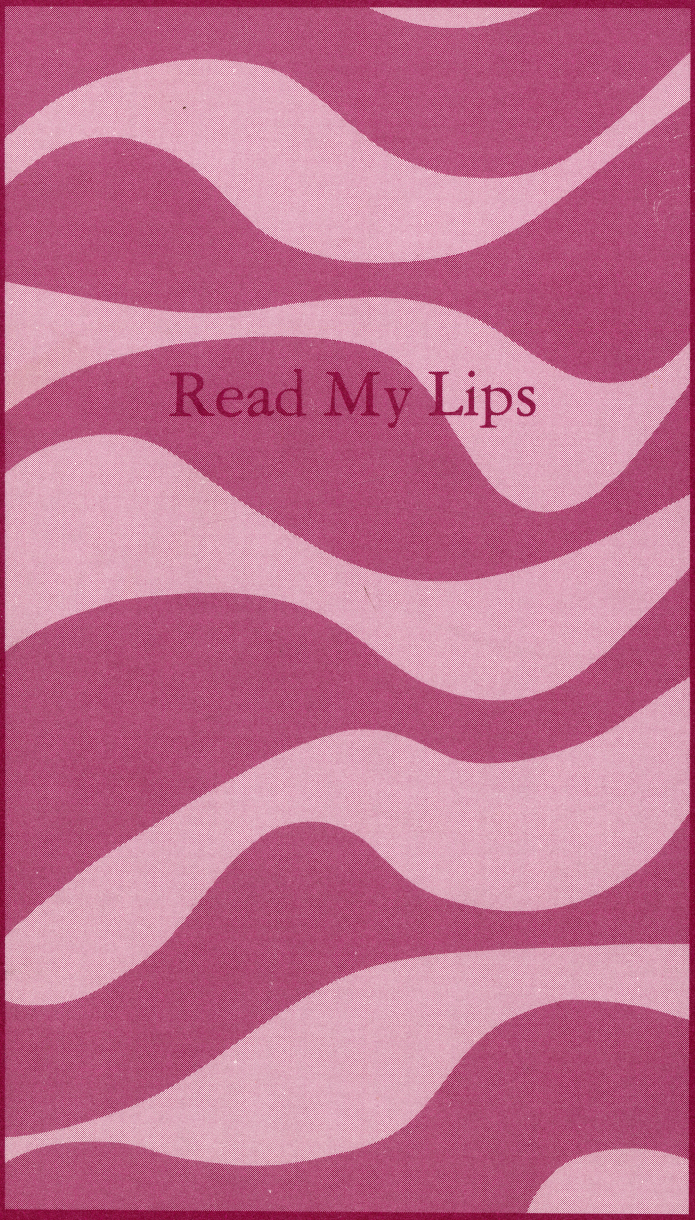
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CURRENTS

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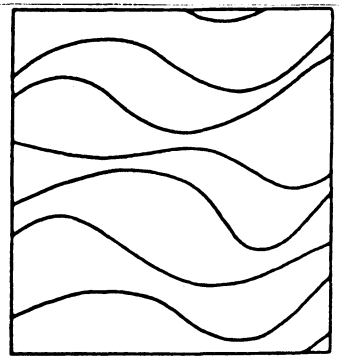
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The Day of Pentecost—Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Read My Lips



Our income tax deadline this year is April 16, mercifully delayed one day because the 15th falls on a Sunday, Easter Sunday at that. While President Bush promises, "No more taxes," those who will read our lips on the 15th will also hear a series of "No more's": No more sin, no more suffering, no more oppression, no more strife, no more death. But our lips will also echo—with Hallelujahs and Amens—God's great yes—to Jesus, to ourselves, to the whole creation, to peace-makers, to justice-seekers, to church leaders, and to all who seek to do God's will on earth. Since we have so much to sing about, Uncle Sam will just have to wait.

Anne Marie Nuechterlein proposes how staff ministries can be improved by a covenant-making process. By reminding ourselves of how Christ has empowered us with a hope-filled, forgiven, and holy life, we are better equipped to listen, discuss expectations, set common goals, and communicate honestly and openly with one another. Her step-by-step approach mixes good theology with good group dynamics and good management techniques, always a hearty brew.

Ralph W. Klein discusses biblical responses to hunger and starvation. Hunger back then arose because of war, drought, and even divine punishment. In modern times, causes are also manifold, but politics sees to it that some countries have more than enough, while

others starve. Since God sees hunger as a problem, it is also a problem for God's human viceroys. Any complicity in perpetuating hunger would expose us to divine fury. The God of the Bible seeks—through us—to reverse hunger and the politics that lead to starvation. The church has one mission in which it—in God's name—confronts and tries to reverse the politics of hunger by dealing God's bread to all the starving—those with bloated stomachs and those with bloated hearts.

John M. Russell responds to the theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg by defining the church as a symbolic entity, symbolizing the future of God's kingdom as proclaimed by Jesus. The Eucharist especially exhibits this symbolic character. It serves as a unifying vehicle that can overcome differences expressed in doctrinal formulae. Eucharistic spirituality and inter-communion symbolize, anticipate, and contribute to the greater unity of Christ's church.

Bruce Wollenberg offers an appreciation of Frederick Denison Maurice, an Anglican leader of the 19th century, who published more than 5 million words. Maurice believed social concern was integral to the gospel, and his point of departure for addressing any doctrine was the goodness of God revealed in Christ. He charged that Lutheran Orthodoxy implies that we are to believe in justification by faith in place of believing in a Justifier. He underscored the positive side of flawed human nature and the possibilities implied by resurrection and redemption. Christian truth for him was not enshrined in a system. Rather, Christianity is grounded in the unshakable truth of God and seeks to discern the truth systems have to offer.

Mary M. Solberg recounts her early disappointment in the church and the renewal of her ecclesiology through exposure to the church in El Salvador. To be dominant is not to be normative. In fact, scholarship critical of domination relativizes all church structures that depend on a power that excludes. Real solidarity with the church in El Salvador requires us to put our resources at their disposal.

Wi Jo Kang points out that the sending of personnel into other parts of the world has taken precedence over other aspects of mission. While

the idea of Christendom led to forced conversions and to the conquest and settling of the New World, Luther recognized the importance of receiving and accepting others in Christian fellowship. The event of Pentecost was the fulfillment of God's prophecy to receive all people into the kingdom of God. The time has come for Lutherans to break away from their ethnic ghettos and receive others for the enrichment of the Lutheran church and the whole Christian community.

Dave Klumpp writes creatively about a neighborhood tragedy that took place during his 54th birthday party. Since God loved us so much that he was willing to experience death with us, we have hope that refuses to accept death as the destruction and cruel end of all things.

On April 16 we will render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. But on April 15th—and on every other post resurrection day—we render to God the things that are God's: self, time, treasure, hospitality, fairness, oneness, relationships, the poor, the rich, the hungry, and the dying.

Satan, I defy thee.
Death, I now decry thee.
Fear, I bid thee cease.
The Lord is risen!

Read my lips.

Ralph W. Klein
Editor

Building a Healthy Team Ministry

Anne Marie Nuechterlein
Assistant Professor of Contextual Education
Wartburg Theological Seminary

This article is adapted from a chapter in Improving Multiple Staff Relationships, *published by Augsburg Fortress in 1989.*

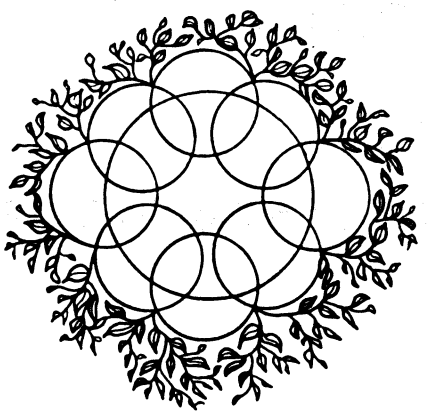
It is only fitting that God is the center of our staff relationships. No one would disagree with this, yet few of us know how to make this a reality in our church staffs.

Staff relationships are more likely to be satisfactory if the staff members base their relationship on a commitment to God and to each other. If we commit ourselves in specific ways to God and to each other, expectations and goals can be more clearly articulated and understood. When a staff negotiates the details of their working relationship in the form of a covenant, loyalty, trust, and open communication can be more easily established, and staff members can experience what it means to relate with each other as a faithful, forgiven, Christ-centered staff.

Senior Pastor Ed Mantig, Youth & Education Director Sheila Simons, and Secretary Jean Townsend had a terrible relationship for the first six months they worked together. When Sheila joined the staff, Ed and Jean had been working together for five years and had a comfortable working relationship.

When Sheila joined the staff, she was unsure of herself and was put off by what seemed to be Ed's uncaring way of relating to her. She also felt that Jean resented her and saw her disrupting what had been a comfortable staff relationship. Ed was disappointed that Sheila had so much need for affirmation and support, and he felt burdened by her insecurities. Jean was angry that Sheila required so much of her time and resented how Sheila's coming had significantly changed the nature of the staff relationship.

After a particularly serious argument during one staff meeting, they realized that they needed to resolve their dissatisfactions and frustrations if they were to continue working together. Ed was familiar with a staff which made a covenant with each other on a yearly basis. He described their



covenant-making process and asked Sheila and Jean if they would be interested. They agreed to explore the idea to find out what was involved in covenant-making and to consider making a covenant with each other.

What is a covenant?

A staff covenant is a pledge of commitment in a binding agreement, made in trust and faithfulness, to God and other staff members. The prophet Jeremiah spoke of God making a new covenant with us in which God would be our God and we would be God's people. This new covenant would be written on our hearts. We would know God as Lord of our lives with God at the center of all we experience. Jeremiah saw this covenant as a symbol and a hope of God's forgiveness.

To make a covenant as a parish staff involves: 1) responding to God's promises of hope and forgiveness, and 2) making a commitment to the people of God with whom you've been called to work.

Before we can make a covenant with the staff we need to identify with and commit ourselves to God in Christ Jesus, the initiator and upholder of all covenants. We need to respond to God's covenant by believing that God has called us in holiness to work in this particular setting and with these particular people.

Our staff relationships with one another are enriched when we trust that God has called us to work together and to make commitments to one another in Christ Jesus. When we commit ourselves to one another and to God in faith and trust, we view our staff relationships in a more sacred way. We each take more seriously the nature of our commitments to one another and to God, and in an intentional manner we live out what it means to be a staff working together as the faithful, forgiven people of God.

In a covenant made in the presence of God, integrity and faithfulness to God and to each other are essential. As honesty, trust, and loyalty are experienced, faithfulness can be developed toward each other and toward tasks and responsibilities which are mutually agreed upon. Responding faithfully to God's covenant significantly influences how a staff covenants and works together. A covenant reminds us of what we are called to be about as we serve together as staff members and as people of God.

Covenants are dynamic. They change with the ever-changing people who enter into them. A covenant needs to be renewed periodically (the Essenes renewed their covenant every Pentecost) and reestablished every time there is an addition or subtraction of a staff member. Ed, Sheila, and Jean established a covenant with each other and renewed it on a yearly basis. When Marie Reilly joined their staff three years ago as Associate Pastor, each staff member took the opportunity to think through what this addition meant for each of them, their commitment to each other, their common

goals and understanding, and their expectations for their life together as faithful, forgiven staff members and colleagues in Jesus Christ.

The beauty of a covenant is that it enables us to (1) remember Christ's forgiveness for us; (2) focus on God's power to bring faithfulness to our staff relationships; and (3) make clear our mutual expectations so that we can have common goals and hold each other accountable in an honest yet loving way.

Covenant-making

Covenant-making is part of a process involving clarification of needs and expectations and agreement on common objectives. As a staff we covenant to:

1. believe in the hope and forgiveness of Christ
2. be holy
3. listen to each other
4. discuss individual and group expectations
5. discuss and set common goals
6. interact intentionally with each other
7. promote honest and open communication

Covenanting together can help build credibility among staff members by establishing lives of commitment and accountability with regard to common tasks, goals, and standards. Such credibility can lead to trust and hope.

1. Believing in the hope and forgiveness of Christ.

Clergy and associates in ministry are broken people who suffer from feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. Like Ed, Jean, and Sheila, we tend to think of our own needs before we think of the needs of others. We get carried away with our own agendas. We like being looked up to or being in charge, and we experience hurt and anger when we do not feel that we are respected and cared for by our fellow staff members. When Ed, Jean, and Sheila took time to discuss their personal faith in Christ and their beliefs in the freedom, hope, and forgiveness that Christ offers, they began experiencing God's forgiveness, faithfulness, and hope in relationship with one another.

Hope in God and in others is central to how we work as partners with each other. Ed, Sheila, and Jean found hope in God's gift of faithfulness even though they had no guarantees. They also discovered hope for their staff relationship by looking at how God joined them together in a common hope in Jesus, even though they were unique individuals.

2. Be holy.

Each of us has been sanctified and made holy in Christ Jesus. To be holy is not something we can strive for or attain on our own but rather something which is a gift from God. God in Christ makes us holy—today, tomorrow, and in all our future days. But we need to remind ourselves and each other of God's gift of holiness. And we must let God continue to renew us in holiness—through prayer, the sacraments, relationships, and times of quietness and celebration. Staff relationships work best if we remember that God calls us to be holy and is constantly working in us to make us holy.

Paul Bauermeister speaks of "habits toward holiness." He states that while our holiness is a gift from God, there are habits to be cultivated that help us experience our holiness. Bauermeister suggests that we develop particular habits to help us live as holy people of God: contrition (recogniz-

ing remorse and regret), repentance (asking for forgiveness), receiving forgiveness (knowing grace and freedom), compassion (caring for others), witness (reminding ourselves and others of God's grace), prayer (asking God to assist us in our holiness), and conversation of the faithful (practicing holiness).

As Ed, Jean, and Sheila vowed to cultivate habits toward holiness, their staff relationship focused on being holy people of God in Christ Jesus. This was accomplished through weekly devotions and prayer with and for each other. With holiness in Christ central to their staff relationship, they were able to rise above their insecurities and frustrations and to strive to see each other as forgiven, holy people of God. To interact with each other as faithful, forgiven, holy, Christ-centered people is a key to good staff relationships.

3. Listening to each other.

When staff members really listen to each other, each one feels heard and taken seriously. Listening involves giving another person careful, patient attention. Listening involves being quiet and taking time to be fully present with another person. Listening involves heart, mind, body, and soul—eyes as well as ears. Listening involves being sensitive to another person's feelings, thoughts, and perspectives.

Such attentive listening is modeled for us in the story of Mary, Martha, and Jesus in Luke 10:25-37. Martha received Jesus into her home and bustled around serving him, while Mary sat at his feet and listened to his teachings. Martha resented the fact that she was busy doing all the work while Mary was just sitting around, and she complained to Jesus. Jesus told Martha that she was anxious and troubled about many things, but only one thing was needful, and that was what Mary had chosen to do: to listen.

To listen is to give another person full, undivided attention. To listen is to focus all of our attention on being with another person rather than trying to listen while thinking about or doing other things at the same time.

In staff relationships, dare to be a listener. Dare to take time to be quiet and attentive to fellow staff members. Dare to wait, to be still, to be receptive, to focus on another person's thoughts and feelings while temporarily laying aside your own personal agenda.

4. Discussing expectations.

Staff members need to discuss their expectations concerning their staff relationships with each other. A useful tool for discussing expectations is found in research by Dennis Kinlaw and Norman Wegmeyer. They suggest that most staff relationships fit into one of four structures: dependent, independent, interdependent, or collaborative. Most staff, in fact, fit into one of the first three structures.

The dependent style is hierarchically-oriented and one in which the senior pastor determines the objectives, goals, and decisions of the staff and the congregation. The staff members are viewed as assistants to the senior pastor, and the senior pastor is clearly the one with authority, in charge of everything.

The members of an independent staff go their own ways and have their own separate, clearly defined areas of responsibility. They do not meet or talk on a regular basis but function independently of each other.

The interdependent staff meets regularly for conversation, support, and discussion of their ministry together. Goal-setting, decision-making, leadership, and ministry tasks are shared by all the staff. They talk openly with each other about their

struggles, conflicts, hopes, and experiences in their ministry together.[1]

While it may seem that the interdependent staff structure is ideal, that is not necessarily true. The ideal staff structure is that one which the staff members expect and prefer. For example, Senior Pastor Todd Swanson, Director of Christian Education Walt Jacobs, and Secretary Laura Thompson all preferred the dependent staff model and worked well together prior to Karee's arrival on the staff as Associate Pastor. With Todd in charge of goal-setting and decision-making, they were efficient, effective, and well-organized, and they felt good about what they were able to accomplish. When Karee joined the staff she had a clear desire to work interdependently or independently and not have her goals and decisions determined by the senior pastor. Todd strongly preferred the dependent staff model and knew it worked well for him. Their staff relationship became difficult because of the different desires and expectations they had for the structure of the staff.

5. Discussing and setting goals.

All staff members have goals for themselves and for their ministry, although very often those goals have not been specifically identified. In particular, goals related to theology and ministry need to be discussed.

Staff need to talk about their theological visions and goals. While it is not imperative that staff members hold identical theological beliefs, it is helpful to have some common theological understandings.

This is evident with the staff mentioned above. Todd, Walt, and Laura all had similar theological understandings of how they needed to obey and try to measure up to God's laws and commandments in order to be good and faithful Christians. Newcomer Karee believed that God loved her just as she was and that she could do practically anything and still be a good, faithful Christian. While Karee and Todd had a difficult relationship for many reasons, their theological differences contributed to the uneasiness and the discomfort they felt with each other.

Staff need to talk about their theological visions and goals.

Significant differences in theological understandings can get in the way of effective staff relationships. It is important to talk about beliefs and faith in the early stages of staff relationships. Staffs with a similar understanding of basic theological beliefs are better able to set common goals and establish a shared vision for their ministry together.

A staff needs to discuss goals for their ministry together. A staff with common goals and expectations for ministry is better able to work together because they share a common purpose. With common goals, the energy and effort of the staff members are focused in the same general direction.

Ed, Marie, Sheila, and Jean had similar expectations and preferences for their staff structure. They wanted to interact with each other in a personal and regular way and share in the leadership, decision-making,

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[1]Norman E. Wegmeyer, *Strengthening the Multiple Staff* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982).

and plans for the ministry. When asked to discuss their ministry goals, they all spoke of the importance of worship, pastoral calling, youth, and education.

Staffs with different goals can work well together, but more energy and concerted effort are required. If one staff member strongly prefers a different model of interaction or has ministry goals quite different from the rest of the staff, the staff will not function as smoothly.

6. Intentional interaction.

Staffs can relate as faithful, forgiven, Christ-centered communities more easily when they have intentional interaction. Staff members need to covenant with each other concerning two types of interaction: business and social. Business interaction involves regularly scheduled planning meetings where all the staff discuss various tasks, programs, and schedules. Social interaction involves time to listen and share with each other and time to talk with each other personally. Social interaction does not need to be a family or evening activity. It can be over coffee on Monday mornings, at lunch on Wednesdays, or in breakfast meetings.

Weekly business meetings are essential for good staff relationships, while weekly social meetings are preferred but not imperative. Staffs which meet weekly to plan, and at least biweekly to socialize and support each other, report a better level of functioning than those who don't meet regularly.

Karee, Todd, Walt, and Laura found that their relationship as a staff suffered tremendously when they stopped meeting regularly. Without a specific covenant with each other to meet, no staff member could hold another accountable to meet, and all found excuses not to attend the meetings that were scheduled.

7. Communicating honestly and openly.

It is necessary to covenant to communicate honestly. In the long run, the lack of honest expression of thoughts and feelings will damage staff relationships. Negative feelings that are not discussed do not disappear but are stored up and expressed in subtle or not-so-subtle ways later on.

While we know intellectually that it is far better to communicate openly with each other, a covenant pledged in faithfulness through the power of the Holy Spirit reminds us of the necessity of honest communication. Pledging to each other in the presence of God, we are empowered by God to strive toward better communication. A mutual pledge enables us to hold each other accountable and thereby facilitate the process of open and honest communication.

Putting the covenant in writing

A staff covenant has the potential to bring staff members together in an exciting commitment of mutual trust, genuine caring, and faithfulness. In order for this to happen, the covenant must be put in writing. A written covenant facilitates greater understanding of the expectations and goals of staff members and enables the staff to relate as forgiven, holy people in Christ. Covenant-writing involves making a rough draft; discussing each staff member's rough draft covenant ideas; describing each person's areas of responsibility; and making staff goals specific, achievable, and measurable.

Making a rough draft.

The staff members at First Lutheran made a covenant with God and each other. They began the process by first reflecting

> In the long run, the lack of honest expression of thoughts and feelings will damage staff relationships.

on their own needs, goals, and expectations, and then making initial rough drafts to share with each other. Karee's rough draft was:

"My highest priorities for my areas of responsibility are in the following five areas. My specific needs and expectations are:

1. Leading liturgy—ideally every week.
2. Preaching—ideally two times a month, but one time a month would be acceptable.
3. Youth ministry—don't want to be actively involved and would prefer that Walt be completely responsible for it.
4. Hospital calling—would like to share on an equal basis.
5. Committee responsibilities—would like to be fully in charge of half or a third of the committees, and not to have to attend the committees that Todd or Walt coordinate.

I have a lower priority and interest in the following five areas. I am somewhat flexible concerning my involvement in these areas and would be willing to negotiate with the staff concerning their needs and priorities in these items:

1. Educational ministry—I would enjoy involvement with adult educational programming, confirmation, and training of teachers; I have less interest in Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and the Christmas program.
2. Social concerns—I would prefer not being involved in the community outreach programs, world and local hunger programs, etc. I would be more willing to participate than to coordinate programs.
3. Administration—I am not wild about administrative responsibilities and would be happy not having any administrative tasks. However, I am willing to share in these areas (the newsletter, general parish correspondence, etc.).
4. Pastoral calling—I am open to sharing new member calling, shut-in calling, and general parish calling. I don't have a strong preference in how we divide up these areas of calling.
5. Evangelism—I have fears about evangelism but know it's important and am open to being involved in it."

Discussing each other's covenant ideas.

A staff needs to set aside a fair amount of time to talk with each other about the specific elements of each staff person's goals and expectations. An effective covenant cannot be made unless all staff members are clear about each other's goals for their ministry together. Good understandings of each other's needs may require conversations over the course of several weeks.

Describing areas of responsibility.

Write out how you perceive the various dimensions of ministry to be shared and divided. Be specific about your goals and expectations. What are your priorities in your staff position? Write out how you perceive your job description.

Is your goal to coordinate and train lay leaders to work with the youth, and not

Every time there is an entry or exit of a staff member, a new covenant is necessary.

attend youth events yourself? Are you expected to be at youth meetings? Do you expect particular staff to attend certain functions? Who do you expect to coordinate the newsletter? How is preaching and leading worship shared? Who preaches on holidays? Who is in charge of stewardship? Who is expected to go to which meetings? Which staff make pastoral calls? How many pastoral calls are expected to be made each week? How are administrative tasks handled during vacations and illnesses?

Making your goals specific, achievable, and measurable.

The more specific you are concerning your goals, the easier it will be for you to articulate them to your co-workers and work toward having common goals as a staff.

Goals must be achievable. If your co-workers cannot envision how your goals can be achieved they will have difficulty working toward those goals with you. If your goals are not realistic it will be difficult to attain them.

As you and other staff members set goals, make sure you can measure them. Think about how you will be able to ascertain whether or not you have reached your goals.

After the staff at First Lutheran discussed their initial rough drafts and ideas concerning their expectations of their areas of responsibility, they each drew up specific goals. Karee's goals and expectations were:

"1. Preaching: to preach two times a month, and every other Christmas, Easter, Confirmation Sunday, Pentecost, and Thanksgiving.

2. Youth ministry: to supervise Walt's work in youth ministry and attend a youth event/meeting every two months.

3. Hospital calling: to share hospital calling with Todd and Walt on an equal basis.

4. Liturgy: to share with Todd and Walt the leadership of liturgy every Sunday.

5. Committees: to be in charge of three committees, to have Todd be in charge of three committees, and to have Walt be in charge of three committees, wherein we all have full responsibility.

6. Committee attendance: to skip committee meetings that Todd or Walt chair.

7. Weddings and funerals: to take turns doing weddings and funerals with Todd, so that we share equally in these important events and are both seen as fully functioning pastors."

After all of the pastoral and program staff discussed their own specific, written goals and expectations, they started talking and negotiating with each other. They talked about each of their goals and made decisions concerning how various areas of the parish ministry would be shared. They put these decisions in writing and prayed that God would empower them to be faithful to God and to each other as they sought to live in a covenant of mutual trust, respect, and holiness.

Summary

A covenant made with God and among staff members is a solid component of a good quality staff relationship. By reminding ourselves of how Christ empowers us for a hope-filled, forgiven, and holy life, we are better equipped to listen, discuss expectations, set common goals, interact intentionally as a staff, and communicate honestly and openly with each other.

By intentionally putting the covenant in writing we are able to be clear about mutual commitment and accountability to each other as a faithful staff in Christ Jesus. Through the power of God a written covenant facilitates staff members to relate with each other as forgiven, Christ-centered people. Covenants are not etched in stone. Every time there is an entry or exit of a staff member, a new covenant is necessary. For large staffs, this might necessitate re-covenanting two or three times a year. Plan a periodic review of the written document and plan to revise it as staff membership changes occur.

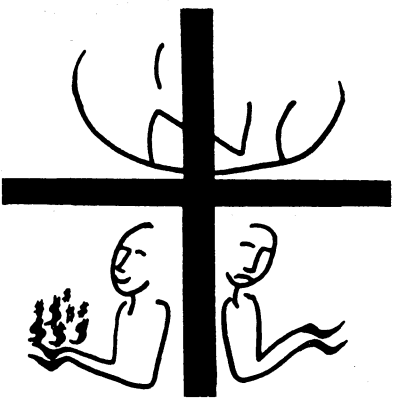
Good staff relationships begin with commitments to God and to each other. God empowers each of us to center our lives and our ministries on Christ Jesus and relate to one another with forgiveness, hope, and holiness.

The God of the Bible Confronts the Politics of Hunger

Ralph W. Klein
Christ Seminary–Seminex Professor of Old Testament
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

An earlier version of this article was an address to the World Mission Institute, sponsored by member schools of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools, in 1989.

The title of this article alerts us to half of the biblical story. The verb "confronts" has an "in your face" quality; it judges, condemns, calls to repentance and change. What this title lacks is a sense of God's revolutionary action and of God's power to effect change; it lacks good news; it falls short on the word *mission.*



There should be two titles for this article:

1. The God of the Bible confronts hunger and its politics.

2. The God of the Bible reverses hunger and its politics.

I. The God of the Bible confronts hunger and its politics

Hunger, malnutrition, and famine form a descending scale of problems connected with insufficient food. The Holy Land was a land of marginal agricultural productivity in biblical times. Abram and Sarai (Gen 12:10), as well as Isaac and Rebekah (Gen 26:1), actually left the land in search of food. Joseph became famous by predicting and then managing seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine that involved at least Palestine and Egypt. The Israelites nearly starved in the wilderness until they were nourished by heavenly bread. Naomi and Elimelech, parents-in-law of Ruth, left the land of milk and honey and their home town called Bethlehem (roughly: "grain elevator") to go to Moab to search for food.

Who can forget the famine at the time of Elijah, when the prophet was sustained by bread-bearing ravens twice a day (1 Kgs 17:1-7) and by the bottomless jar of meal and cruse of oil of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:8-16)? The Prodigal Son's negative cash flow was complicated by the famine in the whole country (Luke 15:14). Famine was among the worst consequences of siege warfare. The author of Lamentations screams out at the destruction of Jerusalem: "The hands of compassionate women have boiled their own children; they became their food in the destruction of the daughter of my people." The Bible recognizes that hunger is an extraordinary circumstance that may justify extraordinary behavior: "People do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he is starving" (Prov 6:30).

Why are hunger and famine so common in the Bible? War, especially siege-warfare, was one of the major causes of hunger back then. While our current hunger problem is also affected by wars and the imbalances caused by the defense industry, our wars often play a more indirect role in precipitating hunger then when an enemy brought a siege against a city for months or even years in order to starve it out.

Another major cause of famine or hunger was drought and the relative infertility of the soil. Damascus receives ten inches of rain in an average year, Jericho four, and the Dead Sea area two. The relatively well-watered area of Galilee in the north receives 28 inches per year, Jerusalem 24.2. By way of comparison, Chicago has an annual rainfall of about 33 inches. The steppe and desert regions of Palestine have woefully inadequate and unpredictable rain. From Beersheba on south rainfall is less than 8 inches per year. While the Israelis have harnessed modern irrigational technology to reclaim many acres for agriculture, their efforts have led to the drying up of the south portion of the Dead Sea. Palestine remains a semi-arid land.

A third cause for famine in the Bible is the judgment of God. Actually, divine agency is often connected with the first two causes: enemy attacks that produced famine (Jer 14:12; 18:21) or lack of rain (1 Kgs 17:1). Deut 28:53-57 contains a theological interpretation of famine as a covenant curse that will be actualized in the Babylonian invasion. There we read of cannibalism during siege warfare and of well-bred people withholding food from their brothers and sisters, their spouses, and their children in order to keep themselves alive. Jeremiah never tires to speak of the sword, famine, and plague that God will send against Israel. The writer of the Apocalypse sees famine as part of eschatological judgment: "I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were

given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth."

We also cannot neglect the social causes of hunger and famine in the Bible. In the advanced agrarian economy of the monarchical period, a cleavage developed between the ruling elite and the peasantry. By the time of Amos (ca. 760 BCE), one to three percent of the population owned 50 to 70 percent of the land. Hence the rules of supply and demand were not as important as the arbitrary, self-serving decisions of the elite. While land in early Israel was distributed on an egalitarian basis and was passed on by inheritance, the king and the elite class gradually added patrimonial domains to their own by a process called latifundialization. Land rights were granted by the king to his favorites, and lands were bought and sold to increase production. The landholding elite exacted charges for each factor (water, seed, work animals) needed to produce a crop (Amos 5:11) and created a peasantry so indebted to them that they lost their freedom or even lost their land. Because merchants monopolized the food supply, they could exploit the poor (Amos 8:6). Production was aimed not so much at meeting the subsistence needs of the peasants but at satisfying the needs of the rich (Amos 6:6) and producing cash crops. The elite were the problem, and their economic activities produced poverty and hunger for others (Amos 2:6-8). Amos would hardly be surprised by what is happening with corporate farms in large parts of the United States or by the economic disparities in Mexico and the Philippines.

The causes of hunger today are many: poor rainfall, poor land, poor distribution of food, poor-ness in general. Our rich country has many who suffer from malnutrition. Famine or hunger in the world results as often as not from war, oppressive governments, the indifference of the rich, overpopulation, the politics of the prosperous, exploitation by multinational and colonialist powers, and other priorities of the "system." While the average citizen of the world consumes some 400 pounds of grain a year, each of us in America consumes a ton. Only about 200 pounds of that is ingested directly; the rest is filtered through an animal first, wastefully. Even where famine is country-wide today, it is not in our experience world-wide. Politics sees to it that some countries have more than enough while others starve.

Whose problem is hunger?

On one level the Bible clearly places the onus for dealing with hunger on the individual. Job's friend Eliphaz accuses Job of great wickedness, of having no end to his iniquities: "You have given no water to the weary to drink, and you have withheld bread from the hungry." Job, of course, will have none of this charge. In his famous Oath of Clearance he justifies himself with the following forceful words: "If I have withheld anything that the poor desired, or have caused the eye of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel alone, and the orphan has not eaten of it... then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and let my arm be broken from its socket." Job's rugged self-curse makes it crystal clear not only that he considers himself innocent, but that care for the poor and feeding of the hungry are a central part of our ethical requirement.

But the problem of hunger in the Bible is also seen as the result of societal breakdown or the loss of what we would call law and order. In a messianic passage in Isaiah 32, the prophet complains that the fool babbles on stupidly about Yahweh and leaves the craving of the hungry unsatis-

fied. Such foolishness will be no part of the messianic age: "The fool will no more be called noble, nor the knave said to be honorable. For the fool speaks folly, and his or her mind plots iniquity: to practice ungodliness, to utter error concerning the Lord, to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied, and to deprive the thirsty of drink."

But responding to famine is God's problem as well. The Psalmist writes: "The eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, that he may deliver their soul from death, and keep them alive in famine" (33:18-19). Psalm 107 testifies that God's steadfast love issues in such "wonderful works" as satisfying those who are thirsty and filling the hungry with good things. God turns deserts into pools of water, parched lands into springs of water. There he lets the hungry dwell.... They sow fields and plant vineyards and get a fruitful yield. God is the one, Psalm 146 relates, who executes justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry, and sets prisoners free (vv. 5-7).

Since hunger is God's problem, it is also the problem of his human viceroys. In the non-canonical Testament of Joseph, the patriarch Joseph matches his complaints with God's actions: I was sold into slavery, and the Lord of all made me free.... I was beset with hunger, and the Lord himself nourished me. I was alone and God comforted me; I was sick and the Lord visited me; I was in prison and my God showed favor to me. This passage shows the priority God gives to emancipation of slaves, relief from hunger, healing of the sick, and deliverance from prison. But surely we are all struck by how similar this passage sounds to the last judgment scene in Matthew 25. In Matthew, the praiseworthy deeds of social concern are done to Christ via acts of kindness done to people in the community; in the Testament of Joseph God himself does these same acts of social concern to his faithful child Joseph. From these two passages we learn that relief of hunger is a number one priority with God (Testament of Joseph) and hence it is also a number one priority for those who are created in God's image (Matthew).

Whose problem is hunger? The prophets at times designate hunger as curse for disobedience. It would be a cruel joke, of course, to explain famine in today's world as punishment due to the sins of hungry people. Rather, the world's hunger is largely the result of our individual and corporate greed, our inequitable distribution of wealth, education, and natural resources, our rape of the environment, our foolish expenditures for the tools of warfare, our messed up social priorities, and our slowness to do justice.

Famine is often visited on those least responsible for it. Hunger and starvation stem from an economic structure that is out of joint; they result from the sins of the rich; they are part of God's rightful judgment on us. And yet the curse that we have coming has been contradicted, overruled, vetoed, and repealed by Godself, as we sing in the words of the Christmas carol: "He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found." Famine as curse has been vetoed for us and for our world through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God's merciful forgiveness reaches out to all those prodigal daughters and sons who have seen the error of their ways and have resolved to change them.

But there is a sense in which the judgment of famine is still an impending curse for us. In Deuteronomy we read: "Because you did not serve Yahweh your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, when you had the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies... in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and in want of all

things. We of the Western world, who have basked in the abundance of the land, not always with the joy and gladness that comes from serving God, but often with the reckless abandon of those bent on acquiring more, we Westerners can also take warning from Deuteronomy: We may soon not serve ourselves or even God, but we may find ourselves serving an enemy. We will be the ones to know hunger and thirst.

Such a nutritional famine would not be the ultimate judgment on us. Amos rang the charges on those who failed to repent when he wrote: "I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, yet you did not return to me." But he also indicated that the worst was still to come: "I will send a famine on the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Yahweh." Such a radical famine would make God's voice inaudible, God's promises incomprehensible, our salvation dead.

II. The God of the Bible reverses hunger and its politics

This article addresses readers who confess themselves to be sent into the world on God's mission in order to offer life and salvation to all the world's people. You seek to secure for all people daily bread and the bread of life.

God's program to reverse the malady of hunger and its politics starts with the beatitudes: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matt 5:6). Those who hunger and thirst *for righteousness* have spiritual concerns. They desire either the righteousness God displays, that unerring fidelity of God to God's people, his salvation and deliverance, or they desire that their own lives might be conformed to the will of God. TEV translates: Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires. Whichever interpretation is correct, the passage is religious in the connotation it gives to hunger and thirst.

> A concern for spiritual food that ignores daily bread for the hungry is only self-concern, a self-conscious attempt to manipulate God.

Luke's version of this beatitude differs remarkably: "Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied" (Luke 6:21). The Lukan version is earthy, physical—almost caloric. It promises eschatological reversal to those who suffer from physical hunger: You shall be filled! To think eschatologically is not to escape, but it is to hope and so to cope. It is to hold God to God's promises to feed the hungry and to attempt to be an agent to make those promises become reality.

I believe both evangelists are right. Both needs—the need for saving vindication (or obedience) and the need for plain, ordinary food—are part and parcel of the good news that comes from the lips of Jesus.

Such a bi-focal vision is not absent from the Hebrew Scriptures. Religious conviction and religious practices without social consequences lead to confusion, frustration, and failure. According to Isaiah 58

the community was faithful in its religious practices, sought God every day, delighted to know God's ways and to discover how they might enter into relationship with him, but they were, nevertheless, very perplexed when they cried: "Why have we fasted and you, God, did not see it? Why have we humbled ourselves and you took no account of it?" (v. 3) The truth emerges in divine confrontation: They had turned their fast into a time for quarreling and fighting. God asks sarcastically, "Did I want a fast in which people displayed their humility? Did I want people to bow their heads like a rush and to spread sack cloth and ashes upon themselves? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord?" (v. 5)

The caricature of their ritual practices exposes how empty they really are. What kind of liturgical renewal did God desire? "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house?"

Helping to restore a person's freedom is more pleasing to God than the practice of parading one's own self-mortification. Actions directed only toward God—fasting, head bowing, and the like—are to be replaced by actions directed toward one's fellow human beings. Real "fasting" means to set prisoners free, to feed the hungry, to house the homeless, and to change one's total lifestyle by loosing the bonds of wickedness.

It is not fasting in itself that is here condemned, but a fasting that is unrelated to service, a liturgy that is unrelated to life. A concern for spiritual food that ignores daily bread for the hungry is only self-concern, a self-conscious attempt to manipulate God. Our fasting, our abstinence from bread, must mean bread for the hungry.

When we juxtapose Deuteronomy and the book of Acts, we see another example where the focus on physical need blends with liturgical action. In Deuteronomy 15:4 we read one of the strangest, most outrageous laws in the entire Bible: "There will be no poor among you." This law was surely more observed in the breach than in the keeping. Archaeology in the Holy Land has shown that after an initial period of equality in Israel—when all houses were of the same modest size—class distinctions began to arise. These iniquities led to the well-known social critique of Amos who excoriated the rich for oppressing the poor. The outrageous law against poverty and hunger in Deuteronomy is a direct deduction from the fact that all Israel had been set free from slavery in the Exodus, that all who had once been poor and downcast, that all who had experienced such liberation, would naturally say, "Never again." This outrageous law is modified by a "realistic" v. 7, which instructs the community how to treat the poor when they do appear.

Verse 7 modifies the old outrageous law, but it does not rescind it. For when Jesus of Nazareth came—whose death in Luke's Transfiguration account is referred to as his Exodus, whose death means freedom, and whose Spirit established a new community—he empowered the new community to actualize the law of Deuteronomy. The early church was an eschatological, Deuteronomic community according to Acts 4:34: "There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet." This religious community, which continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers, also held all material things in common. Among them there were no poor. The living bread they broke among

Jesus in feeding the 5,000 repeats or anticipates the actions of the Eucharist.

themselves was matched by the daily bread they shared.

God's gift of daily bread to the needy is often balanced by his removal of bread and power from the rich, the arrogant, and the godless. Already in the Song of Hannah we read: Those who were full have had to hire themselves out for bread while those who were hungry have now grown fat. God gives food and children to his faithful, but subtracts those blessings from the faithless.

In Isaiah 65 the prophet addressed a community wracked by controversy and division. He told them that a great role reversal was coming, backed up by God's word: Behold, my servants shall eat, but you—the proud, priestly aristocracy—shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you—the proud, priestly aristocracy—shall be thirsty; behold my servants shall rejoice, but you—the proud, priestly aristocracy—shall be put to shame (v. 13).

Mary echoes the Song of Hannah in the *Magnificat* as she celebrates the God who honored her low estate by making her the mother all people call blessed. "God has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; God has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich were sent away empty."

God is not just a bread giver, supplying food to the have-nots. God reverses the politics of hunger and confronts it. In the words of Jesus: Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied (Luke 6:21), and Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger (Luke 6:25).

Living bread and daily bread

God gives bread. We remember the Manna he gave in the wilderness, so aptly called the bread of heaven in the Psalms. We remember the cruse of oil that never failed and the barrel of flour that never emptied out when God sustained Elijah during a famine. We remember how the prophet Elisha fed one hundred people with just a few first fruits, loaves of barley, and ears of grain (2 Kgs 4:42-44). We remember how that story had its own reprise when Jesus took five barley loaves and two small fish and multiplied them for the thousands.

Why did Jesus feed the 5,000? Because he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd (Mark 6:34). John tells us that the immediate response of the people was to hail him as the new Moses, the new manna-giver: "This is indeed the prophet who was to come into the world" (John 6:14). They recognized in Jesus the prophet like Moses promised so long before (Deut 18:15), even if they immediately erred by wanting to take this bread giver and turn him into a king by force (John 6:15).

Why did Jesus feed the 5,000? Because another promise had been given to an Israel in exile that someday they would experience rivers in the desert, the end of physical handicaps, and a whole new creation (Isa 49:13). God had promised: "They shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall smite them, for he who

has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water he will guide them." The one who fulfilled this word of promise, who himself displayed God's compassion, was that bread giver, Jesus of Nazareth.

What did he feed them? Well, bread of course—barley bread at that, the usual diet of the poor—and some fish. But not only that. That caloric food symbolizes eucharistic bread as well. Scholars have long noticed that Jesus in feeding the 5,000 repeats or anticipates the actions of the Eucharist: he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to his disciples, and then gathered it up again. The Didache echoes John's Gospel in its references to the breaking, the giving thanks, the gathering, the multiplication on the mountain, and the reference to Jesus as king. Remember that famous prayer: "We give thanks to you, Our Father.... As this fragmented Bread was scattered on the mountains, but was gathered up and became one, so let the church be gathered up from the four corners of the world into your kingdom."

Jesus gave bread that was full of calories, but he also gave living bread, bread that gives life. He said: "Moses gave you the bread of heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the real bread from heaven" (John 6:32). This bread gives life to the world. "Lord," they begged, "give us this bread all the time." Manna or barley bread is physical nourishment, but God has the power to grant spiritual nourishment as well. Jesus is the bread that comes down from heaven; people eat of him and never die (v. 50).

Jesus gives bread full of calories, and spiritual bread that provides spiritual nourishment, but he also gives bread of the Eucharist, according to vv. 51-58. "The bread that I shall give—make no mistake about it—is my own flesh for the life of the world. Let me firmly assure you that if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you.... My flesh is real food, and my blood real drink."

The feeding of the 5,000 provides food for the hungry, it conveys bread that brings life, it is the sign, symbol, and anticipation of the Lord's supper.

We have come full circle. The Beatitudes celebrate—and promise—the satisfying of spiritual and physical hunger. A text from Isaiah 58 speaks of the real meaning of liturgical fasting: dealing bread to the hungry. God's gift of food to the hungry may mean deprivation to the arrogant and faithless rich.

Daily bread/living bread. The church needs both; it has both to share in its mission. We think of two biblical prayers:

> The eyes of all wait upon you, Lord,
> to give them their meat in due season.

and

> Lord, give us this [Eucharistic] bread
> all the time.

The church has one mission in which it—in God's name—confronts and tries to reverse the politics of hunger by dealing God's bread to all the hungry, to all the starving—those with bloated stomachs and those with bloated hearts.

Pannenberg on Eucharist and Unity*

John M. Russell
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"[Eucharistic] fellowship at the Lord's Table," writes Wolfhart Pannenberg, "is not merely the goal of the process of church union but... it can also be the present power of Christ by which we travel the path toward that goal."[1] Christ's presence in the Eucharist expresses and symbolizes church unity.

Nowhere, however, do we observe Christ's church so divided than when denominations prohibit inter-denominational celebrations of the Eucharist. In effect, this divides and dismembers the Body of Christ. Ironically, such eucharistic celebration sometimes remains a criterion for *self*-authentication rather than for authentic, inclusive communion.

Pannenberg sees God's church as a symbolic community. The church employs symbols like the cross to bring Christians together. But the church *itself* points to a wider community:

> The Christian community symbolizes another community, the community of all human beings in a society of perfect justice and peace, the global village, the kingdom of God.[2]

We do not find God's kingdom—this just, peaceful, and perfect society—as a *present* reality; moreover, we can realize it neither by human government nor by political revolution. For this reason, Pannenberg identifies and locates this perfect Christian society as present within the *symbolic* community of God's church. In fact, he contends that the church from its very inception has constituted a "symbolic entity" symbolizing the future of God's kingdom as proclaimed by Jesus.

Christian worship and, more narrowly, eucharistic celebration exhibit this symbolic character. They form the foundation of the church's symbolic and eschatological purpose. Worship, for Pannenberg,

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*This article is dedicated to Pastor Hillard K. Ranta, The Lutheran Church of Arcata, Arcata, California.

[1]Wolfhart Pannenberg, *The Church*, trans. Keith Crim (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 117.

[2]Pannenberg, *Christian Spirituality* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 35.



symbolically celebrates and anticipates divine glory. Eucharistic celebration, more than any other ecclesial event, both commemorates and symbolizes the very basis of the church's life:

> Every celebration of the Eucharist reenacts the reality that constitutes the foundation of the church, and that happens not only in the sense of memorial but also in the symbolic power of the Eucharist, where the essence of the church itself is alive, present, and effective.[3]

If we do not adequately grasp and appreciate this eucharistic symbolism, then, notes Pannenberg, we miss the central place it occupies in the church's liturgical life.

Eucharistic spirituality can free Christians from the individualism and autocracy that sometimes characterize ecclesial institutions. Christ's actions exemplify this inclusive embrace:

> Jesus celebrated the presence of the eschatological kingdom in the simple form of the meals he took together with his disciples, but also with Pharisees, with "tax collectors and sinners" who *by the intrinsic symbolism of the joint meal* [emphasis added] were accepted by Jesus as candidates and citizens of the future kingdom of God.[4]

In this way, Jesus foreshadows God's eschatological glory: Christ celebrates a unifying meal with his disciples and with those who would become disciples. This symbolic, eschatological action of Jesus continues whenever the church celebrates the Eucharist.

That eucharistic spirituality includes every *society* seems clear enough. The unifying power of eucharistic spirituality, as the present unfolding of God's kingdom, can also restore *individuals* to the Christian community:

> In the eucharistic anamnesis, the Christian churches likewise commemorate and render present the restoration of communion between human beings and God and among human beings through the sacrifice of Christ, which was offered to God in order to "purify your [or: our] conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14). Here too the goal is the restoration of community, the reintegration of the individual into the community, the removal of alienation, [and] the "purification" of conscience from the judgment that condemns our works and keeps us imprisoned in nonidentity.[5]

Restoration effected by the Eucharist moves an individual from isolation to reintegration within community. Authentic restoration to and reconciliation with community offers previously isolated persons the increased freedom and identity they can experience as participants in a shared world.

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[3]Pannenberg, *Christian Spirituality*, 40.

[4]Pannenberg, *Christian Spirituality*, 46.

[5]Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 311-12.

Eucharistic spirituality can free Christians from the individualism and autocracy that sometimes characterize ecclesial institutions.

Pannenberg considers the Eucharist as a reality having past, present, and future significance. Eucharistic sharing involves our looking back at and contemplating Christ's death, as well as our sharing the present reality of Christ's and our communal presence with each other. That all individuals unite at the Lord's Supper also reveals the Eucharist as forward-looking:

> [The Eucharist] is also a sign of hope. The New Testament accounts of the Last Supper express clearly its relationship to that future fellowship around the table in the Kingdom of God.[6]

In the Lord's Supper we can now celebrate the future fellowship of God's kingdom as we anticipate Christ's return:

> If Jesus is the true man through his dedication to God's future, in his message of the nearness of God's Lordship, as well as through the anticipatory fulfillment of human destiny in his own person through his resurrection from the dead so that truly human life becomes possible through community with him, then that realization toward which all human hopes are aimed is already fulfilled in him in an anticipatory way.[7]

We can encounter church unity within the Eucharist through the form of hope. Additionally, we initiate and deepen the present fellowship that we celebrate communally. Pannenberg argues that the universal significance of Christ's individual humanity and message make this community possible. In fact, community with Jesus constitutes the very basis of Christian life:

> Having community with Jesus is the basis of being Christian. How we can have community with Jesus is the main problem not only of the church's *doctrine*, but also of her life. Therefore, it is so important in theology to inquire about the universal significance of the particular elements of the life, work, and teaching of Jesus.[8]

Pannenberg qualifies this assertion by noting that not every element of Jesus' particular life must have universal significance. But community with Jesus presupposes Christ's individual life as a universal exemplar at once appropriate for every person.

Past barriers to church unity and eucharistic sharing derived from distinct doctrinal formulae which separated denominations held (e.g., transubstantiation, the church's ministerial orders, the sacrificial nature of the Mass). However, Pannenberg believes that today's ecclesial communions approach such issues from an increasingly open perspective, as contemporary interdenominational dialogues exemplify. He contends, furthermore, that the communal character of the Eucharist forms the nucleus

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[6]Pannenberg, *The Church*, 118.

[7]Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 206.

[8]Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, 205.

of this evolving perspective. New possibilities for ecumenical dialogue and unity replace the calcified differences of the past.

In fact, Pannenberg points out that eucharistic sharing can serve as a unifying vehicle that can overcome differences expressed in doctrinal formulae:

> There is increasing agreement today that the existence of a multiplicity of theological formulations, even of conflicting ones, does not always exclude the possibility of unity in the faith.... Insight into such limitations of theological perspective should not reduce theologians to despair. On the contrary, it can lead to a new estimate of the Christian conviction that the reality of the life of faith and especially of the eucharistic participation in Christ cannot be fully realized through theological reflection.[9]

Pannenberg maintains that we can redress this divisive emphasis by nurturing a different type and mode of theological reflection, centered around our devotional life in the Eucharist. The reality of communal fellowship with Christ and each other in the Lord's Supper transcends our finite capacity to understand. Therefore, theological reflection rooted in eucharistic spirituality can bridge divisions while promoting rapprochement between separated communions of God's church.

In the main, Pannenberg envisions a new, vital eucharistic spirituality unfolding. An essential important consequence of this spirituality includes the increasing tendency toward interdenominational communion. Eucharistic sharing anticipates church unity. Christ's presence within the Eucharist should not degenerate into a requisite for compartmentalized self-legitimization among denominations.

Sharing Christ's presence eucharistically may become our means of unity:

> The experiences of eucharistic communion across the barriers that still divide the churches [have] created in many cases a new sense of Christian unity that in the final result may well contribute to the reunification of the churches.[10]

Through our corporate presence with Christ and each other at the Lord's Supper we can experience the spiritual power of eucharistic sharing. We see this spiritual power most evident in the growing realization of God's kingdom. Pannenberg, in keeping with Luther, affirms communal reality in the church: "The essence of the church is communion of the faithful on the basis of the communion with Jesus Christ that each individual member shares."[11] Eucharistic spirituality and inter-communion among separated denominations symbolize, anticipate, and contribute to the greater unity of Christ's church.

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[9]Pannenberg, *The Church*, 120-21.

[10]Pannenberg, *Christian Spirituality*, 43-44.

[11]Pannenberg, *Christian Spirituality*, 40.

Frederick Denison Maurice: A Lutheran Appreciation

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Episcopal and Lutheran Christians have been getting to know one another, especially since the Interim Eucharistic Agreement of 1982.[1] While personal knowledge is pleasant and rewarding, this article provides an avenue of access into Anglican thought by offering an appreciation of one of its most illustrious figures.

Frederick Denison Maurice was a certifiably eminent Victorian and an intellectual giant of his age who continued to teach and to inspire the church long after his death in 1872. Born in 1805, the son of a Unitarian minister, Maurice was reared in a family in which theological discussion was taken extremely seriously. Eventually, his mother and sisters found they could no longer worship at the chapel over which the Rev. Mr. Maurice presided and, at the age of 26, Frederick was received into the Church of England.[2]

In 1835 he wrote *Subscription No Bondage*. In it he defended the requirement, then under attack, that students entering Oxford University subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Christian Religion. Arguing in a rather "confessional" vein, Maurice asserted that the Articles represented the basis for theological exploration, not its end and goal, and could be embraced in that spirit.[3] Maurice was re-

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[1]Some of us have had to brush up on our English usage in the process. "Episcopalian" is, properly, a noun; the adjective is "Episcopal."

[2]The form of reception was re-baptism. Curiously, Maurice had been baptized as an infant with the Trinitarian formula by his father, but the young convert entertained strong doubts about the act's validity and insisted on repetition of the rite.

[3]The Anglican tradition is not a confessional one. As some wag has said, Anglicanism is a church in search of a theology, whereas Lutheranism represents the reverse. Nevertheless, as Olive J. Brose has pointed out, much of Maurice's reforming zeal came from his reflection on the Thirty-Nine Articles. See Olive J. Brose, *Frederick Denison Maurice: Rebellious Conformist* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1971), xviii. Interestingly, both the order and wording of the predecessor Thirteen Articles were heavily influenced by the *Confessio Augustana* through the English-German London conferences of 1538. See p. 81, note 6.

garded as a liberal in his day; in this volume, however, he presented himself as a vigorous defender of the *corpus doctrinae*—properly appropriated, of course. Along the way he praised the "brave, hearty, homebred" Luther who, although calling for freedom and change, stoutly upheld the retention of the catholic creeds.[4] Yet for Maurice in this early work, doctrinal and historical continuity was not to be purchased at the price of bibliolatry: the "frozen tradition" that is Scripture could not be regarded as reducible to a list of propositional truths.[5]

Maurice published the most comprehensive statement of his theology as *The Kingdom of Christ* in 1838, and two years later was appointed Professor of English Literature and Modern Literature at King's College, London. In 1846 he was appointed Professor of Theology. During these years he found himself exchanging polemical barbs with the Newmans and Puseys of the Oxford Revival. His was an exceedingly fractious age. The English church was marked by deep divisions between Evangelical, Broad Church, and Anglo-Catholic forms of Anglicanism. Each new trend threatened to become a movement, and Maurice set his face like flint against this sectarian spirit throughout his career. His writings are dotted with railings against what he called "systems"—comprehensive, encompassing deductive schema that inevitably calcify into brittle "orthodoxies" and so lead to division.

Maurice's dogged refusal to claim, or to be claimed by, any ecclesiastical party was partially responsible for his famous dismissal from the King's College faculty in 1853. The issue was joined publicly, however, on a point of theology: the eternal punishment of the wicked in hell. In his *Theological Essays* of 1853 he argued that it was contrary to the gospel to assume that perdition could be the perpetual fate of anyone. What sense does it make, he asked, for clerics to announce, "Unless you believe what we tell you, God will keep you in hell forever and ever (i.e.) God will keep you in sin forever"?[6] Maurice was convinced that God had already constituted the human race as the Kingdom of Christ: this is the center of reality, the essential, commanding fact, the foundation upon which the future is being built. Maurice was judged unfit to instruct the impressionable in divinity, although he was not defrocked or excommunicated.

Conservative chagrin was also directed against Maurice's political positions. He was part of a triumvirate that included Charles Kingsley and J. M. Ludlow and which was responsible for popularizing a collection of notions that went under the banner of Christian Socialism. The man who could write, "I must have Monarchy, Aristocracy and Socialism..."[7] was no advocate of any thoroughgoing reconstruction of the social order along democratic lines. Yet he did think there were things the government could do to ease the burdens of the Industrial Revolution which were being shouldered disproportionately by the underclasses. He also thought there were measures working people themselves could take

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[4]F. D. Maurice, *Subscription No Bondage* (London: J. H. Parker, 1835), 5.

[5]Maurice, *Subscription No Bondage*, 85.

[6]Maurice, *Theological Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1891), xiv. His comment on the credal assertion "He descended into Hell": "I accept [these words] as news that there is no corner of God's universe over which His love has not brooded, none over which the Son of God and the Son of Man has not asserted His dominion (p. 138).

[7]Quoted by Frank M. McClain in *Maurice: Man and Moralist* (London: SPCK, 1977), 128.

This union of heaven and earth meant, for Maurice, that religion could never be a matter of the soul only.

collectively to improve their economic position. One result of this was the successful and long-lived Cooperative Movement, which made consumer goods more cheaply available and played a significant political role in Great Britain into the early decades of the twentieth century.

His incarnational perspective shaped the thinking of generations of Church of England clergy. Within the platonic framework so congenial to classically trained Oxbridge clerics, the Incarnation stands as the divine signal that the heavenly and mundane realms have been connected; it is the promise that God is continually and redemptively present in the "secular" sphere, lifting it up toward its higher, holy destiny. This union of heaven and earth meant, for Maurice, that religion could never be a matter of the soul only. Social concern was integral, not incidental, to the gospel: God cares for "the outcasts of our cities," he declared, and wills that all metropolises be free of pollution both moral and physical.[8]

Maurice was not content merely to preach an activist faith. In 1848 he was instrumental in founding Queens College, London, a college for women, to be followed in 1854 by the still-flourishing Working Men's College. But through his writings he became the advocate of a strong tradition of social reflection and action, the cudgels for which were picked up over the years by men like Bishop Wescott, the great New Testament scholar, Stewart Headlam; Charles Gore; Henry Scott Holland; William Temple; the layman R. H. Tawney; and Frank Weston, Bishop of Zanzibar. Weston supplied the rallying cry for many incarnational-sacramental social Christians in a riveting sermon at the 1923 Anglo-Catholic Congress. "You cannot claim to worship Jesus in the Tabernacle," he thundered, "if you do not pity Jesus in the slum." Here was well captured, in a ringing challenge, the Maurician refusal to set any human concern outside the ambit of the church's concern.

Maurice's last academic post was at Cambridge, where he was appointed Knightbridge Professor of Casuistry, Moral Theology and Moral Philosophy. A nineteenth century Martin Marty, he seemed never to have had an unpublished thought; even his publisher, David Macmillan, wrote at one point to a friend that he thought it was time the theologian turned off the spigot. His estimated career total: five million words.

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[8]F. D. Maurice, *The Prayer Book* (London: James Clarke, third ed., 1966), 75. B. J. Benjamin argues, correctly, that Maurice's "Christian Socialism" participated in a popular medieval romanticism that, in its rejection of the Industrial Revolution, differed little from the Tory Disraeli's "Young England," in *Frederick Denison Maurice: A Commemoration of his Centenary* (London: Working Men's College, 1974), 14. This romantic virus was to infect Christian social thought long after the death of the one some called "Prophet."

These he arranged in prose, many stretches of which are exceedingly turgid and unapproachable. Indeed, a complaint common to large numbers of his readers is that he is "obscure." "I ever thought him hazy," opined John Henry Newman,[9] and this line of criticism extended also to his preaching. Aubrey de Vere: "Listening to him was like eating pea soup with a fork."[10] Part of the problem is a function of Maurice's methodology. So intent was he on approaching a given topic from every conceivable angle that sometimes the direction of his thought becomes difficult to discern.

Perhaps it is useful to begin an assessment of his theology with Maurice as a preacher, since a prime test of any theology's worth is the extent to which it strengthens the hand of the homiletician.

Anglicans and Lutherans can learn from Maurice. How many sermons have we heard which consist of nothing more than a guided tour of the exegetical possibilities offered by the text? The Maurician style is different. He had a lively sense that the sermon brings God's address to hearts, a change-inviting Word to situations of bondage. It is an encounter, not a lecture. It has a form, goes somewhere, has a goal. A moralist, Maurice avoided moralism. His appeal emerged from and was grounded in the *viva vox evangelii* ("living voice of the gospel"). He invited his hearers to make the given fact of their redemption the basis of their decisional life. A typical declaration: "The everlasting God counts you worthy to be his children; He has sent His Son to claim you as His children."[11]

Maurice's view of the Bible was congruent with his preaching style. With expectations similar to Luther's, he came to the Scriptures not primarily to find a repository of propositional truth but a witness to the saving activity of God. His view of the primary function of the Bible coincides well with the Reformer's maxim *was Christum treibt* ("what emphasizes Christ"): the Bible is a vehicle of the Spirit to lead people to the Savior.[12] It does not merely inform on a cognitive level but discloses the "existential" human situation, revealing who we are, for what we were created, and to what, in Christ, we have been restored.[13] Maurice's polemical context, although highly charged, differed substantially from that of the sixteenth century, which accounts for his lack of interest in a systematic exposition of the Bible's place in Christian theology. What held things together for him at the center was worship and the *Book of Common Prayer* in the spirit of *lex orandi, lex credendi* (what you pray is what you believe). He thought that reconciliation could be wrought in a seriously fractured English church, not via a scholastic doctrinal precision characteristic of Lutheranism and Calvinism, but in worship.

> I am sure the liturgy will torment us so long as we continue selfish and divided, therefore I would cling to it. I am sure it may be the instrument of raising us out of our selfishness and divisions, therefore I value it above all artificial schemes

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[9]Quoted by John Orens in Frank McClain, Richard Norris & John Orens, *F. D. Maurice: A Study* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 1982), 61.

[10]McClain, et al, *F. D. Maurice: A Study*, 62.

[11]Maurice, *The Prayer Book*, 168.

[12]Maurice, *The Prayer Book*, 81. Maurice suggested that Luther loved the Bible chiefly because it spoke of justification by faith. *The Kingdom of Christ* (New York: D. Appleton, 1843), 80.

[13]Maurice, *The Prayer Book*, 161.

> of reconciliation, all philosophical theories, all inventions, however skilful, for the reconstruction of human society in which there evidently lies no such power.[14]

Worship, in contrast to human plans and ideas, is a divine gift, a privilege rooted in grace.

Grace is the *leitmotiv* of Maurice's theology. He believed that the church of his day was scandalizing people not only by virtue of its schismatic tendencies but also because of its legalism. It was offering stones for bread. Therefore, he was constantly at pains to offer comfortable words to persons stricken with terrors of conscience. His point of departure for addressing any doctrine was the goodness of God revealed in Christ. Repeatedly he referred to God as "the Great Absolver." No room is made for works-righteousness: "We do not become God's children because we are good; but being the children of a good God, we can be like our Father in heaven."[15] Like Luther, Maurice had a sensitive conscience and a vivid sense of the power of sin, which is in essence failure to trust the gospel.[16] Throughout his writings Maurice stressed the transcendent aspect of the evangelical Word, a Word that is not ours, does not arise out of our inner subjectivity, and stands over against us as an unconditional offer of forgiveness, joy, and power. Everywhere, the concept "to know Christ is to know his benefits" is mirrored. Everywhere, the gracious and loving action of God is emphasized. "Take away the love of God," he wrote, "and you take away everything. The Bible sets forth the Revelation of that love, or it is good for nothing. The Church is the living Witness and Revelation of that love, or it is good for nothing."[17]

Throughout his writings Maurice stressed the transcendent aspect of the evangelical Word.

Maurice was at once warmly appreciative of Luther and sternly critical of the orthodoxy of the seventeenth century doctors. He quoted the reformer frequently and viewed himself as a social and ecclesiastical gadfly: a "digger" (his self-designation) in contrast to a builder of systems. In this role he also reflects affinity with Kierkegaard, another stormy petrel in a country

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[14]Maurice, *The Prayer Book*, xi. Prof. Stephen Sykes traces what he regards as an anti-theological bias in Anglicanism to Maurice and his "bogus theory of comprehensiveness" which disdains careful definition and intellectual rigor for the sake of amity; quoted in McClain, et. al., *F. D. Maurice: A Study*, 14.

[15]McClain, *Maurice: Man and Moralist*, 4. McClain rightly observes that in this key point Maurice is close to Luther.

[16]Maurice, *The Prayer Book*, 172. See also F. D. Maurice, *The Church a Family* (London: John W. Parker, 1850), 65. He did not emphasize Law as the judgment that kills (*lex semper accusat*) but spoke of its educative, enlightening function: it shows humans their sinfulness, which is always placed in the context of divine love and the goodness of creation.

[17]Maurice, *Theological Essays*, 11.

with an established church.[18] Yet for Lutheran scholasticism he had nothing but contempt. It is overly intellectual, he thought, and "teaches us to believe in justification by faith instead of to believe in a Justifier."[19] And in this criticism, would he not be joined by more than a few Lutherans today?

Maurice's thinking adumbrated two themes currently engaging the attention of theologians from Augsburg and Canterbury and beyond: eschatology and creation-centered spirituality. His consistent citing of the New Testament's Kingdom figure was accompanied by a steady eye on the eschatological horizon. The Kingdom breaks into the present; Christ is God's goal for history, and the divine energy is working continually to bring to perfection all the cosmos's creatures, even those on other planets![20] His anthropology was grounded, not in the fall, but in what Matthew Fox calls "original righteousness," and if he was not the type for N. V. Peale and Robert Schuller, he did underscore the positive side of flawed human nature and the possibilities implied by resurrection and redemption. It was a message his contemporaries needed to hear, Maurice believed, a strong contrast to the doom-and-damnation fare to which they were accustomed.

I am not attempting to make Maurice more ahead of his time or more "Lutheran" than he was. Yet we Lutherans need to remember again that the gospel is the critical principle above all others, a position with which Maurice, I believe, would be much in sympathy. We could do worse than listen to a brilliant, magnetic, and widely influential Victorian, who considered that there were two options available to the church of his day. One was to see Christian truth as absolute, enshrined in a system requiring external validation: exclusive, disdainful of all who are not part of it. The other was to view the Christian proposal as grounded in the unshakable, eternal Truth of God, set loose in a world of systems, not to destroy them but to discern the truth they have to offer.

Anglicans and Lutherans could do worse, it seems to me, than to learn together what Frederick Denison Maurice long ago called "the alphabet of the Gospel."[21]

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[18]McClain points to parallels with Bonhoeffer: both emphasized a universal Christ as head of the whole of humanity and resisted pressure to draw a static line between church and world. McClain, *Maurice: Man and Moralist*, 145.

[19]Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ*, 201.

[20]Maurice, *The Prayer Book*, 104.

[21]Maurice, *The Prayer Book*, 178.

Some Thoughts on Church, Ministry, and Mission

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Church

Years ago, in an attempt to help me deal with my adolescent frustration about what I saw as the "hypocrisy" of the people who went to church on Sunday and acted as if they hadn't on Monday, my father explained to me that the church, like all institutions, is human: filled with people who fall short of their promises to themselves, each other, and God. I was skeptical, and eventually wandered out of the church, not because I had a major bone to pick with it but because it seemed singularly irrelevant. Although I, a marinated Lutheran, could hardly shake off the church's impact on my life, I had very little to do with the church for a long time.

Seven years ago I agreed to go to El Salvador to represent the international Lutheran community to the church in Central America. There, in the midst of a people, a culture, and a situation that could hardly have been more different from the background out of which I came, I had a new experience of "church," an experience that has made me both more critical of what the church is and more convinced of what it can and should be.

It was a kind of conversion. I was not a tabula rasa, nor did my "conversion" erase my previous capacities or accumulated experience. What happened was rather a shift in my way of looking at things and making sense of things. I discovered, gradually, that the measuring instruments I had used earlier—for "church" and for many other previously recognizable entities—were no match for the raw, tender, violent, fearful human situation in which I found myself.

I discovered this not only actively, as I tried to make sense of what was going on, but also receptively, as people broke through all the differences that separated me from them and touched me. The truthfulness, authenticity, and authority of what was shared with me, intentionally and accidentally, emerged not from comparisons I could make with the standards or categories I brought with me, but rather from the life and hope incarnated in people who were threatened with physical and psychological death at every moment.

One of the most remarkable things about this experience is that there was nothing more "saintly" about my Salvadoran Christian sisters and brothers than there is about my North American compatriots. There are churches and individuals within churches in El Salvador who refuse to respond to the invitation of Jesus, "Follow me." That there are churches and individuals who do, and who incur persecution because they do, suggests that the liberating work of the Holy Spirit involves responsive human collaboration.

I have only begun to reflect on what I learned of "church" from my experience in Central America. At this point it makes more sense for me to be descriptive rather than to extract prescriptions for another setting. Provisional rather than definitive statements are both more useful and more honest.

But one foundational observation is worth making: the church that is persecuted in El Salvador is perceived by those who dominate to be paying too much attention to those who have been systematically denied power. This church is taking risks to upend structures of dominance and subordination that have institutionalized violence, exclusion, and oppression. Both the transformative power this witness generates in those who have accompanied this church and the brutal reaction of those who are dead-set against shifts in these structures suggest that this sort of risk-taking may be one of the true marks of the church.

Ministry

When Oscar Arnulfo Romero was named archbishop of San Salvador in 1977, those in positions of authority in church, state, and the economy sighed with relief. This conservative canon lawyer could be counted on to keep order, to stem the rising discontent among some parish priests, and to quiet the rumble of gathering revolution.

What happened instead is a parable for ministry, within or outside the church. Romero experienced conversion. It began with the assassination of a close friend, a priest whose ministry with and on behalf of the poor threatened the powerful, and it led Romero out into the midst of his people. He listened, he wept, he prayed, he consoled—and then he preached, to the rich and powerful as well as to the poor and marginalized. He became the voice of the voiceless. Everyone listened; everyone heard.

Romero was murdered by an agent of those who didn't like what they heard; they liked it even less because Romero spoke truthfully and with authority. Now, ten years later, Romero still lives—not only among those who heard and saw him, but among many more within and outside his country, who (like me) had not even heard of him by the time he was killed.

Ministry, it seems to me, should be spoken of in the broadest possible terms as the vocation of a follower of Jesus. All of us sew seams into the garment of Christian ministry as we try—for the sake of managing, controlling, explaining, protecting—to divide our lives into "making a living," "public/social life," "private/personal life," and as many more categories as we need to keep things in our own perspective. Rules for appropriate behavior, worthwhile goals, and measures of success for each may overlap, but it is just as likely that they won't. At the end of the day, the frustration that accompanies such a fragmented view of ministry or vocation reflects the difficulty of living as if what we do in one sphere is not done by the same agents who also act in the others. Being and doing have everything to do with one another.

How to correct this fragmentation? Seeing people and things *in relation to* one

another—a key focus of feminist theology—is an attempt. Relationality is not a convenient or, in the first instance, a rational construct for understanding reality. It is the foundation from which theological reflection begins.

What I do in ministry is related to past, present, and future persons and activities. Beyond this, attention to relationality calls on me to recognize both the value of relationship and my responsibility to act in favor of those persons and things with which I am in relationship. What is "right" and what is "wrong"—my ministerial ethics—will be evaluated by me with respect to what serves and what denies the value in relationships of which I am a part.

Needless to say, decisions about how I should minister are not simplified, just because I see everything in relation to everything else, or just because I value relationship. Many of the relationships I am party to, many that I care about, are distorted, destructive, and/or apparently beyond my control or consent. By acting in favor of some persons or issues with whom I am in relation, I can easily act against some others, in apparent or conscious disregard for what might serve their well-being. How to decide?

There may be a few rules that need to be broken. These are rules made by those who—by intention or by collusion—benefit, at the expense of others, from relationships of one-sided power.

1. *Whose experience?* A theology of ministry emerges from experience. The question is, whose? Insisting on the importance of experience as the starting place for a view of ministry has several key implications. First, it raises an obvious but uncomfortable critique of views or "systems" of ministry that do not acknowledge their own experiential locations. Second, it seeks to correct distortions that fail to account for those whose capacity for ministry has been erased, overlooked, or ignored. Third, it proposes a radical new point of view that is willing to be shaped by those previously "left-out" people. Principally, that viewpoint seeks empowerment of those ministered to.

2. *What is normative?* If I do not acknowledge the limitations of my own experiential location, I can begin to believe my own experience is normative. As long as I hear only the sound of my own voice and of others like me, my ministry remains narrow and narrowly self-serving. Constructive criticism of proposals for ministry generated by those who have been in charge (white, middle- or upper-class males, generally) is helpful, not only over against these dominant models but also within all conversations about ministry.

There is no such thing as a normative experience. This is precisely the risk, and the richness, of working out an inclusive ministry based on human experience. Such a ministry must seek commonalities among human beings of all stripes, must struggle with what enhances life within, and what brings death to, all the human family. If it isn't my rules for ministry but your life that is at stake, then either my rules must enhance your life, or I must re-evaluate my rules.

The professional ministry I have chosen to pursue—studying and teaching theology—provides ample opportunities to play out the implications of what has been suggested above. Methodology and content of both study and teaching are intimately bound up with one another in any case. A scholar/teacher committed to (1) the principle of the relatedness of things and people, and the importance of discovering, analyzing, and valuing relationships; (2) the primacy of experience in generating and validating the "stuff" of theological reflection; and (3)

avoiding the spiritual and intellectual pitfalls of confusing dominance with normativeness—such a scholar/teacher can make a distinctive contribution to both the learning process and the field of scholarship in which she engages.

What are some implications of my reflections on ministry for how I would teach? There are enormous risks in bucking the "banking method" described by Paolo Freire; the risks have more to do with undoing a dynamic of domination between teacher and learner than with not covering the "required" material—although there is some risk there, too. The question of what needs to be learned must be answered in a different way if relationality, and the persons who comprise it in the teaching/learning situation, are to be respected.

I have never learned anything by myself; nor has anyone I know. Fortunately, I didn't need to start from scratch; neither does anyone else. But again, what is known by someone who has spent a lifetime studying what is known (about anything) need not be a barrier to reciprocity. Placing chairs in a circle, working in small groups (in and out of appointed class times), student leadership, and collaborative creation of projects including research papers, are some of the ways in which those who set pedagogical ground rules actively recognize the mutuality of learning.

Story-telling and role-playing (live or on paper) encourage learners to see and claim the value in their own histories and to struggle with who and what may be different from them. These "techniques" may be more difficult to enter into, the longer learners or teachers live without trying them. On the other hand, their positive impact may be deeper, the more illuminating the revelations that result.

Probably the most radical scholarship is that which questions the normativeness of tradition and its metaphysical underpinnings. Such critiques are radical not only because they scrutinize the content of tradition but because they call into question the intellectual, political, and political-intellectual systems built on and apparently prescribed by tradition.

A whole host of questions is raised: Whose tradition? Are there others? Who has control over what is remembered, over that out of which traditions are fashioned? Who has been forgotten? Why? What makes a tradition normative? Does the tradition speak to our condition? If it does not, can we translate it or must we disavow it in favor of an alternative memory?

What is revolutionary about scholarship consciously critical of the dominant or the established tradition is not that it will surely smash the intellectual equivalent of the state. Rather, it relativizes relationships and structures that depend on a power that excludes or that fears that nothing, including learning, can be left to those who do not or cannot know enough to "do it right."

Mission

The church's willingness to re-examine its "mission" involves re-examination of how the church understands itself as "church" and how it sees itself as "ministry." Risk-taking and mutuality (being-in-relation) are critical to this process.

My work in Central America involved, among other things, administering funds for projects undertaken by organizations, churches, and groups working with the displaced and the poor, and orienting groups of visitors from North American and European churches and church-related development agencies. Reflecting on the impact these activities had—on Central American colleagues and "beneficiaries," on visitors,

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and on myself—I have become increasingly convinced of certain things.

First, there is virtually nothing we as "Northerners" do *not* have to learn from our "Southern" sisters and brothers about their context. Someone who blows in and out of a capital city, stays in a four-star hotel, and has 24-hour-a-day translation, may ignorantly believe that "mission" can be done from drawing boards or static principles. But even a few weeks in-country, with eyes, mind, and heart open, make it clear that without the active collaboration of those who inhabit a setting, we cannot really help or even be involved. Differences in language, mores, needs, and logistics bend and often break open familiar categories, and they force us to create new categories—or to rethink our own—often to our benefit.

Second, the profundity, complexity, and raw brutality of the situations to which our development or relief efforts are directed confound our usual criteria for "successful" mission. Problems like those in El Salvador or Guatemala are not "solved" by spending large or small sums of money, or by multiplying projects, nor can projects be judged successful when books are balanced and "output" is commensurate with investment. Here we can learn at least a couple of things:

• Intelligent, risk-taking accompaniment often means more than budgeting or administering funds. It also means solidarity, which in turn requires awareness of and sensitivity to difficult political circumstances, as well as the courage to risk, in one's own location, at least as much as the church under fire risks. What is done from afar, without consultation with those on the other end, has done more damage than good, even when it has been well-intended.

• Real solidarity requires us to put our resources—statements as well as silences, money as well as prayer, personnel as well as encouragement—at the disposal of those with whom we would be in solidarity. While this does not mean giving up our own identity, it does mean that we take our cues from those we must learn to trust, if we do not already trust them. This in turn means we must learn something about how the world, and their locality, looks from their point of view, not from ours.

Third, there is a great deal to be said for "reverse mission," not simply for the sake of global awareness but for the sake of our mission at home, even within the church itself. The risk of listening to those who are not like us, of trying to decipher another language, of featuring another way of living, breaks all the rules of institutional self-preservation. Wherever such a risk is taken, the status quo is threatened—inside or outside the church.

Jesus' teaching and ministry challenge us to lose our lives in order to find them. Justifying ourselves, we often call attention to that which is all too evident—the gap between what we do and what we should do—and explain it as the result of "human nature." As if, somehow, Jesus himself had not been human, even as he spoke and lived out his own challenge.

Sending and Receiving in Christian Mission

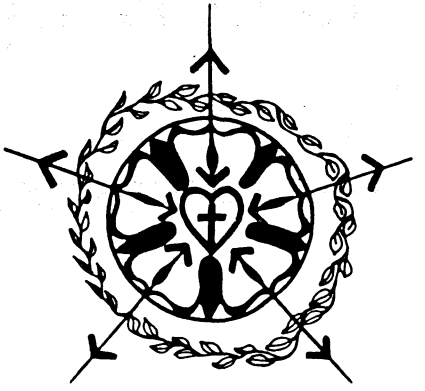
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We Christians, especially from the two-thirds world, are grateful to the North American churches for their leadership among today's Christian world mission, supplying a large number of missionary personnel and substantial financial contributions. However, the mission theology and mission practices of North American churches are still carrying on the old notion of mission as a one-way street of "sending" to far away places inherited from European churches of the past. The word "mission" itself is derived from the Latin word *missio*, which means "sending." While many North American churches have understood mission as "sending," it must be said that "sending" is only one aspect of Christian world mission. According to Scripture, there are many other aspects of Christian mission work in the world, including leavening, witnessing, advocating, serving, receiving, proclaiming, and sharing. Since North American churches have understood mission in the narrow sense of "sending" there has been success in sending great numbers of missionaries throughout the world. This method of mission is, in a sense, a "one-way street" in which the "sending" of American personnel into other parts of the world takes precedence over other aspects of mission. Thus there is failure and negligence to recognize the "receiving" aspect of Christian mission.

Theology and practice of sending

The European theology of Christendom (the idea of a temporal kingdom under the spiritual authority of the Christian church), which developed from the time of the emperor Constantine in the fourth century, nourished the "sending" aspect of Christian world mission. The theology of Christendom believed and taught that there is neither life nor culture apart from European Christendom. Therefore, any people who resisted conversion to the Christian faith were conquered, enslaved, even murdered for their resistance. In the context of "Christendom theology," the mission of the church was then no longer a peaceful, loving witness to God's mercy and grace, as in the early church, but was often compulsive conversion of people to a political and military alliance with Rome.

Although in the years of development of Christendom theology there were many outstanding missionaries, such as St. Pat-



rick, St. Dominic, St. Francis, St. Benedict, and St. Columba, medieval mission was characterized primarily by its imperial policy of expansion, even through military and political means. The use of power in mission was glorified, and participation in forced conversions of "infidels" was considered an expression of Christian piety, with absolution of sins for those who fought and died on such missions. It seemed that the establishment of a right relationship with God was not based on faith in Christ but rather on obedience to the ecclesiastical and political institutions of Europe.

The worst example of this kind of sending mission was the Crusades, the bloody and in many ways unChristian military campaigns in the Holy Land from the 11th to the 14th centuries. In a recent article on the study of the first crusade, the author writes about the crusaders' cruelty in the city of Jerusalem: "Even their hard-bitten contemporaries were shocked by the terrible massacre that followed as the maddened crusaders rampaged through the city [Jerusalem] in a bloody catharsis for that appalling, three-year journey."[1] In this militaristic "sending" mission, under the auspices of the Christian church, people's lives and livelihoods were taken away with their land. Benjamin Kedar writes:

> During the siege of Caesarea in the spring of 1101, two envoys of the beleaguered Muslim town reproached the patriarch of Jerusalem and the papal legate for having called on the crusaders to slay the Saracens and take their land, thereby contravening the Christian injunctions against murder and robbery. So reports the Genoese chronicler Caffaro, an eyewitness to that siege, who also relates that the patriarch brushed aside this criticism by telling the envoys that Caesarea, the city of Peter, belongs to the Christians by right, and those who impugn God's law ought to be slain.[2]

During the period of European expansion, especially in the 16th and 17th centuries, the "mission of sending" was virtually identical with the European conquest of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Such conquest of other parts of the world and even the enslavement of other peoples were justified by the church. One example of such justification was provided by the papal bull called *Inter Caetera*, which was issued a year after Columbus' sailing to America, in 1493. (I purposely do not use the term "Columbus discovered America," as this too reflects the European-centered worldview and its Christendom theology). In this papal bull, Alexander VI empowered the Portuguese to send missionaries to the New World and be responsible for the Christianization of the Indies. Alexander issued

[1]Tim Severin, "Retracing the First Crusade," *National Geographic* 176:3 (September 1989), 361.

[2]Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 97.

another bull, *Examinae Devotionis*, in 1501, which allowed monarchs to collect tithes in the colonies and to use the money to defray the cost of Christianization.[3] The next pope, Julius II, issued another bull called *Universalis Ecclesiae*, which allowed the Spanish to select the candidates for all church offices in the "Indies," with the right to define the territories of the bishops.[4]

A positive result of the sending

Some positive results, however, did come of the Christendom theology and its "sending" missions. By the sending of the church, contacts with other cultures were made, and such contacts brought a creative epoch in world history. The crusaders took note of the efficacies of Arabic numerals, originally developed in the culture of India, the highly developed natural and medical sciences, and, above all, the study of Greek and Roman classics, not only in translations but in their original languages. Attracted to these ancient classics, the crusaders and soon the whole of Europe began to reclaim them as the foundations of European culture, and this revival became what we know as the Renaissance. European Christians also began to receive and appreciate classical studies of the Near Eastern world, which shed light on biblical texts. Bible scholars like Martin Luther placed renewed emphasis on studying Holy Scriptures in the original languages.

However, such positive development took place not only through sending but also by receiving and accepting other cultural elements. The appreciation of other cultural elements by receiving and acceptance of others provided the sources of reform and renewal in the life of the church in Europe. Luther asked his people not to find certainty in the works of law or church requirements but to fall back upon the original promise of God's Word. In turn, Christians were to accept and receive all human beings with the same generosity with which God had accepted them; the source and God-given responsibility of mission was to receive and appreciate all peoples of all cultures.

On the basis of the Holy Scripture, Luther recognized the importance of receiving and accepting others in Christian fellowship. In his commentary on Exodus 12 he wrote, "We must not stop inviting [or receiving] quests to partake in this paschal lamb."[5] In a 1533 sermon based on Mark 8:1-9, Luther said that the noblest work people can perform for God is to receive other people to the knowledge of God by the holy gospel.

In spite of Luther's fine theology of mission, the Protestant churches were too busy in doctrinal debates and did not have political backing to send missionaries to other parts of the world. Meanwhile the Roman Catholic Church continued the mission of sending with the unfortunate feature of being closely associated with Spanish and Portuguese colonial interests.

As the Protestant reformation matured in Northern European countries, the sending of Protestant missionaries started in the early part of the 18th century. However, in the new age of the Protestant mission, the mission was also closely associated with the colonial interests of the sending countries of Europe. Whether it was England's

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[3]Stephen Neill, et al, eds., *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), 474.

[4]Neill, *Concise Dictionary*, 474-5.

[5]Ewald Plass, ed., *What Luther Says: An Anthology* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), 260.

Many U.S. churches strongly identified their Christian mission with the "manifest destiny" of their nation.

colony of India, Germany's colony of Southwest Africa, or the Netherlands' colony of Indonesia, the church's mission was a "sending" mission of European homelands to support the colonial interests. Of course this writer is not denying the positive contribution of such missions to bring the native people into the knowledge of our Savior Jesus Christ by proclaiming the gospel, but the one-sided sending aspect of Christian mission did make many mistakes by allying mission work with the colonial interests of European countries.

The magnificent sending nation: The United States of America

The tradition of a sending mission theology was handed down to the emerging world power, the United States. The U.S. became the leading nation in sending not only personnel but material support in the latter part of the 19th century. This was especially true when that sending was enmeshed with American patriotism. The sending of both material and personnel by U.S. mission agencies was magnificent.

The American Board of Commissions for Foreign Mission, the first U.S. Christian foreign missionary agency, is a good example. Established in 1810, the agency's mission work in the world is considered to have been an expression of American patriotism. Soon after the organization of the agency, a leader of the organization preached a sermon entitled, "Do We Love Our Country?" The sermon asked:

> How can we better testify our appreciation of her free institutions than by laboring to plant them in other lands? For where the gospel goes in its purity and power, there will follow in its train the blessings of civilization, liberty, and good government.[6]

Many U.S. churches strongly identified their Christian mission with the "manifest destiny" of their nation. With patriotic fervor they proclaimed the Christian gospel with American ideals.

The Pietistic Hauge Synod, made up of Norwegian Lutheran immigrants to the U.S., is a good example of what has been said here. At its annual meeting in 1890 the Synod discussed beginning mission work in China. In the following year it decided to establish the mission's center in Hankow, 600 miles west of Shanghai, calling it the "Chicago of China." From 1891 to 1917 no less than thirty missionaries were sent to China by this one small U.S. Lutheran church body, which had barely settled in the new land.[7]

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[6]Clifton J. Phillips, *Protestant America and the Pagan World* (Cambridge: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 1968), 243.

[7]J. L. Neve, *A Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America* (Burlington, IA: The German Literary Board, 1916), 391-95.

However, often the patriotic fervor of American missionaries had strong paternalistic results, producing attitudes that were unsympathetic to the cultures and customs of the people to whom they were sent, just as did their European predecessors before them. Wherever American missionaries were stationed, they maintained a strong American identity, holding on to their own culture and cultural values. They maintained extra-territorial rights, even to the point of ignoring the official permission of the national government for mission projects. A church instruction given to Peter Parker, a medical missionary in China, said:

> The Christian missionary is not, therefore, to expect, and he is not to seek, the sanctions of heathen governments to his efforts to extend the gospel, but he is to go, with its heavenly message, directly to the people, wherever he can find them; and he is to proclaim its requirements and sanctions to them as individuals having souls for the salvation or loss of which they are themselves responsible....[8]

Often ignoring native governments and societies, the American missionaries believed that American culture and their version of Christianity were identical, and superior to other cultures. Thus American missionaries were preoccupied with converting the "heathen" and imposing upon them the end of their native cultural values and practices. To the eyes of Christian converts, then, Christian mission from the U.S. appeared imperialistic. Argentinian theologian Jose Miguez-Bonino said:

> The missionary enterprise of the past 150 years is interwoven with the expansion of economic, political and cultural influence of the Anglo-Saxon world, whether Catholic or Protestant. We from the Third World call this neo-colonialism or imperialism.[9]

Poverty in receiving

The European and North American churches that had such a magnificent sending mission to other parts of the world now face difficulties in church membership. The shift of Christian population is occurring from North to South. Until recently, the majority of the world's Christian population was European or North American. But in the last few years three million of these white Christians have drifted away annually. On the other hand, the Christian population in the Third World increased from 83 million in 1900 to 643 million in 1980. In 1982 there were more nonwhite Christians in the world than white. Even in a small country like South Korea, the Christian population reaches 30%. By the year 2000 the majority of the world's Christian population will live in the Third World. Already the leadership and the theological centers of Christianity are moving southward and eastward. One result of this shift is that Christian churches in the Third World can no longer be regarded merely as "mission stations," where preoccupation with the one-way street of sending could continue.

This movement away from the imperialistic stance of former mission efforts reminds us that the church must be not only the community of sending but also a receiving community. Our Lord reminds us, "Many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 8:11). From the very beginning of Christ's ministry and mission to the world, our Lord received people of other traditions. The Christ Child was manifested to the wise men of the east.

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[8]Phillips, *Protestant America and the Pagan World*, 183.

[9]*Time* (December 27, 1982).

He meant to include all peoples and to receive the variety of their gifts for the glory of God and the joy of God's people.

Failure to receive people of different traditions and the gifts they bring is often caused by the lack of a correct understanding of the nature of the Christian church. The church is always an assembly of people, all kinds of people, that transcends nationalities, races, languages, and cultures. In the church, men and women of all races are bound into a close relationship with God by the atoning grace of God, and they are led into personal relationships with one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

In the church we are all children of God and fellow heirs with Christ (Rom 8). We are brought together to live, receive, and share fellowship in the church. Through Christ we have access in one Spirit to the Father so that we are no longer strangers and sojourners but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household.

In the church, according to Romans 10, there is no distinction between Jew or Greek, for everyone who declares allegiance to Christ will be accepted by Christ. In Galatians 3:26-28 we read: "For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God, through faith, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

The example of this inclusive, transcultural, multinational church is found in the early Christian churches, especially in the first Christian church, founded in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. That Jewish day of Pentecost was the harvest festival, and the new Pentecost brought a harvest of souls in Christ. According to Acts, the people who were attracted to the city of Jerusalem on that day were from "every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5).

The event of Pentecost was the fulfillment of God's prophecy to receive all people from east and west into the Kingdom of God. This earliest example of the church, as a community of receiving and appreciating one another, should be the model of the church in all places and in all ages. Full Christian fellowship, therefore, must be shared with black, yellow, and white brothers and sisters in the same faith.

In spite of all the talk about the inclusive nature of the church, many Lutheran churches are still waiting for only Norwegian, Swedish, and German immigrants to come and fill their churches and pews. But the color of the immigrants has changed. The U.S. is now the fifth largest Spanish-speaking country in the world, and the Asian population here is steadily growing. According to *Newsweek*, for example, Asian-Americans are the fastest growing single group, largely due to immigration. The report also provides us with the following statistics of population increase in the United States:[10]

	Whites	*Asians*	*Spanish*
1970	178,098,000	1,538,721	9,072,602
1980	188,340,790	3,500,636	14,608,673

Since these statistics are ten years old, the percentage of population increase among Asians and Spanish is even higher. Is the Lutheran church receiving these people and their gifts into fellowship? Unfortunately, the Lutheran churches appear to be losing membership instead. Meanwhile, other churches—Assemblies of God, Southern Baptist Convention, American Baptist Churches—are having good success. They have all experienced an increase in membership. According to *The Lutheran*, the

[10] *Newsweek* (January 17, 1983), 22.

American Baptist's ethnic membership increased 43%, the Assemblies of God increased its ethnic membership by 48%, and the Southern Baptists increased theirs by 70% in the decade of the 1980s. *The Lutheran* says:

> The Southern Baptists, which have 4,600 non-English speaking congregations, have started almost 400 black congregations in 10 years. The Assemblies of God added 118 congregations in its Gulf Latin American District in the past five years and have 10,000 Korean members in 70 churches.[11]

These figures indicate that churches that are successful in receiving new immigrants into their fellowship will grow in membership. Churches that do not know how to receive these immigrants will demonstrate a sizable decrease in their membership through the years, especially in the major mainstream churches, including Lutheran churches. In its constituting convention the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America established a goal of having 10 percent of its members be people of color or of primary language other than English by the year 1998. That goal may be difficult to achieve. But success can be achieved by the ELCA if its members accept and receive peoples of different color and if they share the good news of salvation in Christ.

Conclusion

As an Asian member of the Lutheran church, I am concerned with our declining membership and financial contributions, and I hope that our Lutheran seminaries and Lutheran communities reach out and receive more of our brothers and sisters of different ethnic groups and cultures into our Christian fellowship. The membership of the church can be increased by paying more attention to our new neighbors. For example, there are now more than 800,000 Korean immigrants living in the United States. These Koreans are very receptive to the gospel of Jesus Christ because they do not have a strong allegiance to Asian religious traditions as other Asians do. In fact, Korean community life is centered around the churches. There are close to 200 Korean churches in Chicago, the city of our ELCA national offices, and yet not one of these 200 Korean churches is Lutheran!

Many Korean Christians are using Lutheran facilities for worship and church activities, yet the relationship between these Koreans and the ELCA seems to be that of landlord and tenant. A Korean Lutheran pastor in New York once told me that a new immigrant from Korea called him one day at his office and asked, "What branch of Mormonism is the Lutheran church?" The pastor explained that the Lutheran church is the original church of the Protestant reformation and one of the largest Protestant denominations in the country. At this point the caller wanted to know why Lutherans do not reach out to their neighborhood and *receive* them.

Christians are meant to reach out, to receive others as neighbors, and to share with them fellowship and life in the church. But it is clear that Lutherans were not doing this. By our lack of receiving others and their gifts into the church we are doing a disservice to our own great heritage of faith. It is time that Lutherans break away from their ethnic ghettos and receive others for the enrichment of the Lutheran church and the whole Christian community.

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[11] *The Lutheran* (March 19, 1986), 17.

Fifty-Four
(A True Story)

Dave Klumpp
Norman, Oklahoma

We had nearly finished my 54th birthday dinner of salad and lasagna when the doorbell rang followed by urgent pounding. 16-year-old Jason scurried to answer it.

"Does anyone here know CPR?" Cora cried, in obvious panic. She's our neighbor, two doors west. "Sam is lying in his back yard, and I don't think he's breathing."

Jason, my son-in-law Tom, and I scrambled. We had CPR training—Jason with the scouts, Tom with the police force, and I had taken a course years ago but had never practiced these skills.

We dashed to the back yard of our next door neighbor, Samuel Wulkerson. While Sam and May were our neighbors, we didn't know them well. They had moved in two years earlier and we had welcomed them to the neighborhood with some cookies. We learned that they had recently returned from the mission field and were teaching at a nearby Bible college. Our contact was limited to an occasional greeting or an exchange of garden vegetables over the six-foot stockade fence that separates our back yards. I would have liked to know Sam and May better and learned first hand of their experiences in South America, but it never happened.

Cora's cry for help had interrupted the usual birthday ritual at our house. Jason had slipped in some trick candles on the cake, the ones that relight when you blow them out. At 54 I don't get too excited about birthdays anymore. This attitude irritates my children, who exhibit all the enthusiasm of youth. My only consolation was that another birthday seemed better than the alternative.

When we arrived in Sam's back yard we found him lying prone behind a silent lawn mower. On the way to him, I overheard Tom mutter, "It's bad." Jason soon joined us with a mirror which he held below Sam's nose, while Tom felt for a pulse in his neck and I at his right wrist. There was no pulse, no breath. In fact, Sam's skin was cool and his complexion ashen. He must have been dead for an hour.

I'll never forget how he looked, lying there in the grass, so still, even peaceful; a handsome man, slender, about my size, but with more grey in his hair. His arms were flung back at the elevation of his head as

though death were a robber who commanded, "Hands up!" Curiously, his thumbs were hooked behind the index finger of each hand. His glasses had moved from resting on his ears, perhaps half an inch, but they still sat steady on his nose. His face was not contorted in pain, but looked gentle, except for his eyes. The lids were at half-mast, and the pupils stared blankly outward.

We stood, shocked by death, so close and so final.

Sirens screeched silent, announcing the arrival of the paramedics. Cora must have called them before racing to our house. The first medic charged to where we stood. Setting down his bag, he checked for limberness in Sam's jaw and unhooked his thumbs. Shaking his head, he fumbled with his walkie-talkie and asked who had found him. Cora answered that her six-year old, playing in the yard, had seen Sam lying there and told her. When the second medic arrived, he urged us to leave.

Soberly we walked home. Jason broke the silence: "Sam waved to me when I threw my papers."

"You may have been the last person to see him alive," I replied. "I didn't hear his lawn mower when I cut our back yard at 4:30."

As we entered our house, Jason whispered to me, "Happy birthday, Dad," with consummate irony.

Back at the table, subdued, serious, we discussed when Sam must have died. This clearly disturbed Eric, our eldest, who blurted out: "He was religious, wasn't he? You ought to be glad. He's better off now!" Silence hung heavy. Suddenly birthday cake lost its appeal.

I remembered some words of Henri Nouwen in which he discusses God's love and human death. I checked them later because they said what I felt. In *A Letter of Consolation* Nouwen writes:

> If the God who revealed life to us, and whose only desire is to bring us to life, loved us so much that he wanted to experience with us the total absurdity of death, then—yes, then there must be hope; then there must be something more than death; then there must be a promise that is not fulfilled in our short existence in this world; then leaving behind the ones you love, the flowers and the trees, the mountains and the oceans, the beauty of art and music, and all the exuberant gifts of life cannot be just the destruction and cruel end of all things; then indeed we have to wait for the third day.

The obituary in the next day's paper noted that Sam was 54.

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—Allen D. Verhey

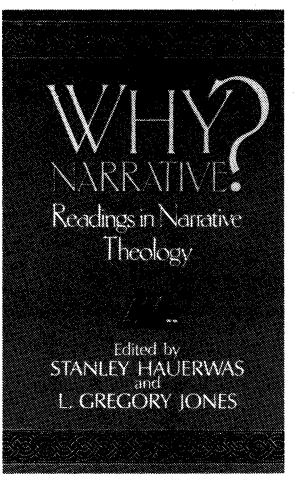
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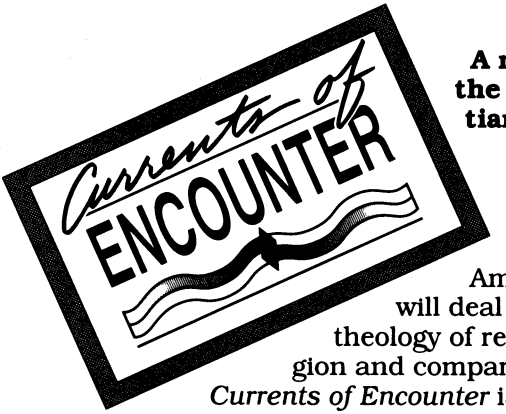
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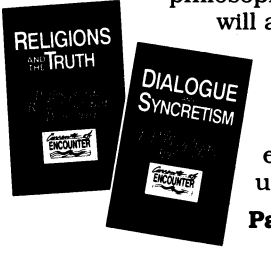
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Book Reviews

DISCOVERING EVE: ANCIENT ISRAELITE WOMEN IN CONTEXT. By Carol Meyers. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. ix and 238 pages. Cloth. $24.95.

Meyers uses feminist scholarship and social scientific research to reconstruct the life of women in pre-monarchical Israel. The typical woman—Eve—was a hard-worker in a highland village and the mother of numerous children. Life in a pre-industrial, self-sufficient household had distinct labor patterns according to gender, but both females and males served as skilled managers in critical areas of economic life; both were accorded prestige and experienced self-esteem. Gender hierarchy was virtually non-existent.

The rise of the monarchy meant the gradual end of a society in which the household was the dominant social unity. The younger sons of a family moved into the military or into religious or political bureaucracies, and their wives became less productive of needed goods than were their sisters on the farm. Soon forms of male dominance emerged.

When life expectancy was 40 for men and 30 for women, as much as half of a woman's lifespan would have been taken up with bearing and caring for children in their early years—compared with about one-seventh of the normal female life cycle in today's world. Women in biblical times died young because of the dangers of maternal mortality.

An exegesis of Genesis 2-3, and especially of Gen 3:16, plays a major role in the discussion, putting divine sanction behind the hard work and multiple pregnancies of the typical Israelite woman. The first line of Gen 3:16 becomes: "I will greatly increase your toil and your pregnancies." By careful philological work, Meyers shows that the traditional "pain" in the next line is a mistranslation. Rather, the oracle states that work for women is unremitting and is not mitigated by the procreative demands placed on human existence. Women's reluctance to have children was overcome, according to the third and fourth lines, because of their natural sexual longing for the male, and because men could "overrule" any hesitancy to have sexual relations. In short, Meyers holds that lines 3-4 of Gen 3:16 do not state that men will "rule" women, but merely that they will cast the tie-breaking vote on having children.

The author's argument on the first two lines of 3:16 is clearly better, in my judgment, than on the last two. Even more dubious is her attempt to show that Gen 3:14-19 is secondary and therefore originally not part of a curse at all. In their original context, according to Meyers, these verses merely provided divine approval for what women and men did naturally in pre-monarchical Israel.

Throughout the book the author draws ably on archaeological evidence and social scientific research to increase our understanding of women (and men) in the Bible. She argues that the fourth commandment, for example, which provides strong backing for the parental authority of both parents, was given because of the difficulty of maintaining order in a multigenerational household.

A provocative book!

Ralph W. Klein
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

DIE TATSÄCHLICHE ROMFAHRT DES APOSTELS PAULUS. By Heinz Warnecke. Vol. 127 in Stuttgarter Bibelstudien, ed. by Helmut Merklein and Erich Zenger. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1987. 164 Pages. Paper.

This is a pioneering book. It is necessary that the American exegetical community become familiar with this new hypothesis concerning the Apostle Paul's journey to Rome. Briefly, it is Warnecke's theory that the shipwreck of Acts 27-28 did not land him on Malta, also not on the Dalmatian island Mljet (which was sometimes advocated), but rather on the Greek island of Cephalonia. The Acts report is taken seriously, without prejudging the issue of historicity. Warnecke, a scientist and archaeologist, not an exegete, uses evidence from many different disciplines, such as geography, ancient sailing, climatology, zoology, social history, etc. in arriving at his conclusion and presents the evidence in an attractive and convincing way, negatively for Malta and positively for Cephalonia. The negative conclusion for Malta, according to Warnecke, reads in part: With the exception of the name, Malta does not fit any other data of Acts, chs. 27-28: the ship could not have been driven from Crete to Malta as a result of the storm; Malta was never in the Adriatic Sea, did not support the route Egypt-Sicily, does not offer a suitable gulf for landing, etc. The sailors could have identified Malta. There were no vipers on Malta, the inhabitants neither were barbarians nor did they venerate the Greek goddess Dike. The island was not administered by a *protos* (chief man), Malta was not Christianized until after Constantine. On the other hand, all these items from the Acts report would fit Cephalonia quite well. The storm would drive the ship there, it is in the Adriatic Sea, and it had a good landing place. The inhabitants were designated as barbarians, Dike was venerated there. Publius Alfius Primus was a legate who could have been in charge of the isländ at the time. There were no physicians so that Paul's ministry of healing was appreciated. The harmless cat-adder could be confused with a poisonous sand-viper. Finally, even the statement in Titus 1:5 (Crete) and 3:12 (Nicopolis) would become more understandable, regardless of authenticity.

The book contains maps illustrating the theory and some drawings. Although the theory is presented well and sounds convincing, there are some criticisms to be noted. The tradition for Malta has been solid for all these centuries. Warnecke uses evidence from all times (Homer to the 19th century) in support of the theory which may no longer or not yet apply to the 1st century. The availability of medical services has not much to do with the miraculous healing narrative. The maps, although illustrative, are not sufficient for all the data. I am sure that his claim that the numerous biblical maps on the journeys of Paul must be redrawn may not become reality in the foreseeable future. Whether archaeology may find anything on Cephalonia to support his theory is also questionable. But the book must be reckoned with in the future; it has convinced other reviewers.

Wilhelm C. Linss
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

THE ROYAL ABBEY OF SAINT-DENIS FROM ITS BEGINNINGS TO THE DEATH OF SUGER 475-1151. By Sumner McKnight Crosby. Edited and completed by Pamela Z. Blum. Yale Publications in the History of Art, 37. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987. xxiii and 525 pages. Cloth. $55.00.

From his first doctoral seminar until his death fifty years later, Sumner McKnight Crosby had the scholarly purity of heart to will one thing: an interpretation of the literary and archaeological remains of the Abbey of Saint-Denis (north Paris) from its beginnings through the leadership of Abbot Suger in the twelfth century. Since Suger's Abbey Church has long been identified as the very first and definitive Gothic structure, influencing centuries of Christian art and architecture beginning with Notre Dame and Chartres, Saint-Denis has received enormous attention. It is worthy of the life's work of a scholar like

Crosby. Delivered to the editor just four months before his death in 1982, Crosby's *magnum opus* is itself worthy of the expert and thorough care it received from editor Blum and its lavish production by Yale University Press.

According to a complex legend, St. Paul's Athenian convert Dionysius (Acts 17) became the first bishop of Athens, wrote several influential works such as *The Mystical Theology*, and then died for his faith in France. Saint Denis had his head cut off, but picked it up and walked away to die somewhere else. There, of course, the faithful built a tomb, a cemetery, and then an Abbey. With successive building campaigns and illustrious abbots, it became the Royal Abbey of France where the regal documents, and tombs, were tended. Crosby's wide reading of the sources and decades of archaeological excavations have long made him the acknowledged expert on the early history of this central French institution.

It was not until this book, however, that Crosby pulled together his findings and conclusions on the most famous building campaign at Saint-Denis, the origins of Gothic under the resourceful author and abbot Suger. In his time, Suger was more influential than his contemporaries Abelard, Bernard, and Hugh of St. Victor. If Gothic architecture, and therefore Neo-Gothic, resulted from his creative sponsorship, then Suger's subsequent influence was enormous indeed. However, Crosby's endless details, plates, notes, and appendices (200 pages) concentrate purely on the one thing, Saint-Denis itself, and do not attempt to compare it with anything else or to document the claim that this was the first Gothic structure. This long-standing assumption might seem reasonable, except for the recent challenge of Jan van der Meulen, and of Thomas Polk (*Saint-Denis, Noyon and the Early Gothic Choir*, 1982).

Nevertheless, this monumental work is now the standard for the early history of Saint-Denis. Rarely does such a worthy subject meet such a devoted student for an entire lifetime of scholarly effort.

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JERUSALEM, THE TEMPLE, AND THE NEW AGE IN LUKE-ACTS. By J. Bradley Chance. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988. Cloth. $24.95.

This revision of a 1984 Duke Dissertation contributes to the debate about the role of Judaism in Luke-Acts by focusing on the place of Jerusalem and the temple in Luke's eschatological scheme.

According to Chance, Luke did not place the endtime in some distant future but instead expected the ultimate restoration to occur soon. In fact, already the time of the church was the beginning of the new age, evidenced by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the leadership of the apostles over Israel, and the mission to the gentiles—all signs of eschatological fulfillment. Within this scheme, Chance argues, Luke did not seek to dissociate Christianity from Judaism in the expansion to a gentile mission, despite the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish leadership. Rather, in agreement with a growing number of scholars, Chance thinks that Luke affirmed an ongoing mission to the Jews and expected an ultimate restoration of Israel, implied by the promises in the birth narratives and by passages such as Acts 1:6 ("Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?").

What then, Chance asks, was the role of Jerusalem and the temple in this future restoration of Israel? Chance shows that Luke did not follow the typical approaches of early Christian writings which identified the temple metaphorically with Jesus and the Christian community or which transferred cultic language to the new church. Rather, Luke retained a special interest in the actual Jerusalem and temple: both figure prominently in Luke's birth narrative; the temple is where the disciples are worshiping at the end of the Gospel; and Jerusalem is the center from which the mission of salvation emanates out to the gentiles. Also, the Lukan writings do not ultimately condemn the temple as such but only criticize the Jewish leaders for using the temple to confine God's presence in the world. Thus, Chance argues, despite the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in C.E. 70, Luke may not have seen this destruction as a permanent rejec-

tion by God. Rather, like the Jewish writers of his time, Luke may have expected on the literal plane of history the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple as the center of salvation in the new age in fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. While Chance may be right that such a restoration is compatible with Luke's general understanding of the promises to Israel, Luke does not ever say explicitly that Jerusalem and the temple will be restored. As such, Chance's point remains an argument from silence.

While the book is mainly engaged in a scholarly debate about Luke, it is quite readable for those generally interested in Jewish-Christian relations and for anyone eager to sort out the many conundra of the Lukan writings.

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HYMNS AND THE CHRISTIAN "MYTH." By Lionel Adey. University of British Columbia Press, 1986. $20.50.

CLASS AND IDOL IN THE ENGLISH HYMN. By Lionel Adey. University of British Columbia Press, 1989. 355 pages. $35.00.

Though Lionel Adey is not a professional theologian, he has provided a definite service to theology with these two volumes, which tell from a novel viewpoint (i.e., from below) what the church has confessed at some times and in some places.

The first book traces "changing representations in hymns of basic Christian beliefs." He finds the myth (Northrop Frye's "mythos") related objectively in some hymns, while appropriated and re-enacted subjectively in others. In yet others, the myth takes a back seat to a reflexive concern with worship itself. *Hymns and the Christian "Myth"* is useful by itself as an introduction to the history of the myth in the hymns of the (English) church. It originated, though, as background for the unique contributions of the second volume. *Class and Idol in the English Hymn* focuses more narrowly on hymns sung in England from about 1700 to 1939, especially the Victorian period. In explaining the social history of hymns, Adey is concerned with accounting for the currency of important ideas, not with narrating the circumstances under which they were written.

Adey investigates two questions, suggested in the title. First, is there evidence in the history of the use of hymns to support the Marxist critique of religion as the "opiate" of the lower classes? That is, were hymns used to condition lower-class Christians to be content with their earthly lot and settle for a promise of happiness after death? Secondly, is there evidence in that same history that in modern times the Christian faith has been subverted by the introduction of "idols" (e.g., the nation state, the family, nature) into its main vessels of praise?

Evidence is sought among the hymns that were actually *sung*, not merely what was written or got published or survives in our own literature. This could make for a daunting research project. Because of the vast number of hymnals published, though, Adey believes he can rely on the frequency with which a hymn got republished as an index of its popularity and use. He also checks this against a few contemporary surveys of hymn popularity. The resulting list of hymns is then subdivided according to their usual social provenance (denomination commonly reflected class), and the two lists are compared for differences in theme or message.

> Clearly hymnals of the Learned tradition [e.g., Anglican] emphasized praise and thanksgiving, the coming of Christ and the Spirit, and the daily round of services, elements to the fore in the worship of the ancient and medieval Church. Those of the Popular tradition [e.g., Methodist, Baptist] emphasized subjective devotion, involving emotional dependence, the act of worship itself, and missionary activity. Surprisingly, the traditions did not differ as regards their emphasis on death and the future state, a fact... casting doubt on the Marxist critique of religion (p. 76).

In general, while Adey finds and documents particular strains of class-conditioning

and idolatry in hymns of certain periods and situations, he does not find support here for Marx's blanket condemnation. There have been noteworthy atrocities, undoubtedly. The following notorious verse from the Victorian "All Things Bright and Beautiful" has inculcated acceptance of class distinctions, especially when one comma in the third line was overlooked:

> The rich man in his castle,
> The poor man at his gate,
> God made them, high or lowly,
> And ordered their estate.

And "Ein Feste Burg" was grouped with "National Hymns" in one Edwardian hymnal! But generally such tendencies, even when strong, have been overcome from within the hymnic tradition, which has proven to be a plastic medium.

The greater problem, Adey concludes, is that the power of Christian hymns to arouse the will and imagination of people by their influence of the collective unconscious might be lost to the church through indifference, or through new idolatrous substitutions for the solid core of tradition that retains its relevance to the world's problems in our day.

The person who is seriously interested in the interrelationship of Christian thought with the lives of Christians, and who likes to sing hymns, will probably enjoy these books as much as I did.

Marcus Felde
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PREACHING AND THE LITERARY FORMS OF THE BIBLE. By Thomas G. Long. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989. 144 pages. Paper. $8.95.

The preacher asks two questions about a book such as this: Does it offer help for more effective preaching? Does it enable the preacher to attain a greater faithfulness to the biblical text? Thomas Long believes that "faithfulness to what the Spirit creates through the text" demands that the preacher let the literary form of the text influence the way in which the sermon makes its impact. He sees that a key part of the preacher's task is "how to preach so that the sermon embodies in its language, form and style the gospel it seeks to proclaim." Both in text and in sermon what is important is not just the idea contained, but the total impact of the communication.

Long list five questions to be asked of a biblical text: (1) What is the genre of the text? (2) What is the rhetorical function of this genre? (3) What literary devices does this genre employ to achieve its rhetorical effect? (4) How in particular does the text under consideration, in its own literary setting, embody the characteristics and dynamics described in questions 1–3? (5) How may the sermon, in a new setting, say and do what the text says and does in its setting? His discussion of this last question is disappointing in that he says very little about the sermon itself as a genre that places constraints on the move from text to sermon. Long does not, however, suggest that the preacher can simply duplicate the form of the text in the sermon.

In the major portion of the book Long applies these questions to several literary forms: Psalms, Proverbs, Narratives, Parables of Jesus, and Epistles. He offers a very suggestive analysis of the literary qualities of each genre and also gives specific examples of how a sermon on a particular text might be constructed.

In spite of the rich suggestiveness of Long's discussion of the various forms, some problems arise when he jumps immediately from textual analysis to sermon. He says little about how specific forms, such as the proverb, have been mediated to us through their collection in a book and inclusion in the canon. He does not always convince that the effect of a particular form can or should be duplicated in the much different setting of the sermon.

For example, his discussion of the Epistles makes the point that the letter has a unique advantage over spoken communication in that it is a genuine way of being present to another person without the risk of the intensity of a face-to-face encounter. But how can this quality of the letter be transferred to the face-to-face setting of the sermon? Long offers no help here.

This book will give the preacher help both for interpreting the text faithfully and for preaching effectively. It is one of those rare books which demonstrates in a practical way how good exegesis can create good preaching. Long shows convincingly that by keeping an eye on how the original text made its impact on the readers the contemporary preacher can understand better how to achieve some of that same communication with the people in the pew.

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THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND ITS PREDECESSOR: FROM NARRATIVE SOURCE TO PRESENT GOSPEL. By Robert Tomson Fortna. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988. xvi and 332 pages. Cloth. $39.95.

In recent years literary approaches to the Fourth Gospel have instilled new life into an area of New Testament study which had become somewhat moribund. Such literary methods have called into question the usefulness of historical source and redaction criticism for understanding the document. Now comes Robert Fortna with this new book to defend, update, and expand his own earlier seminal work on a postulated source behind the Fourth Gospel. Fortna claims that it cannot be adequately understood without uncovering the history of how the present text came to be.

He postulates (following the suggestion of Bultmann) that there was once a document consisting of a collection of seven "signs," stories of Jesus' miracles. To this Signs Source was added a Passion Source, forming a Signs Gospel. Fortna sees this as the most primitive "gospel," roughly contemporary with Mark, representing a purely Jewish form of Christianity. Its purpose was strictly Christological, to demonstrate that Jesus was the expected Messiah, and its aim was to convert other Jews to belief in Jesus.

The Christian community which used this Signs Gospel was forced out of the synagogue. Reflecting this traumatic experience, the author of the Fourth Gospel created a new document, using the Signs Gospel as the narrative basis. This was done mostly by adding discourse material, both in major sections such as the Farewell Discourses, but also in many smaller additions within the narratives. The author worked on a conservative principle, expanding on the original wording but not changing it. As a result the Fourth Gospel is filled with "aporias," difficult bumps within the flow of the text. The investigator can use these aporias as clues to recovering the Signs Gospel.

Fortna's main reason for this book is his analysis of the Fourth Gospel's redaction of the Gospel of Signs. He attempts to do what a redaction critic would do in comparing Matthew to Mark as its source. He shows how the Fourth Gospel revises sharply the source's attitude toward the Jews. The Fourth Gospel also introduces a subtle critique of signs. They are no longer regarded as simple proofs of Jesus' messiahship; faith needs a more adequate basis. The Fourth Gospel is not content to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah, but also explores what it means to be the Messiah.

Fortna admits that, in details, his separation of source and redactional elements is far from certain. The thesis as a whole, however, is persuasive, for it offers a credible solution for many of the aporias. Yet sometimes one wonders whether Fortna's ingenuity leaves too little room for the author's freedom to jar the reader. My uneasiness with his reconstruction comes mostly in the passion narrative, where it is much harder to see the tension between source and redaction than it is in the miracle stories.

Fortna's work presents a significant challenge to those who suppose that they can understand the text of the Fourth Gospel without historical literary investigation.

David W. Kuck

THE GRAMMAR OF THE HEART: NEW ESSAYS IN MORAL PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY. Edited by Richard H. Bell. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988. 259 pages, notes. Cloth. $24.95.

The Grammar of the Heart is a *Festschrift* to the now retired Yale professor of philosophical theology, Paul Holmer. Holmer sought to reroot theology in the soil of Christian living, and he has fertilized this endeavor with the thought of Soren Kierkegaard, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and C. S. Lewis. It is the first two of these three that interests the contributors to this volume. The common task is to employ Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein either separately or in tandem for the purpose of developing a grammar of the human heart which has been given over to thinking and living Christianly.

The book's root metaphor likens theology to linguistic grammar. Grammar is not something we speak *per se*; rather, it structures our conversation so that what we say makes sense. Similarly, having a grammar of our emotions, our will, and our moral actions helps us to make sense out of our lives. Theology, properly understood, constitutes the grammar that makes sense out of our life as our heart leads it. Holmer makes the assumption that "we are to become godly in all things, referring everything, our woes and weal, fears and joys, past and future, completely to God's love and care." With this assumption in mind he describes the task of theology:

> ...theology does not parse verbs, arrange thoughts, and conjugate sentences. Its matter is finally the whole of human life itself. Insofar as it is a grammar, it is more like the teaching that leads to a truly successful, deeply satisfactory, even blessed and happy life.

A side theme is the relationship between the turn to the subject in modern thought and the emerging post-modern agenda. The philosophical problem has to do with getting beyond the private self to deal with truth claims, whereas the theological problem has to do with getting beyond human subjectivity to deal with knowledge of God. Most contributors to this book emphasize the communal character of linguistic understanding in the later Wittgenstein, so that we get beyond the privatism of the modern self. Bell's introduction and the chapter by D. Z. Phillips set the agenda nicely. The essay by Rowan Williams is especially helpful. After exegeting Wittgenstein and Bonhoeffer, he helps us to find ourselves by looking beyond ourselves, i.e., by looking to our relationship with God.

The theological arguments overall are much less successful. They capitulate too easily to the commonly accepted split in the modern mind between scientific and affective knowledge. Author after author continues the intellectual schizophrenia we know so well of dividing between objective or neutral knowing through science, on the one hand, and purposeful or value laden subjectivity, on the other hand. Religion, according to this bifurcation, belongs to the latter and not the former. Contributor John Whittaker says theology engenders attitudes toward our life, but certainly not accurate knowledge of the divine. He writes, "religious truths are not comparable to scientific or metaphysical descriptions but are instead the cornerstones for teleological, evaluative construals." Similarly, Ronald Hustwit drives a wedge between the mind and the heart, forcing us to choose between them. He says that our faith produces a "grammar appropriate to affairs of the heart rather than to rationality." Such has been the approach of neo-orthodox Protestant theology for much of the twentieth century. It has led to a protectionist or defensive maneuver. It has sought to defend Christian truth from scientific attack by sealing it off in the fortress of subjective faith. The assumption seems to be that the mind of science cannot harm the heart of faith. The risk in this approach, of course, is that in keeping true to our hearts we end up losing our minds.

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THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM: A BIBLIOGRAPHY, 1716–1988. Compiled and edited by Thomas R. Longstaff and Page A. Thomas. New Gospel Studies 4. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988. xxviii and 235 pages. Cloth. $35.00.

This bibliography on the Synoptic Problem casts its net very wide. It lists 1,747 items in alphabetical order, covering not only the synoptic problem in the narrow sense, but the general theory of literary sources, works based on some particular theory of sources (e.g., works on the source Q), and works on the historical Jesus.

Prof. William R. Farmer, who served as catalyst to bring the two compilers together, provides a useful "Foreword" calling attention to the utility of the bibliography.

Publication data were "verified" in standard data bases and public indexes, above all in the Ohio College Library Center (OCLC) data base and the standard indexes to periodicals. (One omission was *Religion Index Two*, an index that covers polygraphs and Festschriften.) Each entry also gives, in the case of books, the OCLC access number and the symbols for holding libraries; this will aid scholars in locating the material. Two valuable indexes (1) arrange the publications by date and (2) provide a keyword index.

The material was keyed into an electronic database using "Pro-Cite"® bibliographic software and then edited on "Scripsit 1000"® for publication. The authors do not indicate whether this electronic database is available to interested users; they do invite interested users to submit titles for inclusion in the database. This is a hard-copy fruit of electronic technology. It deserves many followers.

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ON READING KARL BARTH IN SOUTH AFRICA. Edited by Charles Villa-Vicencio. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988. xii and 172 pages. Paper. $14.95.

VIOLENCE AND NONVIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA: JESUS' THIRD WAY. By Walter Wink. Philadelphia/Santa Cruz: New Society Publishers, 1987. viii and 98 pages. Cloth. $24.95. Paper. $7.95..

Do European and North American theologians have anything to contribute to theological movements for liberation? Both of these books claim they do. In the first book, both the method and objective are in themselves significant. Methodologically, the authors participate in a team approach as they examine various facets of the life and writings of Barth which they argue are relevant in the present South African struggle. This team approach reflects the solidarity of liberation theologians united in a common struggle for justice which contrasts with theology practiced as an isolated academic discipline. The objective of the book, a retrieval of Karl Barth for the freedom movement in South Africa, affirms that indeed there is something to be learned from European theology.

Barth is read contextually. His theology is placed within the social and political conflicts of his lifetime (Villa-Vicencio). Special attention is directed toward Barth's theology of the in-breaking Kingdom of God (Dirkie Smit), his penchant for socialism (Robin Peterson), his analysis of the possible use of violence for social change (Alan Brews), the tension between church and state (C. A. Wanamaker, Jaap Durand), and the ongoing relevance of Barth for contemporary South African theology (Nico Horn, John W. de Gruchy). These essayists uncover aspects of Barth's theology within the context of his political biography often neglected in less context-related treatments.

Unlike many volumes of collected essays, this book maintains a strong continuity by virtue of its consistent probing of the heritage of Barth for the South African freedom struggle. Because other readings of Barth's theology have been

frequent, this volume, closely connecting the doctrine of justification with a passion for justice in praxis, has relevance for contexts beyond South Africa.

> "Barth's doctrine of reconciliation was firmly grounded in his Christology, and it is precisely his Christology that enables him to distinguish and yet affirm an intrinsic relationship between reconciliation with God and sociopolitical liberation. Just as for Barth there is a very close connection between reconciliation and justification, and between justification and social justice, so he dialectically related the gospel of God's reconciliation to the establishment of a just peace in the world" (de Gruchy, 146).

These issues, particularly the relationship of justification to justice, are of paramount importance also for our own theological agenda and practice.

In *Violence and Nonviolence in South Africa*, Walter Wink is most aware that he addresses the South African church as a North American "outsider." Nevertheless, he seeks to make a modest contribution to the South African discussion regarding the means to be employed in effecting a change from the apartheid system. In defending a nonviolent means, Wink does not intend mere passivity. The nonviolent alternative, modeled after what Wink calls "Jesus' Third Way," is an intentional, "militant" nonviolence which boldly confronts the injustice of the present system. To follow in Jesus' Third Way is to seize the moral initiative, refuse to submit or accept the inferior position, shame the oppressor into repentance, and be willing to suffer rather than retaliate. Wink argues on both pragmatic and theological grounds for the superiority of this approach. Contemporary models for change by nonviolent organizing include Solidarity in Poland, the popular movement in the Philippines, Mohandas Gandhi in India, and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the United States.

Wink appeals to the South African church to prepare nonviolent strategies to topple apartheid. It is not only the moral/theological basis of nonviolence but, moreso, its practical potential for success which Wink emphasizes. Wink is most helpful when he illustrates with cases tactics consistent with the way of nonviolence.

Wink's contribution, although directed toward South Africa, challenges any who seek to provoke social and political change to examine both motivation and means.

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WHY IS THIS HAPPENING TO ME? GUIDANCE AND HOPE FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER. By Erika Schuchardt. Translated by Karen Leube. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989. 208 pages. Paper. $9.95.

Winner of the German Protestant Literature Prize, this book "reconfirms" Schuchardt's research on the social integration of the handicapped, published in 1980 and 1987. Based on a study of over 500 written accounts of suffering people, Schuchardt found that while personal faith assisted many of the afflicted, the role of the church was largely insignificant or negative. The author notes that successful coping occurs where sufferers have gone through eight phases. Most significantly, the expression of aggression enables progress through the "learning process" to the target stage of acceptance, management, and solidarity with others. Schuchardt argues that Christian faith can liberate aggression by providing a listener and companion for the lonely, searching sufferer.

Part Two documents the role that Christian faith and companionship played in six cases of affliction. Following a review of books which tell the life stories of people suffering from polio, depression, blindness, raising a retarded child, and cancer, Schuchardt examines, in Part Three, the writings of Hans Kung, Dorothee Solle, A. M. K. Muller, and Giesbert Greshake. She chides the theologians for being too theoretical and including no reference to the "interaction between God's care and human support." In her summary, Schuchardt reiterates the complaints of sufferers against the church, underscores the importance of human support and Christian faith

for successful coping, warns about the problem the healthy are to the disabled, and restates the failure of theology to include relationships among the gifts of God to us.

Schuchardt mistakenly criticizes theology, whose interest is theodicy, rather than strategies for health care. Also, in spite of its title, the book is not about theodicy, but about activating Christians to better care for the disabled and suffering. For Schuchardt, theology is a digression or tangent that can supply no answers. Schuchardt also seems to underestimate the place of biblical resources in pastoral care. In her defense, however, she puts her finger on a serious lack in many theodicies, namely, the failure to see compassionate Christian care as a way to deal with the *intellectual* problem of evil. Schuchardt opens the door to that insight, although she does not develop it.

Whether the fault of the writer or translator, the text is frequently opaque and disjointed, leaving the reader unsure what is being said. Among assets, it includes 62 pages of notes, references, and bibliographies—a wealth of material for further research.

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JESUS IN EUROPEAN PROTESTANT THOUGHT, 1778–1860. By Colin Brown. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988. xxiv and 359 pages. Paper. $18.95.

This book is a road map to the restructuring of Christology that occurred in the 19th century. That period saw, to use Brown's words, "the second major crisis of faith concerning the identity of Jesus Christ." The first crisis began with the appearance of Jesus and lasted until the fifth century; there was no prevailing orthodoxy in the strict sense against which to rebel. Such was not the case, however, during the last century. New voices raised questions that subverted every inherited assumption. Brown seeks to clarify the contours of the Christological debate that occupied some of the greatest minds of the age.

Brown groups his presentation under five categories. The first, "The Fragments Controversy," deals with Reimarus's rationalistic attack on Christendom and with his critics. Lessing's distinction between the religion of Christ and the Christian religion is treated in this context. The second, "Philosophical Idealism and Rational Religion," covers the Christological thought of Kant, Herder, Goethe, Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling. Part 3, "New Perspectives on Religion," is a treatment of the new thinking represented by Schleiermacher, together with critique from within (Kierkegaard) and outside (Feuerbach) the church. Part 4 is a clear exposition of problems and possibilities surrounding "The Life of Jesus and Critical History." It is here that Brown is able to demonstrate most distinctively the interplay between biblical scholarship and the theological task. The last section, "Orthodoxy Modified," examines the reaction of the Confessionalist (Hoffman, Thomasius) and Mediating (Ullmann, Rothe, Dorner) theologians to the challenge of the more radical thinkers.

Brown has been conscientiously fair in his presentation, never arguing his own critique. He has copiously quoted the works of those whose views he presents and has provided extensive endnotes. These do much to offset the need for the bibliography that the book lacks.

Overall the book is to be highly recommended for its scope, which is wider than Schweitzer's, its balanced presentations, and its clarity. It will tend to serve best those who seek information rather than contemporary theological argumentation. It will, no doubt, prove a trustworthy guide for those who find the intersection of philosophy, biblical studies, and systematic theology intriguing. Brown concludes that the 19th century views of Jesus, set amid post-Enlightenment philosophy and an unsure theology that ranged from "Deistic Unitarianism" to "practical tritheism," continue to have powerful resonances in our own day. The earlier context, he says,

> ensured that Jesus was seen as a profound religious visionary, a pioneer moral teacher, the human instantiation of the divine principle of the universe,

or as the human metamorphosis of one of three Gods. But if the thinkers of the nineteenth century were at fault in this, it is a fault which they share with many of their counterparts today.

As post-moderns continue to grapple with Christology from below and its relationship with classical orthodoxy, it is worthwhile to remember that the debate is one with a history.

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TRANSFORMING GRACE: CHRISTIAN TRADITION AND WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE. By Anne E. Carr. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988. ix and 272 pages. Cloth. $16.95.

Most writers in regarding the women's movement within the church (and the feminist theology it has spawned) tend to one-sidedly criticize or advocate the work that has been done. Anne Carr's analysis strives to be a balanced account. She maintains that the Christian faith and the feminist view of reality not only concur but are necessarily interconnected. At the same time, however, she acknowledges that there is a broad range of thinking among feminist theologians; conservative feminists do not challenge the tradition enough and thus encourage women to remain in a position of subjection, while revolutionary thinkers reject the tradition in favor of other feminist forms of spirituality and consequently sacrifice the wholistic view of salvation that Christianity offers. Carr wants to steer a course between these two extremes and asserts that what she calls "mainline Christian feminism" has the most promise for revealing the interconnection between Christian tradition and women's experience.

Carr's grounding in Catholicism prompts her to begin the work of "critical retrieval" by arguing for women's ordination from the perspective of church as sacrament. Such a starting-point is relevant to the Protestant situation in which women are already ordained if one agrees with Carr's theses that concrete experience must precede theological reflection and that Christian feminist spirituality is truly universal in that it "sees the whole of the human problem through the part." The principles of liberation theology are woven into this plea for solidarity in seeking to discern the gospel for all those who suffer under dehumanizing and objectifying structures in the present world. The author's conviction is clear—feminist theology awakens the church to its responsibility of proclaiming the gospel as truly universal, which can only be done by reinterpreting tradition in light of women's experience as different from that of men.

Although topical in nature, the book is a useful introduction to the present state of feminist theology and some of its prominent representatives. It is more a survey than a constructive endeavor; still, it makes some insightful observations about various aspects of the Christian tradition that have the potential for new meaning through reinterpretation. Just one example is the image of Mary as modeling the church's coming to faith in the process of tension between human weakness and God's grace. An extensive bibliography of feminist theological writings (by both women and men) and an index enhance the value of this very readable volume.

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THE ILLUMINATING ICON. By Anthony Ugolnik. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. xxiv and 276 pages. Cloth. $18.95.

Tony Ugolnik has written a *very* good book as an introduction to orthodoxy especially aimed at Western Christians and especially accessible by those who have known rock and roll, Vietnam, and recent forays into *glasnost*.

I believe that Western Christianity, Protestant and mainline, is so captive to the reigning ideologies of left and right and the empty symbols of our culture that we have *got* to journey outside the tight little circles of our own narcissistic and short-sighted theologies. Orthodoxy

has, for at least two decades (along, to some degree, with Eastern-rite Catholicism) been a major force in re-understanding the shortsightedness of Western Christianity, largely through the theology of the icon and through the central force of the sign of transfiguration.

Ugolnik has achieved a good work: his book is so readable and so accessible to non-theologians, non-academics, and non-pastors that it cries out for a broader readership than I'm afraid Eerdmans will be able to provide. It is, because of its accessibility and because of the way it is laid out, better for most readers than the standard introductions to Orthodoxy: Bulgakov, Archbishop Paul, Hopko, Kallistos Ware. I mean these venerable authors, living or dead, no ill will. It is just that Ugolnik's book avoids the obvious initial problem in achieving insight into the vast differences in *sensibility* (his word) between the Christian East and West by refusing to follow the systematic outlining of the material. The authors cited above all did that in their works, and the result is that the Westerner cannot help but draw up a systematic list of her beliefs and then put them side-by-side with Orthodoxy. When she does this, she can simply say, "Oh, I see: we're the same except for a few details." Ugolnik invites the reader into a personal tour of Orthodoxy, including the theology thereof, which shows you the difference in vision, in imagination, in worldview, in... *sensibility*. For it is precisely those "few details" which make all the difference.

We in the West can continue to kid ourselves that our Christian faith is an entire way of life, if we want. We in the pastorate can continue to rip our hair out in amazement at the ability of parishioners to segment their lives so that one part is religious and all the rest is secular. Or we can seek some insightful help from a tradition in which the spiritual and the material are truly married and vision and thought inspire a whole imaginative approach to all of life. And while you're at it you will read a deep lay theologian whose interest is the development of the Christian mind and not manners and morals alone.

Jay C. Rochelle
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM. AN INTRODUCTION. By Robert H. Stein. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987. 292 pages. Cloth. $17.95.

This is an excellent introduction to the synoptic problem and to other matters of interpretation of the synoptic Gospels.

Stein devotes a large part of this book to an analysis of the problematic, laying out the data of the literary interdependence of the three Gospels with copious examples. After discussion of the various possibilities, he argues convincingly for the priority of Mark. This chapter lists seven arguments which, according to Stein, must be used cumulatively. The next chapter is devoted to the demonstration of the existence of Q as a written source (which Matthew and Luke had in common beyond the material they drew from Mark). A separate chapter is devoted to one of the major problems of the Two-Source-Hypothesis, the minor agreements between Matthew and Luke in the triple tradition. Stein believes they can be explained partly by coincidences in the redactional activity of the two evangelists, partly by overlapping of Q and Mark, partly by textual corruption, and partly by the overlapping of oral traditions. The agreements must be seen in the whole context of the synoptic problem in order not to overemphasize their significance. The author considers the Farmer revival of the Griesbach hypothesis—that Matthew was first, that Luke used Matthew, and that Mark used both Matthew and Luke—not to be a convincing theory, but it has the value of reminding us that the two source hypothesis is and will always be a *theory*.

This book's special contribution is the demonstration of the relationship of source or literary criticism with form and redaction criticism. Stein believes that "the greatest value of source criticism lies in the area of redaction criticism. The most reliable way of observing the work of Matthew and Luke is by noting how they used their sources." Therefore, Stein discusses the preliterary history of the gospel tradition and gives a good and even sympathetic description of the presuppositions of form criticism. Unfortunately, in the next chapter he

contradicts these insights by attempting to demonstrate the faithful transmission of the gospel materials and their historical reliability by pointing to their sacredness, the value of eyewitnesses, the ability to memorize, etc. This stands in sharp contrast with the phenomena discussed earlier in the book when the differences were demonstrated. This contrast is once more evident when Stein in the next chapter describes again the positive values of form criticism. He seems to be torn constantly between acknowledging the validity of form criticism with its conclusions and a desire to maintain the historical reliability of the gospel materials. He concludes, "surely the burden of proof had clearly shifted to those who would deny the trustworthiness of the gospel traditions." He does not discuss the criteria for authentic Jesus sayings but refers to his earlier article in *Gospel Perspectives* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1980).

The final section covers redaction criticism. Despite its brevity, this section is informative and uses good examples. He emphasizes correctly that redaction criticism presupposes form and source criticism, but demonstrates that Markan redaction criticism is also valid. Toward the end of the book, there is this perceptive statement: "And, if we have in the triple tradition a threefold interpretation of a saying or deed of Jesus, are we not far richer as exegetes than if each of the Evangelists simply repeated in unison the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus?" A helpful glossary and two indexes are attached.

Wilhelm C. Linss
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

THE NEW TESTAMENT BACKGROUND: SELECTED DOCUMENTS. By C. K. Barrett. Revised and Expanded Edition. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989. xxx and 361 pages. Paper. $14.95.

We welcome this helpful book, republished in a revised and expanded paperback edition after more than thirty years.

All the texts contained in the first edition are reprinted, usually furnished with a concise introduction, and rendered in a fluid English translation. There are also some explanatory notes. In addition to the texts of the first edition, there are other texts, such as Dio Cassius, *Epitome* 67.14.1-3 concerning Domitian, some epistles of Diogenes, two ossuaries, a section from Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, and other additions. The main enrichment is provided by the special section on Qumran (ch. 9), some of the materials of which were contained in a hasty appendix in the first edition, and by the incorporation of Coptic Texts from Nag Hammadi and the Mandaean Literature.

One may always quibble about the inclusion or omission of certain texts, but the present selections are felicitous and always relevant to our understanding of the New Testament. The classification of the materials is partly by subject (Roman Empire, Philosophers) and partly by the kind of material (Papyri, Inscriptions) so that there is some overlapping. The American reader may find some expressions a little too British. But these are small matters. We must express our gratitude to the author and the publisher for making available to every student of the New Testament such an excellent resource for its background.

Wilhelm C. Linss

JUST A SISTER AWAY: A WOMANIST VISION OF WOMEN'S RELATIONSHIPS IN THE BIBLE. By Renita J. Weems. San Diego: LuraMedia, 1988. 145 pages. Paper. $8.95.

TEXTS OF TERROR: LITERARY-FEMINIST READINGS OF BIBLICAL NARRATIVES. By Phyllis Trible. Overtures to Biblical Theology, Vol. 13. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984. 128 pages. Paper. $8.95.

Dr. Weems unabashedly targets her work to African-American feminist Christian women like herself; however, her "creative reconstructions" of biblical women's stories enliven the text for all. She uses feminist biblical criticism to "reclaim and reconstruct" their stories while

also drawing upon African-American skills in story-telling and drama.

Sometimes the reconstructions follow historical and sociological considerations of the ancient world, as in the chapter on Ruth and Naomi; other times they are fanciful and fictional, like the chapter on Lot's wife. Weems, an Old Testament scholar and free-lance writer, is quite capable in doing both operations. Her choice of material opens one's eyes to neglected stories, like the role of Moses' wife (Nu 12) and Queen Vashti (Esther 1-2).

Her concern is to bring the biblical stories to bear on the lives of women today. Hence, the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter speaks to the violence against women in contemporary society.

Weems' book is personal. She confesses her initial jealousy and rivalry with her sisters-in-law and reveals her own mother's victimization as an abused spouse.

Each of the nine chapters has suggestions for reading from the biblical text and questions for discussion at the end. The book could be a provocative resource for teaching or preaching.

Quite different from Weems' African-American midrash is Dr. Phyllis Trible's second book in the Overtures to Biblical Theology series. Trible offers us three "provisions" for the journey through four 'texts of terror': a perspective, feminism; a methodology, literary criticism; and a story, Jacob's wrestling with God at the Jabbok. This terror text serves as a paradigm for the other texts: elements of suspense and tension, murky identity, a divine-human relationship, naming, injury, night-time, and uncertain resolution. It is, however, a male-only character story, unlike the four texts upon which Trible chooses to exercise her fine skills of rhetorical criticism.

Rhetorical criticism demands a careful and judicious eye for the details of Hebrew narrative. Trible is a master at it. Through noting the use of dialogue, narration, characterization, plot, and ending (even what does not happen or is not said), Trible draws her conclusions about each story based on the "inseparability of form, content and meaning."

Her feminist perspective directs the four stories she interprets: Hagar, the maid of Sarai; Tamar, the raped royal princess; the unnamed concubine of the Levite in Judges 19; and the unnamed daughter of Jephthah. Trible's "intrinsic reading" of each story lends support for her claim that "to tell and hear tales of terror is to wrestle demons in the night, without a compassionate God to save us." The "us" comprises biblical to contemporary women, and the feminist hermeneutic "seeks to redeem the time" from past to present.

Like Weems, Trible writes a personal and scholarly book. She chose her biblical stories in part because of the terror she saw on the streets of the city and even in "wrestling with the silence, absence and opposition of God."

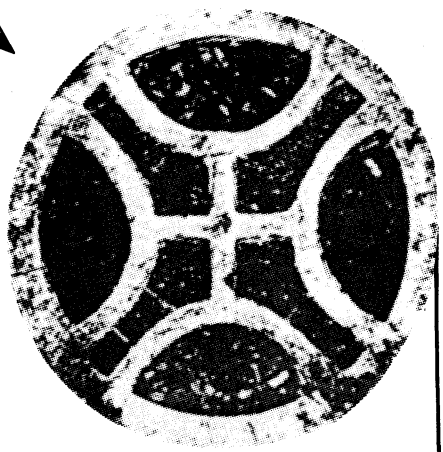
While God may at times be silent, or as in the case of Hagar and Sarai, on the side of oppression and enforced suffering, Trible tolerates neither silence nor injustice. Her expert reading of the plain sense of Hebrew narrative conventions and devices brings to light neglected female characters and perspective.

Biblical passages are listed at the beginning of each chapter, and there are many endnotes. While a knowledge of Hebrew would be helpful, the book is accessible to graduate students and ministers. I commend it as a valuable and persuasive reading of these 'texts of terror.'

Hugh J. Matlack
United Campus Ministry
Glassboro State College

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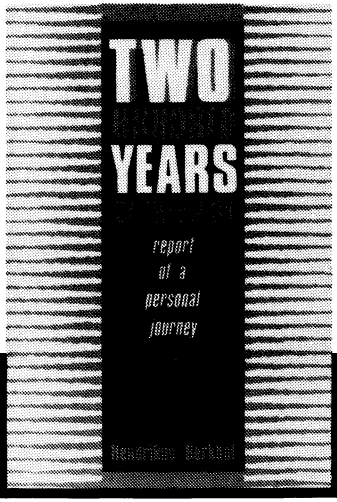
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Preaching Helps

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

Matthew and Mission

We now enter the long green season, sometimes known as "Pentecost." But Matthew neither has nor requires any special texts focusing on the sudden seizure of the church by the Spirit. In Luke-Acts the Spirit functions as a kind of substitute or alter ego of the ascended Jesus. Jesus and the Spirit in Luke-Acts are like Moses and Joshua or Elijah and Elisha. Not so in Matthew.

Matthew's Gospel closes with Jesus' pronouncement that he is not departing, not ascending, not leaving, not abandoning the church, not going anywhere. He does not hand over the direction of the people of God to spiritual energies. And most certainly Jesus does not ordain that direction be left in the hands of some cadre of elite human leaders. He is not abdicating. Hence the church needs no successors to Jesus. "I am and always will be with you," he says (28:20).

He is present with all authority (v. 18). And with all those commands of his (v. 19).

According to Matthew, the church receives not powers or privileges, not offices or officers, but marching orders. This is the Gospel which portrays Jesus as creator and commander of righteousness. Higher righteousness (5:17-20). Stunning deeds commanding the attention and admiration of a great public who will also then glorify God in heaven (5:13-16).

Christian von Dehsen, Professor of Religion at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin, has provided the "First Readings" for this issue. As he worked through the Gospel texts he noticed that most of them focus on mission: "The theme begins with the resurrection appearance in the Gospel of John and continues with Matthew's 'Great Commissioning.' The risen Jesus commissions his disciples to continue his work (John 20:19-23; Mt 28:16-20); the earthly Jesus calls those rejected by others to follow him (Mt 9:9-13) and to extend his work (Mt 9:35-10:8). The missionary work has real consequences, affecting the lives of those sent into a hostile mission field (Mt 10:24-33) and of those hearing the message (Mt 10:34-42). This series concludes with two passages that summarize the importance of the missionary work as a whole: the prayer of Jesus (Mt 11:25-30) and the parable of the sower (Mt 13:1-9,18-23)."

Author of "Pastoral Reflections" is the Rev. Kelly Denton-Borhaug. She is pastor of Golden Gate Lutheran Church in San Francisco. In her thoughtful meditations on the texts we can hear echoes of the struggles of people living in the city and in a church planted in the heart of the city.

And again Pastor Don Prange looks at the texts from the vantage point of his position as program director of Appalachian Ministries in Economic Justice, working out of a small mountain community in Dickenson County, Virginia. It may help to keep in mind that Don uses the *Jerusalem Bible* as he mulls over images and words in the texts.

I am grateful to these pastors and teachers for sharing with all the rest of us their ponderings of the lessons.

Yours,

Robert H. Smith
Editor of Preaching Helps

Day of Pentecost
June 3, 1990

Psalm 104:24-34 or *Veni, Creator Spiritus*
Joel 2:28-29
Acts 2:1-21
John 20:19-23

A FIRST READING

The story of Jesus' first appearance to the disciples (John 20:19-23), falling between that of Jesus to women at the tomb (20:11-18) and to "doubting Thomas" (20:24-29), emphasizes four major themes.

First, Jesus confers eschatological peace on the disciples as a sign of their life in Christ. Twice in this passage the risen Jesus greets the gathered disciples saying: "Peace be with you [pl.]," repeating the wish for the disciples spoken by Jesus when he was anticipating his departure (crucifixion) from them (14:27). In the face of the world's hatred, the disciples receive divine peace (16:33). This wish for peace may be grounded in the tension or even violent persecution suffered by the johannine Christians while they were still a part of the synagogue (9:22; 12:42; 16:2!).

Second, the mission of believers grows out of the johannine Christological assertion that "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (20:21). This theme pervades the entire Gospel (e.g., 1:1,14; 3:34; 5:36; 11:42; 17:8). Indeed, John is so bold as to claim that Jesus and the Father are one (10:30; 17:11). The relationship of the Father and the Son corresponds to the relationship between the Son and the disciples; just as God sent Jesus into the world, so also he sent the disciples into the world (17:18). Therefore, as the Son concludes his mission, he commissions the disciples to continue.

Third, and related to the second theme, the mission of the disciples is empowered by the Holy Spirit. This theme, clearly, is the centerpiece of the narrative of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-21. During his final discourse with the disciples in John, Jesus promises that he will send to them the Paraclete ("Counselor"), the Holy Spirit, to teach them and to remind them of all that Jesus taught (John 14:26). The Paraclete is the Spirit of truth (14:17), who will direct the testimony of believers confronted by the world's hatred (15:26-27; cf. Mt 10:19-20; Luke 12:11-12).

Finally, the disciples are given the authority to forgive and to retain sins (cf. Mt 16:19; 18:18). At the very beginning of the Gospel Jesus is recognized as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (1:29). The man born blind, removed from the synagogue because of his sin, is forgiven by Jesus whose very presence judges the world (9:24-41). Further, the Paraclete will also have the authority to convince (or, better, convict) the world of sin (16:8). Similarly, the disciples are given the authority to continue Jesus' ministry to bind and to release sin. CvD

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

This is the Sunday when preachers struggle to paint with words that powerful and yet gentle presence of the Holy Spirit, wind and fire, lifting up among us the sharp edge of truth and justice, yet also whispering, warming, and comforting, assuring us of the everpresent love of God embracing us. The images that the texts for the day place before us are powerful ones: the "pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh" issuing into visions and dreams before unimagined among God's people; "tongues of fire" and human tongues loosed to speak languages before unknown; and in the Gospel, the resurrected Christ appearing among the disciples—locked doors notwithstanding—to breathe the very Holy Spirit into those gathered followers. It's an image that can't help but conjure up in our minds that other, more ancient image from Genesis, when God breathes into the dust and the human being receives the gift of life.

The Gospel text makes it clear that it's the appearance of the crucified and risen One in the disciples' midst that is the most unimagined vision of all.

Pentecost, the day of wind and fire, takes us all back to the days when we had to memorize Luther's explanation of the articles of the Apostles'

Creed in confirmation. Luther's words about the work of the Holy Spirit are such beautiful ones: "...the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with [her] gifts and sanctified and preserved me in true faith...."

On our own we would be, we are, simply lost. But God doesn't leave us on our own. By our own reason or strength or desire faith would be impossible. But God hasn't left it up to that. No, instead God sends the Holy Spirit, wind and fire, and before you know it a small community of believers—the ones baptized after Peter's great sermon—are found selling their possessions and goods and distributing them as any have need; God sends the Spirit, and sons and daughters prophesy and see visions. Before you know it, even we whose ears are slow to hear are suddenly hearing that small voice, "Come, follow me," and we're standing and affirming the creativity of the Spirit begun in our lives long before we were old enough to be aware. The Holy Spirit is wind and fire. KD-B

PROPHETIC VOICE

With Pentecostal punning a *tongues*-in-cheek paraphrase of Acts 1:1 might read: "From Advent through Easter we've dealt with everything Jesus did and taught about a God movement called into being to bring justice into the world." But up to their last days with Jesus, the disciples never fully grasped the meaning of these actions and teachings. Then, "suddenly" (Ac 2:2) they are "filled with the Holy Spirit" (2:4). Bold proclamations "about the marvels of God" (2:11) follow. Based on the centrality of the Christ in that proclamation, we must conclude "those marvels" embodied the actions (praxis) and teaching (theory) of Jesus which initiated the God movement as a radically new order, with social, economic, political *justice* significance. Traditional hermeneutical approaches (our own 'scribal' tradition) may react with bewilderment, amazement, and astonishment (Ac 2:6,7). But hopefully there will be some "catechetical curiosity" (Ac 2:12) to probe the meaning of the Acts (*praxeis*) of early Christian community as it responded to the Holy Spirit and a mission (Jn 20:21) of justice (cf. Mt 6:33) centered around the actions and teachings of the Christ. DP

The Holy Trinity
June 10, 1990

Psalm 29
Genesis 1:1-2:32
(or Deuteronomy 4:32-34,39-40)
2 Corinthians 13:11-14
Matthew 28:16-20

A FIRST READING

The pericope commonly identified as the "Great Commissioning" culminates the Gospel of Matthew. Standing on a mountain in Galilee, the risen Jesus, the exalted Son of Man, directs the disciples to go out and to make disciples of all nations. Here Matthew joins Christology to mission, deriving the latter from the former. These dual themes of Christology and mission draw upon themes already developed in the narrative of Jesus' earthly ministry, now expanding the mission initially aimed at Israel to include all the nations (*panta ta ethnê*).

The setting of the Great Commissioning highlights the Christology of Matthew by bringing to mind other events from the earthly ministry of Jesus which occur on mountains, the symbolic location for a theophany. First, the setting on the Galilean mountain recalls the setting of the Sermon on the Mount (5:1), where Jesus, like Moses before him on Mt. Sinai (Ex 19), interprets God's law for his disciples and for the crowd (5:17). Second, this setting recalls the setting of the Transfiguration, where the "inner circle" of the disciples (Peter, James, John) receives the special revelation that Jesus is truly God's Son (17:1-9). Finally, this setting recalls several other significant events from the earthly ministry: the tempting by Satan (4:8), the healings and feeding on the mountain (15:29-39), Jesus' survey of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, and his final instruc-

tions to the disciples before his arrest (24:3, 26:31).

The risen Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth; he sends out the disciples to continue his mission. In contrast to his earlier instructions to them only to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt 10:6), now he sends them to all the nations. In the New Testament, the word *ethnê* usually means "Gentiles," although the word can also mean "nations." Either way, the mission begun by the resurrected Jesus to Israel is now expanded beyond Israel. After the rejection of Jesus by Israel (the trial and crucifixion) and God's vindication of Jesus (the resurrection), the nations can now be included in God's kingdom (cf. 12:17-21). Perhaps here we have a window into the history of Matthew's community. Originally consisting only of Jewish Christians, the opposition of other Jews faithful to their interpretation of Torah drove the Matthean Christians out of the synagogue and into the Gentile mission field.

The risen Jesus instructs those present to "make disciples" (i.e. "to make students") of others. Noticeably, the instruction is not to "evangelize" (i.e. "to *preach* the gospel"). Two verbs describe the content of this mission: they are *to baptize* them in the name of the Triune God, and *to teach* them all that Jesus commanded them. The sequence of these verbs differs from the usual sequence for initiating catechumens; it was only after a period of instruction that the proselytes were baptized.

The final verse of this pericope, and of Matthew as a whole, expresses the eschatological promise that Jesus will be with the disciples (i. e., the church) until the Parousia, comforting those who had expected the immanent return of the Son of Man. CvD

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

The importance of the last five verses of Matthew's Gospel can't be too strongly stated. Commentators refer to these verses as the climax of Matthew's Gospel, bringing to a conclusion and illuminating everything that has gone before. And this passage has been no less important in later church history. Turning to the ELCA rite of ordination, we see this passage included with two others that are read to the ordinand immediately before the vows of ordination, the three biblical selections obviously meant in that context to encapsulate just what exactly this ministry of word and sacrament is into which we ordain our clergy.

And yet the flow in this final chapter of Matthew's Gospel is disturbing to me, especially in light of the importance the church has granted to its final five verses, disturbing because it's a flow that moves from stirring encounter between the resurrected Christ and the women ("Go and tell") to a final, climactic scene in which Jesus' overarching instruction, the "Great Commission" and assurance to the church, are directed exclusively to the eleven remaining male disciples. In this respect Matthew differs from John, whose Gospel speaks of those post-resurrection commissioning words as being addressed to a larger group than simply the eleven, very possibly including the presence of female as well as male followers. The Trinitarian baptismal formula in this passage from Matthew reflects a later, more established church; do these five verses also reflect an early church that as it becomes established is increasingly limiting the role of leadership to its male members? The Sunday of the Holy Trinity is a good time to struggle with such a question as this, indeed with the many and profound questions that feminist theologians continue to bring to the discussion of the meaning of "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

Question: Is the Great Commission from Matthew's Gospel an appropriate encapsulation of the ministry of word and sacrament for women? KD-B

PROPHETIC VOICE

God is the transcending "Father" and Creator who calls the human family to a social, economic responsibility so that "goodness" (Gen 1) might prevail. But God is also the liberating "Storm God" (Ps 29) who brings order and justice out of the chaos of injustice and oppression. And God is certainly the Holy Spirit calling and gath-

ering communities of justice into being, instructing them to organize and "make disciples" (Mt 28:19) of all the peoples of the earth, and encouraging them to become "perfect" in meeting common needs, and to be "united" and "live in peace" (2 Cor 13:11). And wherever faithful communities are living out that story, there is a comforting and empowering presence of God with the continuing reminder, "I am with you always; yes to the end of time" (Mt 28:20). DP

Second Sunday After Pentecost June 17, 1990

Psalm 31:1-5(6-18)19-24
Deuteronomy 11:18-21, 26-28
Romans 3:21-25a, 27-28
Matthew 7:(15-20)21-29

A FIRST READING

The series of sayings in Matthew 7:(15-20) 21-29, which comes at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, are linked together by the common theme of false prophecy. In 7:15-20, Jesus warns that false prophets will indeed threaten the community. They can be recognized, however, by their "evil fruit." In 7:21-23, Jesus teaches that insincere prophets will be rejected "on that day," the day of eschatological judgment. Next is the familiar parable of the two houses (7:24-27). The house built on a firm foundation will withstand the destructive forces; the house built on sand will not. The conclusion of this pericope, and of the Sermon on the Mount as a whole, depicts the astonishment of the crowd at Jesus' teaching, "for he taught them as one with authority, not as their scribes" (7:28-29).

Form and redaction critics have taught us that many of the canonical sayings of Jesus reflect the ecclesial life-setting (*Sitz im Leben*) which shaped and molded the tradition's final literary form. It might be useful, therefore, to try to place ourselves in the position of the first hearers of these texts, trying to imagine their situation and seeking to appreciate the impact these sayings had on the Matthean community.

Our imagining leads us to construct a picture of a community threatened from within (7:15-20). Here we might see false prophets who have secretly gained the confidence of the church, but whose false prophecy (theology? christology?) will destroy the church's faith. Ultimately, they will give themselves away; their "fruits" will be recognized as evil. Moreover, they face eventual judgment; the trees which bear evil fruit will be cut down.

These false prophets may "talk a good game." They confess using the right words, "Lord, Lord," but they do not do the will of the Father. At the proper time Jesus will deny them (7:21-23).

The church, then, must be cautious not to be seduced by these false prophets. Accepting their "prophecy," the church will become like the house built upon sand, unstable and unable to withstand external opposition. If, however, the church is built upon the rock, the firm confession of faith, then it will withstand the pressures from without, because it is strong within (7:24-27).

The final saying may give a glimpse of the hearers' response. The crowds were astonished at Jesus' saying, because he taught with authority, not as one of *their* scribes. Similarly, the teaching of Jesus could have struck hearers in Matthew's church where they were most vulnerable, their allegiance to false prophets. CvD

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

In this concluding passage to the Sermon on the Mount, the overwhelming emphasis is on action—not just any kind of action, but specific actions that naturally flow from transformative hearing of the gospel message. True prophets are to be known by the good fruit their lives produce; we know and are known by Christ as we "do the will" of the Father in heaven. And it is not enough simply to hear the words; only those who hear and do them are built firmly on the rock.

The juxtaposition of Romans 3 ("...since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by God's grace as a gift...") with the Gospel text is a beautiful one. Salvation always comes to us as gift, and the call to action in the Gospel text isn't a works-righteousness dynamic but the immediate upwelling response of those whose lives have been changed.

Does the "fruit" in our lives indicate the experience of transformative hearing in our lives? Or are we merely going through the motions? How can we preach, how can we hear with that same astonishment invoked in us as was sparked in the crowds listening to Jesus' teaching, an astonishment that comes when Jesus breaks with the tradition of the scribes to bring the law to fulfillment ("you have heard it said, but I say to you...")?

Certainly anyone in the greater San Francisco Bay area following the October 17 earthquake has a renewed appreciation for the difference between a house built on bedrock and one on sand or fill that liquefies into jelly when the earth shakes. Since October 17, prospective home buyers in our part of the world have a new set of priorities. "What kind of land is the house built on?" is suddenly the first question one asks. Yet rains, floods, earthquakes, and all else notwithstanding, the rock in our lives is our faith in the One who continues to astonish, who is sure to remain steadfast and firm, a guide and friend, challenger and caller to ever greater hearing and doing. KD-B

PROPHETIC VOICE

Jesus emphasized that it's not *saying* "Lord, Lord" but *doing* "the will" of God that matters (Mt 7:21). And throughout the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7)—indeed throughout the Scriptures—"the will" of God means the doing of justice.

So "Beware!" (Mt 7:15): These "ravenous wolves disguised as sheep" (7:15) not only deceive others; they are victims of self-deception, because they really believe they are doing the work of the Lord (7:21-23). We easily fall into the trap of creating institutional religious practices as a way of saying, "Lord, Lord," when we may indeed be ignoring the will of God for organizing communities of justice. DP

Third Sunday After Pentecost June 24, 1990

Psalm 50:1-15
Hosea 5:15–6:6
Romans 4:18-25
Matthew 9:9-13

A FIRST READING

Matthew 9:9-13 contains two pericopes, both of which emphasize Jesus' acceptance of those rejected by others. The first pericope (9:9) recounts the "call of Matthew," the tax collector. The second (9:10-13) narrates the Pharisees' indignation at Jesus' table-fellowship with tax collectors and sinners.

The text of the call of Matthew is taken almost directly from Mark (Mk 2:13-14), eliminating Mark's geographical reference and changing the name of the official from Levi, the son of Alphaeus, to Matthew. Tax collectors were routinely despised by all. Not only did they represent the government's (Rome's) power of taxation, but they also operated as "independent agents," squeezing the populace for all the money they could. They were permitted to tax each citizen as heavily as possible; in turn, they paid the government the requisite tax. Whatever remained went into their own pockets. Some Jews even looked upon Jewish tax collectors as doubly heinous. First, they cheated their own people. Second, their act contributed to the veneration of Caesar, an act of treason to God. In fact, in some rabbinic sources tax collectors and thieves are linked together (Mishnah, Nedarim 3:4). Elsewhere in Matthew, tax collectors are linked with sinful Gentiles (18:17) and with prostitutes (21:31).

As in Mark, the tax collector becomes a disciple of Jesus in response to the simple command: "Follow me" (cf. Mt 4:18-22). Without hesitation, Matthew abandons his "business," rises, and follows Jesus to become a disciple.

In 9:10-13, Matthew also follows Mark's lead (Mk 2:15-17) by continuing with the narrative of Jesus' table-fellowship with those whose very presence defiles the meal. Speaking through the disciples, the Pharisees question this practice which they find abhorrent. In Matthew 11:19, Jesus recognizes that he indeed has been rejected by some because of his commerce with gluttons, drunkards, tax collectors, and sinners. Jesus confronts them by asserting that it is not the well (lit. "the strong") who need a physician, but the sick. Matthew then diverts from the Markan narrative and adds the text from Hosea 6:6: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (cf. Mt 12:7), in order to emphasize the radical nature of these new relationships, based not on legalistic rituals but on the initiative of divine love. In accord with Mark's narrative, the Matthean Jesus concludes: "For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

The impact of these two passages is profound. For Matthew, Jesus' mission was not directed to those who seem to be the deserving, that is, the righteous. Instead, those who by midrashic definition would be excluded from fellowship with the Messiah are precisely those directly brought into Jesus' intimate presence. CvD

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

One has to wonder at the assortment of people Jesus called to be part of the inner circle of his disciples. Certainly the calling of Matthew (Levi) is one of the more dramatic stories in this vein, the invitation to the tax collector, an outcast and even more, a traitor and extorter of his own people, one who has personally gained through alliance with the foreign imperial power at the expense of his own community.

And of course the Pharisees are on hand to object and proscribe Jesus' radical action ("Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"). So in this controversy story we see the concern for good order, moral propriety, and dare I say even common sense, over against a willingness to embrace more widely than one ever imagined might be possible.

The Pharisees here embody so poignantly that age-old (and also contemporary) human tendency to want to tighten any loose edges of God's realm, to rein in the confines and keep out any undesirables. And yet doesn't the story suggest that it is precisely through travel to the periphery, the place of the outcast, the sinner, the poor, that we who are all too much in the middle of things are unblinded to the ills in our own systems, minds, spirits, and bodies? Those who are sick are in need of a physician.

Who are the ones we are shutting out because we can't presently see how they fit in the varied creation of God's realm? The group that comes painfully to mind for many of us in the church today are gay and lesbian Christians, whose cries to be included as full and equal members of the body of Christ continue even as the church struggles to sort out and come to grips with the many complex issues of human sexuality.

The poetry of Hosea, referred to only in Matthew's version of this story, captures us in that all-encompassing, persistent, and even hard to understand embrace of God: "God will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth." KD-B

PROPHETIC VOICE

The Pharisees prided themselves on their religious system, and the Romans on their political system. Neither welcomed the God movement proclaimed by Jesus involving "daily bread" and the "forgiveness of debts" (cf. Mt 6:10-12). Existing religions and political systems could not handle Jesus' invitation to community based on "mercy rather than sacrifice" (Mt 9:13; Hosea 6:6).

Jesus invited the marginalized to a full share in the God movement, and was seen as a subversive force. As such, he was condemned to death by the system. But in God's own subversive action he who acted always on the principle of mercy was the one raised from the dead. Around

that principle a community of faith comes into being. DP

Fourth Sunday After Pentecost July 1, 1990

Psalm 100
Exodus 19:2-8a
Romans 5:6-11
Matthew 9:35–10:8

A FIRST READING

Matthew 9:35–10:8 contains a summary statement about Jesus' mission, the names of the twelve disciples, and instructions for the mission of the twelve to Israel.

Matthew 9:35-38 opens with a general statement about Jesus' teaching, preaching, and healing (cf. 4:23), thus drawing to a close the series of healings begun with the cleansing of the leper (8:1-4) and concluding with the healing of the dumb demoniac and the skepticism of the Pharisees (9:32-34). Matthew reveals that Jesus took compassion on the crowds because they were harassed and helpless, "like sheep without a shepherd" (Num 27:17). Surveying the crowd, Jesus hopes that the Lord of the harvest will have enough laborers to gather the harvest. For Matthew, the harvest is a metaphor for the final day of judgment (13:39). The combination of the image of the shepherdless sheep and of the impending harvest leads Matthew's reader directly to the special mission of the twelve to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

In the next passage (10:1-8), Jesus confers on the twelve the authority to carry on the mission he has already begun. They are given authority to cast out demons and to heal people with disease. Following the naming of the twelve, Jesus sends them out on a special mission to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (cf. 15:24), recalling God's gracious choosing of Israel as his people and their special obligation to keep the covenant (Ex 19:1-8). The shepherdless sheep are being gathered for the harvest! Matthew is the only one of the evangelists to focus the mission of the disciples solely on Israel. In Mark, Jesus sends the twelve out to all people (Mk 6:7-13); in Luke, Jesus first sends out the twelve (Lk 9:1-9) and later the seventy (Lk 10:1-12) to spread the mission to all. As we saw above in the discussion of the Great Commissioning, in Matthew it is only after the resurrection that Jesus' mission goes beyond Israel to the nations.

The mission of Jesus to the initial followers finds its counterpart in the initial mission of the disciples to Israel and, eventually, to the rest of the world. In fact, the hearers of this text in Matthew's church may have considered themselves the extended links in this chain of missionary activity. The mission begun by Jesus was authorized by him to continue, first to Israel, then to the nations, and to extend the good news about the kingdom where it had not yet been heard. The Lord of the harvest was indeed enlisting laborers to gather in the harvest. CvD

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

The introduction to the second of Jesus' five major discourses in Matthew begins much as the introduction to the first, with a summation of Jesus' activity and teaching, preaching and healing. What is different about this second introduction is the added element of compassion that Jesus feels when he sees the crowds, "...because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." And then immediately following we see Jesus calling the twelve together and sending them out in imitation of what has been his own mission up to that point, and foreshadowing the later call to go out to "all the nations of the world." It's as if we can see in this passage the first stones of the foundation of the church beginning to be formed.

How do we in our own day experience being sent out as laborers into the harvest? On the one hand there are Jesus' words later in this same

discourse that make it clear to the disciples that serious conflict and difficulty may be expected in the mission, including persecution, division of family, physical abuse, even death. Behind these words of Jesus we can see the real struggles of the primitive church Matthew is attempting to address. It is not always a safe or easy journey we're asked to travel. The image of Medardo Gomez, Bishop of the Lutheran Church of El Salvador, in hiding as of this writing due to threats to his life, springs into mind for me. Are any of us asked to risk any less?

On the other hand, as we consider our own experience as laborers sent out into the harvest, there is the compassion of Jesus that sets everything following into motion. The sending out, the preaching, the healing, raising, cleansing and casting out, all that must spring first and foremost from the ground of compassion. The mission is one that is mercy-filled, and mercy has both heart and hands: heart that feels with the other and hands that move to bring wholeness. KD-B

PROPHETIC VOICE

Jesus' concern for gathering people into communities of justice grows out of a compassionate analysis and concern for the marginalized. Their popular piety may cling to a hope in God that "we are his people, the flock of his pasture" (Ps 100:3), but their reality is harassment and dejection, "like sheep without a shepherd (Mt 9:36).

The task seems overwhelming and, as the rest of Matthew 10 makes clear, Jesus is well aware of the costs (especially 10:38). But he "proves" (Rom 5:8) the faithful love of God to rescue and return a people to the way of justice (Rom 5:9). The "twelve" (Mt 10:1) initiate the reorganization strategy with a proclamation of hope and signs of healing and restoration (10:7,8) and go strategically to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (10:6), appealing to their calling as a people "consecrated" (Ex 19:6) to the way of justice. DP

Fifth Sunday After Pentecost July 8, 1990

Psalm 69:1-20
Jeremiah 20:7-13
Romans 5:12-15
Matthew 10:24-33

A FIRST READING

In Matthew 10:24-33, Jesus continues his instructions to the disciples who are about to be sent out to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (10:5). In the preceding passage (10:16-23) Jesus warns the disciples that they will face opposition from the councils, synagogues, governors, kings, and Gentiles (10:16-18). Families will be divided, and the believers will be hated (10:21). The disciples are consoled that the Holy Spirit will guide their testimony (10:19-20). They are also encouraged to persevere; only those who remain to the end will be saved (10:22). They must hurry, however, because they will not have time to visit all of the cities of Israel before the Parousia of the Son of Man (10:23). The threat of persecution and the urgency of the mission may reflect the actual situation of Matthew's church.

Our passage builds on these comments, drawing implicit distinctions between Jesus and his disciples. In 10:24-25 Jesus reminds the disciples of the proper relationship between teacher and student (disciple). Even after they have completed their "course of study" and are sent out to gather others as Jesus gathered them, they remain students nonetheless. For Matthew, only Jesus can receive the designation "teacher." In contrast, rabbinical "disciples" become themselves rabbis (teachers) after having completed their studies under a rabbi.

In Matthew 10:26-31 Jesus encourages his disciples to be bold in their proclamation, fearing no one. What Jesus told the disciples in the dark, they are to speak in the light. What was spoken into their ear (RSV "whispered"), they are to

proclaim from the house tops. That which the disciples heard from Jesus was not a "private possession" but preparation for a public mission. Further, they are to speak boldly, assured that God will protect them from any danger. The contrasts in 10:27 may allude to the hostile circumstances in which the Matthean church carried out its mission. (See also Jer 20:1-12).

This passage concludes with a note of eschatological warning (10:32-33). Those who acknowledge (lit. "confess") Jesus before people will likewise receive the "confession" from Christ before God. Conversely, those who deny Jesus before other people will likewise be denied by Christ before the Father. There is no room for indifference.

Once again, we may have a glimpse into the situation of Matthew's church. Faced with harsh opposition, the church's mission activity becomes a yardstick by which to measure the faithfulness of the believers. Those courageous in their preaching will be acknowledged by Christ; those who forsake Jesus and reject him will find themselves abandoned on the last day. CvD

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

In many ways the experience of the evangelizing church in 1990 in my part of the world (San Francisco) is utterly unlike the evangelizing community addressed by Matthew's Gospel, but in some ways the experience is similar, or at least parallel. The Gospel for this Sunday paints the picture of a missionary community struggling in the face of persecution from both Gentiles and Jews. The vitality of the church and work of the gospel proclaimers are threatened by an outer world's response of hostility and the presence of physical and psychic danger. In the Matthean community there prevails fear, self-doubt, and uncertainly about an eventual positive outcome.

Matthew's cryptic reference to the Passion in verse 24 reminds the community of Jesus' encounter with such destructive forces as the ones they now face; how then can the community think it might escape a similar or even worse struggle? And so Matthew's community and we too are drawn back to the way of the cross.

Persecution of the church remains a strong reality in our day, and the entire church is touched by it. Yet in San Francisco, 1990, our struggle with the world's response to our missionary endeavor has a different color. In a city with hundreds of churches, only a small minority of the population claim any church affiliation. We ELCA churches are mostly small struggling congregations trying to witness to the gospel in a huge and diverse cosmopolitan urban setting. The people in our congregations most certainly know what it is to experience self-doubt, anxiety over their evangelizing efforts, and fear for the ultimate survival of their congregations. We wonder what it means to be "successful" churches. And we find ourselves pulled back again and again to the way of the cross, and there we are reminded that our values and standards of measurement and judgment are entirely different from the ones mirrored in our society and world. Finally, whatever the circumstance in which we find ourselves, there is the overarching promise of the accompanying presence of God, giving strength, caring, and valuing us above all else: "...even the hairs on your head are numbered." Thanks be to God! KD-B

PROPHETIC VOICE

There is a holy "seduction" (Jer 20:7) about the work of organizing communities of justice, along with a "zealousness" (Ps 69:9) with its own edifying quality. Perhaps it's part of the *happiness* promised to those in solidarity with the lonely and marginalized (Mt 5:6-12). An inner struggle goes on, as Jeremiah's impassioned words (20:7-10) make clear. Doubts arise about the mission or the ability to carry it out. After all, we're up against overwhelming, even hostile and demonic, forces, and we can be like "sheep among wolves" (Mt 10:16). This is not a romantic adventure, and our sisters and brothers in El Salvador and other places where communities of faith and mercy are active can testify to that. That's why this mission can only happen where there is the internal sense of peace and purpose (cf. Pentecost and Jn 20:20, 21) nurtured by the Holy Spirit in authentic Christian community. DP

Sixth Sunday After Pentecost July 15, 1990

Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18
Jeremiah 28:5-9
Romans 6:1b-11
Matthew 10:34-42

A FIRST READING

The missionary discourse in Matthew concludes with two groups of sayings. The first group stresses the radical nature of faith in Jesus; such faith eclipses all earthly relationships (10:34-39). The second group reiterates the connection between Jesus and his disciples. Those who receive the disciples receive Jesus and the one who sent him; those who receive them with the appropriate demeanor will receive the appropriate reward (10:40-42).

Both of these pericopes suggest that the mission of Jesus through the disciples has real consequences. First, all human relationships are qualified (10:34-39). Even the most intimate of familial bonds are placed at risk; any relationship which threatens to replace the faith relationship with Jesus as the central relationship must be challenged: son against father, daughter against mother, daughter-in-law against mother-in law.

In addition, anyone who wishes to retain as central the old relationships and deny the "way of the cross" is not worthy. Matthew's Jesus emphasizes the drastic shift in relationships by rejecting the bond in the most fundamental human relationship (parent/child), a bond whose strength no one would challenge, and by supporting the bond with Jesus as one reflecting the suffering of the cross (cf. Mt 16:24-28). Moreover, the lives of the disciples mirror the life of Jesus. His true family consists of those who do the will of the Father (12:49-50); his mission ends in suffering and death. Anyone not willing to follow in Jesus' path is not worthy of Jesus.

The second group of sayings emphasizes the interrelationship of the Father, the Son, and the believers (10:40-42). Those who receive the missionaries receive the Son and the one who sent him. That is, no one can reject the missionaries without simultaneously rejecting the Father. Again the consequences are real; those who receive the missionaries now will receive their reward. Implied also is the warning that those who do not receive the missionaries and their message will be punished appropriately on the day of judgment (cf. 10:14-15). CvD

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

With the heavy emphasis on the cross in both this Sunday's Gospel and second lesson, surely preachers must grapple with the centrality of the cross for our walk of faith. Verses 38 and 39 form a climax to the second major discourse in Matthew, as Jesus graphically connects discipleship with the practice of crucifixion in which the condemned was forced to carry the crossbeam to the location of execution. Likewise Paul reminds us not to leap too quickly over the crucifixion in our enthusiasm to arrive at the resurrection; it's as if the two have to be held always together. Jesus is the crucified and risen One.

Recently, in Tilden Edwards' *Living Simply Through the Day*, I came across his articulation of the cross' centrality for us who make the journey of faith: the cross is "...an open window into the way life is: broken and clouded, yet on its far side, whole and radiant" (New York: Paulist Press, 1977, p. 2). What does it mean to find one's life by losing it for Christ's sake? What does it mean, that as we are buried with Christ into death, even there, and only from that place, the promise of newness of life becomes real to us?

The most powerful expression of the significance of the cross I remember occurred in a small Bible study in a member's home, when in response to the question of how faith was important in our lives, a Salvadoran woman, a refugee in this country, slowly told us the story of her life. It was a story about the violent death of her husband by Salvadoran death squads, about her own subsequent psychic and emotional death, and the gradual unexplainable transformation in her life leading back to stronger faith, commitment, and aware-

ness of God's presence with God's people than she ever before experienced.

Texts such as those for this Sunday can't help but call such stories to mind. We live in the cross and are there surprised and blessed by flashes and glimpses of a newness and wholeness of life beyond our wildest imaginings. KD-B

PROPHETIC VOICE

Conditions of injustice and oppression make it impossible for Christian community to be at peace without being in conflict with "the world" (Mt 10:34ff.). To paraphrase: "Anyone who avoids conflict is not worthy of the name of discipleship." The whispers nurturing "internal peace" must inevitably become the shouts of external struggle.

Conflict with "the system" is a joyful sign of the genuine peace and shalom of God, the very sign Paul recognized: that in Baptism (into Christian community) we are "dead to sin and alive for God" (Rom 6:2,11). DP

Seventh Sunday After Pentecost July 22, 1990

Psalm 145:1-2 (3-13) 14-22
Zechariah 9:9-12
Romans 7:15-25a
Matthew 11:25-30

A FIRST READING

The interpretation of Matthew 11:25-30 rests on the interrelated propositions that the identity of the Son is revealed by the Father (Christology) and that the believers (the Christians of Matthew's community) are distinct from others in the world (ecclesiology). The first proposition forms the basic premise for all of Christianity; the second forms the basic premise for the distinction between the church and other institutions in the world.

In 11:25-26, Jesus gives thanks to the Father that "these things," an expression reminiscent of apocalyptic secrets which God reveals to one chosen to receive them, have now been revealed to the babes. In contrast to the wise, whose wisdom is derived from the experience of living in the world, these babes receive the wisdom of the one rejected by the world (Mt 11:19; 12:14; cf. 1 Cor 1:18-25). Here Matthew reinforces a theme we have already encountered: Jesus' mission is not to those lauded by the world. Rather, Jesus' particular fellowship is with those otherwise rejected (9:9-13). To these people God uncovers the "things" hidden from the rest of the world.

The essence of the revelation to the "babes" is found in 11:27—no one knows the Father except the Son, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Only those to whom the Son *chooses* to reveal the Father will know him. The believers do not choose the Son; the Son chooses the believers. This revelation is based both on the selection and on the initiation of the Son.

In 11:28-30 Jesus issues an invitation to those who labor and are heavy laden to come to him and to receive rest. They are invited to take on the yoke of Jesus, a yoke which is easy. Here Jesus may be speaking as the Old Testament figure of Wisdom. However, instead of leading the believers to the true interpretation of the law, to be under its legalistic yoke, Jesus/Wisdom leads believers to the true revelation of the relationship between the Father and the Son, to take on Wisdom's yoke with its easy burden.

For Matthew, Christology and ecclesiology cannot be separated. No one can know the Father except the Son who reveals the Father. Further, the Son reveals the Father only to those whom he chooses; not everyone is so blessed. The church, then, consists in those to whom this revelation was given and to whom were given the faith to receive it. CvD

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

Rest for our very souls. Isn't that what we're all truly longing for? Rest. It's almost as if we've forgotten what rest is. A recent study reports that the average American spends approximately seven hours a day watching television. At the same time doctors across the country are chronicling a previously unknown disease, a debilitating, chronic fatigue that renders people helpless and depressed. Where, how to find the real rest for which we're so deeply longing?

Jesus connects soul-rest with his yoke, light and easy, that he asks us to take on in becoming his disciples. It seems strange at first to connect the idea of rest with the yoke, since the yoke after all is an instrument of labor, of confinement and drudgery. Yet paradoxically, this yoke unyokes us from all those other burdens that so encumber and sadden us; this yoke is the entrance into the relationship of intimate knowledge of God, revealed to us in and through Christ Jesus.

And finding ourselves thus yoked in Christ, we become like the babes Jesus speaks of at the beginning of this Gospel. The wise and understanding were too secure, too sealed off, too cynical and sure of themselves to see a new breaking-in of God's realm; yet in the yoking, in the learning from Jesus, our hard shells of self-defense, self-accomplishment, and self-righteousness crack and fall away, like the hatred that finally melts away from the two old Norwegian women in Isaac Dinesen's short story, "Babette's Feast." As children, the two once held hands and skipped together to confirmation classes, sharing secrets and dreams. As young women they became bitter enemies when one became romantically involved with the other's husband. And as old women, somehow, all in the course of a remarkable evening, when in the sharing of an unexpected meal the gentle light of grace penetrates, a miracle takes place: two old women discover the light yoke long forgotten, long rejected in favor of another yoke of angry accusation and cold resentment. Two old women forget the long years of isolation and hatred, and return, faces shining, like children, to a place where true rest for the soul and true communion with one's neighbor is possible. KD-B

PROPHETIC VOICE

Jesus did not call for vindictive power over others but for authentic communities of justice in which mercy remains the basic organizing principle. The temptation to power is always there, especially when those who "labor" and are "overburdened" (Mt 11:28) discover a sense of empowerment. But the temptation is laid to "rest" (11:29) in the experience of a collective struggle, and in knowing that others have the same burdens. Personal struggles don't disappear, as Paul makes clear (Rom 7:15ff), but when they are being worked out in Christian community they are *easier* and *lighter* (11:30), there is empowerment for humble, Christ-like service (Zech 9:9 and Phil 2:5ff.).

The call to communities of justice is not an ethic of rugged individualism in a world of competition where only the fittest survive; it is a call to cooperation and community in seeking the common good. DP

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost July 29, 1990

Psalm 65
Isaiah 55:10-11
Romans 8:18-25
Matthew 13:1-9 (18-23)

A FIRST READING

The two texts comprising this Matthean pericope are taken directly from Mark. The first text contains the parable of the sower (Mt 13:1-9 // Mark 4:1-9). The second text provides the allegorical interpretation of the parable (Mt 13:18-23 // Mark 4:13-20). In each case the parable is spoken in public, for all to hear; the allegorical interpretations, however, are given in private to the disciples. Only they receive the secrets of the

kingdom (Mt 13:11). Matthew, moreover, shifts the location of this parable from the beginning of Jesus' ministry, as in Mark, to the point at which the rejection of Jesus by Israel is growing (Mt 12:14-21). The revelation of the parable's meaning comes at the time in the gospel narrative when the division between those who believe and those who reject Jesus is becoming more pronounced.

The parable itself draws upon agricultural imagery to impress upon the hearer both the widespread proclamation of the word (the seed) and its limited acceptance (it only takes root in the good soil). The focus of the parable proper is the seed. It is sown on any available ground. Although it does not flourish in most places, when it does flourish, it flourishes beyond belief (up to a hundred fold!). The focus of the interpretation, however, is the type of ground upon which the seed falls. With the exception of the good soil, in each case pressures from without prevent the seed from growing. Only on the good soil, signifying those who hear the word and understand it, does the seed bear bounteous fruit.

The shift in emphasis of the parable and its interpretation has suggested to some scholars that the parable may be originally from Jesus, but its interpretation may reflect a later stage in the church's history. For Matthew, this parable may even be placed at this point in the gospel as a whole to call attention to the growing rejection of Jesus by Israel, which may in fact reflect the historical situation of Matthew's own church. Born in the synagogue, the church may have been rejected and pushed out. Although the seed was scattered widely about, it did not always take root sufficiently to flourish.

The mission of Jesus, and that of the church as well, is not a "numbers' game"; the success of the mission cannot be measured by counting "sprouts." Ultimately, its success is measured by the strength of the roots, and that success only becomes evident when the young plants are tested. CvD

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

Scholars of the parables like Joachim Jeremias remind us that the allegorical explanation of the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:18-23 reflects a secondary interpretation by the primitive church. Whereas the earliest focus of the parable was the joyous certainty of God's realm, symbolized by the bountiful harvest that comes in spite of all the pitfalls of farming, in the allegorical explanation of the parable we find a different focus. The theme of certainty becomes an emphasis on the question of one's capacity to hear, accept, and follow the gospel proclamation regardless of circumstances.

Chapter 13 of Matthew both begins and ends with telling descriptions of the people's responses to the words and actions of Jesus. The chapter opens with crowds that are so eager, so desperate to hear Jesus that their intensity edges Jesus off the beach and into a boat, from which he preaches to them. At the close of chapter 13, now in a different location, this time the home-ground of Nazareth, those gathered in the synagogue to hear Jesus take offense at the carpenter's son. These people are unable or unwilling to move beyond the traditional role Jesus has held among them since his birth.

Given the reality of persecution and the everpresent allure of secular materialism, it's not difficult to see how the primitive church arrived at its allegorical explanation of the parable. And the questions posed by that explanation are useful ones also for our day: Where are we rooted? How deep is our hearing? What is choking our following? But returning to the parable's original focus, we can do no less than marvel at Jesus' insistence and clear confidence in God's gathering realm, in the rich harvest, the certain and eventual fruition of creation and time. This was the promise on which Jesus staked his very being, the promise which also calls and claims us. KD-B

PROPHETIC VOICE

Not everyone clearly hears the call to a mission of organizing communities of justice. Many are simply too conditioned by "the system" and are easily victimized by the evils of doublespeak and propaganda (Mt 13:4, 19). Others respond with enthusiasm, but their shallowness of faith makes them vulnerable to fears and insecu-

rities (13:5,21). Still others are so conditioned by their own situation and by the value systems of this world that "the word" never even has a chance (13:7, 22). But by God's mercy and grace there are others who hear the word of the God movement, understand its liberating substance and action, and become productive in the process of organizing communities of justice. It doesn't mean it makes them better than any of the non-hearers, or those who don't last, or those caught up in the world's systems, because all stand under the same judgment (Rom 3:9-20), and (thank God) the same mercy! But what it does mean is knowing the joy of being in on something "the whole creation is eagerly waiting for" (Rom 8:19). It's the happiness of sharing in the struggle of creating and shaping a history of liberation and justice, a history of communities filled with the "first fruits of the Spirit" (Rom 8:23) and moving on to the full bloom of the "freedom and glory" (Rom 8:22) of a new social, economic, political order.

With the help of the Spirit, we need to cultivate the soil of understanding. DP

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MISSION90: Time to Gear Up!

Roger W. Fjeld
President, Wartburg Theological Seminary

Recently I've had the opportunity to share in some of the synod events as congregations prepare to participate in MISSION 90. I've said to each of those groups, "It's time to start the engines!" Clearly there is some hyperbole in that, because mission didn't stop while we were preoccupied with organizing a new church, and therefore the engines are already running. But there is a sense in which the new church is not yet fully engaged in mission. So if it is an overstatement to talk about starting the engines, it is surely not an overstatement to say that it is high time for us to gear up for mission.

All the efforts of these recent years—efforts to plan, organize, and launch this new church—were preliminary to the main event. The main event is mission! We always knew that, as we took time, energy, and money for the necessary tasks of forming this Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We also knew that the time needed to come when we could shift our full attention to mission.

How could we have known, though, when we started the chain of decisions that led to the formation of the ELCA, that we would be ready to give our full attention to mission precisely when our world is moving—lurching!—from an old era to a new one? How could we have known that a window of opportunity would be opening precisely when our church was ready to devote itself to reaching out? Is it for this hour... this new decade... this new era that our church was called into being? At the very least, we are called to respond to the startling things happening in our world.

What will it mean, what ought it mean, to be in mission in the 90s? For Lutherans a question like that is always a theological question, not a marketing one. It is not the question, "What will work?" but "What does God expect of us?" MISSION90 is an attempt to discover what God expects of us and then to commit ourselves, prepare ourselves, and gear up!

There is a temptation to see this as just another program of the church. When programs come along, congregations give themselves permission to be selective; to decide whether and how much to be involved in

something being promoted by "headquarters." We run the risk that MISSION90 will be treated as an option, with some congregations enthusiastic about it, some lukewarm in their involvement, and others not engaged at all. If that should happen we will have said something both about our perceptions of the church and about our perceptions of mission. About the church, we will have said that we have only optional obligations toward the vision of the whole church for the whole mission of the gospel. About mission we will have said that we can take it or leave it. Instead, we need to recognize that this is a crucial moment in the life of the ELCA. If all of us take this as the opportunity to unite in study, in commitment, and in action, we will become the strong church God has called us to be. If we fail to be full partners in this call to mission, we will have signaled our willingness to limp along in low gear, neglecting opportunities that are ours in this dramatically changing world.

MISSION90 deserves to be an imperative for all of us, not just an option for some of us. The usefulness of our church as an instrument for mission is at stake. It is time to gear up!

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