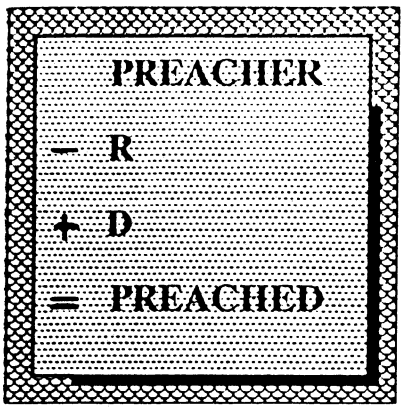
Resurrection as enthronement

Scholars identify a number of hymns in the New Testament that are earlier than the books that cite them. Colossians 3:16-17 (parallel in Eph 5:18-20) describes what such hymns are. The have an "account of Christ" (a *logos* about Christ), an interpretation of his actions and significance. Hymns are useful for teaching about Jesus and for admonishing Christians to correct actions. They enable thanksgiving to God. Such hymns carry the Spirit to people. The usual translation "spiritual" for the word *pneumatikos* gives a totally wrong impression. The word does not mean "religious," but that which is inspired and conveys the Spirit. We shall examine three such hymns briefly.

1 Timothy 3:16 is such a hymn. It is composed in six lines that fall into three two-line stanzas:

> He who was made public in flesh
> Vindicated in spirit;
> Appeared to angels,
> Proclaimed among nations;
> Believed on in the cosmos,
> Taken up in glory.

This is one of the most carefully written passages in the entire New Testament. It begins with a relative pronoun that has no antecedent, a mark of prose hymns in the Hellenistic-Roman era. The six verbs have end rhyme. Each pair of lines ends with antithetical dative cases: flesh and spirit (singular), angels and nations (plural), cosmos and glory (singular). Thus each pair presents complementary actions on earth and in heaven. They are formed on the ancient enthronement ritual. The first two lines assert that the subject is elevated to the status of ruler in heaven and on earth. Lines three and four describe his public presentation by his appearance in heaven to the angels and his proclamation (in missionary preaching) to the nations of the world. Lines five and six present the response of those ruled: he is accepted in the universe by faith, he is installed as *Kosmokrator* (Lord of the cosmos) in heaven. The hymn disregards his ministry and death (his whole earthly



existence is summarized in line one) to stress resurrection as enthronement.

Philippians 2:6-11, another hymnic passage, also begins with a relative pronoun. It first describes how Jesus, unlike the prince of evil, did not seek heavenly status, but emptied himself by assuming human existence to die in obedience, on a cross at that. Philippians 2:6-8 provides the background for understanding 2:9-11. He went so low in death that his exaltation appears all the greater. God exalted him to a higher position (*hyperhypsôsen*, 2:9) than he had before his self-emptying. All powerful beings throughout the universe—those in the heavenly regions (the upper world), those on the earth, and those under the earth (*chthonian* deities of the underworld)—do obeisance to him and confess "Jesus Christ is Lord" (an early Christian creed) and thus give glory to God, who exalted him. There is no interpretation of Jesus' death as salvific in this passage, no theory of atonement, no sacrifice made. The elevation is all important, the death only a prelude. (Strangely, there is no explicit mention of resurrection in this passage.)

Colossians 1:15-20, the third hymn, was written in a world in which people feared the powers that controlled their lives. Colossians names these powers "things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rules or authorities" (1:16). These powers lord it over the world of humanity, since they reside in the seven heavenly spheres. Ancients identified them with the sun, moon, and the seven planets that they could see without the aid of magnifying devices. The powers were the "fullness of God" (*to plêrôma tês theotêtos*, 2:9; cf. 1:19), and they control the cosmos, which is the body. Colossians elsewhere calls them the "elemental spirits of the universe" (*ta stoicheia tou kosmou*, 2:8, 20). Since they inhabit the seven heavens, they control access to God, who dwells in the eighth heaven. Therefore "worship of angels" (2:18) is necessary; one mounts up into the celestial regions by humiliation, the putting down of the body (2:23).

This great hymn also begins with a relative pronoun, which here refers back to the "Son of his love" in 1:13. The hymn makes two great claims for this Son.

(1) The Son is the agent who created all things for God ("in him all things were created" ... all things were created through him and toward him," 1:16). This has two implications. First, as the creator "he is the image of the invisible God" (1:15), that is, he is the one who reveals God whom we cannot see. The "powers" are not a revelation of the character of God. Second, as the creator he is the one who is lord over the universe ("the firstborn of all creation," 1:15b; "he is before all things," 1:17a) and "all things hang together in him" ("cohere," *synestêken*, 1:17b). Therefore he controls all things as the head controls the body (1:18a).

(2) Colossians 1:18b-20 is the second strophe of the hymn. As the first stressed the creative activity of Jesus, the second stresses his role as reconciler (see the terms "recon-

cile" and "make peace" in 1:20). The hymn presupposes that the powers have rebelled against God and become his enemies. The universe was out of joint. Jesus is the beginning, the first born from the dead (1:18b), and that gave him leadership in the universe (1:18), because the fulness decided to live in him, not in the powers (1:19). The resurrection was the means by which he achieved primacy of place in the cosmos, since he went through the heavens at his enthronement and so, moving through the spheres of authority controlled by the powers, brought them back into their proper place in the universe, what John Milton called "the harmony of the spheres" in his poem "At a Solemn Music." Resurrection is reconciliation in this hymn because it brings the hostile world to heel.

I have interpreted the hymn as I think it was originally written. But the pupil of Paul who wrote Colossians made two significant additions to the hymn, thus altering its triumphalist realized eschatology. In 1:18a he inserted the words "the assembly" (or "church," *ekklêsia*) to identify "his body." Jesus is not yet the Lord of the cosmos; in the present he rules only in the church. The writer calls for fidelity to him in 1:21-23. His second insertion is the words "through the blood of his cross" (1:20). The hymn originally had no direct reference to the death of Jesus. But that death is important to the author of Colossians, since he held that it was the instrument by which Jesus achieved reconciliation (1:21).

The enthroned Son of Man

The Gospel of Mark ends without a resurrection appearance. It appears at first to be an ominous ending. "So they [the women] went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone [i.e. about the resurrection], for they were afraid" (Mk 16:8 NRSV). Manuscripts show three different attempts to provide suitable supplements to this ending by adding resurrection appearances after Mark 16:8. But they really miss the point of Mark. Properly read, his Gospel makes clear that you should expect no resurrection appearances.

Martin Dibelius said years ago that the Gospel of Mark was "a passion history with introduction." The narrative from the confession at Caesarea Philippi on is dominated by the three great passion predictions (Mk 8:31, 9:31, 10:33), each of which makes clear that the death of the Son of Man will be followed by resurrection after three days. But what does resurrection mean for the Son of Man? Three passages prepare the reader to understand. Mark 8:38 describes the Son of Man as the heavenly public attorney who will prosecute those who deny Jesus and his teachings. Here the Son of Man appears in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. The high point of Jesus' apocalyptic discourse comes in 13:24-27. After the great tribulation the powers in the heavens will be shaken (13:25); these powers are the sun, moon, and stars. They, that is the powers, will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory (13:26). There is a reference to Daniel 7:13-14 in these words. There the Son of Man goes on clouds to the throne of the Ancient of Days to be given rule and authority! The imagery is clear. The Son of Man goes to heaven, not to earth from heaven, and that means a change of lordship in the heavens; when the powers see his going to the throne, their rule is over. The language of Daniel 7:13-14 is conclusive.

When Jesus does not answer the false witnesses at his trial before the religious authorities, the high priest asks him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed

One?" Jesus answers "Yes" but immediately interprets the answer by referring to the Son of Man: "You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power... coming with the clouds of heaven." This answer interprets Daniel 7:13-14 as enthronement; it reinforces it by an implicit citation of Psalm 110:1, a verse which speaks of the enthronement of a king!

The young man at the tomb reminds the women of Jesus' passion predictions when he calls Jesus the Nazarene, the crucified one, risen, not here. The resurrection is the accomplishment of the enthronement of the Son of Man, as predicted in Mark 13:26 and 14:62. The disciples are to go to Galilee (the place of Jesus' miracles and preaching) and preach the gospel (cf. Mk 13:10; 8:35; 10:29). He had commissioned them to preach there. They will see him when they have preached the gospel to the nations, since that is the way he "sends out his messengers and gathers his elect from the four winds, from the corner of earth to the corner of heaven" (Mk 13:27).

The women spoke to no one because awe before divine power (*ephobounto*) had them in its grip. Such awe is both a fitting reaction to the young man's message and to the enthronement of the Son of Man after death. Mark's Gospel is a narrative fleshing out of the great hymn in Philippians 2:6-11!

Matthew 27-28 develop this Markan insight in a unique manner. Whereas Mark still views the death of Jesus as the road to resurrection, Matthew regards the death of Jesus as the first great eschatological event. Matthew 27:50 describes Jesus' dying with the words, "Then Jesus, shouting again with a loud voice, sent out the [or his] spirit." What follows? "At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many" (Mt 27:51-53). Earthquake is a sign of a theophany. Matthew's language also reminds one of Ezekiel 37:9-10, where "breath" (*pneuma*) enters the dead and they come to life. Jesus' death releases the life-giving spirit into the world.

Earthquake also accompanies Jesus' resurrection. When the angel comes down to roll back the stone door, the living guards become "like dead men" (Mt 28:4). The irony is beautiful. The resurrection is scene two following the death. His death means life; his resurrection means death for those who are not his own! The conclusion of Matthew presents Jesus as the one who now has total authority over all creation. The disciples are to make disciples of all the nations by baptizing in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching all that he commanded. Because of the resurrection he now is truly the Immanuel, God with us, promised in Matthew 1:23. "Behold, I am with you always to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20).

The Resurrected as rescuer

1 Thessalonians, the oldest book in the New Testament, interprets Jesus' resurrection as his enthronement as the Lord who will come as the future rescuer of his people. Two passages are highly significant. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 summarizes Paul's initial preaching at Thessalonica: "How you turned to God from cult statues, to serve a God who is alive and authentic, and to wait for his Son from the heavens, whom he raised from the dead people, Jesus, the one who rescues us from the wrath that is coming." God demonstrated that he is truly God, the source of life, by raising Jesus

The resurrection establishes a new community that lives not from the past, but from the future!

from the dead; the resurrection makes clear that Jesus will come from the heavens (where the resurrection placed him) to deliver those who confess him from eschatological wrath. 1 Thessalonians introduces the term *parousia* ("coming," 2:19, 3:13; 4:15; 5:23) into Christian language. Paul borrows the term from the Roman ruler cult; knowledge of that cult illuminates 4:13-18. For those who believe that "Jesus died and rose" (a creedal summary, 4:14) the future is certain. Jesus is installed as Lord who will come for those left behind. How will he come? Like an emperor arriving for a state visit: as the "Lord" (an imperial title), with a command (there is an imperial guard), with the shout of the chief herald (*angelos* first means "messenger" or "herald"), with a flourish of trumpets. He will come down to earth. Christians will go up to meet him just as the elders of a city went out in formal procession to welcome the emperor. And so they "will be with the Lord," that is, they will be recognized as his friends, a title of honor. The resurrection established Jesus as the one who will come to save. The death is mentioned, but almost totally disregarded. The resurrection points forward almost entirely.

Philippians also understands the resurrected Jesus as the coming rescuer. Philippians uses political language to describe the situation of Christians. 1:27-30 describes Christian life in military terms: They live out their city life in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ (1:27). The military metaphor recognizes that life is a struggle in which people suffer (1:29-30). Paul applies that to his own life in 3:8-11. Knowing the power of Christ's resurrection led him to a clear-headed evaluation of all that he had prized as a basis for self-confidence (3:4b-7); now conformity to Christ's suffering and even his death might let him arrive at the resurrection of the dead (3:10-11). The resurrection of Jesus makes Paul into a person who strains toward the future (3:12-14). On that basis he also calls the Philippians to "work out their salvation with fear and trembling" (2:12). They can do that because the colony of which they are citizens is not Philippi, but "is in the heavens, from which we eagerly expect a *sôtêr* ("savior," 3:20). Savior is a title of the Roman emperor; but the Philippians have a Lord and Savior in the heavens, the one put there by resurrection. The resurrection establishes a new community with a new savior-ruler; that community lives not from the past, but from the future!

Resurrection as revelation

Romans 4 discusses Abraham as the Old Testament example to prove that God justifies by faith, not by works. The last paragraph (Rom 4:13-25) argues that the promise came to Abraham by faith, not through the Torah (4:13). The promise of an heir came to him when both he and Sarah were dead so far as having children was concerned (4:19). But he "believed on the God who makes the dead alive and calls

non-existent things into being" (4:17). And so "on the basis of hope, contrary to hope, he believed that he would be the father of many nations" (4:19). That narrative, says Paul, has significance far beyond the case of Abraham: "we believe on the God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over because of our acts contrary to the law and raised because of our declaration of righteousness" (4:23-25). The resurrection of Jesus reveals the creative power of God. Jesus also was one of the dead whom God made alive, one of the non-existent things that God called into existence. To know Jesus as the resurrected one is to confess faith in God as the creator. Jesus' resurrection is his ultimate act of creation.

Romans 8 draws out the implications of Paul's assertions. "Now if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, he who raised Jesus from the dead will also make alive your mortal bodies through the Spirit who makes his home in you" (Rom 8:11). Paul draws out the implications in the rest of chapter 8. The resurrection of Jesus calls us to "live in the Spirit." Life is determined by the Spirit, the advance payment on the future, as Paul calls the Spirit in 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; cf. Eph 1:14. The Spirit illuminates the present, because it teaches us to utter the acclamation "Abba father," that is, to confess that God is father (Rom 8:15). That liberates us from the bondage imposed on creation because we know that the Spirit prays for us in these birth pangs of the future (Rom 8:26). Because we know God as father, a father who handed over his own Son for us, we face the future without fear. The resurrection placed Jesus at the right hand of God (Ps 110:1), where he prays on our behalf. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, whether suffering and death for him (Rom 8:35-37) or one of the demonic powers. God's love in Christ is certain because of the resurrection.

John Masefield wrote a play entitled *The Trial of Jesus*. Longinus, the centurion in charge of the crucifixion of Jesus, talks to Procula, Pilate's wife, shortly after the crucifixion. "Do you think he is dead?" she asks. "No, lady, I don't." "Then where is he?" "Let loose in the world, lady, where neither Roman nor Jew can stop his truth." Romans 8 names that power let loose in the world, the Spirit, against whom nothing can prevail, for it is the Spirit of the God who raised Jesus from the dead.

First fruits according to the Scriptures

I have left the most important passage on Jesus' resurrection to the last because of its richness. Ernst Käsemann entitled a chapter on 1 Corinthians "For and Against a Theology of the Resurrection"—and his title was apt. The Corinthians held that their baptism incorporated them into the death and resurrection of Jesus so that they already were living life in the Spirit. Paul, in striking fashion, is glad that he did not baptize many of them, "for Christ did not send me out to baptize, but to preach the good news, not in the wisdom of rational speech, in order that the cross of Christ might not be made empty" (1 Cor 1:17). The Corinthians held that baptism as resurrection delivered them from the body so that they lived on the level of the Spirit alone. They already spoke in "the tongues of angels" (1 Cor 13:1), evidence of their Spirit life (cf. 1 Cor 14). Baptism so changed a person that a man dared to live with his deceased father's wife, regarded as incest in both Greek and Roman law, since his "death" in baptism removed him from the laws of human relationships (cf. Rom 7:1-3). And the Corinthians were proud of him (1 Cor

5:1-5). Paul's response makes clear that this man is still living in the realm of flesh, not Spirit. The Corinthians appear to have cited Jesus' death and resurrection as the ground on which they based their understanding. Jesus died in the realm of the body; he was raised as the Christ in the realm of Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:1-3 suggests that their baptismal creed was "Jesus be anathema, Christ is Lord." To which Paul replied that the Spirit of God would never enable such a statement; rather, "no one can say 'Jesus is the Lord' except by the power of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3).

Paul's major discussion of Jesus' resurrection is 1 Corinthians 15. The chapter makes a number of points that can well serve also as a summary of all that we have said. Paul begins by arguing that he gave them a summary of the gospel that he shared with all the apostles: "so we preached, and so you came to believe" (v. 11). He quotes the summary in vv. 3-5 as a tradition he inherited and passed on to them. He uses the technical verbs for this: "I handed on" (*paredôka*) and "I received" (*parelabon*). The tradition is a creedal statement in four lines:

(1) That the Anointed One died on behalf of our sins according to the Scriptures,
(2) And that he was buried,
(3) And that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,
(4) And that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

The fourfold repeated "that" (*hoti*) is the equivalent of quotation marks in Greek. A number of the turns of phrase are not Pauline, as we shall note. The creed has four verbs: died, buried, raised, appeared. Paul mentions the burial of Jesus elsewhere only in Romans 6:4, to explain the significance of baptism as dying with Christ. Otherwise it never appears in connection with Jesus' death. Its function here is to support the facticity of Jesus' death. Line four performs a similar function for line three. The appearances of the resurrected Anointed One to Cephas and the twelve supports the fact that he was raised from the dead. Paul certainly understands it that way, since he adds a series of other appearances to the two in the creed (1 Cor 15:6-8): more than 500, James, all the apostles, Paul himself.

> To know Jesus as the resurrected one is to confess faith in God as the creator. Jesus' resurrection is his ultimate act of creation.

Thus the first and third lines are the key assertions. They are structured in similar fashion, each verb being modified by two adverbial phrases (underscored to show the parallelism). The adverbial phrase "according to the Scriptures" stresses that one will not understand the death and resurrection of the Anointed One unless one uses the Hebrew Scriptures to interpret them. This particular way of referring to the Old Testament is found only here in Paul. "On behalf of our sins" and "on the third day" are placed immediately after the verbs "died" and "raised" as interpretive phrases. "On the third day" appears nowhere else in Paul. What does the phrase mean? Hosea 6:2 ("After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may

live before him") and John 11:39 suggest that the third day is the decisive day, when the effects and significance of an action become evident.

The phrase "on behalf of our sins" is also not Pauline. Paul uses this preposition in a different way to describe Jesus' death for people: "on our behalf," as in Romans 5:6-8. Paul uses the word "sin" (*hamartia*) over 50 times, always in the singular except in citations (cf. Rom 4:6). Paul regards sin as a power that holds us in slavery, from which we must be freed. The first line suggests that Jesus' death is a sacrifice that removes sins, or it is the death of a righteous person whose good deeds are available for others. That is a first century Jewish view, and the Jewish Christian character of this creed is supported by the use of the Hebrew name Cephas. This creed confesses that Jesus' death is the only sacrifice that removes sin; or, he is the only truly righteous one whose death benefits others. He is the only one who has been raised on the third day, and this ratifies his death. This creed, which uses the sacrificial language of the Old Testament, has parallels in many places in early Christian language (cf. Rom 8:32; 1 Pet 2:21). Hebrews gives it classical, extended treatment in 4:14–10:31 as it discusses Jesus both as the Melchizedekian High Priest and the perfect sacrifice for sin.

Two other sections of 1 Corinthians 15 are significant for our discussion of images of the resurrection. Paul regards Jesus as the first fruits of the resurrection (1 Cor 15:20, 23). He is the counterpart figure to Adam in human history. As we all "are dying in Adam [note the present tense] so we all will be made alive in Christ" (1 Cor 15:22). The effects of Christ's resurrection are universal, cosmic, just as Adam had universal effect. But all happens according to a plan determined on the basis of Psalm 110:1 and Psalm 8:7. Our resurrection lies in the future, at the parousia of Christ, not in our past baptism. He comes as regnant one, when all things have been made subject to him, in order to turn all rule and authority back to God. In the end, God is all things in all people (1 Cor 15:23-28).

Paul develops this Adam–Christ typology further in 1 Cor 15:44-46. He argues two things here: (1) The resurrection will be a bodily one, as Christ was raised bodily. (2) But this body will be a *pneumatikon* body (a body characterized by Spirit), not a *psychikon* body (one characterized by sensual appetite). Paul reverses a Hellenistic Jewish interpretation of Genesis 1-3, known from Philo of Alexandria, to make his point. Philo held the Adam of Genesis 1 was entirely spiritual, made by the word of God alone, and so a heavenly being. The second Adam in Genesis 2 was formed from earth and brought to life by God breathing into this "mudpie" body. Because the second Adam was part earthy, part spirit, he fell into sin. The heavenly Adam did not. Paul stands this interpretation on its head. The Adam of Genesis 1-2 is the first Adam, earthy and mortal. Jesus is the second Adam, characterized by Spirit. The resurrection made him a "life-producing Spirit" (1 Cor 15:45). The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of our future resurrection and of our being fitted out at that time for life with Jesus. "We shall bear the image of the heavenly Adam" (1 Cor 15:49).

Paul ends 1 Corinthians 15 with a victory cry: "The goad of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:56-57). The New Testament uses a variety of images to support that victory cry, and we who proclaim the resurrection for the world today need to ransack our imaginations for adequate images to express it.

Imaging the Resurrection in Proclamation

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"Then they told what had happened on the road and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread." (Lk 24:35)

A few days later Elias, a neighbor, stopped Cleopas, one of those Emmaus disciples, with "What was going on at your house this week's first day? I happened to be standing at my door when I saw the two of you bringing home a guest. It was toward evening, and I assumed you had invited the stranger to stay the night since the day was spent. But a half hour later the two of you bolted out of the house pell mell back down the Jerusalem road. What got into you? And, if I may ask, what happened to your guest? Did you simply leave him to fend for himself? But I didn't see him afterwards. He simply seems to have disappeared."

"That's the marvelous thing!" Cleopas almost stuttered in excitement. He took a deep breath and went on. "Disappeared!—He did and he didn't. Because he promised—and he is—with us always! Even though you or I cannot see him...."

"What are you talking about?"

Then Cleopas told him what had happened on the road—all that we have heard again in Luke 24: their first imaging of the resurrection, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, the interpretation from all the scriptures of things concerning Jesus, how it was necessary that the Christ should suffer all the things that happened to him in the last days, and how he should enter into his glory, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

"Your eyes were opened? You recognized him? And then he vanished?"

"He did and he didn't!" And Cleopas told how the disciples had already heard the news of the resurrection—"He has appeared to Simon!" He told how Jesus himself suddenly stood among them in the upper room. How he said, "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have." How he took a piece of broiled fish and ate before them. How he explained: "'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from

the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.' 'You are witnesses of these things,' he said."

"But then he vanished again?"

"Well, he did, but he didn't! He *is*, you see. Well, not 'see' exactly—he is! He is alive! He is with us always!"

And on and on they talked; but the point of it all is that the resurrection from the dead means that Jesus is now with us all the time, in all the places we may be, all over the world!

The resurrection means "God with us wherever we are." If you liked *Emmanuel, Christus natus est*, and if you liked *Pro nobis* in *Crucifixus sub Pontio Pilato*, you'll love what comes after: *Et resurrexit!*—God with us always, even to the end of the ages! God *appears*—to be with us.

That was one of the beginnings of the homiletical task of imaging the resurrection, and of the participatory task of hearing and *viewing* that proclamation.

Proclamation in imagery

"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." This beatitude is to be shared by preaching. "How are we to believe in God of whom we have never heard? And how are we to hear without a preacher? And how can preachers preach unless they are sent? Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ." Apparently at the time of Romans 10, *how* that proclamation was to be phrased and illustrated and imaged was not felt to be significant enough to be recorded, or, perhaps, was felt to be obvious enough as not to require inspired instruction.

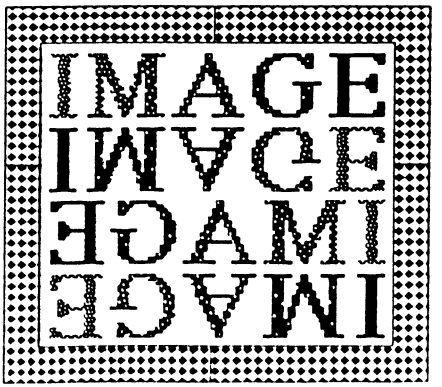
But the premise for those words was, "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." The subject is clearly the resurrection. And the faith, that belief, is to be "from the heart," "in your heart."

The heart, in biblical usage, "is above all the central place in us to which God turns, where religious experience has its root, which determines conduct" (*A Theological Word Book of the Bible* [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1950, 1962, 1963], under "Mind," 145).

"The heart is the central place in us to which God turns"—our proclamation of God's turning to us with blessing, therefore, should also be directed toward the heart. But where this heart is located, how this rooting ground of religious experience is to be plowed, or with what mixture of seed this genetic field of conduct is to be sowed, has long been discussed. What appears to be new appeals to publisher and public, and therefore much of what is currently printed about imagery is phrased intensely and in the present tense, although some of its glitter is old. A current review of the heart's dimension in preaching can be summarized with passages and paraphrases from *Imagery for Preaching* by Patricia Wilson-Kastner (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989).

The author clears the ground by pointing out that systematic theology does not reign unchallenged in the theological world. Depth psychology has come up with the conclusion that the psyche is made up of more than mind. The ability to make moral judgments on the basis of abstract principles is not the end-all of moral development. Feminist and liberation theologies, she contends, challenge the scientific, rational mode. Women's experience brings to them an awareness of their being interconnected with the whole of creation, of being psychically and biologically interconnected with the process of life. These

theologies reject the dominance of abstraction, rational discourse, and quantifiable thinking to the exclusion of the affective, the intuitive, and the aesthetic. Preaching which focuses on the intellectual, the academic, and the rational, she concedes, is still valuable and contributes to an essential dimension of the homiletic endeavor. But such an approach, the author says, is incomplete. The primal mind should not be relegated to a secondary position. Creativity and insight involve elements of the primal mind as well as those contributed by the rational scientific approach. While she concedes that to some extent each person already looks at the world with both the primal and the post-Enlightenment scientific perspective, she presses on to contend that if we are to become fully human we must learn to see the world both aesthetically and scientifically, with our primal mind and our rational scientific mind.



She hopes for imagery in which the rational and the affective intersect. Imagery is to be understood as a broader term than the use of images. Imagery incorporates the affective and aesthetic because imagery represents the concrete and visible in the tangible world, but it also embodies a form and appeals to the senses, while evoking emotions and feelings in us. Imagery also includes an intellectual dimension because the reality signified by the imagery carries cognitive meaning. Imagery includes the whole physical and sensory dimension of the world portrayed in a sermon.

Finally, while imagery is not the same as story, the two do intertwine. Plot is the focus of story, the sequence of action and the interaction of characters and events. Imagery involves the physical and visual dimensions of characters, events, and their setting. While narrative serves the temporally conscious mind, imagery appeals to the spatially and visually directed. But good narrative must include imagery in its detail and embodiment. Imagery in preaching is the center and prism for the dramatic narrative that is the very nature of a sermon, which aims both to instruct and to move (Seriatim, pp. 29-31 and 20-21).

To instruct and to move have always been the goals of our preaching. (I was comforted to find in my file these notes on "Preaching the Gospel in Lent" presented to the Greater Chicago Pre-Lent Retreat at Illinois Beach State Park in January of 1962: "The preaching of the gospel is the asserting of what God has done in and through Jesus Christ so pertinently to the human situation, so movingly in the heart's language so as to give the Spirit the opportunity to redeem the hearers now, to move and empower the hearers with new life.") The beatitude of believing though not seeing will be attained by hearers as they are taught that Jesus is Lord and that God has raised him from the death he died for us, and at the same time are moved to confess with their lips and their lives what such conviction entails.

Revelation in imagery

Our understanding of the Word of God implies that *moving* is the heart of proclamation. The heart is the central place in each one of us "to which God turns." What moves us is the word. The word is God moving us. *Teaching* all that is commanded by our Lord is not complete if by "teaching" we mean only the conveying of rational information. Teaching does not mean only that we "observe" all that God commands, looking at all that with our minds, observing in the sense of recognizing that all that God commands does seem to make sense, propounding a golden ideal for human living. Teach them "to obey," which is the translation in the Good News Bible and The New International Version, is more to the point, implying as it does that we have been moved to walk faithfully on what we have been shown to be the way of God. We have reached the word's goal when we are moved to place our right hand in the hand of the God who is continually with us, accepting the divine counsel as our guide, and pressing on to the final glory. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides thee" (Ps 73:25).

The word works in moving ways.

Some of them are moving because they are parallel to our human experience. The incarnation and nativity of our Lord, for instance, reveal God stooping to our common experience. In Jesus, the Son, God lies down in the manger's hay so that all of us will be moved to lean over the Christmas crib and see the Wonder, receive the Counsel from the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

God reveals the nature of divine love in recognizable terms of relationship. "When Israel was a child, I loved him.... It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms" (Hos 11:1-3). When the returning prodigal was yet a great way off, his father ran and embraced him and began the preparation for making merry (Lk 15:20). But wrath and judgment also come in moving imagery: "'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" (Lk 23:29-31). And the ultimate in broken relationship: "I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers" (Mt 7:23).

Think of the Word selecting *water* for the sacrament of regeneration—not something dry like salt nor sticky like honey. How good the smell of baking bread and how enlivening is the wine which makes the heart glad. And so he took bread and he shared the cup of blessing. How marvelous the alphabet, the art of writing, the invention of moveable type, the unending making of books—and the word does its work through them all.

The primary sacrament, the Word made flesh, was born and grew in wisdom and stature and favor, and wept and suffered and died—God moving in understandable and experienced ways.

God moves most mysteriously in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Resurrection—beyond experience, ultimate climax of human hope. God raised him from the dead. And the word in speech can now use the recall of that resurrection as the ultimate in imagery.

Power in resurrection imagery

The use of imagery about the resurrection could be said to be the most moving of the *modes* of proclaiming the revealed gospel. Would the shepherds have kept on

What went before the resurrection has meaning because of the resurrection.

saying, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" after they could begin to say, "There he is, Jesus of Nazareth—that one there! the one who is healing and doing good and speaking as no one ever spoke before"?

Would they have kept on saying *that* when they could say, "Behold him on the cross, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"?

Or *that*, when they could say, "Behold the place where they laid him. He is not there. He is risen!"?

Even *that* is not the end, no more than first fruits are the whole harvest. Because the grave could not hold him, because he lives and reigns, it follows that we can say, "He goes before you... he is with you always... he will come again." And we can say, "We have been baptized into his death and are risen with him to new life. Take and eat, take and drink, his body and his blood for living in forgiven-ness." And we can exult, "Henceforth there is laid up for us a crown of righteousness!"

Of course, our proclamation will say all of these things. They are one word of salvation.

But note how much more frequently we use the detail of the passion and death of our Lord as the mode for releasing the power of the gospel than we do any other of the images. It is, perhaps, the most moving part of the gospel-action of God-in-Christ. But it is almost as if we thought St. Paul were limiting the modes of gospel proclamation when he determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. "Why would you stop short of imaging how our Lord lay down his life for us if your object is to move us to an increase of faith or a greater zeal in life?" I would ask in class. And a student in exasperation replied, "And why minimize our Lord's life lived for us?" Active and passive obedience—*pro nobis*. All of it, of course.

But note—what went before the resurrection has meaning because of the resurrection, and what our faith grasps will surely follow, can follow only because of the resurrection! Imaging our Lord's death as the principal mode for the release of gospel power frequently results in the making of the problem mode *guilt*. The power is then proclaimed as the source and guarantee of *forgiveness*. The sermon's point then becomes faith's grasp of God's gracious gift of forgiveness. Certainly that is of the essence! But if it become the major mode of our proclamation, it can lead to quietism and the minimizing of sanctification.

Imaging our Lord's resurrection as the mode for the release of gospel power results in reshaping the mode of the problem: the tragic failure by those who have been given *life* by the Lord's life failing to live that new life. The sermon can then build upon his resurrection to establish the proclamation of how through his rising from the dead we have been given the resurrection ability to rise to newness of life. "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you" (Rom 8:11).

There can be no resurrection of our Lord without the dying of our Lord. It is a seamless gospel. In our confession we proceed through our belief in the forgiveness of sins onward to the resurrection of our bodies and to life everlasting. Our gospel's imaging moves from our Lord's dying through his rising to proclaim our possession even now of that life which lasts forever. And our present possession of that life moves us to the living of it.

In C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*[1] the connection is made clear in imagery. The lion, Aslan, had been shamed and tied and killed upon the Stone Table. After hours and hours had gone by, Susan and Lucy witnessed the cracking of the Table, and the efforts of the tiny mice to free the trussed lion body. "Then suddenly, shining in the sunrise, larger than they had seen him before, shaking his mane, stood Aslan himself!

'Oh, Aslan!' cried both the children, staring up at him, almost as much frightened as they were glad.

'Aren't you dead then, dear Aslan?' said Lucy.

'Not now,' said Aslan.

'You're not—not a—?' asked Susan in a shaky voice. She couldn't bring herself to say the word *ghost*.

Aslan stooped his golden head and licked her forehead.... 'Do I look it?' he said.

'Oh, you're real, you're real! Oh, Aslan!'....

'Oh, children,' said the Lion, 'I feel my strength coming back to me. Oh, children, catch me if you can!' He stood for a second, his eyes very bright, his limbs quivering, lashing himself with his tail. Then he made a leap high over their heads and landed on the other side of the Table. Laughing, though she didn't know why, Lucy scrambled over it to reach him. Aslan leaped again. A mad chase began. Round and round the hill-top he led them, now hopelessly out of their reach, now letting them almost catch his tail, now diving between them, now tossing them in the air with his huge and beautifully velveted paws and catching them again, and now stopping unexpectedly so that all three of them rolled over together in a happy laughing heap of fur and arms and legs. It was such a romp as no one has ever had except in Narnia....

'And now,' said Aslan presently, 'to business.'"

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[1](New York: The Macmillan Co., 1950. Collier Books Edition, 1970. Third Printing, 1971), 159-61.

The Image of the Resurrection in Music

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"Image" is a word that usually denotes something visual. But how is *music* an image? Of what is it a likeness or symbol? Composer Paul Hindemith once said that if music has meaning, he wanted to see the dictionary.[1]

In search of image in music we might talk about music and echos of the resurrection. We could discuss the loud noises coming from the earthquake that echoed his resurrection (Mt 28:2), or the soft, tender voices of Jesus and Mary in the garden on Easter morning. Or we could tune in on the first whispers about an empty tomb and then follow the bold telling and retelling of the impossible—a crescendo of good news. Sounds of the resurrection might include the grunts of the Father rearranging creation for this unprecedented event and the counterpoint of sounds emanating from a corpse transformed into a glorified body.

If grunts of God are not your image, try something less radical. Isn't it true, for example, that as we sing "I Know that My Redeemer Lives" we experience a "sense of ascent" as we arrive at the high D on the syllable "deem"? Even basses and altos don't complain much about such a high pitch on Easter morning, nor do many retreat from an even higher F during the refrain of "Christ is Risen, Alleluia." These feelings are more than corporate, conditioned experience. That sense of ascent is a kind of participation in the resurrection itself, a micro resurrection.

Some pieces of church music do in fact invite us to experience energies usually associated with the resurrection. We will see that by considering a work by Bach, an African song, and ancient liturgical reflections on the temporal meaning of Sunday.

Charles Seeger, a musicologist and father of the widely known folk singer Pete Seeger, once wrote about what he considered to be the inner logic of music.[2] Seeger noted that when we sing a song or play a horn the movement from one pitch to the

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[1]Paul Hindemith, *A Composer's World* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1961), 41ff.

[2]Charles Seeger, "On the Moods of Music-Logic," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, XIII (1960), 224-61.

next higher note requires additional energy and often increased tension. For this reason we perceive rising melodic lines as metaphors for energetic life and heightened emotion.

Three centuries earlier Bach composed music with similar understanding. Cantata BWV 51, *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen* [Make a Joyful Noise to God in all Lands] comes across as a moment of musical resurrection. Bach, of course, predates Seeger. But they approached music in similar ways. For Bach was heir to an elaborate system of composition which provided him with a tool-box full of writing techniques together referred to as Musical Rhetoric.
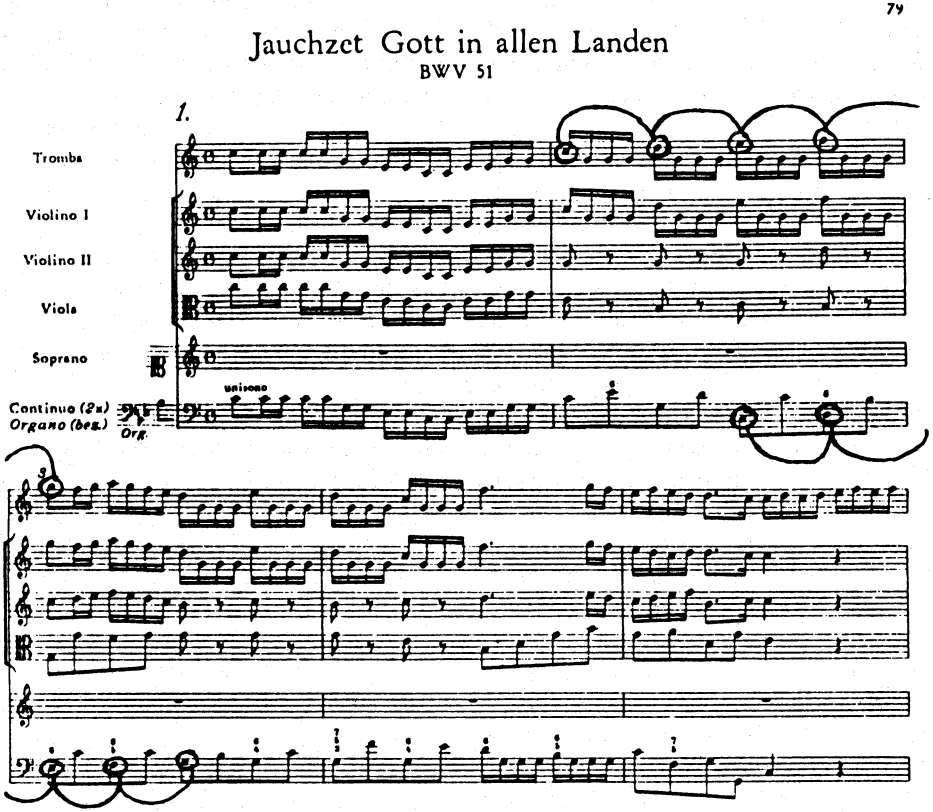
In the eighteenth century musical rhetoric was understood to have roots in classical oratory as practiced and refined by Quintillian, Cicero, and others. Hence devices had Latin labels.

Cantata BWV 51 was crafted utilizing such devices, and their recognition and identification make it possible for us to receive the work as a moment of musical resurrection.[3]
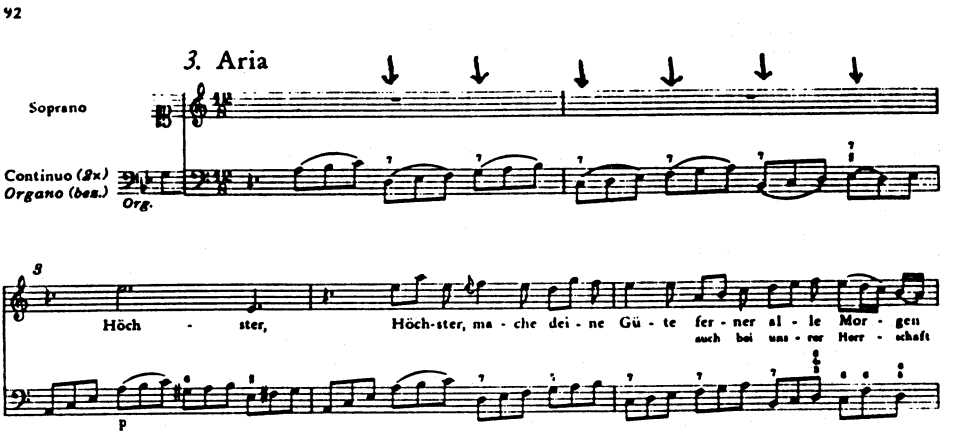
In measures 2 and 3 of movement 1, there are examples in the treble (C-D-E-F-G) and bass (C-D-B-E-F-G) clefs of ascending notes (known as *Hypotyposis-anabasis*) that express the praise that rises from the musicians who present this cantata.

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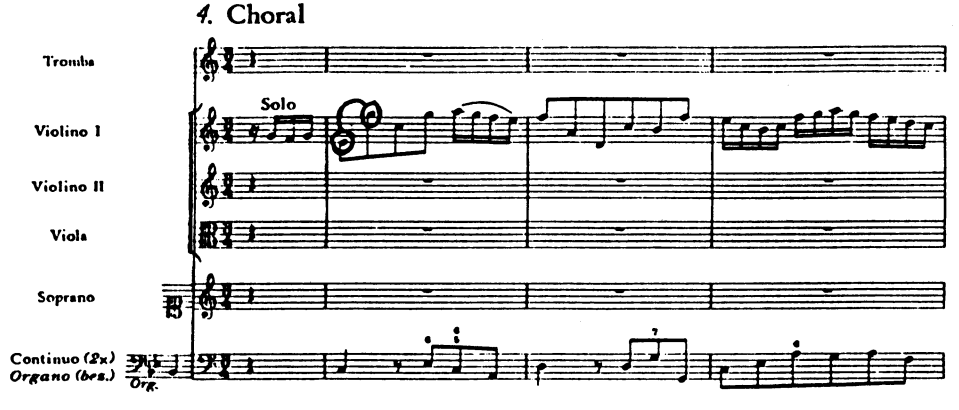
[3]*Neue Bach-Ausgabe*, s.v. I/29, 79-105.
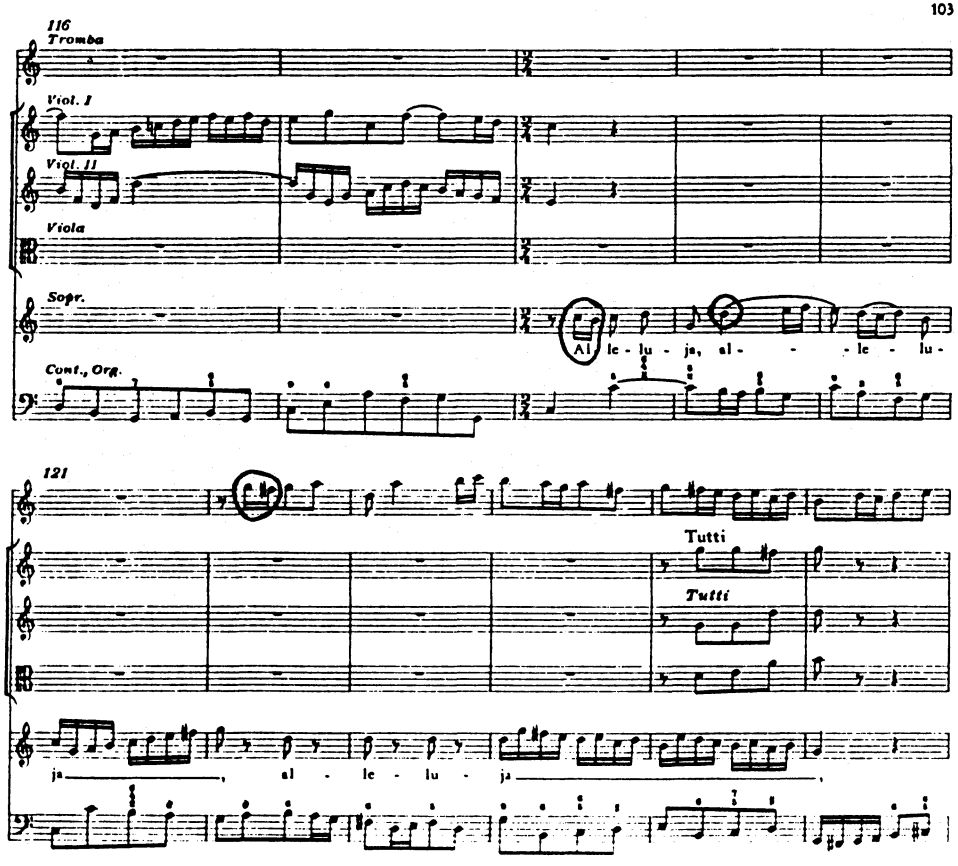


In measures 1 and 2 of the Aria, the listener confronts a case of *Congeries*, a succession of like chords—in this case the so-called "seventh" chord, which always leads harmonically to something else, a symbol of the goodness of God which never ends, but continues from one generation to another.



In the next example, from the Choral, movement 4, praise is understood as an activity that extends to the extremes of life. Thematic material is constructed from unusual (for that time) voice-leading in the violin (from E to G), known among composers like Bach as *Hyperbola*.



Further on in movement 4, the excitement which stems from the energy which draws us to God's future is expressed in the soprano with syncopated anticipation.



Bach has composed a series of musical images. God invites our praise by taking us to the extremes, beyond our preconceived limits. Such praise coincides with resurrected life. When the cantata is performed, it is by its very performance a moment of resurrection, fully dependent on the life of God.

African music

A large part of African musical repertoire derives from the "call-response" practice. A leader sings out a phrase of music, which is then sung back identically or with some minor variation by the rest of the group. Traces of this pattern exist in jazz, in blues, and in much of contemporary Gospel music. Non-African cultures also use this structure.

Call-response music reflects an older stratum in African society where there was a recognized leader and those who provided recognition. It served well in work songs, also in American cotton fields, and it invited improvisation to keep both music and work interesting.

There may be deeper, more universal roots. Those who study the psychology and physiology of music point out that the way we receive music in our brain already determines how we deal with it.[4] Musical impulses find their way into our right brain where all non-verbal, non-linear data are processed. Sound waves get there, as their name suggests, by vigorous motion. Traveling through the outer ear, these waves are received by tiny hair cells in the inner ear, which also are set in motion. Finally, the brain decodes these musical stimuli by analyzing the kinetic patterns and so providing us with the joy of music.

Music comes into existence by the succession, alternation, and simultaneity of various waves washing over the cells of the inner ear directly to our right brains. One pitch succeeds another; an I, a thou, and another thou meet in the space of our auditory organs. And yet music is not localized merely in our ears and right brains. There are kinetic responses throughout the human body, related directly to heartbeat and the flow of blood. Music and dance go together naturally, which Africans still understand instinctively. We have stifled that natural union and so must think it back into existence.

Dance is both spatial and kinetic. The foundational dance of life—and hence also of resurrected life—is the round dance, for it echoes the structure of our solar system and the surface of the planet on which we live. The round dance also symbolizes the church in action, the linking of hands until the circle of humanity is complete.[5] No wonder we gather *around* word and sacrament. Some German musical groups are called "singing circles" (*Kantoreien*).

Call-response is the micro Christian community in action. Experienced at the base of what we know as mentality, at the core of our being, call-response energizes our life and creates a thou with whom we can now communicate. John writes:

Mary said, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

Jesus said, "Mary."

Mary then went out and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her (Jn 20:13-18).
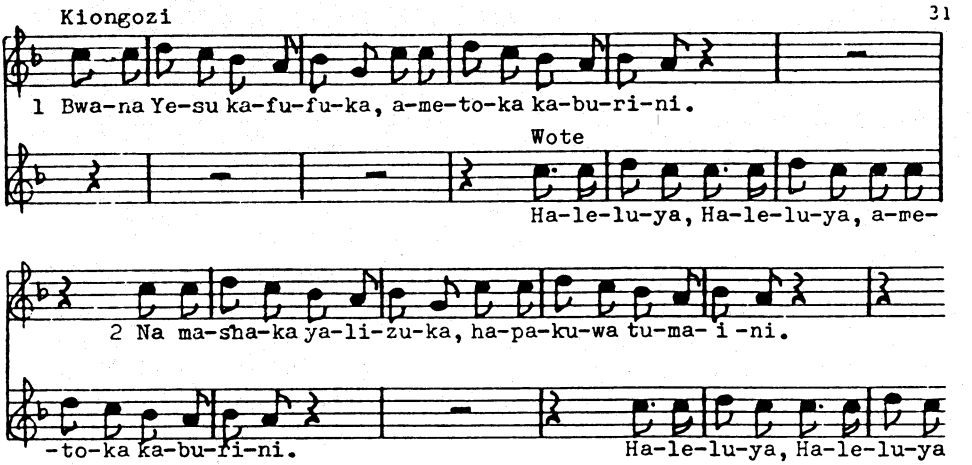
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[4]Juan G. Roederer, *Introduction to the Physics and Psychophysics of Music*, second edition (New York: Springer, 1975), 1-12.

[5]Dorothea Forstner, *Die Welt der Symbole* (Innsbruck: Tyriola, 1961), 32-34.

Call-response music can be a moment of resurrection. You really have to hear—and sing—the Swahili anthem "Bawana Yesu Kafufuka" to appreciate it.

BWANA YESU KAFUFUKA



3 Kiongozi - Wanawake walifika asubuhi kaburini.
Wote - Haleluya, Haleluya, ametoka kaburini.

4 Kiongozi - Tayarini waliweka manukato mikononi.
Wote - Haleluya, Haleluya, ametoka kaburini.

5 Kiongozi - Walitaka kuupaka mwili mle kaburini.
Wote - Haleluya, Haleluya, ametoka kaburini.

6 Kiongozi - Nao hao walifika; kumbe jiwe li kandoni.
Wote - Haleluya, Haleluya, ametoka kaburini.

7 Kiongozi - Kwa ukweli malaika kasimama kaburini.
Wote - Haleluya, Haleluya, ametoka kaburini.

8 Kiongozi - Wakasema kafufuka; enyi nyote kumbukeni.
Wote - Haleluya, Haleluya, ametoka kaburini.

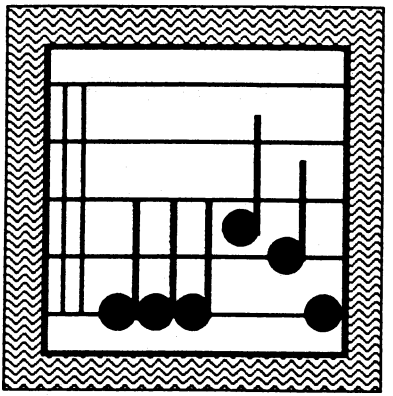
9 Kiongozi - Wanawake kakumbuka; wakatoka kaburini.
Wote - Haleluya, Haleluya, ametoka kaburini.

10 Kiongozi - Kweli Yesu kafufuka, ametupa tumaini.
Wote - Haleluya, Haleluya, ametoka kaburini.

11 Kiongozi - Atazidi kwa baraka kuokoa waamini.
Wote - Haleluya, Haleluya, ametoka kaburini.

Words & Music by Joas Kijugo

Kiongozi = Leader (Call)
Wote = People (Response)
Translation, stanza 1: The Lord Jesus has arisen, the tomb is empty.
Stanza 2: There was only doubt, there was no hope.



Music that deals with motion and space also involves time. In 4/4 time, there are four pulses to a measure, with a quarter note occupying a full pulse. We call this *time* even though we have not yet talked about pace or the passage of time. This time has to do with relative duration of notes and the relationship in real time of successive pitches and pulses.

Jonathan Kramer has probed the intriguing relationship between musical time and real time.[6] Most of us function with a linear view of time: time began for us this morning, continues through this now, and will end later tonight when we slip into blessed sleep. Our lives are on a railroad track, moving along from one time destination to another. People who experience time in this way sense progress in their lives.

Kramer points out, however, that most of us travel by plane these days. Air travel provides a static sense of time unless turbulence or the roar of the engines lets us know that we are actually moving. Air travel minimizes notions of process and progress; it substitutes impressions of a constant present. There are few hints that we are coming from somewhere or going somewhere.

Music elicits divergent senses of time. It engages musicians or listeners in a time structure that is utterly unique. The time of music occurs within clock time and can be measured by clock time, although that measurement offers little insight into the genius of music. Some music is atemporal, with no sense of past, present, or future. Minimalist composers, such as Philip Glass, achieve timelessness by repeated melodic fragments while New Age musicians serve up sounds set free from pulsating rhythms. At the other end of the spectrum, the linear music of Bach and Mozart provides the listener with many devices for encouraging musical memory and anticipation.

When Christians speak of the resurrection, we employ many "time" words: new age, new aeon, end-time, the age to come. The resurrection of Jesus brings us into new time structures. Early Christians believed the resurrection had already inaugurated a new age. Sunday was the day on which Jesus rose, and it was revered as the day borrowed from the age to come. Some called it the eighth day of the week because it was a token of the new time to come. Thus, Sunday is the first and the eighth day together, the already and the not yet.

Luther called music a gift of God. This gift can deliver us into new and different time structures, keeping us tuned to the age in which we live already-but-not-yet. Music of the resurrection provides us with such a moment of the life to come.

I think we can end right here!

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[6]Jonathan Kramer, *The Time of Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1988).

People of His Pasture

Marc Kolden
Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary

"For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand" (Ps 95:7a).

We sing this verse every time we have Morning Prayer. And perhaps because we are accustomed to it, we don't consider how odd it is. Why doesn't it say what it ought to say? That we are the *sheep* of his pasture and the *people* of his hand? Why does it say "the people of his pasture" and "the sheep of his hand"?

When I first noticed this I assumed that there had been an error by some ancient copyist, who had shifted "sheep" and "people" around in some way. Switching them back would certainly make better sense, and it would fit with other passages of scripture (e.g., Ps 100:2). But there seems to be absolutely no evidence for this theory; no ancient manuscripts have it the other way.

Modern commentaries make an assumption similar to mine. The *Interpreters' Bible* states authoritatively that for "metrical reasons" in Hebrew it should have been "we are his people and the sheep of his pasture," and it cites a work by Gunkel. Some modern translations smooth out this verse so that it won't upset the reader's sensibilities. But the longstanding use of Psalm 95 in worship probably has helped to maintain this anomaly in most versions so that we remain *people* of his pasture and *sheep* of his hand.

The ancient commentators are more interesting because they assumed the Holy Spirit had wanted it this way and so they tried to figure out what it could mean. Both St. Augustine and Calvin see the first part—"people of his pasture"—as referring to general providence, whereby God blesses people with sustenance, the way a pasture does; and the "sheep of his hand" then is said to refer to special providence, which elects certain people to be the chosen flock of God's hand. Perhaps—though to us that may seem to be reaching, forcing this awkward parallelism into formal dogmatic categories.

So it still has been puzzling me, every time we sing it, what it means for me to be one of the people of God's pasture and a sheep of God's hand. Then a few days ago I opened a magazine at home and was paging though it. When I got to the back cover there was an ad for Dewar's scotch. I have never developed a taste for scotch, but a visit to Scotland aroused in me a great taste for the Scottish countryside. I love the Dewar's ads because of the landscapes and the small houses with fireplaces at each end. In this particular ad of a beautiful green

landscape there was a striking picture in the foreground: a man was riding a bicycle on the road near the driveway that led back to the farmhouse, and in one hand he was carrying a little lamb. You don't normally think of a sheep being carried; they're too big, especially for a hand. But this little lamb was nestled securely in the farmer's hand, tight against his side, looking utterly at peace even though they were riding on a bicycle! Perhaps the sheep had wandered off, but now he'd been found by the master.

For me it was just a short step from there to Ezekiel 34, where the Lord God says, "Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out... I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered." Then we are on familiar ground. The one whose sign is on us has said (in Jn 10:14-15), "I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." Surely "He *is* our God... and we *are* the sheep of his hand."

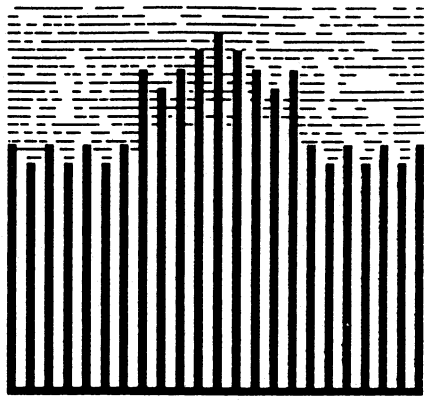
Yet it still sounds strange to be "people of his pasture." It seems like a put-down: animals live in pastures; people live in houses and eat at tables. Of course, if you have taken one practicum in homiletics you can deal with this. The words are a picture; they tell about God's tending Israel, providing food and a safe place for the people. Yet they are still more than a bit annoying. Many of us have left the farm, but here we're getting put back on it—and by the Bible, no less.

So I put this verse out of my mind until I read an interesting short story in the Sunday Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* (2/12/89). It was called "A Gravestone Made of Wheat," by Bill Weaver, who teaches in my hometown and writes about life in northern Minnesota.

In this story an old man and his grown children and their children are gathered in the living room of his farmhouse following the funeral for his elderly wife. Most of the people have left, and the family is sitting around the coffin, waiting to bury her in a grave on the farm. Olaf, the old man, notices that the sheriff is still there and wonders why he won't leave so they can get on with the business at hand. But the sheriff has lingered to tell him that they cannot bury his wife on the farm. There is a new law against that, and they will have to bury her in the cemetery in Park Rapids. They argue about this a bit and then, having made his point, the sheriff leaves. The old man asks his family to step outside so that he can sit by the coffin and decide what to do.

Instead, his mind wanders back many years, to 1920, immediately after the first world war, when Inge, the woman who was to be his wife, had been sent over from Norway, where she had fled from Germany when her family was killed in the war. She had worked for his parents back in Norway, and in that way an agreement had been made that she would come to America and they would be married.

He remembered that on the day she was to arrive, he had driven by horse and wagon from near Park Rapids to Fargo—no small trip—and waited to meet her for the first time when she arrived on the afternoon train. They went immediately to the court house to be married, but they were refused because she did not have any citizenship papers. Undaunted, they stayed overnight in separate rooms in a hotel in Detroit Lakes and returned to his town of Park Rapids, where he was sure that it would be possible for them to get married. But here too the judge was adamant; because she was a German and we had been at war with Germany, she would have to get letters of recommendation from Europe as to her



patriotism and reliability before the marriage could be performed. They were shaken; this would take weeks, perhaps months.

But they went out to his farm, where he slept in the hayloft that summer so that she could have the bedroom—and he farmed, and she kept house, and they waited. Finally the letters came, and they rushed to the court house—but again they were rebuffed by the judge, who considered this evidence insufficient. They returned home in stunned sorrow. And that night she came to him in the hayloft, and then they lived together faithfully for forty-five years—in common-law marriage.

His wife never forgot her treatment in that court house in Park Rapids. She never became a citizen, Weaver writes, "remaining without file or number, nonexistent to federal, state, or local record. She was real, Olaf thought, only to those who knew her, who loved her. And that, Olaf suddenly understood, was the way she would remain. As in her life, [so in] her death."

So they buried her late that night, not in the grave near the house, but in the middle of the field of wheat stubble. In the darkness they took the tractors to the middle of the field and used a backhoe to dig the grave; with the front-end loader they lowered the coffin and then, along with the dirt, they put a whole loader-shovel of manure and two bags of fertilizer for good measure on top of the coffin.

Then, as the others returned to the house, the grown sons on their huge tractors with running lights plowed that whole field so that there was no evidence of a grave. But Olaf knew that the next summer and for nearly forever thereafter there would be a spot near the center of the field where the wheat would grow greener, taller, and more golden than all the rest. It would be a gravestone made of wheat.

She had no legal existence; no nation on earth now claimed her. But the farm had been her life for forty-five years, and she had wanted to be buried there. "We are the people of his pasture." We return to the earth from which we were made. When none of the other claims on us any longer has validity, we know we are people of *his* pasture, for we are buried with him in a death like his (Rom 6).

Book Reviews

A FEMINIST ETHIC OF RISK. By Sharon D. Welch. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990. 206 pages. Paper. $9.95.

Drawing upon the literature of African-American women, Sharon Welch develops a transformative ethic of resistance which correlates with a theology of divine immanence. The stories of African-American women challenge the presuppositions of Western moral theories which are rooted in an ethic of control. Western moral theories and their theological correlates are a dangerous combination for white, middle-class people because they cause people to lose their ability to empathize with the pain of victims and to work against social injustice. Welch examines the nuclear crisis as a symptom of this "deep-seated" ethic of control. Welch's book moves dialectically between critique and call to action, between diagnosing a problem and offering a solution. Welch acknowledges that her experience as a white, middle-class woman limits the solution to the problem she analyzes.

Welch not only describes a sobering analysis of an ethic of control but also prescribes a vision of hope and commitment to wholeness and healing. She claims that the move from "cultured despair" to "sustained hope" involves repentance and a desire to "be well and whole." Welch joins with her African-American sisters not only to challenge and criticize but also and most importantly to offer victims hope. The divine presence tenderly heals the wounds of the world and is "unambiguously" absent from the history of humankind's evils. Welch argues that the divine power is relational and "that it is neither necessary nor liberating to posit a substance or ground that exists outside of relational power" (173).

Welch's diagnosis does not reach to the depths of the problem because it does not allow room for a radical critique of the divine presence in the world. Welch also ignores Christological resources present in the communities of resistance in Latin American and in other liberation contexts for developing her solution to the problem. While her critique of traditional theology is pertinent at points, she may have missed her greatest resource in a theology of the cross for developing an ethic of resistance.

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ETHICS IN MINISTRY: A GUIDE FOR THE PROFESSIONAL. By Walter E. Wiest and Elwyn A. Smith. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990. 200 pages. Paper. $12.95.

There constantly appear numerous books on innumerable topics in Christian ethics. Yet only very few if any deal with *clerical* ethics. Wiest and Smith now have presented a volume that in a very accessible way introduces both the theological foundations of clerical ethics and the complexities of concrete ethical issues to be faced within clerical praxis. Wiest and Smith come down to some issues which undoubtedly are on many ministers' minds but which seldom if ever are reflected upon in Christian ethics—plagiarism and gossip, income and tax advantages, popularity and politics, etc.

In the first part of the book the issue of truth-telling is addressed. After a more theoretical reflection drawing upon Kant, Bonhoeffer, and biblical thought on truth and truth-telling, the authors discuss the issues of plagiarism, letters of recommendation, theological differences between church professionals and lay people, changes of personal theology after ordination, and confidentiality. In the second part the authors focus on the issue of authority and discuss topics varying from the temptation of egotism to false humility versus professional humility, from

problems of manipulation, adulation, and personality cult to the "watching brief" as the core task of the pastor in the congregation. The third part, "character & relationships," deals with a whole variety of ethical questions from the pastor as human being (perfectionism in ministry, income, gifts and bequests) to professional relationships among ministers (staff member relations, "sheep stealing," etc.) and finally to ministers and social establishments (clergy's public prayer, civil religion, etc.).

The authors state, "the purpose of the book is precisely to help clergy think and act ethically...." The book clearly fulfills this purpose. The counsels which are given are balanced and informed and serve as an invitation to constructive self-examination. Useful and illustrative practical examples and sound judgment point out the authors' long experience with the issues and problems of clerical praxis. Their ethical reflection is Christologically and ecclesiologically grounded in a way which avoids any danger of a reductionistic professional ethics. Wiest and Smith make it clear that clerical ethics is an integral part of Christian ethics rooted in the church and its overall witness to the presence of God's kingdom. Thus their ethical thinking is guided by a clear understanding of both the church's ministry and the ordained ministry.

It should be noted that there is a certain insecurity in their rather loose use of partially incompatible concepts such as rules, principles, virtues, and character. A stronger development of the themes of character, virtue, and practical reason as the ground for sound practical judgment would have made an even stronger case. Despite these more conceptual shortcomings *Ethics in Ministry* is an extremely helpful book to be highly recommended to first of all clergy and seminarians but just as well to theologically interested lay people. As one learns by reading this book, clerical ethics is not a concern of ministers alone but of the whole church. An understanding of the ethical challenges which specifically confront ministers should not be limited to the clergy.

Reinhard Hütter
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IN THE SHADOW OF KARL BARTH: CHARLOTTE VON KIRSCHBAUM. By Renate Köbler. Translated by Keith Crim. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989. 156 pages. Paper. $10.95.

If you happen to be interested in Karl Barth, his theology, and his political and social activity, and have always wondered how in the world he managed all of this in one lifetime, this is the book for you to read. If you have heard rumors about Karl Barth and Charlotte von Kirschbaum, and are looking for "*the* story," it is not your book. Renate Köbler does an excellent job in telling a life-story, the story of an exceptional and difficult relationship, without ever succumbing to the temptation of gossiping. We get to know that the 'project' of Karl Barth's theological life-work was, as a matter of fact, not the project of one person. It was a common project, the project of an on-going dialogue, in which Charlotte von Kirschbaum invested her life at least as much as Karl Barth did—if not more. We learn that she by being the research assistant, typist, editor, and theological companion all in one person made a work like the 13-volume *Church Dogmatics* possible. In addition, she managed Karl Barth's vast correspondence, organized his calendar, and was his "walking memory." In short, what we know as the theological accomplishment of Barth was the accomplishment of an intense theological and personal partnership.

Köbler tells us the daring and unique life-story of a very peculiar woman, a life wholly dedicated to a common project in an unconventional relationship, a life not completely "in the shadow" but in the limited public of her and Karl Barth's common friends and companions in the theological, ecclesial, and political struggle of their time. It was a life covered by silence after her death because of its very unconventionality, yet a life which needs to be remembered and honored wherever the *Church Dogmatics* is discussed and Karl Barth's biography read.

In addition to the biographical account, the book contains two essays by Charlotte von Kirschbaum ("Address for the Movement to Free Germany," 1945; "The Role of Women in

the Proclamation of the Word," 1951); a prologue by Rose Marie Barth, the wife of Markus Barth and close friend of Charlotte von Kirschbaum; an epilogue by the church historian Hans Prolingheuer; and a whole series of responses to the author by people who had known Charlotte von Kirschbaum personally—a series of testimonies which shed additional and supportive light onto the author's biographical account. It is a book which definitely belongs on the same shelf as the *Church Dogmatics* and the standard Barth biography by Eberhard Busch. We owe it to Charlotte von Kirschbaum and her life's cost and work.

Reinhard Hütter

CHRIST AND THE CYNICS. JESUS AND OTHER RADICAL PREACHERS IN FIRST-CENTURY TRADITION. By F. Gerald Downing. JSOT Manuals 4. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988. xiii and 232 pages. Boards. $32.50.

In antiquity this would have been called either an *anthologion* or a *florilegium*. That is, it is not really a book with an argument, but a collection of citations to illustrate selected topics. Downing gathers citations from Judaism and from the Cynic philosophic tradition that parallel, in his opinion, material in the Synoptic Gospels (arranged in the following order: 'Q' material, peculiar Matthew, Mark, James [regarded as close to the synoptic tradition], Luke), the Fourth Gospel, and the Pauline corpus.

The ancient texts frequently cited include Dio Chrysostom, The Cynic Epistles, Diogenes Laertius 6 (cited by the aberrant abbreviation LEP), Epictetus, Musonius Rufus, Lucian of Samosata, Plutarch, and Seneca the Younger. Josephus and Philo are also quoted often. A sampling of the lemmata for the Markan parallels illustrates the process: John the Baptist; Spirit, Dove, Voice; Wild Beasts in the Wilderness; Good News of God's Rule—Repent; Disciples; Exorcism; Healing; Forgiveness by God or by God's Agent; Physician; Fastings, Feasts, Patches and New Wine; He is beside Himself; Jesus' Real Family; Prophet without Honor; True Purity and Real Filth; Parents; The Blind; Status and Rejection; etc.

A short "Preface" describes underlying convictions and purpose of the collection. Downing is convinced that from the beginning real communication took place between proclaimer and hearers. The hearers in many cases would have found the closest analogies in their own world in the Cynic philosophic teachers' life style and message. The purpose of publishing the collection—even though Downing is personally convinced of the close parallelism—is to stimulate discussion; therefore there is almost no comment other than the collected parallels themselves. Early Judaism provides, surprisingly, fewer parallels than Cynicism. There are also striking differences between the message of Jesus and Cynicism, for example, quite different understanding of liberation and salvation (saviour).

Downing gives a short argument for his own interpretation of the data in his work *Jesus and the Threat of Freedom* (London: SCM Press, 1987). But florilegium is independent of that book, though readers would do well to read it and Donald R. Dudley's *A History of Cynicism from Diogenes to the 6th Century A.D.* (London: Methuen, 1937). Downing includes a short description of the most frequently cited authors (really needed by the audience able to use this collection?), a mini-bibliography of studies on the relation of Paul to Cynic philosophy (187-88), and a longer select bibliography including editions of writers cited, modern studies of the period, and New Testament scholars who have worked in the area. He has surprisingly omitted almost all works of specialists in ancient philosophy, e.g. Windelband, Uerberweg-Praechter, and Zeller (among the Germans) and Guthrie in English. But that may go beyond what is demanded of a florilegium, whose value lies in the texts. For that Downing deserves thanks from all non-specialists in Hellenistic-Roman philosophy and entry into the discussion he invites.

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SOCIAL ETHICS. AN EXAMINATION OF AMERICAN MORAL TRADITIONS. By Roger C. Betsworth. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990. 213 pages. Paper. $10.95.

Betsworth presents in a very suggestive and convincing way the four dominant cultural narratives which make up the moral fiber of the U.S.–American nation: the biblical story, the story of success in America, the story of well-being, and the mission-of-America story. They all are master narratives which claim to define the cultural identity of "America"—yet they are incompatible, which is according to the author the source of much of our present moral confusions. Worse, they also tend to have at least some potential of self-deception in them. And self-deception represents one of the most intricate and persistent problems of our moral lives. Only the very stories of others, especially of those who suffer from our ways of construing our selves and our perception of the world, can help us to break through the spell of self-deception. Thus the very stories of those who are both "outsiders" and "insiders" of the dominant culture—African-Americans and women—have a central function for each of these master narratives. It is especially, if not only, their experience which unmasks the very self-deception implicit in the formulations of the dominant cultural narratives. Yet even they are not immune to self-deception. While being "outsiders" in regard to one of the dominant narratives, they might very actively participate as "insiders" in one of the other dominant narratives—and its potential self-deception. Yet, I might add that even the author seems to share the blinders of the broader culture inasmuch as he omits to even mention the story of the truest outsiders, of those who never even partially became insiders in any of the American master narratives: the native Americans!

Betsworth's book also suffers from the fact that while his account of the biblical story certainly implies an accurate and suggestive concept of Israel and the church as God's people, he never draws on it constructively. "America" seems to remain his primary agenda; that only shows that the radical implications of the biblical story are not fully developed. Yet despite these shortcomings this book is definitely worth reading since it represents a unique and very straightforward way of placing the mirror in front of the cultural identity of many of us and of pointing out the conflicting narratives both true and false which make up the moral fiber of this nation. The first impulse for writing this book came for the author out of the context of the ethical discourse in a congregation. This is one setting where I think it might be especially helpful (i.e. in adult Sunday school classes and other adult discussion groups); in addition it could be challenging reading for pastors and lay people in general, especially also for college students—for it makes us aware of those stories which claim our lives and identities without us realizing it.

Reinhard Hütter

JESUS: A NEW VISION. SPIRIT, CULTURE, AND THE LIFE OF DISCIPLESHIP. By Marcus J. Borg. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987. 216 pages. Cloth. $16.95.

JESUS AND THE SPIRAL OF VIOLENCE. POPULAR JEWISH RESISTANCE IN ROMAN PALESTINE. By Richard A. Horsley. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987. xi and 355 pages. Cloth. $29.95.

A new wind is blowing in research into the historical Jesus. Historical skepticism about the Son of Man sayings of the Gospels prevails. Yet the application of new models from the social sciences (sociology of popular movements, anthropology, history of religions) broadens the base of knowledge and leads to optimism about historical reconstruction. These two volumes illustrate both the gains and the variety in this new, largely American mode of studying the Jesus of history.

Borg (B.) rejects "over-simplified interpretations" of Jesus in (1) the popular image of Jesus as divine being who entered history to die for the sins of the world and thus made eternal life available to people; and (2) the scholarly view of

Jesus as eschatological prophet who went to Jerusalem to compel God to act and bring in the Kingdom (A. Schweitzer).

B. also rejects historical skepticism about Jesus as unwarranted: "we can, in fact, know as much about Jesus as we can about any figure in the ancient world." He writes to demonstrate the validity of this view. B. concentrates on two foci in the Gospels: Jesus' relationship to the Spirit and his relationship to culture, the "two central realities in the life of Jesus." He concludes that Jesus is a Spirit-driven Jewish charismatic, involved in the social and political problems of his people, whose radical commitment eventuates in his becoming the founder of a revitalized religion.

Three chapters discuss Jesus and the Spirit. Jews took the existence of the demonic seriously; Jesus, as healer and exorcizer (of people and nature), did too. Driven by the Spirit (baptism) into a life of prayer and preaching, people recognized power in him, and he was aware of it himself. Popular opinion associated him with Elijah or John the Baptist (both charismatic figures). Jesus expressed his feeling of authority as closeness to God as Father. "Son" does not first denote divinity, but charismatic activity with authority. B. concludes that Jesus "was, in terms of cultural and historical impact, the most extraordinary figure" in the stream of Jewish charismatic healers.

Five chapters situate Jesus within the political context and social matrix of first century Palestine, a largely agrarian, rural society in crisis. Jesus sets himself, at times, against Torah wisdom, which gave Judaism its boundaries and shared identity by detailing rewards and punishments as warrants for action. Palestinian Judaism stressed holiness (separateness) as a response to the threat of Roman imperialism.

Jesus challenged both Torah wisdom and the Roman hegemony. He was less concerned with holiness than transformation of people. He based his teaching on the forgiveness of a compassionate God, not on rewards and punishments or religion as a way to security. Jesus' teaching was thus inevitably a threat both to anti-Roman political action and religiosity and to Rome. Its outcome was his death; power removes threats spoken by prophets, and Jesus appeared as a prophetic figure. That he was also more than a prophet is shown by Easter and the faith of the church in its resurrected Lord.

A final chapter draws implications for today. Jesus revealed God, called for radical discipleship which he modeled himself, and showed what life in the Spirit means for a politics of compassion. B., the historian, gives a challenging, fascinating reconstruction of the Jesus of the Gospels. Borg calls us to realize the message of Jesus in our own world. While he does not show how this portrait of Jesus is in continuity with apostolic and patristic Christianity, he could well have done so. This is a book worth reading. Borg, an ELCA theologian, teaches at Oregon State University.

Horsley's (H.) volume is a bit different, though he too situates Jesus in the social world of first century Palestine. He is impressed by the violence of Roman rule in Palestine and the protests that arose in reaction to it. He describes intellectual reaction, popular, non-violent mass protests (the incidents under Pontius Pilate and Gaius Caligula), and apocalyptic interpretations of the situation.

H. interprets Jesus as a fomenter of non-violent social revolution. He underscores the Gospel logia that speak of conflict and social dislocation, describes Jesus' efforts to renew Israel by the proclamation of the kingdom of God, the resulting egalitarian social structure and its socio-economic implications, and Jesus' judgment of the ruling powers in Jerusalem. His work is heavily dependent on recent social movement theory. H. concludes that Jesus is not a political revolutionary, but a social revolutionary who opposed institutional violence and revolutionary violence in the name of God. He looks for God to liberate the discouraged Jewish peasants. His love ethic was a threat to the ruling groups because it created communities united around social and economic relationships. He teaches at the University of Massachusetts in Boston.

Borg and Horsley situate Jesus firmly within first century Palestine. They agree that he responds to social injustice. In a sense both interpret the society from below. They deserve wide

reading, thoughtful consideration, and not domestication, but implementation within the context of the confessing and believing community.

Edgar Krentz

THE GLOBAL ECOLOGY HANDBOOK: WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS. By The Global Tomorrow Coalition. Boston: Beacon, 1990. 500 pages. Paper. $16.95.

This full-sized workbook is billed as "the most comprehensive, easy-to-use, and practical guide available on the environment—an essential sourcebook for every home." Indeed, it is a rather clear and thorough treatment of all aspects of the environmental crisis put together by leading writers and consultants in the area of study.

After some initial chapters about our emerging awareness of the crisis and our capabilities to make forecasts, the guide deals in turn with population growth, developing nations, food and agriculture, biological diversity, tropical forests, ocean and coastal resources, fresh water, nonfuel minerals, energy, atmosphere and climate, hazardous substances, solid waste management, and global security. Each chapter begins with a summary of major points, moves to an analysis of the issues involved, identifies the causes and consequences of the problem, gives a global survey, and ends with a list of practical suggestions for action and a bibliography of further helps and teaching resources. The volume concludes with a look at the prospects for a sustainable economy and a projection of what the reader can do in response to these problems.

The *Handbook* is an excellent compendium of information and resources with very thorough yet clear analyses. You can read it for general information. It can serve as a textbook or as a resource guide to specific problems. Indeed, the *Handbook* was conceived as a companion guide to the television series, "The Race to Save the Planet," a ten-part documentary airing in the fall of 1990. This series is in turn based on the annual *State of the World* reports from the World Watch Institute, which have for some years charted the progress of the environmental crisis and our efforts to cope with it. For information on the telecourse and the *Handbook*, contact the Global Tomorrow Coalition, 1325 G Street, N.W., Suite 915, Washington, DC 20005-3104.

You will note that most of the "What You Can Do" sections in each chapter are oriented to community organization and action. For specific suggestions on changes in individual lifestyle which benefit the environment, you may want to supplement this guide with such books as *Save Our Planet: 750 Everyday Ways You Can Help Clean Up Our Planet* (Dell, 1990) or *The Green Consumer* (Penguin Books, 1990).

David Rhoads
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THE HELLENIZATION OF JUDAEA IN THE FIRST CENTURY AFTER CHRIST. By Martin Hengel in collaboration with Christoph Markschies. Translated by John Bowden. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989. 112 pages. Paper. $9.95.

In his magisterial work, *Judaism and Hellenism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), Martin Hengel argued that Hellenism had already before the time of the Maccabees so infiltrated the Judaism of Palestine that it was no longer possible to distinguish the Hellenized Judaism of the Diaspora from Palestinian Judaism. In the preface to those two volumes, Hengel projected a subsequent volume that would deal with the same subject in the first century after Christ. Hengel has not produced the full-scale sequel promised, but he has offered this small work as a companion piece to the first set.

Hengel's argument here follows the thesis of the first volumes. He marshals evidence from the borrowing of words, from inscriptions, and from texts in order to show that Greek was widely used in Palestine in the first century. He argues that Greek forms of education were prevalent, especially among the aristocracy. And he shows how the leaders of Israel, especially the Herods, brought Hellenistic art, architecture,

culture, political forms, and commercial relations into Palestine in ways that affected virtually everyone. Hengel concludes that Palestine was thoroughly Hellenized, so much so that the traditional distinction between Hellenistic Judaism and Palestinian Judaism is not valid. Also, the use of the word "Hellenistic" to describe a branch of early Christianity in contrast to Jewish Christianity is no longer a meaningful designation, because virtually all that occurred in the development of Christianity outside Palestine could also have happened among Jews within Palestine.

Hengel presents an enormous amount of evidence in very few pages, and he provides excellent bibliographical notes. Certainly his basic thesis is correct, particularly in light of recent archaeological work in the Galilees. Yet at times Hengel seems to be arguing a case rather than assessing the evidence in a balanced way. Often he overstates the significance of the evidence. For example, the borrowing of Greek words can have very limited importance. Also, much of the evidence he cites comes from the literate, ruling elite and had little to do with the peasant majority. In addition, one could hardly conclude with any certainty based on the New Testament narratives that Jesus spoke Greek or that Greek was spoken in tandem with Aramaic at the Apostolic Council. On the other side, Hengel downplays other evidence. He minimizes the resistance against Hellenism in Palestine and never explains why it occurs. He gives scant attention to the cataclysmic Jewish war against Rome, which he attributes to a small band of radicals and a vacillating upper class. By contrast, most scholars now consider that support for the war was widespread, making attachment to Hellenism for anyone in Palestine much more difficult as the century progressed.

Hengel is absolutely correct that our changing picture of first century Palestine should lead us to be circumspect in using the categories of Hellenism and Judaism. The clarity, cogency, and thoroughness with which he establishes this basic thesis, along with the helpful indexes of authors and subjects, make this book well worth reading and consulting.

David Rhoads

ENCOUNTERING JESUS: A DEBATE ON CHRISTOLOGY. Edited by Stephen T. Davis. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988. 200 pages. Paper. $13.75.

The format of *Encountering Jesus* promises much to promote a dialogue regarding current Christological options. Five scholars of varied expertise in biblical studies, theology, and the philosophy of religion (who all presently teach or recently taught at one of the Claremont Colleges in Claremont, California) each offer a short position paper outlining their convictions about a Christology adequate to the needs of the present. In reply to each of these five Christological briefs, the remaining four authors write a short critical response. The author subjected to criticism then answers the four respondents with an evaluation of their criticism. The book concludes with two overviews of the entire debate: a Jewish postscript by Michael Wyschogrod, and a Christian postscript by John K. Roth. Seldom does one find a book that intends so much in terms of dialogue.

The five main participants defend an interesting variety of Christological propositions. The editor, Stephen T. Davis, makes a case for the logical defensibility of the classical two-natures Christology articulated at Chalcedon. Rebecca D. Pentz, sharing many similar evangelical presuppositions with Davis, argues for an affirmative answer to the question, "Can Jesus Save Women?" James M. Robinson, the only biblical scholar of the five, proposes reconsideration of a Sophia Christology as an often neglected form of primitive Christology which bears inherent relevance in light of current feminist critiques. John B. Cobb, Jr.—under the challenges of other religious traditions, Latin American liberation theology, and feminism—elaborates and modifies his earlier proposal of Christ as "creative transformation." John Hick outlines an "inspiration Christology" which leaves room for parallel claims to inspiration in other religious traditions.

The interchanges between the five principal scholars through the process of criticism and response are lively and, at times, contentious. The presuppositions which undergird the five

proposals are so diverse as to make mutual understanding at times tenuous. For example, the Christology of Davis, committed to the categories of Chalcedon, simply clashes with Hick's concern for a Christology which avoids absolutistic claims in a religiously plural world. John K. Roth's conciliatory search for commonality among the five authors in his Christian postscript may underestimate what separates the various proposals.

The contributions of Wyschogrod and Cobb prove particularly interesting. With great sensitivity, Wyschogrod addresses the problematic nature of the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation for Jewish thought. In discussion with the principal authors of the book, he suggests several Christological revisions which would respect the Jewish roots of Christianity. Cobb's essay, "Christ Beyond Creative Transformation," is especially important as an elaboration and corrective to his book, *Christ in a Pluralistic Age*. By his openness to the challenges raised by other religious traditions (i.e. Buddhism and Judaism), by liberation theology, and by feminism, Cobb demonstrates the power of creative transformation within his own Christology. Cobb does not so much retreat from his earlier proposal as he refines it. Among the modifications he makes are a new emphasis on the Triune God as incarnate in Jesus, on Christ as "the truth," and on the incarnation of Sophia in Jesus.

Two significant viewpoints are absent from this volume. The first is that of a New Testament scholar more optimistic than Robinson regarding the results of historical investigation for describing the teachings and ministry of Jesus. For a genuine Christology "from below," such research remains indispensable. Secondly, although the book contains several references to liberation theology, the presentation of a Christology from the Third World would have enhanced the discussion.

The value of *Encountering Jesus* lies primarily in its attempt to generate a genuine dialogue among several distinct Christological options. Its greatest shortcoming rests with the limited development of the arguments due to the brevity of the presentations. The conflicting presuppositions of the authors also raises a question regarding the extent to which the intended dialogue actually succeeds. The book will be most helpful to those seeking to familiarize themselves with the issues at stake in constructing a contemporary Christology.

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NON-VIOLENCE, THE INVINCIBLE WEAPON? By Ronald J. Sider. Dallas, TX: Word, 1989. 118 pages. Paper.

As the debate over just war continues to wage throughout Christian communities, Sider presents a strong argument for non-violent intervention as an alternative to armed conflict.

Written before the non-violent revolution in Eastern Europe, Sider cites the non-violent intervention used by the Witness For Peace volunteers in Nicaragua in the midst of guerilla warfare and the "People Power" revolution in the Philippines as his prime examples. He also briefly cites other examples of successful non-violent interventions.

Sider makes it clear that non-violence is not for cowards. He argues that people who are afraid of death cannot champion the cause of non-violent intervention because those people who are involved in non-violent intervention must be willing to lay down their lives for the cause. He argues that while non-violent intervention usually takes longer and requires a great deal of patience and commitment, it can be just as effective as any armed resistance and result in fewer losses of lives.

The book is not an in-depth, academic discussion of non-violence. It is a brief presentation of some fine arguments for non-violent intervention that should spark discussion beyond the pages of the book. An excellent tool for an adult discussion class on non-violence.

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RESISTING THE THREATS TO LIFE: COVENANTING FOR JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION. By D. Preman Niles. Risk Book Series, No. 41. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1989. x and 85 pages. Paper. $5.95.

This book introduces readers to the World Council of Churches' emphasis on justice, peace and the integrity of creation (JPIC). It describes the "three-in-one" emphasis, recounts people's stories of injustice, goes through the history of the movement, deals with the concept and the living out of "covenanting," and describes the World Convocation on JPIC.

The most moving and powerful parts of the book are the people's stories of injustice. Yet, the book lacks depth in the way it has been written. Whether or not the author intends it, the book stands as a damning indictment of the shallowness and superficiality of the churches' commitment to unity and wholeness. The author very politely—perhaps purposefully vaguely—mentions some of the doctrinal and political differences of the churches. Almost in the same breath, though, he mentions that in spite of the differences the churches and Christians stand together to condemn "systems of injustice" and "structures of sin" and to fight against the "powers of death." Yet, he forgets to mention that these "systems" and "structures" and "powers of death" include such factors as ecclesiological pride.

The author becomes a victim of the churches' unfaithfulness. Because the world's churches do not want to be held accountable, they create programs and offices, which now others must defend. They look pretty silly defending a program and office which have run out of steam! This is so because the churches never stopped to listen to the voices of those who possess more wisdom and knowledge of what is required in having a spiritual relationship with creation—the voices of the indigenous peoples from around the world. What began as a command of God for us to live as faithful stewards of God's creation became a tool for humanity's continued pursuit of power and wealth, and an ecclesiastical "fad" for the churches. However much churches deny and protest against it, they are a part of "the system" and must side-step the reality of "God's covenant" if they are to survive. The cost of being prophetic is too high.

The first international consultation of JPIC at Glion, Switzerland, in November 1986, highlighted the ecclesiological differences, abandoned the idea of a Council, and changed the Vancouver call from a "priority" for WCC programs into a "process that would permit the churches themselves to set their own priorities taking into consideration the peculiarities of their own situations and struggles." This could be interpreted as "an out"—a way to take the teeth out of JPIC, of not being held accountable. All throughout the book, Niles writes of the importance of *covenant*. It seems, though, that this kind of waffling and "re-prioritizing" on the part of the churches is in fact our *breaking of* the covenant with God, again. We chafe at being held accountable, and we dream up escape plans.

Thus, *Resisting the Threats to Life* is the title of a book which is completely useless to readers until they learn to match words with actions.

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MEMOIRS IN EXILE: CONFESSIONAL HOPE AND INSTITUTIONAL CONFLICT. By John H. Tietjen. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990. xvi and 368 pages. Paper. $19.95.

The subtitle could be "John Tietjen at Rest," for the book ends with Tietjen at peace with himself, sure in the belief that we do not need to justify ourselves and that God through forgiveness will redeem the past and open up the future. In fact, the author recounts two memorable personal encounters with this gospel truth—as a frightened teenager and in the weeks following his surprising resignation as Bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod.

The story told between these two "bridge pilings" covers the Concordia controversy and the founding of Christ Seminary-Seminex and of

the ELCA. Tietjen came to Concordia as President in 1969, shortly before the upset victory of Jacob Preus at the LCMS Denver convention. (At the time, I was the third youngest of a fifty-person Concordia faculty.)

Tietjen wrote this book so that others might know what really took place from his perspective—he describes himself as a fair partisan—and so that all might know this dramatic story that finally offers the hearer good news. Throughout the book Tietjen never tires of telling how God is at work in the midst of death to create life. He wants this story to be the power of God for those who believe.

The battle for Concordia focused on Tietjen and Preus, as different in theology as in leadership style. Tietjen represented the Eastern, progressive wing of the LCMS; Preus was militantly conservative and a Jacob-come-lately, who joined the Missouri Synod in 1958 after quitting two previous Lutheran denominations. Tietjen, as he tells it and as I remember it, was the master strategist, always aware of his options and carefully choosing which to follow. Preus was a more intuitive leader, given to frequent changes of strategy. His attack on Concordia rolled over it in wave after wave, until he finally "won." Holding 55% of the votes at synodical conventions makes up for a lot of mistakes in strategy.

Tietjen carefully documents all the double-crosses and duplicities that marked the ever-tightening Preus noose, including the offer to drop the heresy charge and to get him a parish call if he would quietly leave Concordia. I was amazed how many details of the battle had already flown from my memory bank and how coherent the Tietjen strategy was when seen from the inside.

We read an insider's account

- of the so-called Fact Finding Committee and its predetermined results,
- of the several opponents whose antagonism to Tietjen was linked to their disappointment in not being elected President of Concordia themselves,
- of the constant changing of the rules by the imposition of a new confessional standard and by electing a new Board of Control when the first one cleared the faculty,
- of the startling—and, for Preus, galling—exoneration of Tietjen by conservative Pastor Oscar Gerken,
- of the courageous stance of the students and of the many colleagues on the faculty and in the wider church who made the confessional struggle at Concordia both memorable and, in its own way, successful.

Tietjen also tells the story of Christ Seminary-Seminex, from its inception in 1974 until the completion of its mission in December, 1987, and of his own role in the union of three church bodies into the ELCA. Those of us who were there in the late 70s are reminded of the disappointment that only 250 congregations, and not the expected 1,200, joined the AELC. Seminex came to know the frustrating institutional paradox: Institution is essential for the church's ministry, and at the same time institution is inimical to the church's ministry. Tietjen also recounts the sad tale of staff reductions at Seminex required by financial shortfalls in 1977 and his view of the faculty's inability to accept what needed to be done.

For me the story of this book is riveting. I have often said that the Concordia controversy was marked by the worst evils of a family fight and by incredible manipulation of a church body on issues of biblical criticism on which we knew—with the rest of scholarly Christendom—that we were right. Who would want to participate in such a useless fight? But those of us who were there, who knew that finally the gospel, and not just the Bible, was at stake, who experienced as never before or since such solidarity with other faculty, students, and the wider church, and who celebrated in public rallies and in memorable symbolic events an Exodus into exile—we would not have missed it for all the world. For me the pages flew by.

Historians, like Tietjen, tell of the past; reviewers can ask the "What if" questions. What if Preus had not upset Oliver Harms? How would the stellar faculty at Concordia have functioned under Tietjen's leadership? Would the ELCA have been able to include the LCMS? What if Tietjen had been willing to compromise by throwing a few heads to Preus? As the book makes clear, Preus was gunning for me and

Robert Smith (editor of the "Preaching Helps" section of *Currents*), both because we were historical critics and because we were on contracts that would make our dismissal easier. If Tietjen had played the game of institutional survival, who knows where Bob Smith and I would be plying our trade today? But the colleagues who would have been left at Concordia would not have survived, as Tietjen knew well: the conservative juggernaut would have swept over them eventually, and/or they would have said "adios" to a seminary that would have lost its soul.

Tietjen's years of public ministry have embodied the unity which the Spirit gives by means of the peace that binds us together (Ephesians 4:1-6). He now serves as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Fort Worth, Texas. After all the years of turmoil, he serves in peace.

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PAGANS AND CHRISTIANS. By Robin Lane Fox. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988. 799 pages. Notes, bibliographies, index. Paper. $16.95.

This reprint of a hardcover publication (1987) puts within reach of a large public an extraordinary amount of information about the Greco-Roman world and the development of Christian belief and practice, with welcome brightening of the obscure period between the reigns of Gordian and Constantine. Brief sketches of six exemplars of piety (three polytheists and three Christians) in the opening chapter form the framework and suggest themes for the three major parts that follow.

Fox proceeds to diagnose the principal characteristics of Greco-Roman polytheism in its social contexts. Drawing on a broad data base, especially epigraphic evidence, Fox challenges a number of over-simplifications that historical and social analyses have advanced to account for the fall of Greco-Roman polytheism and the progress of Christianity in the first four centuries. Theses whose main focus is on synchretism wrought by infusion of Oriental cults, on a "drift into monotheism," on developing interest in magic at the expense of traditional cult, on alleged "winning of the countryside" by Christians do not do justice, argues Fox, to the basic character of Greco-Roman polytheism, nor do they account for the progress of Christianity. Nor did Christianity have an advantage over polytheism through emphasis on divine presence. The history of the early Christian church is also not to be purchased cheaply by ascribing a loss of nerve to polytheists (Gibbon's spiritual vacuum theory); or by characterizing Christianity's development as a history of holdovers of polytheistic elements, or as a story of unimpeded growth, or of "social compensation." In the course of his challenge to easy assumptions, Fox succeeds in disclosing the basic belief patterns of a far broader Mediterranean public than has often been deemed possible by historians of ancient religion. The very hazards endured by Christians and the problems that they posed to their societies aid in the portraiture of contemporary polytheism.

Basic to polytheistic society was a reciprocity system in which privileged members of society were the benefactors of the less privileged or "poor." Leadership and power of distribution were synonymous, a pyramidal concept that contrasts with early Christian separation of the leadership function from the role of benefactor. Piety, expressed in cultic observances, aimed at maintaining the beneficent mood of the deities, who were in turn closely associated in the popular mind with the ruling authorities. Civic responsibility, or usefulness, was therefore intimately linked with cult. These were themes known to lovers of Homer and Herodotos, and inscriptions are replete with them. Closely associated with appreciation for the beneficence of deities was fear, but it would be erroneous, Fox cautions, to conclude that polytheistic "anxiety" created a vacuum to be filled by Christian theology, which itself shored up much loyalty with appeals to fear (the fact is that from Homer on there is constant testimony to a mixture of awe and a sense of the intimacy of the gods). Indeed, much of the alleged persecution of Christians was instigated by local elements who feared that Christians were a threat to civic stability because

of inhospitality to deities other than their own god. Persecution was therefore the "right thing" but not constitutionally decreed until the third century. What especially distinguished early Christians from polytheists was their inclusiveness, with distaste for rank and riches (polytheists, generally, saw no spiritual merit in poverty); interest in the individual; attacks on corruption; a certainty of faith that philosophers could not deliver; a network of communication of their faith, with emphasis on conversion as opposed to polytheistic ecumenism (a stance that also became lethal to heretics and polytheists); and endurance in the face of opposition.

In a brilliant discussion of Constantine's "Good Friday Oration," Fox envelopes the whole. Absent is the caricaturing that historians have at times used to inflate Christian virtue through devaluation of ancient polytheistic societies. Neither polytheists nor Christians were as bad as they were painted by each other, and much of their rhetoric must be heavily discounted. On the other hand, Christians failed, for the most part, to recognize the problems of Roman administrators, who were unusually tolerant in the face of arrogance, obstinacy, and what on occasion must probably be recognized as treasonous response. Nor can their record on attitudes about slavery elicit accolades. In addition, the fact that even bishops bribed their way out of persecution and yet escaped excommunication suggests that better ways could have been found to take Rome off embarrassing political hooks.

Church historians and heortologists will find much in this book that will correct or modify misconceptions that they encounter. Officials engaged in study of ministerial offices ought to make no pronouncements before reading this book. Students of Greco-Roman antiquity and the New Testament will be enriched (but ought to discount some of the negative judgment about Luke), and all who think that church history makes dull reading will find it filled with fascinating narrative. There are many surprises in this interesting study.

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VERSÖHNUNG: EINE STUDIE ZUR PAULINISCHEN SOTERIOLOGIE. By Cilliers Breytenbach. Wissenschaftgliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 60. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1989.

A book that combines theological perception, exegetical acumen, and broadly-based philological awareness with modern linguistic advances is a rarity in biblical scholarship. Breytenbach's work, a slightly revised *Habilitationschrift*, classifies as such and may well become one of the best antidotes to recycling of theological conclusions whose claim to attention rests more on the mesmerizing effect of long-hallowed but rearranged terminology than on conviction evoked by careful examination of a biblical writer's noetic data-base. In reference especially to German debates about biblical theology, B. observes that much discussion is carried on about terms in the German language that are used to translate biblical expressions, but without new semantic input. In other words, much of the argument is semantically irrelevant, being carried on from the standpoint of one's own native diction, without adequate account taken of the context of the original terms as a major factor in transmission of meaning.

Breytenbach is interested in the origin of Paul's concept of reconciliation and the integration of it in his theology. Much of his book, therefore, relates to 2 Cor 5:11–6:10 and Rom 5:1-11. After the customary history of research, B. reminds interpreters about the limitations of modern lexicons and alerts them to the works of John Lyons on semantic theory. For those who do not have Lyons at hand, any one of the numerous works on semantics by Eugene Nida (not mentioned by B.), of the American Bible Society, will be very serviceable. Breytenbach makes use of such technical terms as "lexeme," "synonymy," "hyponomy," "competence," and "performance," but with adequate definition and exemplification. Whereas much of so-called modern exegesis is still pre-Mathesius, B. combines diachronic and synchronic approach to the understanding of his texts. The major difference between his work and that of most theologians is

his application of semotactic awareness, which leads him to the conclusion that *diallasso* and *katallasso* (reconcile) are not in the same semantic field with *hilaskomai* (expiate) and cognates. Paul does not include expiation as a semantic component of reconciliation, nor do reconciliation and expiation traditions share the same root. On the other hand, in reference to the human problem and God's action in Christ, Paul notes that Christ's expiation of sin makes reconciliation possible.

Knowledge of Hellenistic diplomatic practice stimulates Paul's adoption of reconciliation terminology, which permits him to emphasize the ecclesial dimension of his role as God's envoy and at the same time give parallel expression to the theme of justification. God justifies the godless, and righteous conduct is a primary goal of the new relationship of peace that God effects. By making use of the Hellenistic diplomatic pattern, Paul is able to express the appeal for reciprocity expressed in 2 Cor 5:20, climaxing in the expression of righteousness as the goal of the new relation with God (v. 21).

Paul is responsible for linking traditions of reconciliation and the substitutionary death of Jesus. The disciples of Jesus were convinced that Jesus died the death of the righteous. From this perspective the eucharistic words took on new meaning, and Hellenistic-Jewish Christians interpreted the death in beneficial terms, "for you" (1 Cor 11:24), "for our sins" (15:3b). In the course of outreach to the gentile world, the Greek text of Isa 52:13–53:12 provided Hellenistic-Jewish Christians with the basis for understanding the death of Jesus in substitutionary-expiatory terms in behalf of the godless (Rom 5:6), that is, for all (2 Cor 5:14). Paul set this substitutionary view in an eschatological framework in which justification and reconciliation run parallel, with the latter terminology offering a more comprehensive perspective.

Breytenbach's examination of the reconciliation terminology in 2 Cor 5 is a model of philological inquiry. One can hope that he will do the same for terms relating to justification. His tireless probing of the Corpus Hellenisticum reveals the narrowness of the data base used in past discussion. His examination of evidence also exposes numerous erroneous judgments made by scholars who have indulged in statistical statement without realizing that the horizon of present knowledge is really a frontier.

Frederick W. Danker

PAUL AND THE THESSALONIANS. THE PHILOSOPHIC TRADITION OF PASTORAL CARE. By Abraham J. Malherbe. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987. xi and 120 pages. Paper. $8.95.

Scholars often disregard 1 Thessalonians as a letter of little interest historically or theologically. Christians think it has little practical value for the church. Only a few passages are included in the three year lectionary. Most people read the letter only for pieces of the practical advice in chapter 4:1-12 and for the eschatological material in chapters 4-5. 1 Thessalonians is the oldest document of the Christian church. It deserves more attention than it gets.

Abraham Malherbe, Professor of New Testament at Yale Divinity School, provides an unusually helpful book that should stimulate interest in and use of the letter. He regards it as an immensely practical letter that shows how Paul "founded, shaped, and nurtured a community." It documents Paul's pastoral practice in a congregation where no major doctrinal dispute disrupted pastoral care. The letter therefore provides an unusual, if not unique, view into the life of an early Christian community.

Malherbe's procedure is stimulating and clear. Paul, according to Malherbe, lives and works in the first century Greek *polis*—that is, his social context is the urban world of the eastern Mediterranean. That is less of a truism than it at first appears. Malherbe looks for the framework in which Thessalonian Christians might understand Paul's methods in order to document, on the one hand, how well Paul fits into Greek urban patterns and, on the other, to set into sharper contours what distinguished Paul from his environment. He is signally successful. Paul appeared to the Thessalonians like one of the popular philosophic moral teachers of the

day (Musonius Rufus, Seneca, Epictetus, Dio Chrysostom), Cynics or Stoics who toured the cities of the empire teaching for the improvement of humankind.

Malherbe examines four aspects of this activity: the process of founding the church, the creation of community among people dislocated from their prior associations through their conversion, the on-going nurturing (pastoral care) of the Thessalonian church, and the resultant life of the Christian church in a non-Christian city climate. A fascinating—and to my mind compelling—interpretation results. Paul is not simply a "street corner" preacher who sets up his "soapbox" in the agora. He more closely resembles the teacher in a school setting, though his place of teaching is the private home or the workshop in which he plied his trade. His teaching leads to conversion, which removes the convert from his place in society.

Conversion as break with the past can only be met by the creation of new communal relationships that give the convert a societal location that gives meaning to life. Paul applies kinship language to Christians to accomplish this, presents himself as model for life, and so offers a way to verify the legitimacy of their Christian existence. At the same time he offers practical advice on human relationships. When absent, he sent Timothy to remove their feeling of being forsaken by him (wandering teachers, sometimes in it for monetary gain, did not care for their absent students). His letter, itself a form of personal presence, instructs the community how to live together (5:12-15) and how to live in the wider urban community. Here Paul comes close to classical Epicureanism: his advice is not to engage in public life (the language of 4:10-12 is technical!). In that way you will insure peace in the community.

This little book is an excellent example of social history applied to a New Testament text. It will make a forgotten letter alive, useful, and relevant to one who reads it carefully.

Edgar Krentz

JEWISH PERSPECTIVES ON CHRISTIANITY. Edited by Fritz A. Rothschild. New York: Crossroad, 1990. x and 363 pages. $29.95.

This book is not an historical overview. Here you get short writings or excerpts from the major Jewish critiques of the Christian faith in the 20th century. It would cost a lot of money to buy all the books excerpted in this anthology, and it would be money well spent. But here is an introduction to Jewish-Christian understanding and dialogue at the end of the century that gathers the basic principles and prospects together. Herein are essays *about* the thinking of Buber, Heschel, Rosenzweig, Herberg, and Baeck, along with representative writings *from* such folks.

Buber and Heschel are well known among Christians, especially seminary-trained ones, of the last thirty years. Rosenzweig should be familiar to older folks. Herberg was best known for his survey *Protestant–Catholic–Jew,* and here you get pithy essays which tell us his vision of Jewish-Christian relations. Baeck remains strong stuff to this day, with his emphasis on the possibility of Christianity becoming a "romantic religion" when and if it should cut off its roots in Judaism. Baeck's authority was rooted not only in his training but in his lengthy stay in (and perhaps more miraculous survival of) Auschwitz.

Included in this anthology are letters between these representative Jewish thinkers and their Christian conversation partners, book reviews, brief essays, and excerpts from works considered classic, such as Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption.* A very worthwhile collection to add to a library for Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Jay C. Rochelle

THE SPIRIT OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. By Roger Brooks. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990. xiv and 199 pages. Cloth. $21.95.

This is a book about *Halacha,* about the interpretation of the Law of Israel. The book's subtitle

is "shattering the myth of rabbinic legalism." It is a book about the interpretation of the law as a window onto continuous revelation among the Jews, after the closure of the canon. It is a book to be read by those who are afflicted with the chronic Christian (Lutheran?) illness of dividing Scripture into Law and Gospel and, in crypto-Marcionite fashion, leaving the Jews to work with the former so that we can embrace the myth of supersession, i.e. that Christianity is greater than Judaism (because the Gospel is greater than the Law). Within this book there are lessons many need to learn: about the rabbinic model of applying the law with flexibility, deliberation, and grace; about the search for submission to the will of God which is always expressed in moral behavior; about the rabbinic integration of the Word of God with the world of humanity in order to create latter-day Judaism as a search for the life of holiness. In this book one can learn to appreciate the Law as "the vehicle for morality and ethics, and more importantly, for holiness" (p. 19).

Jay C. Rochelle

MATTHEW. AUGSBURG COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT. By Robert H. Smith. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989. 351 pages. Paper.

Smith notes that commentators have for the most part ignored the importance of the connection between the first words of Jesus, about fulfilling all righteousness, and the last words, which emphasize the teaching of all that Jesus had commanded the disciples. Appropriately, therefore, Smith titles his outline of the Gospel: Jesus' Journey to Universal Authority.

Matthew is about righteousness: Jesus "makes right and he summons to a surpassing righteousness" (p. 15). In contrast to those who view Matthew as engaging in polemics against Pharisaic opponents outside the Christian community, Smith sees the polemic as an intra-Christian affair. Words that Jesus used against the Pharisees of his own time are brought to bear on issues of authority and discipleship among Christians. Some of their prophets and leaders have distorted ideas about the function of charismatic gifts, and impressionable "little ones" in the community need to be put on their guard. Matthew therefore pictures Jesus "as reacting against legalism or ethical rigorism on the one hand and against libertinism and carelessness on the other" (p. 22).

Combining philological attention with awareness that he is dealing with a literary master, Smith brings out of his interpreter's workshop things new as well as old. His masterful touch is able to evoke stirrings of life from portions of text, such as the genealogy of Jesus, which to other interpreters are literary dustbowls. Again, instead of subjecting the virginal conception of Jesus to a dreary recital of many views about it, Smith tell us what it means.

This commentary has a forward thrust. Matthew's work pulsates with an unmistakable rhythm, and Smith records it well. What does the "brood of vipers" (3:7) hear? Clipped cosmic arrest: "Escape is impossible, evasion hopeless, excuses vain. The choice is simple: repentance or wrath. John's water or the Lord's fire." That is commentary worth the name, and this one is full of a sense of what language is for.

Smith's work incorporates so many values for a reader who does not have the patience for detailed technical expositions, that one hesitates to mention a flaw or two. Yet it is necessary to do so, precisely because this commentary is designed especially for the general reader, who cannot be blamed for repeating without further probing the information that he finds in a scholarly work. First, Roman international politics were not nearly so dreary as Smith alleges (pp. 61-62). It is true that some provincial governors at times exceeded their constitutional authority, but Tiberius and Nero, to name but two emperors, encouraged provincial parliaments to monitor the activities of their Roman officials. There is also nothing comparable in Roman history to the large-scale diversion of the acquisitive instinct that led such United States of America entrepreneurs as, e.g., Jay Gould, Andrew Carnegie, Pierpont Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and John Rockefeller, not to mention careless players in the S & L debacle, to become masters of plunder under the guise of legality. Under

Roman imperial jurisdiction there was also no oppression comparable in extent of time and depth of exploitation that Afro-Americans and American Indians have experienced. Second, it is true that rote incantation of divine names was common in the Greco-Roman world, but not all Greco-Romans, as a non-specialist might infer from Smith's description, were guilty of heaping up the names of their gods in "incantations" (p. 109). There are Greco-Roman examples of personal expression that challenge intensity of Christian devotion. Besides, the Lord's Prayer has itself been turned by many into an incantation. Elimination of the term "pagan" might help repel some of the Greco-Roman bashing that goes on in biblical circles.

The discussion of the passion and resurrection of Jesus is itself worth the purchase of this fine commentary.

Frederick W. Danker

Briefly Noted

EZEKIEL. By Joseph Blenkinsopp (Westminster/John Knox, $19.95); **FIRST AND SECOND SAMUEL.** By Walter Brueggemann (Westminster/John Knox, $24.95); **JEREMIAH.** By R. E. Clements (Westminster/John Knox, $17.95). These three commentaries on the RSV by outstanding contemporary Old Testament scholars are all in the "Interpretation" series, which aims to blend the best of modern critical scholarship with a consideration of the meaning of the text for faith and life. The commentaries are essay-like, which means one does not have to wade through philological notes and text-critical or form-critical labyrinths to arrive at the meaning. Given the stature of the commentators, however, one can feel confident that the interpretations they propose are in the main stream.

Blenkinsopp detects in Ezekiel a crisis in which the public had grown skeptical and disillusioned with prophecy and, therefore, with the reality, power, and justice of God. He invites the reader to identify Ezekiel's response to this crisis and to bear in mind that such crises are not confined to the sixth century BCE.

In tracing the change from tribal to monarchical order in Samuel, Brueggemann returns time and again to the realism of historical-technological-social factors, the powerful person of David, and the irresistible sovereignty of Yahweh, that is, to issues of power, personality, and providence. He presents an "artistic" reading, which attempts to hold these three factors in proper tension and which pays special attention to the speeches in these stories. Through it all he seeks a third way beyond the "pious" reading of the church and the "historical-rational" reading of the academy.

Clements aims not to uncover the authentic voice of the prophet preaching to the men and women of his time, but to see how the book in which the author(s) experiences since the prophet first preached were viewed in light of the prophet's message. Accordingly, the prose sermons in Jeremiah arose as late, deuteronomistic reflections, based on words, themes, and situations authentic to the prophet. They were attempts to promote the true worship of Yahweh and to eradicate traces of Baalism. RWK

PERSIA AND THE BIBLE. By Edwin M. Yamauchi. (Baker, $34.95). In this history of Persia (modern Iran) Y. devotes five chapters to great kings [Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes I], four to great Persian cities [Susa, Ecbatana, Pasargadae, and Persepolis], and one chapter each to Persia's relationship to the Greeks, to Zoroastrianism, the Magi, and Mithraism. Interlaced with this history is Israel's interaction with Persia, focusing on Cyrus and the return from the exile and including Ezra, Nehemiah, and other post-exilic sources. There is much of value in this volume, including especially more than 100 photographs and many

maps and diagrams of archaeological sites. Y.'s extremely conservative approach to the Bible, however, makes it difficult for him to interpret convincingly Darius the Mede, references in (Second) Isaiah to Cyrus, and the whole book of Daniel. This same anti-critical stance renders his discussion of the Christmas magi as a kind of walking on eggs. Do the Christmas magi belong in a history of Persia, which stops otherwise with the death of Artaxerxes I in 424 BCE? RWK

Qumran and the New Testament was a major research concern from the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls through 1970; then scholarship moved on to other concerns. Now James H. Charlesworth introduces the reprinting of two significant collections of essays, **PAUL AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS** (Crossroad, $16.95), originally edited by Jerome Murphy O'Connor, and **JOHN AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS** (Crossroad, $16.95). Each is welcome. The volume on John illuminates Johannine dualism, John's passion chronology, the paraclete, *inter alia*, and shows that the Johannine tradition is anchored in Palestine and Judaism. Most essays in the Paul volume are translated from German or French. They include seminal essays on Ephesians by K. G. Kuhn and F. Mussner, studies of angelology in Corinth (1 Cor 11:10 by J. Fitzmyer), an investigation of justification in Paul and Qumran, etc. Welcome the reprinting of both collections. They contain basic studies, frequently cited, good to have available in inexpensive format. Edgar Krentz

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF WILLIAM FOXWELL ALBRIGHT: AN APPRAISAL. Edited by Gus W. Van Beek (Scholars, $16.95). Albright, a legendary archaeologist and biblical scholar (d. 1971), established the basic pottery chronology for Palestine, made substantive contributions to the dating and interpretation of Hebrew and other Near Eastern inscriptions, published more than 1,000 articles and books, and trained some 57 doctoral students who have played leading roles in North American Old Testament and Near Eastern studies. This volume is the report of a 1984 symposium conducted in his honor by former students, who dealt with his contributions to epigraphy, history, philology, biblical studies [this manuscript is not published in this volume], and archaeology. While Albright's conclusions need substantial modification a generation after his death, the encyclopedic and creative dimensions of his contribution still put us all in enormous debt. RWK

THE EARLY HISTORY OF GOD. By Mark S. Smith (Harper & Row, $26.95). The subtitle clarifies what S. writes about: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel. He elucidates the deities present in the Old Testament and/or in historical Israel by setting them in the context of the ancient Near East now known to us through inscriptions and archaeology. He believes that Israelite culture overlapped with, and derived from, Canaanite culture, and that monolatry arose only as Israel broke from its own Canaanite past through a process of convergence (various deities and/or some of their features coalesced into the figure of Yahweh) and differentiation (numerous features of early Israelite cult were later rejected as Canaanite and non-Yahwistic). S. notes the tremendous interest expressed in goddesses (especially Asherah and Astarte). He discusses at some length the new inscriptions discovered at Kuntillet Ajrûd and Khirbet el-Qôm, which refer to "Yahweh and his asherah," but he concludes that the asherah here is not a consort for Yahweh but rather a wooden object symbolizing a tree. In the period of the Judges, Israelite divinities may have included Yahweh, El, Baal, and Asherah. Texts from the exile are the first to attest unambiguously expressions of Israelite monotheism. This history of the God of history is clear and voluminously documented. RWK

THE NIV EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE. By Edward W. Goodrick and John R. Kohlenberger III (Zondervan, $49.95). An exhaustive concordance lists every word in the Bible, even "and" which occurs 29,600 times and "the" which appears 55,728 times! But except for 78

such minor words, this concordance also prints out the context and provides a numbering system that enables the user to study the underlying Hebrew (9,597), Aramaic (779), or Greek (6,068) terms. It is much easier, of course, to use a Semitic or Greek concordance if one can handle the language, but the reference scheme devised by G. and K. far surpasses that used by Strong for the KJV. Young's famous concordance took forty years to compile and three to set type. Thanks to computers, this mammoth (1,853 pages!) and easy to use book took only seven years to compile. Typesetting was done in ten weeks. This concordance and Eerdmans' recent analytical (but not exhaustive) concordance to the RSV mean that the two most popular English versions can now be thoroughly searched for sermons, Bible classes, or just to locate a passage. Here it is—all 726,109 words of the New International Version. RWK

A DICTIONARY OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION. Edited by R. J. Coggins & J. L. Houlden (Trinity Press International, $49.95). Here are fresh, up-to-date articles by primarily British scholars on all the biblical books, schools of interpretation, periods in the history of interpretation, technical terms, and the relationship between the Bible and art and music. It is hard to see why some individuals have articles devoted to them (Duhm and Torrey in Old Testament study) whereas other true giants (Albright and Wellhausen) get mentioned only in wider discussions of American or German scholarship, but these kinds of quibbles are minor and are the plague of editors of such a dictionary. Many of the newer movements in exegesis are described helpfully: Black Christian interpretation, feminist interpretation, sociology and social anthropology, structuralism, synchronic exegesis. Much attention is given to the history of interpretation in days gone by—e.g. the rabbis, the church fathers, Muslims, Christian and Jewish scholars in the Middle Ages, Luther, Calvin, and the Tübingen school. This dictionary is not so much about the contents of the Bible, but about how the Bible has been and is being interpreted. RWK

SEPTUAGINTA-VOKABULAR. By Friedrich Rehkopf (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, DM 38). This student's lexicon for the Septuagint devotes only two lines to every entry, but it manages to give the basic meanings of the word (in German) and the approximate number of times the word occurs in the rest of the LXX and in the New Testament. If the word occurs four or fewer times, the exact chapters and verses are given. Since there is no scholarly lexicon as yet for the LXX, this tool will be welcomed by many. RWK

JERUSALEM, THE HOLY CITY: A BIBLIOGRAPHY. Edited by James D. Purvis (Scarecrow, $42.50). The editor has collected data on more than 5,800 books and articles on Jerusalem and divided them into eight major (and forty minor) categories: General Studies on Jerusalem; Jerusalem until 587 BCE; Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period; Roman Jerusalem; Jerusalem in Judaism; Christian Jerusalem; Jerusalem as a Muslim City; and Jerusalem in Modern Times. There are fifteen pages of bibliography on the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, nine on the city's water system, and another fifteen on city walls and gates. Whatever you want to know about Jerusalem, ancient or modern, here is *the* place to start. RWK

THE BOOK OF GENESIS CHAPTERS 1-17. By Victor P. Hamilton (Eerdmans, $27.95). In this contribution to The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (NICOT), H. provides a thorough review of recent research on Genesis, clearly favoring those like Kikawada, Rendsburg, Tengström, and Radday who lend plausibility to unitary authorship. While hinting even at Mosaic authorship, he does not insist on it and denies that "composite" is a synonym of "errant." He also reviews the attacks of Van Seters and Thompson on the historicity of the patriarchs, but ends lamely with the conclusion that events of salvation history can be neither proved nor disproved. (Critical scholarship *could* evaluate the history of Abraham if evidence about him had survived; it is only the reality of

his faith claims that would resist historical investigation). H. also subscribes to the domino theory—if there were no patriarchs, then the Exodus and conquest would go as well. He believes that Yahweh was known by the patriarchs (despite Exodus 6) and decides on a "first gospel" approach to Gen 3:15. While conservative, H. provides a most useful interpretation of Genesis that keeps the reader fully appraised of what others are saying. His thorough discussions of how the NT appropriated or quoted Genesis are also helpful. While I find myself disagreeing with H. on numerous issues, I value his thorough surveys of the exegetical arguments and his own proposals for the "traditional" positions. I will use this volume often and look forward to the publication of a second volume which will complete his treatment of Genesis. RWK

CULTS OF THE DEAD IN ANCIENT ISRAEL AND UGARIT. By Theodore J. Lewis (Scholars, $29.95). In this Harvard dissertation, L. studies the vibrant cult of the dead at Ugarit and the strong polemic against this cult especially in the Deuteronomistic and prophetic literature of the Bible. Some forms of popular religion in Israel seem to have been marked by necromancy and other death cult rituals. Cults of the dead produced acts directed toward the deceased in order to placate the dead or to secure favors from them. Exclusive Yahwism opposed any practices which looked elsewhere for favors or for knowledge about a future event (cf. Saul and the witch of Endor). RWK

THE UTILIZATION OF 1 AND 2 CHRONICLES IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF ISRAELITE HISTORY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By Matt Patrick Graham (Scholars, $16.95 cloth; $11.95 paper). Two challenges to the historical reliability of Chronicles took place in the last century: 1) the application of the historical critical method and the highlighting of the differences between Chronicles and Samuel-Kings; 2) the late date assigned to the priestly source in the Pentateuch and the conclusion that both P and the Chronicler represented the theology and cult of post-exilic times. G. judicially and fairly traces the ebb and flow of the argument and also shows how the new discipline of biblical archaeology was used on both sides of the debate in the 19th century. While new methods and new perspectives dominate the current discussion, the historical impasse of our forebears has by no means been overcome. A splendid history of research. RWK

TORAH AND THE CHRONICLER'S HISTORY WORK. By Judson R. Shaver (Scholars, $29.95). S. studies references to the book of the law of Moses in the Chronicler's History (1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah) and shows that the Chronicler knew a wide range of Pentateuchal legislation and sometimes combined laws from various Pentateuchal strata. More surprising is the discovery that the Chronicler sometimes attributed to the Torah book legislation that is not found in the Pentateuch or the Hebrew Bible. For the Chronicler in the mid fourth century BCE, then, the canonization of the Torah (Pentateuch) had not yet taken place. His Torah book contained more than the form of the Pentateuch we know today. RWK

IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE. THE INTERPRETIVE LIFE OF BIBLICAL TEXTS. By James L. Kugel (Harper & Row, $34.95). K. studies the relationship between the biblical interpretation found in rabbinic texts and that found in earlier nonrabbinic sources, such as the pseudepigrapha, Philo, and Josephus. He demonstrates that well before the common era there was a substantial body of standard explanations of various exegetical problems, and that this lore was passed on orally. Five of his eight essays are on Joseph (ancient exegetes wondered why Joseph's body was not immediately buried in Canaan, as Jacob's had been, but was only taken along for burial by Moses during the Exodus). One of the most fascinating of these well-written essays deals with Psalm 137 (Why does the Psalm say "There we sat down"? [Because the Babylonians had chased them non-stop from

Palestine to Babylon and only there could they sit down.] Why does the Psalm say "How shall we sing the Lord's song"? [Because the Levites had bit and mutilated their thumbs and were literally unable to sing their songs.]) K. suggests an analogy between Joseph's fidelity in Potiphar's house and the ancient exegetes' attempt to be faithful within the wider house of Hellenism. RWK

A GRAMMAR FOR BIBLICAL HEBREW HANDBOOK. By Jeffries M. Hamilton and Jeffrey S. Rogers (Abingdon, $7.95). This is basically an "answer book" for *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*, by C. L. Seow, which has become the standard introductory textbook at LSTC and many other schools. In addition to providing help for those students who want to study Hebrew on their own, this handbook also provides additional explanations for grammatical issues and numerous study hints. RWK

THE NEW JEROME BIBLICAL COMMENTARY. Edited by Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland W. Murphy (Prentice Hall, $69.95). In 1968, just after the closing of Vatican II, the publication of *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* climaxed a spectacular generation of Roman Catholic biblical scholarship. Now, two decades later, the same editors have produced a new one-volume Roman Catholic commentary that is two-thirds new. This volume illustrates the continuing excellence of Catholic scholarship and the ongoing freedom of biblical research within that communion despite sharp conservative attacks. In addition to commentaries on individual books, the NJBC contains sterling articles on inspiration, canon, methodology, history, archaeology, and theology, several of which alone amply repay the purchase price. The only minor annoyance is the continued arrangement of the biblical books (after the Pentateuch and historical books) according to their alleged date of composition. The NJBC and the *Harper's Bible Commentary* give pastors and church libraries two splendid one-volume commentaries from which to choose. Why not both? RWK

JOB 1-20. Word Biblical Commentary 17. By David J. A. Clines (Word). C. advises: By all means let Job the patient be your model so long as this is possible for you; but when equanimity fails, let the grief and anger of Job the impatient direct itself and yourself toward God. C. interprets the divine speeches to mean that much is incomprehensible to humans about the natural and the moral order, but all of it is the work of a wise God who has made the world the way it is for his own inscrutable purposes. Innocent suffering is as irrational as a hippopotamus. The issue is not retribution, but whether God can be trusted to run the universe. Retribution is not the whole truth about God; the whole truth is that God is ultimately unknowable. Still, the narrator reinstates the doctrine of retribution in chapter 42. According to C., Job does not believe that he has an advocate or redeemer in heaven other than his own cry of defense uttered in the direction of God. C. claims to know nothing of the author or the date of composition. Instead, he reads the book as a literary whole. This long (500-page) book is stuffed with astute and wise comments. It also contains a fifty-page bibliography dealing with the history of interpretation and the affect of Job on literature, art, music, dance, and film—in addition to copious bibliographies on each individual pericope. When the second volume is published, this will clearly be the number one commentary on the book of Job. RWK

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IN THIS PROVOCATIVE STUDY Anton Wessels explores the manner in which Jesus has been introduced to and received by various non-European cultures. After an introductory sketch showing how European art through the centuries has mirrored the changing images of Jesus — youthful shepherd, triumphant conqueror, man of sorrows, and so on — Wessels looks at some of the many other, non-European cultural-historical images of Jesus.

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

Pentecost in the Gospel of Mark

The ending to Mark is abrupt and shocking: rushing from the tomb, the women "said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid" (16:8).

That's so clipped and unsatisfactory that Stephen Neill, to take just one example, believes that somehow the last page of Mark's Gospel has been lost. (He thinks that Mark's present beginning is also too rough, indicating that Mark has somehow lost its covers—both the first and the last pages.) Neill is not alone in these head-scratching guesses. Others have suggested that Mark was unable to complete his Gospel because of illness, imprisonment, or death.

As it stands, Mark's Gospel does not contain any of the beloved narratives of Jesus' post-Easter appearances or of the gift of the Spirit to the church on Pentecost. (Most of us probably agree that Mark 16:9-20 is a second century addition to the Gospel, designed to give Mark a happier ending.)

Nevertheless, in Mark 13 Jesus clearly looks ahead to what we call "the Season of Pentecost" or "the Time of the Church." It is not an easy time of smooth sailing under cloudless skies. In fact chapter 13 is full of disasters in nature (earthquakes, the sun turning to a cinder, the stars falling from the sky) and of catastrophes in human history (wars, famines) and in the life of the Christian community (persecution, betrayal).

But chapter 13 is also full of the confidence that God is Creator of nature and Lord over all human affairs and that history as we know it will end in God's own good time at the feet of the Son of Man who is coming to gather his elect.

The chapter calls on the one hand for trust, watchfulness, and endurance. And on the other hand it is a summons to a mission of proclamation. The end will not come until the gospel has been preached to all nations. And in that time of endurance and of proclamation, however long it may be, the Holy Spirit (13:11) will be powerfully at work, encouraging and moving the women and men of the new community.

Of course the author of the Gospel of Mark himself stood in the post-Easter season, in the days of the Spirit, in the time of the church. Every paragraph in Mark's Gospel was composed for the sake of the church, for our sake, living in that new time.

The "First Readings" for this Markan-Pentecost issue have been prepared by Craig Koester, Assistant Professor of New Testament at Luther Northwestern Seminary since 1986. Craig served as pastor in Princeton, Minnesota, from 1980-83 and earned his Ph.D. at Union Seminary in New York in 1986. The year 1989 saw the publication of his work titled *The Dwelling of God.* Craig has a special interest in the Gospel of John, and he has published many articles on John. He is currently at work on a book dealing with symbolism in John's Gospel.

The "Pastoral Reflections" in this issue are the work of David Schroeder, pastor of United Lutheran Church in Manteca, California. I have fond memories of the pastoral conference at which I first met David, when he was in Fresno, California, serving as pastor of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. We spent many hours together wrestling with ways of moving from the exegesis of texts to the preaching of sermons.

To Craig and David for their good help in getting all of us started in the on-going task of proclamation in this Year of Mark and this time of the church I say, on behalf of all of us,

A Spirited thanks!

Robert H. Smith
Editor of Preaching Helps

The Day of Pentecost
May 19, 1991

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

A FIRST READING

The first lesson recounts Ezekiel's famous vision about the valley of the dry bones. The Lord asked, "Son of man, can these bones live?" (37:3), voicing a question that plagued Israel after Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Babylonians (37:11). The loss of the temple and the exile of the leading members of the community called into question Israel's very existence as a people. Israel had become a skeleton, whose lifeless members had been scattered. Yet God promised that *ruach* would fill them and restore them to life. The Hebrew word *ruach* means both breath and spirit, and God promised to fill the people of Israel with his Spirit like the breath that gives life to a corpse. The eerie rattling of bones being joined together heralds the good news that God will revitalize Israel, returning them to their land.

The second lesson recounts another reconstitution of God's people, this time through the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The disciples began to speak in other languages, attracting a crowd comprised of the devout Jews who had come to Jerusalem "from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). Although the Christian mission would eventually extend to Gentiles, the group that heard the message on Pentecost was Jewish. Christians in the first century knew that many Jews rejected Jesus, but Luke-Acts stresses that had there were always some in Israel who accepted him. God had not abandoned his people, but faithfully called many in Israel to faith in Jesus as the Christ. The story of Israel continues in the story of a church that would soon reach out to Samaritans and Gentiles. Peter's sermon reinforced the connection between what was promised in Joel 2:28-32 and what God was doing through the Spirit after the resurrection. God was faithful to the promises.

The third text establishes a clear christological focus for the work of the Spirit. The passage is set at the Jewish feast of Tabernacles, which occurred in the fall at the end of the dry season. Priests poured water on the altar each morning of the feast as people shouted, "O Lord we beseech thee, give us success!" (Ps 118:25), hoping that God would send life-giving rains again. Jesus declares that the hope of life is fulfilled in himself through the power of the Holy Spirit. This passage anticipates the flow of water from Jesus' side on the cross (Jn 19:34) and the giving of the Spirit after Jesus showed his wounds (20:20-22). It also looks back to 4:14, where Jesus promised the Samaritan woman a living water that would well up in her heart. The Spirit brings life *from* Christ by binding the believer *to* the crucified and risen Christ. CRK

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

The lessons for Pentecost underscore the incredible power of God's Spirit on the lives of the chosen people.

Ezekiel has a vision of a valley filled with dry bones and dares to suggest that the breath of God has the capacity to revive them. He "prophesies to the bones"—that is, he speaks the word of God (not his own), and amazing things happen to what has long been dead and dried up. Bone connects to bone, sinew joins bone to muscle, flesh and skin complete the form. Strangely, he "prophesies to the breath," and God's Spirit gives life to what all others had long ago concluded was headed only for further decay.

Chosen people who are dried up have reason to "hear the word of the Lord." God's Spirit will rattle them. Those who felt cut off from God tasted new life. Those convinced that either they were (or God was) dead have a new lesson to learn and a new life to lead. God calls them through his prophet. Incredible power!

Following the resurrection, the disciples were in danger of sliding into their own valley of dry bones. Nothing spectacular was happening. The oft-repeated remembrance of the resurrection had

been enough to bring them together from time to time, but where was the life, the direction? What now? At least they assembled, they gathered, but that wasn't enough. The impression is that they might soon be put on the "inactive list" if something more didn't happen to them. The incredible story of Pentecost says that God's Spirit happened. The tongues of fire and the wind (breath again) were enough to launch the church, and we've been having a birthday party on every remembrance of the day since then.

God's Spirit gives life to the thirsty, says Jesus, in one of the shortest Gospel lessons in the three-year cycle. There are the folks who need the Spirit to continue the life given them in the past. The Spirit is given to those who need it to further enliven their active participation in the business of the kingdom.

Every congregation has its "lists": the "inactive" (dry bones), the "active" (those who still bother to meet regularly), and the "real doers" (those who thirst). Pentecost is here for all three to hear the word of the Lord, receive the enlivening Spirit, and be refreshed to continue the work of the kingdom. Incredible power! DWS

The Holy Trinity
First Sunday after Pentecost
May 26, 1991

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

A FIRST READING

The first lesson is the great biblical confession that God is *one*. Loyalty to other gods is excluded. In the time of Josiah, this confession became a summons to reform, leading Israel to eliminate sanctuaries to local Canaanite deities in order to worship the one God in one central sanctuary. Since God is one, he calls for a love that is also an undivided whole, including a person's heart, soul, and strength. Moreover, the love of God pervades all of life, not just select parts. Whether they are traveling or at home, lying down to sleep or getting up to work, God's people are called to be faithful to the one who alone is Lord.

The second lesson presents God's own Spirit as the means by which people live in relationship with the one God. Paul recognizes that apart from God people are in fear and bondage to the powers of sin and death. For Paul, the opposite of bondage is not simply freedom, but "adoption" or "sonship" (*huiothesia*, Rom 8:15). People are freed from bondage, not to live in isolation, but to live in relationship with God. The intimacy of this relationship is suggested by the Aramaic word "Abba," meaning "Papa." To be a child of God is to have a future, since adoption will include the redemption of the body from bondage to decay (8:23). The RSV said that we become Christ's heirs "provided (*eiper*) we suffer with him" (8:17). The NRSV is better here, reading "if, in fact, we suffer with him." Paul consistently uses the word *eiper* to introduce something he assumes to be true (e.g., Rom 3:30; 8:9).

The third text moves beyond adoption to rebirth. Nicodemus spoke of seeing signs while Jesus spoke of "seeing" the kingdom (3:2-3); he spoke of entering the womb, Jesus spoke of entering the kingdom (3:4-5). Nicodemus took "birth" to mean physical birth rather than spiritual birth and the ambiguous word *anothen* to mean "a second time" rather than "from above" (3:3,4,31). In the beginning he appeared to know the ways of God, but it quickly became clear that he did not (3:3,10). Nicodemus came by night and seems to represent a world living in dark estrangement from God (3:2,19). In John's Gospel "the world" (*kosmos*) is the world that had rebelled against God (3:19; 7:7). Yet God loved the world that hated him, sending his Son to die for it, in order to win it back to himself (3:16). Finding life through Christ's death is a rebirth that can only be comprehended through the Spirit. CRK

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

It seems that everyone is telling us who we are! The TV commercials proclaim us as "worth it" when it comes to buying their more expensive product. Bosses evaluate us. Parents implant self-images in the complicated rearing of children. Spouses build up or tear down images.

It should come as no surprise, then, that God spends a good portion of the Scripture telling us who he is and who we are. One would expect from the lessons for Trinity Sunday some sort of confessional formula to describe the mystery of the Godhead.

Surprise! God tells us about ourselves! The Old Testament Deuteronomy pericope contains the shema," which Jews repeat daily. That may not be enough, however, for God declares them and us to be *teachers*, principally to our children. Even the teaching method is outlined. Not only lecture ("talk to them") morning, noon, and night, but visually display signs of God's will on your person and the entryways of your home. As God's educators, we are enjoined to practice what we teach, and that brings us back full circle to loving God with heart, soul, and might. Teachers we are, and we need to be reminded of that calling over and over again.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit appear in the text from Romans, but the real jolt is that "son" refers to the Father's followers who are distinguished as folks led by the Spirit of God. You are sons and daughters, God says, and no longer slaves. What would distinguish children from slaves is not only present privilege, but future inheritance, eternal life, as Paul clearly intends by the context of the eighth chapter (see verses 18-25). The children's privilege is balanced by responsibility. The children may have the same sort of experience as the Son. They may undergo suffering and be called to faithful endurance.

The Gospel, of course, tells us how we became children of God in the first place: through a new birth. Such a birth is not our responsibility, as some within Christendom might claim, but God's, who gives us the birth through the Spirit. Once again, the persons of the Trinity are alluded to, but the focus seems to be on who we are (as the dialog with Nicodemus seems to indicate). People born anew have another life to live, a life that focuses beyond the "earthly" on the "heavenly" things. And, lest we believe that our status as the baptized children of God came because of our own innate goodness, the lesson closes with the gospel "in a nutshell," reminding us that we are a part of the world, privileged to receive the Son sent by a gracious God.

Who is God? God is the one who acts as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to make us teachers, children and heirs, baptized and beloved. DWS

Second Sunday After Pentecost
June 2, 1991

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

A FIRST READING

The first lesson states the command, "Observe the sabbath to keep it holy" (Deut 5:12). Something "holy" is set apart for God, and by refraining from work, Israel set that day aside for God. Exodus 20:8-11 binds sabbath observance to the created order: people were to observe the sabbath because God himself had rested on the seventh day of creation. Deuteronomy 5:12-15, however, ties the sabbath more closely to the Exodus. People were to rest and permit their own servants to rest, remembering how they themselves had once been servants in Egypt. When the Israelites were in bondage they craved rest; now that they had been freed they should not withhold God's gift of rest from others.

The Gospel picks up the sabbath theme. The Pharisees reproved Jesus because his followers plucked grain on the sabbath. Jesus first responded by pointing out a precedent that was congruent

with the spirit if not the letter of the sabbath command. He recalled how David fed himself and others who were hungry with the bread of the Presence, even though such an action was prohibited (Mk 2:25-26; 1 Sam 21:1-6). Second, he appealed to the principle involved, namely, that Israel's statutes were intended to serve, not to enslave people (Mk 3:27). Third, Jesus stated the authority for his statements through a play on words that appears when we translate *anthropos* as "man." If "the sabbath was made for man" (*anthropos*, 2:27), then Jesus, as "the Son of man" (*anthropos*, 2:28) stands above the sabbath commandment as its Lord, rather than beneath it as its servant.

The second lesson picks up the theme of Jesus' lordship as a message that is central to Christian preaching (2 Cor 4:5). In the Gospel, Jesus proclaimed his lordship in the face of conflict. Paul too proclaimed Jesus as Lord in the face of severe opposition. Paul's suffering would appear to discredit the gospel, but in reality it manifests God's transcendent power. Paradoxically, it is precisely in the midst of darkness that light appears (4:6) and in death that life is revealed (4:8-12). The lordship of Christ does not mean an absence of suffering; in fact Paul was persecuted precisely because of Christ (4:11). Instead, Christ's lordship brings hope, perseverance, and assurance despite the reality of suffering. CRK

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

The "sabbath" clearly connects the first lesson and the Gospel for this day. It is a little more difficult to find in the second lesson the view that St. Paul is an excellent example of a sabbath person, reflecting both concerns of the Old Testament and the transformed perspective of Jesus.

The Jews who were about to enter the Holy Land were more than ready to "hit the ground running." Joshua had assembled a dedicated host with singleness of purpose. They were ready to move mountains (or at least the walls of Jericho) for God. Perhaps never had there been a more dedicated group than these folks who had survived forty years in the desert with feet in good condition and the same shirts on their backs! They *needed* the sabbath lest they "burn out," a day of rest to recharge their collective battery to do the task of purging a land to be set aside for Yahweh's purposes. The sabbath would remain to remind them that Yahweh had led them through the Exodus and the wilderness wanderings. To Yahweh belong all credit and praise. A good reminder for all "Type A's" today who would command our own Jerichos to surrender their walls! God is still in charge. The sabbath reminds us of precisely that!

Jesus saw in his disciples a further need beyond the "reminder" function of the sabbath. No slavish obedience to a code for him. The Sabbath is now a time to act in response to the needs of people, even if the need is as simple as a midday snack. Disciples, after all, follow Jesus, the living sabbath. He demonstrated that the best reminder of the power of God to sustain was seen in his own person, not in a codified prescription. He even pointed this out to scowling Pharisees who were living as though the Holy Land still needed conquering! "Wake up," Jesus is saying, "and see the sabbath for what it must be today," a day to honor God by the way we live and not by what we decline to do. He even dared to use a few pointed examples from the sacred Scriptures to drive his point home.

The apostle Paul mentions the sabbath not at all, but his description of himself as a servant "for Jesus' sake" represents the ultimate in sabbath devotion. Paul lived the sabbath in his body as he made his way from town to town, ministering all the way. Because he lived the sabbath, Paul had the spiritual reserve to meet every stress with the strength God supplies. Paul's battery was always fully charged. Each day was a sabbath to refresh him and give him courage for the next round of testing.

Every day is a sabbath for us, when God nurtures our true life in Jesus Christ. DWS

Third Sunday After Pentecost June 9, 1991

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

A FIRST READING

The first lesson is an excerpt from the story of the fall. As a whole, the chapter moves from cooperation to conflict. At first the woman heeded the serpent; the man, in turn, cooperated with the woman by eating the forbidden fruit (3:1-6). Then, in our text, the man blamed the woman and the woman, in turn, blamed the serpent for disobedience. The result was abiding conflict between the serpent and the woman. Those who united in opposition to God, putting themselves in the place of God, quickly came into conflict with one another.

The Gospel continues the story of conflict. Three charges are brought against Jesus: his family thinks he is crazy (3:21), the scribes think he is possessed (3:22a) and uses satanic power to cast out demons (3:22b). Jesus responded to the last accusation first, by noting the absurdity of the charge through the analogy of a divided kingdom (3:23-26). He addressed the second charge with a parable about plundering a strong man's house; the fact that Jesus is *casting out* demons shows that Jesus is not under Satan's control, but that Satan is under Jesus' control (3:27). Jesus responded to the first charge by redefining his family circle in terms of obedience to God (3:31-35).

In 3:28-30, Jesus warned that their second accusation verged on blasphemy. "Blasphemy" can refer simply to slander or irreverence, which seems to be the case in 3:28. God's grace is so broad that all of these sins and blasphemies can be forgiven. In 3:29 the sense is intensified to indicate a defiant hostility toward God. Jesus' opponents openly acknowledged his power to exorcise demons but identified it as Satan's power, not God's power; they equated the Holy Spirit with an unclean spirit. Those who so refuse to recognize the power of God come under the judgment of God. (Paradoxically, those who fear they may have committed this sin show by their fear that they still recognize God's power. This saying is not meant for them.)

The second lesson, in contrast to the Gospel, shows what it means to speak from "the spirit of faith." Paul cites a few words from Psalm 116:10, in which the psalmist affirms faith in God despite affliction. In Mark, the scribes looked at Christ's power and saw the demonic; Paul looked at Christian suffering and saw glory. Instead of distinguishing the body from the soul, Paul spoke of an outer and an inner "nature" or "person" (*anthropos*, 2 Cor 4:16). By using the same term for both he suggests that human life is a whole. Faith rooted in Jesus' death and resurrection enables one to perceive life rightly, finding renewal despite decay and glory despite affliction. CRK

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

One childhood cartoon in particular I remember. The angel on the right shoulder of the bulldog encourages him not to attack the cat, and the little bulldog-like devil on the left shoulder advises just the opposite. Which spirit should he listen to?

An apt question for the lessons. Which spirit will hold sway and influence our decisions? In the Genesis account, the decision had been made, and the consequences were beginning to have their effect. Consequence one: Adam had to answer to God for his disobedience, for choosing the spirit that would destroy him and his heirs to follow.

His answer to God's inquiry was wanting. It reflected the wrong spirit that had invaded his body and soul. He had not yet learned that along with the privilege of being the crown of God's creation comes also the responsibility of 'fessing up when God's righteousness had him cornered. The subtlety here, of course, is that Adam's anger is against God ("the woman *you* gave me!"). Like a trapped dog, he snarls that he is not at fault.

Likewise, Eve tries to shift blame to the serpent.

Like Adam and Eve we spend a lot of our energy trying to evade blame and trying to avoid pain and sweat, when we really need to toggle back to a previous "menu" to discover that the problem remains faulty choices between two "spirits."

Paul wastes no time in the second lesson explaining that the proper choice of spirit will ultimately have positive results. The "spirit of faith" trusts that God's guiding will bring pastor and congregation together ("...and bring us with you into his presence"), extend grace to more folks, and increase a sense of thanksgiving among God's people.

Such a spirit of faith does not imply, however, that life is easy and without wants. Indeed, Paul here reminds us, as Jesus experienced, that the choice of the faith spirit may be a prelude to difficulties. The apostle Paul refers to his own "wasting away," his daily endurance of affliction. We sense pain in these lines, pain which is the direct result of proper choices. He, in faith, is able to look beyond present pain to the greater things, now "unseen." Proper spirit-choices always keep the eternal in mind, and that is necessary if we are to have strength to endure momentary affliction.

Jesus knew the pain of severed relationships because he had the courage to make the right spirit-choice. He knew the will of God. He knew what his mission was, even this early in his ministry. It was, of course, not without painful consequences. His own townfolk accused him of devil-likeness in an effort to explain Jesus' following and his miracles. To make matters worse, even his family believed he was "beside himself." Ultimately, Jesus would not change in order to gain a better opinion from them. From the beginning Jesus chose to walk the path of trust and obedience toward God.

His choice of God's will led him to other hard choices ("Who are my mother and my brothers?"), but they had to be made.

"Listening to the Right Spirit—in Spite of the Consequences" is an overall theme that seems to permeate the lessons today. What will it be, fellow bulldogs, the right shoulder or the left? And, are you ready to choose the right? Adam, Paul, and Jesus can help. DWS

Fourth Sunday After Pentecost
June 16, 1991

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

A FIRST READING

The first lesson allegorically announces a great reversal in the fortunes of Israel. At the beginning of the chapter, an eagle representing Babylon (cf. Ezek 17:12) takes the top branch from a cedar tree representing Israel; the cedar twig is Israel's king, who is taken into exile (Ezek 17:3; cf. 17:12). God, however, promises to "take" (*laqach*, 37:3,12,22) a cedar sprig and plant it gloriously in Israel, referring to the restoration of Israel's Davidic king. This restoration would be accomplished by God himself, not by human achievement, and the restoration would manifest God's own power.

The parables of the kingdom in the Gospel are similar. The first one stresses that the kingdom of God is a sheer gift. A farmer sows seeds, but there is no mention of plowing, cultivating, fertilizing, or irrigating; the earth produces "of itself" (*automate*). Similarly, the kingdom is a gift; its coming cannot be hastened by purely human means, like a revolt against the Roman occupation of Jesus' day. Like a patient farmer, Christians await its fulness with patience. The second parable compares the kingdom to a mustard seed, which is tiny but produces a plant that becomes eight to ten feet high in Galilee. The beginning of the kingdom is absurdly small—a Galilean teacher and a few followers. Yet by the power of God the growth will be phenomenal, so that the kingdom will come to shelter many peoples in its boughs.

The theme of anticipation also plays a central role in the second lesson. Paul recognizes the sharp difference between the suffering Christians endure in their bodies and the glory that has been promised to them. The contrast is so strong that he

can even speak of life in the body as separation from God (2 Cor 5:6-8). Yet he qualifies this by carefully and firmly stating that he does not await the release of an immortal soul from a mortal body, but the transformation of the whole person, including the body (5:4; cf. 1 Cor 15:42-57). The Spirit is the "down payment" (*arrabon*) of this transformation (2 Cor 5:5; cf. 1:22). The Spirit is given to people with ordinary bodies, yet the Spirit shows the provisional character of ordinary bodily existence. The gift of the Spirit does not mean that one's body is unimportant, but that the body is very important, since it will be transformed. Accordingly, people are accountable for the ways they use their bodies (5:10). CRK

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

When the Bible uses the natural process of the growth of trees or grain as in the Old Testament lesson and Gospel for this Sunday, it is clear that the writers and Jesus were in awe of this great mystery.

We may know a lot more facts about the growing process, but the mystery remains. How is it, after all, that cells divide again and again to grow and produce material and food for our enjoyment and life?

The prophet Ezekiel says that God will take a sprig "from a lofty top of the cedar" and will personally replant it on a mountaintop. God has to take charge again, because first Israel and then Judah failed to grow in the way God intended. The "keepers of Israel" had failed to do the proper planting and tending. In exile, the prophet holds out the hope that God will be there to pick up the pieces (remnants?) again, to begin again after the promised return to Jerusalem and the Holy Land. God will again plant the people and cause them to grow and flourish.

Jesus echoes and expands the growth theme with two parables. The seed has great potential to grow and provide different kinds of "harvest." Some seed has the potential to produce a grain that feeds and nourishes, the other produces a small tree as a resting place for many birds.

St. Paul, in the second lesson, is a man waiting for the "harvest," a stalk of grain about to burst. The analogy is completely different (an earthly test!), but the theme of growing in faith remains as an important link with the Old Testament lesson and Gospel. To grow to the point in one's life where the value of the eternal becomes more and more important is a sign that the wheat can be harvested, that the birds can make a nest, that the mountain top tree is full.

To observe growth among the people of God is a great joy. And it is not always apparent. At times the seed seems to have died. But God is still seeing to its growth, planted at Baptism and nourished in word and sacrament. All the while God is in charge. Growth *will* happen—growth surprising and mysterious. That is God's promise. DWS

Fifth Sunday After Pentecost
June 23, 1991

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

A FIRST READING

The first lesson is from a transitional point in the book of Job. Previously, Job had demanded to know why so many misfortunes had happened to him. Here God turns the tables, demanding answers from Job. God recounts his work as Creator and Lord of the whole natural world, sarcastically telling Job, "surely you know" the mysteries of the cosmic order. The passage functions as "law," firmly putting Job in his place by demonstrating the limits of human understanding. It also functions as good news, reminding Job that despite the apparently meaningless suffering Job endured, God continues to care for and order the world he has made.

The Gospel also consists of questions and counter-questions. Jesus and the disciples were in a boat when a severe storm arose. Although they were part of a company of boats (a detail unique to Mark) they were helpless before the waves. The disciples awakened Jesus, demanding to know, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" (Mk 4:38). Jesus calmed the storm. Then, like God questioning Job, Jesus asked the disciples, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" Again the text functions as "law," pointing out the disciples' lack of trust. The text also functions as gospel. Although there is no explanation concerning the cause of the storm, the calm following Jesus' command to the wind and waves demonstrates that he remains in control in spite of the storm.

In the first lesson and Gospel, Job and the disciples were challenged to rethink their perceptions in light of the power of God and Christ over the creation. In the second lesson Paul challenges readers to perceive things in terms of the "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17). What "controls" (*synexei*) people in this new order is the love of Christ, which is the love Christ manifested for the world in his own death and resurrection (5:14-15). Echoing Isaiah 43:18-19, Paul announces that something new has come and our mode of life must conform to the new reality in which we live (2 Cor 5:17). Christian life conforms to the new reality in which Christians live. The old reality was a world captured by sin. But God did not reconcile himself to the reality of a fallen world; instead he created a new reality, by reconciling the fallen world *to himself*. Within this reality, Christians participate in "a new creation." CRK

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

If ever there was a set of pericopes that literally shouted to be heard, that set would be this Sunday's. I see it as the shouting of God's Symphony of Creation. The three lessons and psalm are the four movements in the symphony. God lifts the baton and we begin:

First Movement: "The Old Creation." Here God is shouting in indignation and even sarcasm at the audacity of a Job who would dare shake his questioning fist at the Almighty. Like Job, our questions about God's providence are so self-centered that we cannot see the big picture. We question the injustice of our own losses and frustrations. We sit in our ash heaps trying to make sense of it all. Then God addresses hard questions to Job and to us. In 38:1-11, God tells Job his human ignorance is showing (darkening counsel with words minus knowledge!), he is a spiritual wimp and is challenged to answer the Almighty (v. 3); and he is forgetting that he is the creature and not the Creator (Where were you...?), as is demonstrated in powerful images to the end of the pericope. The flashes of brass and timpani shout God's power and leave Job and us humbled once again. Such music shakes us to the core and turns our mortal heads back to the One who still moves as Creator in our lives, regardless of how we may interpret events.

Second Movement: "Responding with Praise of the Creator." Yahweh is worthy of the continuing legato of praise from literally all directions and corners of the earth. Creatures lift up praise for the creator's *love* and power. Divine love is evident in God's sovereignty over *all* peoples (certainly a radical notion to any nation or people who would keep Yahweh as their own little secret! Ps 107:1-3). Verses 23-32 of the psalm strike chords of awe and mystery in the sea to demonstrate the power of the Creator. The sea continues to inspire awe for all who dare to go down to the sea in ships (v. 23), as the sun rises and falls over the horizons and the waters swell and recede. Where else is God more nobly present? One answer follows.

The Third Movement: "The Waves Revisited." Here the music alternates in a frenzy of rising and falling notes. The disciples, even the experienced fishermen among them, are scared to death. Here there is little thought of God's majesty and creation. They experience their own littleness on undulating waves threatening to overwhelm and destroy life. The music turns suddenly mellow as Jesus rebukes the wind and wave with a commanding, yet gentle hand. He remains in our "boat," commanding waves time and again when needed. The sudden change from violence to peace causes us to gasp, "Who then *is* this?" Really.

The Fourth Movement: "The New Creation." As the Christ controlled the waves, so he moves his people (v. 14) by his great love. The music rises and falls as does life, but life is sustained, strengthened, and filled with Christ's people who "live no longer for themselves, but for him who for their sakes died and was raised." Such people are the living new creation, forgiven, restored. This beautiful passage fairly shouts the harmonies of a life lived for the Savior who continues to recreate his people. DWS

Sixth Sunday After Pentecost
June 30, 1991

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

A FIRST READING

The first lesson comes from the center of Lamentations. The book's five chapters consist mainly of anguished reflections on the horrors of Jerusalem's fall to Babylon. But in the middle of chapter 3 we find these affirmations of God's love in the face of apparent abandonment. Chapter 3 is an acrostic; verses 1-3 begin with *aleph*, verses 4-6 with *beth*, etc. Our section includes *chet* through *kaph*. The technique seems to bring order to the discord of suffering and suggests that the book deals with suffering "from A to Z." Theologically, the text affirms that God's punishment is temporary, but his steadfast love (*chesed*) never ceases. The heart of God is manifest in love; according to 3:33 God does not afflict people "willingly," literally, "from his heart" (*leb*).

In the Gospel, the story of Jairus (Mk 5:21-24a, 35-43) frames the story of a woman with a hemorrhage (5:24b-34). The same technique appears elsewhere in Mark. The woman was driven to Jesus out of desperation; various physicians had increased her suffering instead of curing her. As in the first lesson, faith emerges from despair to discover the power and goodness of God. Jesus literally says, "Your faith has saved (*sozein*) you" (5:34). The word "save," which also appears in 5:23 and 28, suggests that the woman was saved from illness for health and from the powers of evil for God (cf. *sozein* in 8:35; 10:26). Jairus' daughter also was healed, but significantly, Jesus did not require that the girl exhibit faith before he healed her. It was her father who was driven to Jesus in desperation and whose faith was actually strengthened by Jesus (5:36).

The second lesson deals with the consequences of faith. Paul was collecting money for the impoverished congregation in Jerusalem as a sign of the unity of the whole church. 2 Corinthians 8 may be a fragment from a separate letter to the Corinthians, but it clearly was composed by Paul. As an incentive to share their possessions, Paul points to the poor congregations in Macedonia who gave freely (8:1-7) and to Christ himself, who was rich (i.e., Son of God) yet became poor (even dying a human death; Phil 2:6-8) for the salvation of others (2 Cor 8:8-9). Christ gave himself completely, but Paul was asking only that the Corinthians give of their abundance. Christ became poor that the Corinthians might become rich (in faith), but Paul did not ask that Jerusalem be enriched at Corinth's expense, only that there might be equality (8:9,13-14). CRK

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

As a Lutheran pastor, my tradition nudges me repeatedly to be alert to opportunities to recognize the grace of God in the Scriptures in order to preach once again on this awe-inspiring attribute of our God. Even so, there are those who would relegate grace to the catacombs of useless theological screaming inside pastoral or professional ivory towers.

By contrast, the lessons today offer grace as a practical quality in the life of God's people.

Grace takes on flesh and bones as proclaimed by Jeremiah, Paul, and Mark.

After the destruction of the temple and the devastation of Judah, those who shared Jeremiah's miserable life had little to cling to that would suggest God's presence. How fitting it is, then, that the void is filled with an almost uncanny assurance of grace. The Temple may end, but God's love never ceases. God remains faithful and counsels patience. The Word is sure: God *will* save. What appears to be a void is really the period before "salvation" will become a reality. Instead of spiritual pacing back and forth, there is to be the "stillness" of the waiting in faith for God's promise to be fulfilled. Instead of "mouthing off" to God, the picture of the prostrated worshiper with his "mouth in the dust" is graphic indeed! Let the enemies ("smiters") do their worst with insults, our God will visit with compassion because God is steadfast love.

The grace of God causes miracles, testifies the apostle Paul in the second lesson. Grace motivates to generosity beyond all normal expectations. God's generosity has been modeled and shared in Christ and experienced in the church. Christ became poor that we might be rich. In every generation, as in Paul's own, some are thoroughly captivated by that divine generosity and display the miracle of grace in their own lives.

God can never be bound or limited, not even by death. God's healing grace for Jairus' daughter in the Gospel once again transfers a crowd of mourners (mocking Jesus) into a group "overcome with amazement." Grace does that for us, too. Even when all seems hopeless, God's grace and healing power breaks through to give, to minister, to serve, to renew life.

There is an assurance that emanates from the Christ that is calming and reassuring. Grace does not seek recognition ("he strictly charged them that no one should know this"). But grace provokes hope and expectation ("come...that she may be made well"). DWS

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
July 7, 1991

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

A FIRST READING

The first lesson deals with the scope and limits of Ezekiel's task. The prophet is not addressed by name, but as *ben adam*, "son of man." The title is not messianic here; the NRSV translates it "mortal." The prophet is sent to God's own people, rather than to outsiders. The message he was to deliver is not stated here, but would include severe words of warning to the house of Israel (cf. Ezek 2:10). Israel had rebelled against God by a persistent refusal to worship God alone. Ezekiel's task was to deliver the message faithfully, knowing that he could not control the outcome of his preaching (2:5).

The Gospel recounts how Jesus was rejected by his own people. Mark 6:2 summarizes what readers know from previous chapters. Jesus was known for his wisdom, which was manifested in his parables and other teachings, and for his mighty works, which demonstrated his power over demons, disease, and storms. Jesus' hearers recognized all of this. But instead of believing, they took offense, or literally were "scandalized" (*skandalizein*) that such power was possessed by a carpenter, whose family members were local people. Although the power of God was clear, they rejected it because it was manifested in the commonplace. According to 6:5a, Jesus "was not able (*ouk edunato*) to do any mighty work there," a comment softened by Matthew and omitted by Luke. On one hand, this does not mean that Jesus was totally powerless, since Mark notes that Jesus did heal a few people there (6:5b). On the other hand, faith apparently was not a prerequisite for the recipient of a miracle—consider the demoniac's opposition to Jesus in 5:7. Paradoxically,

faith does not cause the miracle, yet the miracles are not done without regard for faith. The focus of the story is on the reality of unbelief despite clear manifestations of divine power.

The apostle Paul also confronted opposition among his own people, including the "superlative apostles" who boasted of their powers (2 Cor 11:5). Paul parodies their boasting by exulting in his suffering (11:22-33). Paul's afflictions do not stem from a lack of spiritual experience; he had received so many revelations from God that he was in danger of becoming arrogant because of them. Yet Paul was afflicted by "a thorn in the flesh," which refers to some unknown malady, and God permitted it to remain, so that Paul would rely on the grace of God and not his own powers. Paul was weak in himself, but strong in Christ. CRK

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

O, the woes of the prophets of God! This is a Sunday for the preachers among us and the prophetic urge in those who inhabit the pews. Let no one suggest that the bearers of God's message are a pampered bunch. Quite the opposite, as we see in the readings for this day.

The magnificent vision of the Lord's glory (ch. 1) left Ezekiel with his face in the dust. Like so many prophets before and afterwards all the way down to our own time, he swung between spiritual heights and terrible earthy, dusty lows. "Stand up, prophet," says God, "and get busy with your work." Yours is not the luxury of basking in the light of your own revelations. Yours is the task to confront the "rebels" out there who seem to never learn the true meaning of unqualified devotion to God. "Preach, prophet," to a people who do not really believe God is near at hand (present in a heathen, foreign land).

God sends the prophet/pastor the toughest of spiritual "nuts" to crack. These are the overly-familiar people of God who cling to their own visions of "favored nation" status, spoiled pets who eat from their master's hand and growl when he gets too close to their dish. "Woe, sigh," says the prophet who must preach nevertheless, whether they hear or care. "Preach, prophet," if only they will know God has spoken. He is not as far from them as they think—or might wish! "Just do it," commands the Almighty.

You would think that God could have compassion on preacher Paul, what with his faithful, sweaty service! But, no. More woe. The thorn in the flesh will remain to keep this prophet mindful of his own humanness and limitations. It is, after all, the power of Christ that makes effective the poor words of the message-bearer. That God chooses the weak, the frightened, the physically stricken to proclaim divine grace is the rule in the Bible rather than the exception. We would do well to recognize that fact. And if God should grant health and well-being to the pastor/prophet, such prophet must concentrate all the more on the power of Christ behind the words. The prophet points beyond himself to the God who has called him, after all. Bring on the "weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities." They only serve to highlight the power of a Christ who can work *through* them, not around them. Strange as it may seem, the true prophet of God is content even when events crop up that would cause anyone else to change professions or give up on God as a lost cause.

God did not even spare his own Son when it came to his prophet task. Jesus did all things right, from healing to teaching in the synagogues. And yet the best he could do in his home territory was to raise a few eyebrows and provoke puzzled questions: "What is this wisdom given to him?" "Nah," spoke the logic in the local citizenry, "he's just a carpenter's son." So much for great expectations.

Jesus' conclusion: "A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country." Mark that well, preacher. Our parishes become "home country" all too soon. Even when we do all things right, there are the practical, logical voices that question the good we do. What to do? The same good things, perhaps no mighty work, but "go about" the villages, the familiar streets and fields, and teach... still. DWS

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost
July 14, 1991

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

A FIRST READING

The first lesson offers three interpretations of Amos' work as a prophet. First, Amaziah, the priest at Bethel, spoke of Amos in political terms to Jeroboam, king of Israel. Earlier, the prophets Elijah and Elisha helped overthrow kings, and when Amos prophesied the defeat of the northern kingdom, his words created genuine fear. Second, Amaziah treated Amos like a professional prophet, that is, one who made a living by prophesying. He suggested that Judea would be a better place to eat his bread and prophesy (note the repetition of "there" in Amos 7:12). Third, Amos himself focuses on the divine commission to preach. He was not a (professional) prophet (cf. 1 Sam 9:6-9) or a member of a prophetic guild (cf. 1 Sam 10:5). He had made his living through agriculture; he prophesied because God had called him to the task.

The Gospel tells that Jesus' disciples, like Amos, preached because of their commissioning, not for economic gain. Although some philosophers adopted a lifestyle as austere as the one depicted here, the text does not commend this manner of life as an avenue to virtue. Instead, travel without money or provisions reflects a complete trust in the God they proclaimed. The command to remain in one place guarded against searching for better lodgings. Typically, Jews would shake off the dust from their feet when leaving a Gentile area. In this text, however, the gesture is for those Jewish villages which rejected the message. This gesture is a testimony that may be intended to hold them accountable for their actions or to move them to repent. The main concern is that people turn from sin through repentance, and become liberated from demons and illness through exorcism and healing.

If the first lesson and Gospel focus on God calling people to proclaim, the second lesson centers on God calling people into faith. God is the subject of the key verbs in the intricate opening paragraph of the letter. God has "blessed us" (Eph 1:3), "chosen us" (1:4), "destined us" (1:5), and "made known to us" the mystery of his will (1:9). The focus of this divine activity is the Christian community, but the scope is cosmic. God overcomes the barrier of sin through the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. And just as sin affected the whole creation (cf. Gen 3:17), so redemption brings about a new unity of all things in Christ (Eph 1:10). The Holy Spirit is the "down payment" (*arrabon*, 1:14) on an inheritance that extends beyond the salvation of individuals to the redemption of the whole created order. CRK

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

"God has big ideas for little people." That, it seems to me, summarizes the pericopes for today. It is no small marvel how God's word breaks down great brick walls using a small chisel. As the Berlin wall crumbled before the strokes of many small people and changed the political face of Europe, so God still accomplishes his miracles.

Such a miracle seems to be lacking in the case of farmer Amos. This uncouth southerner had the nerve to tell an embittered foreign king that things are not as rosy as he imagined. Economic success, satisfied citizens, and local forecasts of a bright future would not be enough to stem the tide of God's righteous wrath against a spiritually dead people. Jeroboam II had ruled for 41 years in a bubble of material prosperity, and he would not let some bedunged upstart from Tecoa challenge that track record with a few pious cliches. Even the religious leaders like the priest Amaziah wearied of his prattling! God, however, compelled this "little person" to sound the note of dire forebodings. Amos, for his part, was reluctant to accept the assignment, a much more difficult task than corralling sheep and goats. The word of God to the gods of materialism remains.

It may be up to the little preachers and little hearers today to be the lone voices against the overwhelming case for financial power. Amos reminds us of our calling.

The little people in the Ephesian congregation could not have been more surprised by the apostle's opening words in his letter to them. "Every spiritual blessing?" Us? "Destined from the foundation of the world?" Really? What's that?! "God's sons and daughters?" "Holy and blameless?" Yes, you. Yes, really. God's great "yes" to the little people is the heart of the gospel of salvation. It's God's big idea that challenges and thrills us, that calls us and inspires us. It's all God's thing, of course, given flesh among all flesh: old and young flesh, white collar and blue collar flesh, healthy flesh and weak flesh. What's more, the little people will grow up to the Spirit-given inheritance. That's the big idea.

Even little people need to be prepared, though, so that big things can be done through them. At least that's what we are tempted to think. Surprise! Jesus takes his brand new disciples and promotes them through the lower ranks to full-fledged authority over unclean spirits. He sends those little-in-faith to the most demanding fields of ministry. No chance here for lifelong preparation and sporadic mission! Before they can object, they are on their way, staffs in hand, without so much as a MasterCard! What gives *us* and our congregants that idea?! Nothing less or more than the presence of Christ—that's what. Stay with him, even for a short while, and you might find yourself sent—one more little person who shares God's big idea!

God empowers little ones. That's enough to cause us to cast out not a few modern demons and fill our flasks with healing oil. DWS

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Oil and the New Superpower

William J. Danker
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Who has been the real superpower since World War II? America? After a draw in Korea, we were defeated in Vietnam by landless peasants, with nothing to lose but oppressive landlords and their own lives of exhausting deprivation. The Soviet Union? Poor and lean mountaineers in backward Afghanistan fought the Soviet empire to a standstill. Impoverished captive nations of East Europe amazed the world by tearing down the Berlin Wall and throwing out Communist regimes.

The new superpower may be the poor. America, at great risk, takes the side of rich oil-sheikhs in Kuwait and opulent kings in Saudi Arabia, just as it vainly backed the landlords in Vietnam, and earlier in China.

Some 300,000 poor and ordinary Palestinians who lived in Kuwait don't want the unpopular and unbearably acquisitive Kuwaiti feudal aristocrats back in power. From Morocco to the Persian Gulf, multitudes of poor and ordinary persons believe they stand a better chance of getting their fair share of the oil wealth with Saddam Hussein, however wicked he may be, than with the USA, allied countries, Saudi Arabia's 4,000 princes, or the board rooms of multi-national oil companies.

Any lasting peace settlement must include a workable plan for genuine sharing of petrol riches with the poor and dispossessed in the Middle East and North Africa. The poor must be allowed to share in the winning of the peace. Military and political experts know that superior weaponry does not guarantee final victory or final peace. If anything happens to Saddam, the poor will find other, perhaps worthier leaders. Alive or dead, the Saddam Hussein who stood up to 28 nations is a potent charismatic hero for multitudes of poor and ordinary Arabs.

God is on the side of the poor and mistreated. An astoundingly large volume of Bible passages says so. So does the Qur'an. Ron Sider, conservative evangelical theologian, in 1980 compiled the abundant biblical texts in *Cry Justice! The Bible on Hunger and Poverty* (Paulist) published by Bread for the World in 1980.

Some observers discount the significance of the yawning cleavages between rich and poor in the Middle East. This stance is difficult to share. The rich/poor division cuts vertically between nations and horizontally within and across them.

Pragmatic dwellers along the Gulf, whose nations are relatively poor in population and military might while rich in attractive assets, are fully aware of the instability and dangers that surround them. "We are wealthy people in a neighborhood of paupers. The world around us is getting poorer and more resentful of us," a man of the

Saudi business elite observed in explaining the American military presence.

Roughly twenty million people in the Middle East enjoy an average per capita income of $5,000 to $27,000 per year. One hundred fifty million people must make do on an average per capita income of $1,700 or less.

Though owning 100 billion barrels in oil reserves, Iraq's gross national product per capita is only $1,950.

With the coming of peace, one could hope that the United Nations would convene a conference on peace and development in the Middle East. Rich and poor nations alike should be invited. The purpose: equitable sharing of access to economic resources and opportunities. Equal access to education at all levels for all Middle Easterners should be a key agenda item. After Kuwait's terrible chastening at the hands of Hussein, some of its people express willingness to share some of their remaining wealth with countries less privileged. Some Saudi Arabs appear to be sounding the same note. An Israeli cabinet member held out similar possibilities in a January television appearance: "If Israel is accepted by its neighbors, they will find that we can be generous."

Among less advantaged peoples attending such a conference, the Palestinian presence would be essential. Would a homeland for the Palestinians and tolerance of Israel be completely beyond the capacity of the children of Abraham—Muslims, Jews, and Christians—to hold in paradox?

If the poor don't win this war, they will try to win the peace. If they don't win the peace, they will continue their struggle against all who deny them their fair share.

The peace of the rich is inextricably intertwined with helping the new superpower, the poor, to achieve their Shalom/Salaam, their full-orbed peace.

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