THE PRINCETON SEMINARY BULLETIN

VOLUME XXVI NUMBER 1 NEW SERIES 2005

THE INAUGURATION AND INSTALLATION OF IAIN R. TORRANCE AS THE SIXTH PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Stephen D. Crocco, EDITOR

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The Princeton Seminary Bulletin is published three times annually by Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey.

Each issue is mailed free of charge to all alumni/ae and, by agreement, to various institutions. Back issues are not available.

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The Princeton Seminary Bulletin publishes lectures and sermons by Princeton Theological Seminary faculty and administrators and presentations by guests on the Seminary campus. Therefore, we do not accept unsolicited material.

This periodical is indexed in the *ATLA Religion Database*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Wacker Dr., 16th Flr., Chicago, IL 60606; e-mail: atla@atla.com, WWW:http://www.atla.com/.

Editor's Note

THIS ISSUE OF the *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* highlights the inauguration and installation of Dr. Iain R. Torrance as the sixth president of Princeton Theological Seminary. Hundreds of people came to Princeton on March 10 and 11 to attend the festivities, which included a symposium on "Faith in the Third Millennium: Reading Scripture Together," and a dinner to honor Iain, Morag, and their family. Well over a thousand people attended the inauguration and installation service in the Princeton University Chapel. The Seminary's web site has pictures and descriptions of the festivities.

Although the inaugural events have been at the center of attention these last few months, the usual convocations and lectures continue apace and some of them are printed here. Faithful readers of the *Bulletin* have surely noted the late arrival of this and the previous issue. This is due to several factors including my decision to delay the publication of the February issue so remarks and addresses from the inauguration and installation could be included. Unfortunately, the late appearance of the February issue will likely delay the publication of the July issue. It is my intention to return to a normal publication schedule by the time of the November issue.

STEPHEN D. CROCCO
EDITOR

Quisquilia Princetoniana

by George Newlands

Dr. George Newlands is Professor of Divinity at the University of Glasgow. He delivered these remarks after the inauguration dinner at Doral Forrestal on March 10, 2005.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I'm not quite sure why I'm doing this, and neither are you. What can I say, and how shall I say it? In a letter dated August 30, 1928 from West China, the Rev. Thomas Torrance wrote to T. F. Torrance: "Dear Tom, This is your fifteenth birthday. I'm glad you have made a start in public. Keep on. To begin with, if you can tell a short story or incident and pack into it a message and an appeal, you'll find it easier to begin with and you'll speak to more purpose than by confining yourself to abstract speech." There's a template!

The suggestion that I should say something tonight came the day after Elizabeth and I arrived here last month, and it's a great honor to be here. Before leaving London we called the registrar's office to find the nearest airport to Princeton, and we arrived in LAX, on a fine sunny afternoon in late January. After a few days with our son and his wife in Westwood, California, we drove across to the Seminary, taking in a short detour to that archetypal Presbyterian festival, Mardi Gras in New Orleans. And so I stand before you tonight, a sheep in sheep's clothing, a simple Southern Californian, which gives me the chance to say a word of personal thanks to a couple of real Californians. We met them again by accident a few months back when we all happened to be visiting Tom Torrance. To their great generosity, I and generations of our Glasgow Peter Marshall scholars are hugely indebted: Tom and Barbara Gillespie.

When your new president invited me to speak my first concern was whether his health care package from the Trustees covered all unexpected risks. He seemed to indicate that was OK. I have been warned that all unpresbyterian allusions are strictly off limits on pain of instant deportation to a well known Cuban sports paradise.

I have solemnly promised not even to mention words like . . . well I would have put this in, just to keep up the tradition. But I say not a word tonight, for example, about the presidential infancy narrative—and certainly nothing about my wife, his cousin's possible role—she was a slightly older child than he was—in facilitating the adjustment of your President's historic early sartorial arrangements—as in you will find the babe wrapped in and lying in. Cf. *Kirchliche Dogmatik* III/3.590-93ff, *Das Kind in der Krippe*, where even the patron saint of PTS himself can't quite bring himself to utter the D word, or in English the N word, or in *Switzerdeutsch* the W word. In fact, to borrow

a phrase from your former president, I think it was Mr. Clinton but it may have been Dr. Gillespie, I get confused between all these great Americans, in truth there was no, I mean there is no, semantically speaking diaper-changing-related circumstantial issue within the meaning of the act.

What does one say at these times? In 1868 a Latin address was presented to James McCosh on his inauguration.

Infandum O Priuceps iubes renovare dolorem.
Seminarii ut opes et lamentabile regnum
Eruerint Caledonii, quaeque ipse miserrima vidi,
Et quorum pars magna fui. Quis talia fando,
Hunsingerum, Vanhuyssteenumque, aut duri miles Jim Kayi
Temperet a lacrimis—
Et iam nox umida caelo praecipitat
Suadeutque cadentia sidera somnos
Sed si tantus amor, casus cognoscere nostros
Et breviter collegiae supremum audire laborem
Quauquam auimus meminisse horret, luctuque refugit,
Incipiam. Et id jazz omne.

Latin is important. In a letter dated March 7, 1928, Thomas Torrance wrote to his six children, "Make it a firm resolution to succeed in your Latin, if only for my sake, and I'll be proud of you for ever." On the other hand, if I say any more in Latin, it might provoke a retaliatory strike. In 1868, the president replied in a two hour oration.

I shall not say a lot about the Scots in Princeton—that theme was already largely exhausted around 1860. Selden, in his history, says of the Scots-Irish contribution: "Their attitude may be summed up by the prayer; Grant O Lord that I may be right, for thou knowest that I am a hard man to turn." Not quite perhaps the perfect model of a modern seminary president! Princetonians in Scotland are rather more interesting and sometimes surprising. Henry Sloane Coffin, age twenty, in a letter home to his parents in New York, October 1897: "If I am not a deep dyed higher critic, it will be no fault of New College, for you get it everywhere in most attractive form and I must say that whatever more conservative ideas I have had have been rudely blown away. . . . But do not worry about the heresy of New College. The Scotch Church seems to stand it and preach better sermons than the bluest Princetonians." What can I say? I shall not speak about Glasgow, where as Susan Brown will tell you we have been repeating the same theology lectures since 1451. Some days it feels that way. But then we had to struggle on our own for some decades, before Columbus discovered the *Princeton Seminary Review*. I

shall not dwell on the mighty deeds of your new president—though I would not be in the least surprised to see a royal wedding in the Miller Chapel some day soon.

The Torrance connection with Princeton goes back a long way. That is why, as he has said himself, Iain has avoided the place for as long as possible. I just hope he isn't beginning to wish that he had waited another year or two! The first connection I have come across is in a letter from Paul Heath to John Baillie in February 1939. Tom Torrance had spent a year teaching at the Presbyterian seminary in Auburn in upper New York State. And I quote, "We have enjoyed having Tommy Torrance here this year. Tom is youthful. He is inclined to be a little bit dogmatic. Still, he is a fine chap and everybody likes him and enjoys him. I have asked Mackay to invite him to Princeton." And he did.

Professor Torrance had of course the benefit of an idyllic Christian missionary background. Well, perhaps it was not always idyllic for everyone. In a letter from Thomas Torrance to his wife Betty, "That night I heard something that made me astonished. In some place there are quite a number of missionaries' children and all of them smoked and swore. How awful! What a commentary on their parents' theology. Had they been taught as they should, not all of them would have been like this." *Nondum considerast quanti ponderis sit peccatum.*

Which brings me conveniently to your new president, as it were. Iain first came here at the age of ten in 1959. Princeton has always majored in revelation, and revelation as all good theology students know is always concrete. For two small boys from Scotland, Thomas and Iain, and their sister Alison, and I'm grateful to Thomas for this, Princeton was indeed a magic world—things then unheard of in Scotland such as transistor radios, color television, cars with automatic transmission and air conditioning—wow! And an old Ford Ranch station wagon to take them on trips to Canada and other exotic places-light years away from Latin grammar at the Edinburgh Academy. (Actually he already was learning Greek here.)

Your president has all his father's intelligence and determination—come to think of it, I feel I need to have a drink now, or invade Poland or something—and his mother's gentleness, and he has been deeply loyal. But he has consciously developed his own thought, his own perspectives. This can not have been easy. One can come to be associated by default with a particular school of theology—tell me about it—and it becomes absolutely crucial to develop a distinctive voice and to stick with it consistently and regardless. For Dr. Torrance this is a brilliantly constructive tension, a tension which Princeton Seminary will come to appreciate more and more

over the years. As some of you have been saying to me these past weeks, Iain is a person who listens to different voices, who takes the most careful soundings, and then makes clear decisions.

Apart from coping with the issues of kinship and dogma in the culture of Scottish tribal theology, Dr. Torrance and I have I suppose at least one other thing in common. He is a Presbyterian minister who has been confirmed as an Anglican: I am ordained both in the Church of Scotland and in the Church of England. This may reinforce any impression you may have that all Brits are crazy. You would probably be right. But on a good day a little madness may lead us to think that people outside the magic circle of the tribe may possibly also be human beings, and that may not be such a bad thing. One of the recurrent themes in the recent *InSpire* article on "What would you like to tell Professor Torrance about Princeton Seminary?" was the need to help the Presbyterian Church USA to deal effectively with diversity.

Being an unrepentantly liberal Christian you will not expect me to have any theology, and I'm certainly not going to disappoint you now. But your new president clearly recognises that theology is the core business of this great historic institution, and that it may well have, could definitely have, shall, will by a determined and sustained effort have, a pivotal role to play in serving the worldwide church in the changed world of post 9-11. As he says in another article in *InSpire*—you see I have been reading the sacred text devoutly: "The school has great potential to do an astonishing amount of good in the theatre of world Christianity. That is ultimately what drew me here." Without reasons for the faith that is in us there is no good news of the gospel. Without words we do not encounter the Word, without voice there is ultimately no voice for the voiceless in this world. Dr. Torrance's vision grasps centrally the paradox that the Word is more than words. The sacramental word is encompassed by the sacrament of hospitality, of generous participation, of eucharistic community. There is a connection after all between tonight and tomorrow afternoon, but only if there is a care also for those who are not at the feast. Perhaps all ministry is at bottom crisis ministry.

I return as I begin to look—helplessly—for some sort of continuing theme, to the tribal gods of Scottish theology: the potential to do an astonishing amount of good. John McLeod Campbell would not have made tenure here. But in the early nineteenth century he succeeded in forcing a paradigm shift in traditional Calvinist thinking about the unconditional nature of the love of God. He got down to the huge significance of notions of sympathy and sentiment in influencing human relationships a year or two before even Richard Rorty thought of this and he helped new generations to see all our

positive relationships with each other and with God as a gift from the ultimate self-dispossession of God.

Theology is important but theology is not enough. This is after all an after-dinner speech! *Non in dialectica complacuit Deo, salvum facere populum suum.*

When I said we haven't changed our lectures since 1451 you thought I was kidding!

There is a potential to do an astonishing amount of good. Without Christomorphic solidarity, atonement is never fully instantiated, as they say sometimes, down at the WaWa. But you don't need the Europeans to tell you that. One of my most permanent impressions from Princeton Theological Seminary was of a night rather different from this, a chilly night in November 1998, when Patrick Miller and fifty or so students stood in silence holding candles in the dark, in front of the Miller Chapel, in respect for Matthew Shepard. Few words were said that night.

What of 2005, going on 2012? Here is a comment made almost thirty years ago in relation to another celebration. "During the Bicentennial Year much has been made of the Calvinist contribution to American beginnings and independence. But this was a revolution that was essentially conservative in nature and that tended to be limited to the rising middle class. The challenge today is to broaden the basis of liberation to include the poor and the powerless, ethnic minorities, and women" (James I. McCord, 1976). That challenge, as other institutions around the world have discovered, is like other matters of some small importance, not to be faced up to lightly, or wantonly, or irreverently—as Camilla might say to Charles. There are grounds for thinking that the challenge will be met, the challenge to broaden the basis, to bring the outsiders inside. I quote again, "The Reformed churches on both sides of the Atlantic need to develop further non-spatial ways of celebrating the seriousness and transforming nature of the gift which has been given us. The inside-outside model of the church may well be a distraction" (Iain R. Torrance, 1999).

"We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders," said that quintessential Presbyterian, Desmond Tutu. (I can't quite remember whether we are in communion with him on Thursdays or just on Fridays at the moment.) "The life of every human being is an inviolable gift of God. And since that person is created in the image of God and is a God-carrier, we should not just respect that person but we should have a deep reverence for such a person."

Solidarity—but something else is vital—the connection between tonight's party and tomorrow's installation. It should be fun. Christian community is

about joy, about hospitality, generosity, about making life worth living. You don't have to be mad to work in a seminary but sometimes it helps. Commenting on Jesus and the demoniacs—perhaps a suitable text for a theological seminary—James Alison says somewhere that: "Jesus did not come and give the Gerasenes a lecture on the structure of their society. He didn't argue with them about definitions. He did something much more three-dimensional. He empowered the demoniac to become a human being, sitting, clothed and in his right mind, going home to his friends."

WWJD. What would Jesus drink?—assuming he came to the party with a designated driver for his SUV. Jesus comes through the New Testament narratives as somewhat like one of these extraordinary human beings whom one may sometimes come across who is entirely generous, selfless, and a privilege to know. The spirit of Christlikeness encourages us to be able to be glad, and to party, at least some of the time. What solemn words of advice in conclusion (it really is coming to the end at last) can I presume to offer to your new president beyond the zillions he has already heard? I began in California—I shall end in Texas. A couple of weeks ago I was back in Scotland, talking to the president's father and strangely enough the subject of Princeton came up. "Did you ever know McCord?" asked Tom. No I didn't. "He was a Texan—stood no nonsense." (Words of profound approval!) Well I'm quite sure that any nonsense has long since vanished from this campus. Will you promise me to be good, children?

One genetic trace has carried on from grandfather in China to father in Edinburgh and son in Princeton, and I fear probably to the next generation too. Dr. Torrance has always worked far too hard. In a letter from West China, dated August 30, 1929: "Dear Tom, Today you are 16! I have a word of counsel. You'll need to take care of your physical health. We can't disregard with impunity even God's physical laws. You must have at least 8 hours sleep daily and all the open air you can get." Perhaps in closing I can reinforce this with some wisdom passed on to me the other week by the most long suffering and amazingly forgiving of Texas state troopers. Like the Bad Samaritan, I had just passed him by on the other side, at ninety-two miles per hour. "It is not really wise always to travel so considerably above the speed limit," he said with infinite politeness. On your behalf I should like to wish Princeton Seminary all possible success for its future. And I'd like to wish your new president and Morag, and Hew, and Robyn much happiness and fulfillment in these Princeton years. Thank you and good night.

Blessed are You, Holy One, Friend of Humanity

by Michael Vasey

Michael Vasey was Tutor in Liturgy at Cranmer Hall, the University of Durham, before his sudden, untimely death in 1998. He is the author of Strangers and Friends: A New Exploration of Homosexuality and the Bible. *This prayer before a meeting was composed by Michael Vasey shortly before his death and sent as a gift to President Torrance. It was read at the symposium on "Faith and the Third Millennium: Reading Scripture Together."*

Blessed are you, Holy One, friend of humanity,

scourge of injustice, creator of peace:

all that is hidden proclaims your glory.

Your wisdom offers insight to the foolish,

delight to the meek and counsel to rulers.

You give knowledge through the discourse of the wise,

the integrity of the righteous, and the trust of the childlike.

From you comes that pure and peaceable wisdom

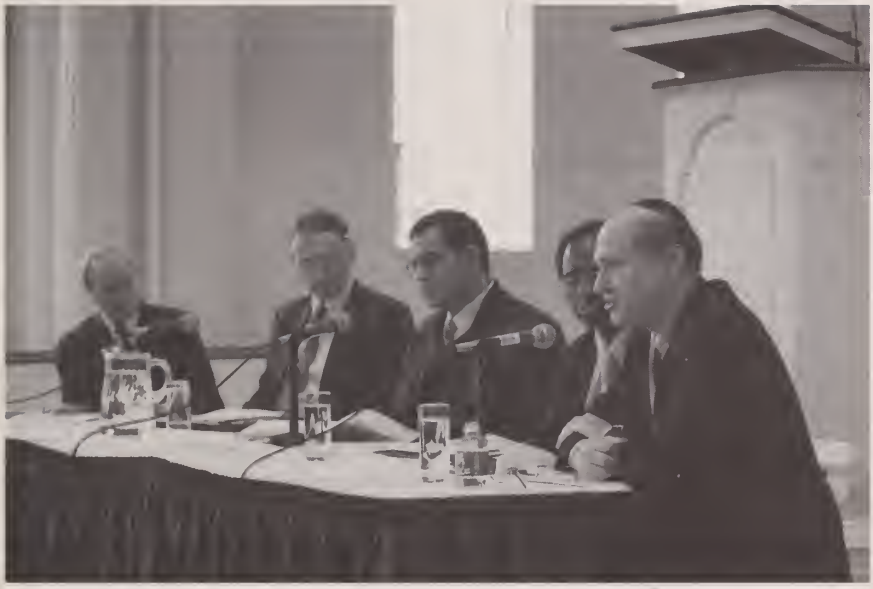
which is gentle, open to reason,

full of mercy, fruitful for good.

Blessed are you, Sovereign God, source of all wisdom.

Blessed be God forever.

Amen.



(left to right: Iain Torrance, David Ford, Aref Nayed, Setri Nyomi, and Peter Ochs)

Living Faith in a Challenging Era

by Setri Nyomi

Dr. Setri Nyomi is the General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. A theologian and pastor from Ghana, he is the first non-European to head the world body of Reformed Christians. He delivered this address in Miller Chapel on March 10, 2005, at a symposium on "Faith in the Third Millennium: Reading Scripture Together," held in honor of Dr. Iain Torrance's inauguration as sixth President of Princeton Theological Seminary.

Hebrews 11 has been described as the chapter on faith in the Bible. Beginning with a definition of faith, the author goes on to illustrate, through the lives of many biblical characters, what faith has meant to people touched by God. This survey of faith, from Abel to New Testament times, indicates clearly that living faith was not merely something that once possessed could be a means of living above suffering or acquiring wealth and health. On the contrary, the long list of people whose experiences illustrated faith went through very challenging times, and in the words of the author of Hebrews, did not receive the fullness of what they believed was promised.

This is a lecture, not a sermon. But in keeping with good Reformed tradition, I could not help but start on the basis of *Scriptura*. How can we talk about living faith in the challenging times in which we live without reference to living faith in the *sitz in leben* of biblical times, through the eyes of biblical passages? I am very grateful that the theme Professor Iain Torrance, our president, has chosen for these inaugural events has to do with reading scripture together as we discern what constitutes faith in this millennium in which we find ourselves.

Reading scripture together is very important. In order for scripture to inform living faith for our challenging times, we have to ensure that while it is fully grasped in one hand, our other hand equally grasps the newspapers, the television, and the radio. To paraphrase the statement that has been attributed to Karl Barth, we must stand with the Bible in one hand and newspapers in the other. We have to carefully read the signs of our times together and listen afresh together to God for the mission to which we are called and sent.

Leading up to its twenty-fourth General Council, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches conducted a survey of challenges that face the church today. The signs of our times that became evident in that survey include the search for meaningful spiritual renewal, threats to peace and security, envi-

ronmental degradation, and worldwide economic injustice.[1] The world is in dire need of meaningful spiritual renewal. Churches in some parts of the world are experiencing a decline while those in the parts which are growing are facing major challenges. In some areas, the very joyful phenomenon of growth and vitality is often burdened by dangers of falling to forms of spirituality which put a premium on health and wealth as rewards and evidence of faith. Many of us live in secular societies. The post-modern era seems to indicate to many that there is no need for God. Young people in many parts of the world find little meaning in associating with Christian churches, while in other parts of the world young people are flocking to church—often to newer non-denominational churches. The church is often ill-prepared to deal with these mixed messages.

In spite of the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ's birth was greeted as "peace on earth" (Luke 2:14), our world is less peaceful and less secure today than ever before. Domestic and public violence and the many conflicts in many parts of the world give much cause for concern. The WARC publication I referred to indicates: "A widespread feeling of national and international insecurity, magnified by terrorism, weakens structures of governance, favors the restriction of civil liberties, and inspires international relations based on cultural and religious prejudices and the survival of the fittest. Unilateral, preemptive military responses in the 'war on terrorism' do not address the root causes of the phenomenon they pretend to resist. Violence and counter-violence create vicious circles."[2]

In connection with worldwide economic injustice and environmental degradation, two quotations from the WARC document illustrate the points:

> While some of us enjoy and rightly celebrate the growing interaction and mutual interdependence of the global village made possible by information technology, many more experience the inhuman consequences of neoliberal economic and financial globalization: 54 countries are poorer today than they were a decade ago. The world's economy is on the whole more unequal than it was 20 years ago. The richest 1% of the global population has as much income as the poorest 57%.... Many countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean stagger under the burden of private and public debt.... Climate change, tropical deforestation, and the decline of water sources are likely to be followed by increasing droughts and floods, rising sea

[1] These are adapted from *The Alliance Today and Tomorrow: Towards Accra and Beyond* (Geneva: World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 2004), 71-73.

[2] Ibid., 72.

> levels and their unpredictable disastrous human consequences. . . . While industrialized countries of the Northern Hemisphere represent only 20% of the world population, they produce 90% of the gases that cause global climate change.[3]

In the General Council itself, we were shocked and challenged as we visited the slave castles on the coast of Ghana. In Elmina, the Reformed Church literally worshipped directly on top of the dungeon in which women slaves were going through unimaginable dehumanization and suffering. From all indications, their reading of the word of God, on their own, seven feet above suffering people, did not equip them to question their complicity in such a terrible sin against humanity, nor did it help them experience any call to do something about human suffering. People of faith may be in the same danger today of missing God's calling if they are not ready to read the Bible together, mindful of the contexts of injustice and suffering around them.

These are some of the challenges of our times. To these, we must add two others. We live in pluralistic contexts. The geo-politics of our times have turned the co-existence of people from different religions and cultures living side by side into communities of conflict and suspicion. In addition the tendency for conflict and division among churches—especially Reformed churches—is another major challenge. How can people of faith make a difference in challenging times such as the ones in which we live? What can we learn from how people of faith in the past engaged their faith in addressing the challenges of their times? Frederick William Faber's nineteenth-century hymn has been a major source of inspiration to me:

> Faith of our fathers! Living still, in spite of dungeon fire and sword:
> O how our hearts beat high with joy,
> whene'er we hear that glorious word!
> Faith of our fathers, holy faith! We will be true to thee till death!
> Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,
> were still in heart and conscience free:
> How sweet would be their children's fate,
> if they, like them, could die for thee!
> Faith of our fathers! We will love both friend and foe in all our strife:
> And preach thee, too, as love knows how,
> by kindly words and virtuous life.

The faith of our parents—Peter, Paul, and the other apostles, Lois and Eunice who nurtured Timothy, Athanasius, Augustine, John Chrysostom,

[3] Ibid., 71–72.

Ignatius, Tertullian, Polycarp, Origen, and all the unnamed women of those early centuries of Christianity whose faith and witness constitute a living inspiration for us today as well as the parents of more recent centuries such as John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, Marie Dentiere, and others. The list is very long.

Although in Reformed culture, we do not tolerate personality cults, and certainly do not label those who have gone before us as exclusive saints, we can be grateful to God for the living faith of these men and women. In my culture, thanking God for the role and contribution of ancestors is important. In addition, scholars such as President Iain Torrance have brought alive the contributions of our parents of those early centuries. A recent issue of *InSpire* rightly observes that he believes that the early Christian writers provide foundational documents for the contemporary church that can be exciting and helpful reading for today's minister.[4]

The faith with which our fathers and mothers confronted dungeons and fire, continues to live still. The dungeons and fires of today may include the lack of spiritual meaning and the emptiness in people's lives, the challenges caused by the forces of death in the global economy, the glorification of violence and polarization at home and in public, and the ways in which military responses to terror have exacerbated world insecurity. Can Christians today be inspired to express a living faith which address the challenges of our days? Can institutions of theological education, especially those which have a special role to play in raising up world theological leaders, be the "solid space" for the formation and inspiration of leaders whose faith can be described as living in the face of global challenges today? How do we counter all these situations with living faith today? We are indeed in a very challenging era. What is called for is not easy answers, but the readiness to struggle with the resources which those who have gone before us have left as a legacy of living faith for their times. The living faith, which is relevant for our days, continues to stand on the wisdom attributed to Karl Barth—holding the Bible in one hand, and newspapers in the other.

In this part of the third millennium, there is a greater need to read the scriptures in the light of our times. Not as providing simple answers but as illuminating the questions we raise along the way. Institutions such as Princeton Seminary can be even more intentional about providing that space where the scriptures are read and re-read with new eyes in the light of the challenges of our days. Reading the scripture in monologues can be easy and common. The world needs more than simply reading scripture within our

[4] "Aberdeen's Dean Becomes Princeton's President," *InSpire* 9 (Summer/Fall 2004), 14.

known frameworks. How can we read scripture effectively together—including all the voices of the people of God? The insights from women, voices from the global South and the global North, eyes of those who have been marginalized, are important in intentionally reading the Scriptures together in our times. Insights from different cultural, professional and experiential perspectives are necessary to enrich our reading together. With so much scientific advancement, what can we learn about the human genome, the modern applications of new scientific discoveries in research, to impact how we read scriptures together? How can we bring the ethical values of our faith into the dialogue in ways that preserve life in fullness for all?

The Reformed family's global body, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, is one of those instruments which, with varying degrees of success, provides space for the reading together of scripture. Other ecumenical and confessional bodies as well as the wider ecumenical organs such as the World Council of Churches do the same. Theological institutions such as Princeton Seminary have the calling to be such a space. Princeton Seminary has a long history of responding to this call. Under past presidents this place has developed a real niche in providing space for an international mix of people to read the scripture together. In addition, some presidents and faculty have understood their calling to be God's instruments to make an impact in the world through service to ecumenical bodies. They have sought to do so with others who share the same values and who have the same concern to read Scripture in communion. In the years of the existence of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, this seminary has historically given real leadership to the worldwide Reformed family. Presidents John Mackay and James McCord, Professor Jane Dempsey Douglas, and at least one past member of the board of Trustees were past presidents of WARC, making Princeton the only institution of its kind to produce so many presidents. The current General Secretary is proud to be an alumnus of Princeton Seminary. In addition, this seminary has produced many church leaders around the world. Princeton Seminary can be at the cutting edge of the ecumenical movement. Such a rich heritage does not happen by accident. Any seminary could reduce itself to a place where people of different nationalities, or women and men, are uncomfortably reading scripture side by side, but not together. If this happens, we can conclude that such a seminary is not fully harnessing the potential of forming women and men equipped with living faith, capable of taking on the challenges of our world today. I hope Princeton Seminary will not fall into such a trap.

These are challenging times. If we had a God who did not care about the state of the world or who was not willing to be touched by human suffering,

human callousness or the effects of evils and difficulties people face, then we could give up in despair or respond with cynicism. In Jesus of Nazareth, we learn that our God is different. God is not apathetic to challenging situations that face God's creation, especially human suffering. The German theologian Jürgen Moltmann helps us move beyond a Greek understanding of a God who is impassable. In contrast, Moltmann draws on Jewish philosophy to place an emphasis on the *pathos* of God in contrast to a view that God is *apatheia*. He points to the expression of human sympathy as the human answer to the *pathos* of God.[5] In Jesus, we experience God's incarnation in the world as Emmanuel, God with us.

A Christian faith that is experienced as a non-engaging maintenance of historical traditions around some carefully formulated doctrinal principles about an apathetic God, can be valid only if taught in cemeteries—not in seminaries. This is not to put down the creeds and confessions that have guided the church throughout the ages, or to question the curriculum of systematic theology and other theological disciplines. On the contrary, it is to recapture the living faith in a living God. This is the faith that the creeds and confessions sought to express, and which our early church fathers and mothers have passed on to us. Thank God history has demonstrated that despite its imperfections and failures, the church has also been able to express its faith clearly and prophetically when faced with challenges. It has been a source of transformation from death to life. Three confessions or declarations in which WARC member churches have been involved illustrate this transformation.

In the face of the terrible era of Nazism, the confessing church in Germany produced the Barmen Declaration in the 1930s. In response to the evil apartheid system the Belhar Confession emerged in South Africa in 1994. In the just-ended twenty-fourth General Council of WARC in Accra, member churches covenanted together and expressed their common stand *vis-à-vis* the injustice in the economy and the earth. The resulting "Accra Confession" is an expression of the churches in a clear stance of faith against the evils inherent in economic systems which are sources of death and destruction for large sections of people. One can add to these confessions the many actions of faith taken by churches in their own contexts against gender injustice and all other forms of injustice.

These are forms of making our faith come out alive and relevant for our times. A major factor that will address challenging times is the sense in which

[5] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, trans. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1974), 267-278.

the church can inspire hope. This hope is rooted firmly in what God has already done, and the possibilities for transformation that we know, are based on our faith and our acting out that faith. This is living faith. It entails engaging in the mission to which we have been called in a manner consonant with how our Lord Jesus Christ understands his own mission. The Gospel of Luke presents Jesus as understanding his mission to include "proclaiming good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, setting at liberty the oppressed and proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

These are not merely words to be theologically dissected with the proper exegetical tools in a lofty academic exercise. They have to do with the lives of people who are often not found in high places or even in popular spots. It has to do with people who are suffering, in need of healing and freedom in every sense—spiritual, physical, and psychological. It has everything to do with revitalizing our faith in challenging times. It is remarkable that these words were presented in the context of worship and not a political lecture. Jesus was in the synagogue for worship on a Sabbath day when he was handed the scroll for reading, an act that was a central part of the worship. His sermon after the reading was very brief, but it made an impact because it came out alive. Reading Scripture together with people at worship for Jesus was not simply a part of the ritual of worship to be traditionally performed Sabbath after Sabbath. It was meant to come out alive—today this Scripture has been fulfilled. The people had to ask, "Is not this the same person we knew?" Oh, that the church would have that same kind of impact today—where people notice the difference when we read the scriptures together! Those words from the Hebrew Bible were made to inspire a new understanding of life and mission relevant to what people were going through. This fosters life. This inspires hope. This constitutes living faith.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus describes his mission in equally strong life-giving terms: "The thief comes only to kill and to destroy, but I came so that they may have life in fullness" (10:10). These are not docile words. They inspire hope for people who are experiencing destruction in their lives or are simply bored by a faith which sees itself as maintaining tradition but is inactive in the face of contemporary destructive practices. These biblical passages point to the fact that the God we know in Jesus Christ is not apathetic. Jesus' mission is engaged in bringing life to replace the forces of death that are experienced in society. Embraced, this is not only a source of vitality in which people are tempted to give up in despair, but it is also a source of hope. If we are to address the challenging times in which we find ourselves and inspire hope, we have to learn from how the Lord of the church

did it. We must learn how we can identify the thieves and destroying agents today, so that people can truly experience the action of Jesus in providing life in fullness in every sense.

The starting point is to foster living faith, not the mere maintenance of church rituals. Living faith for our times is based on reclaiming the right relationships—vibrant meaningful relationships which are consonant with our faith. The relationship with God is the first of these relationships. The key component of the Christian message of being reconciled to God through Christ is at the center of vibrant meaningful relationships (2 Cor. 5). The biblical message affirms the profound love that God has for humanity and the resulting sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for our redemption. The cross is at the center of restoring the relationship between God and humanity. But, it does not stop there. The cross is also at the center of how we appropriate this message in our mission. This understanding of mission should necessarily follow the example of Jesus Christ who came that all may have life. It takes into account how Jesus saw mission as proclaiming good news and release to those who were left on the margins of society. This understanding helps equip us to engage in the critical reflections with which we can make a difference in the world. The foundation of this understanding is how Jesus' life was given on the cross for humanity. Our critical reflection therefore should be focused on the cross.

Reformed theologians such as Jürgen Moltmann have helped us affirm that this form of critical theological reflection is at the heart of being Reformed. He writes, "To realise the theology of the cross at the present day is to take seriously the claims of Reformation theology to criticise and reform, and to develop it beyond a criticism of the church into a criticism of society."[6] In agreement with Moltmann, the Reformed family has historically chosen to respond to societal issues by engaging prophetically. We can recall the commitments of Old Testament prophets. When Old Testament prophets say, "Thus says the Lord," they do so as persons who are very much engaged in the social issues of the day. Their words had significance for what the people were going through by challenging the forces of evil and bringing hope for life. They did not stay silent in the face of evil.

In the New Testament, what got the early apostles in trouble with the powers of the day was not only their *kerygma*. It was often how their proclamation was linked with practical expressions of faith in how they brought healing or relief to ordinary people. This attracted the action of the leaders who had vested interests in keeping things as they were, even if this

[6] Moltmann, 4.

action brought death and destruction. The narrative in which the apostles were arrested and thrown in prison in the Acts of Apostles indicates that in healing the sick they attracted the jealousy of the leaders (5:15–18). In this passage they declared, "We must obey God, rather than human beings."

It is in the light of these reflections that I offer five suggestions for the church to respond to our challenging times. When our critical reflections impact church and society they lead to transformation, which in turn produces renewal and hope.

Renewing the church and how it engages in mission. The church has always valued evangelism—proclaiming the good news of God's salvation to people who have not heard and inviting them to participate in God's marvelous light. There is a renewed passion for this especially in Africa today. This is a source of renewal of the church. However, we cannot simply be satisfied with measuring the results of evangelism in terms of increasing numbers. The critical questions include: to what extent are people experiencing the cross of Jesus Christ as both the source of life and a challenge to evil in society? To what extent are lives of communities being transformed as a result of what they see in the churches? Therefore, the first implication of revisiting a theology of the cross is a critical message to the church. In the cross, we have the most profound message of Emmanuel—God with us. Faced with challenges, when there is a tendency to feel that the post-modern world is a post-Christian world, it is the message of the cross—not a triumphal proclamation of a faith supported by political powers—that reminds the faithful that in Christ God is alive in our situations.

Mediating fullness of life for all. Lessons from the theology of the cross are not limited to the internal life of the church. It helps us be attentive to the millions of people who are suffering as a result of spiritual emptiness, poverty, disease, economic injustices, conflicts—both Christians and non-Christians—in the light of Jesus' coming so that all may have fullness of life. Many have very little opportunity to experience the "life in fullness" for which Jesus Christ came, very often because of the selfish and callous actions of people in their locality or nation or sometimes from far away lands. If we have truly experienced the cross as liberating, how can our lives and our messages proclaim the good news in word and action? Reformed people understand our calling to include being prophetic in advocacy, challenging the forces of evil and death, and speaking in places where the victims of oppression, injustice, and suffering do not have a voice or presence to speak. Our calling includes becoming living critics of structures and systems whether in church or society which contradict life. This is not simply offering charity, but doing the critical analysis and actions that make for transformation from the roots.

Being effective neighbors in pluralistic communities. To be successful we have to recognize the danger of enjoying a privileged status as the dominant majority in any community. Maybe for that reason it is good that we now operate in pluralistic contexts. We need to shift our mindset to become effective people who are sometimes in the minority. In fact, even if Christianity is the majority religion, often those who are engaged in prophetic action as God's instruments of transformation are in the minority. Therefore, having a "minority" mentality can be helpful. As effective minorities, we can have a more realistic appraisal of ourselves, knowing that what we proclaim can have a transforming impact on the world, but will not be readily embraced by the majority of people. Our calling is to model our message. We are also called to find ways of being in dialogue with non-Christian neighbors with whom we live in our communities. Avoiding this will simply be burying our heads in the sand while there are challenges to be faced.

Using the gifts of all God's people. Being an effective minority also entails harnessing the gifts of all God's people. This is both an issue of justice as well as efficiency. The church has for far too long in its history often seen the mission of God as the domain of only men of a particular age. Thankfully, this injustice is in the process of transformation. The change is rather slow in some communities. Gender injustice is alive and well in many churches today. In addition, young people are often excluded from decision-making and the full use of their gifts in church and society. Some of our churches have structures that make it difficult for persons with disabilities to enter the sanctuary for worship, let alone participate in leadership. If the church is to be effective in addressing current challenges comprehensively, it has to be faithful to God, harnessing the gifts of all people and repenting from the prejudice that leads to exclusion of the communities mentioned here. In addition, in the Reformed tradition we believe in the priesthood of all believers and yet far too often we act as if only the ordained pastor is a priest. In the face of societal injustice, the church has often neglected to use the gifts of its economists, lawyers, environmentalists, journalists, psychologists, and social workers to engage in analysis of our times and strategies toward viable actions that will bring life in fullness for a greater number of people. This commitment makes us value the gifts we have received from modern technological advances. We can be more committed to interdisciplinary actions to counter the forces of evil.

Receiving strength from spiritual renewal. The effective mission of the church should be based on renewed worship that strengthens the people of God. Effectively linking prayer, analysis, and action in a manner relevant to the

challenges facing our communities is very important for transforming actions that inspire hope. If worship life is disjointed from what people go through, they will experience Christianity as irrelevant to them. This is why it is important to have a link between worship and action in the world. Worship and prayer can provide the context in which people of faith can garner spiritual strength, value those with gifts of analyzing the contexts, and providing pointers towards the concrete actions that will make a difference in the world and therefore make the church experienced as relevant today. This is a call for spiritual and worship renewal. As Livingstone Buama, a Ghanaian theologian noted, "Worship is the heartbeat of religion. It is also the wellspring of spirituality, and, for that matter, the wellspring of the vitality of life. When worship is stifled or denied its authentic and native expression, life itself is stifled."[7]

If the church of the twenty-first century dares to engage in these five and many other steps, it can be a vibrant community for transforming society and a real source of hope. Challenges take a toll if there is no sign or source of hope. Yes, in facing challenges, people of God from time immemorial have also found hope through their faith. Such faith always found expression in action to counter the forces of death. The Christian today is called upon to be that source of hope for the world. Through commitment to action, we can be the light and salt of our communities, being that source of hope for all as we take on our role as co-workers with God in the transformation of society.

No Christian community or tradition can be an effective witness alone. Whether we are Reformed, Baptist, Methodist, or Episcopal, our reflections and actions make an impact if we overcome our divisions and act ecumenically. One of the past presidents of this great institution, John Mackay said of Presbyterians, "Let us be ecumenical Presbyterians. Grasped afresh by Jesus Christ Himself, let us dedicate ourselves to propagate the one holy faith throughout the world and to seek the unity of the one Church of Christ. Let us do what John Calvin wanted to do. Let us cross 'seven seas' and the great terrestrial spaces as well, to make Jesus Christ known as the World Savior, as the sovereign Lord of life and death, in whom all His followers are one."[8]

Yes, people of faith are facing great challenges today. But we cannot be overwhelmed. We can hold out hope for all—hope that is based on the God

[7] Livingstone Buama, "The Worship Experience of the Reformed Family in Ghana," in *Christian Worship in Reformed Churches—Past and Present*, ed. Lukas Vischer (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 222.

[8] John A. Mackay, "Ecumenical Presbyterianism," *The Presbyterian World* 20 (June 1950):56.

who feels with us, is with us, and works through us to transform the challenges. That hope will be invigorating and life-giving because women and men of faith have dared to believe that transformation is possible and they have committed themselves to be God's instruments acting ecumenically to usher in transformation.

Reading Scripture with Intensity: Academic, Ecclesial, Interfaith, and Divine

by David F. Ford

Dr. David F. Ford is Regius Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge. He delivered this address in Miller Chapel on March 10, 2005, at a symposium on "Faith in the Third Millennium: Reading Scripture Together," held in honor of Dr. Iain Torrance's inauguration as sixth President of Princeton Theological Seminary.

It is a delight and an honor to be here with you today to celebrate the inauguration of Dr. Iain Torrance as President of Princeton Theological Seminary and Professor of Patristics. It seems deeply fitting that he should be here in that double role. Iain's wonderful gift of paying close, patient attention to each person he deals with is united with a comparable and perhaps even rarer gift of paying perceptive, far-sighted attention to institutions, both in their internal workings and in relation to their increasingly complex environments. He has already demonstrated this impressively not only in the church and in the academy but also in a range of other institutions.

Of these I would single out the British Army. Your new President has held the rank of Major in the British Army, a recognition of many years of active service in the Territorial Army, a reserve force that serves on active duty with the regular army. While there he was not only a chaplain who was with his soldiers in all they went through; he also engaged with the structures and culture of the army, and especially its education and its ethics. I remember the Chaplain-General of the Army taking me aside once to explain how important Iain's integration of military, ecclesiastical, and educational experience had been as the army rethought the formation of its soldiers for service in situations of great pressure and complexity. I assume that the uniform has now been set aside, but in the years to come it may be worth remembering that your President has done such things.

But Dr.Torrance is also to be professor of patristics. It is remarkable that he might just as easily have become professor of ethics or of New Testament. Undergirding and pervading his ministry to people and to institutions is his rigorous, thoughtful study of several disciplines. Christian leadership of an institution requires many things, but three increasingly impress themselves upon me as being the conditions for everything else. One is "the vision thing," the ability to conceive and sustain a truly desirable goal for the flourishing of the institution in the context of dedication to the coming of the Kingdom of God in church and world. Another is the facing of reality, the

perception of what is really going on, and the capacity to redescribe this reality for people so that they can recognize, through all its confusions, complexities and ambiguities, that this is God's world and that God is with us on our way to God's future for us. The third is the root and inspiration of the other two. It is the calling to be a disciplined, intelligent, imaginative, and practical reader and re-reader of scripture and tradition, and to encourage and guide others in that. Iain Torrance combines all three, and typically he has chosen as the theme for his inauguration the most fundamental of them.

Iain and I go back some way together, back to being colleagues at the University of Birmingham in the 1980's. Since then we have been in different universities. We have had some golden meetings in Aberdeen, in Cambridge, and at conferences, but they have been all too few. I want now to attempt to distill something of what, during the years we have been friends, I myself have learned about Iain's chosen theme for today. I offer this in part autobiographical address to you today, Iain, in gratitude for what we have shared and as a small token in inadequate substitution for all I would like to have been able to share had we been colleagues for longer than those Birmingham years. Reflecting on "Faith in the Third Millennium: Reading Scriptures Together," my thoughts converged on four intensities.

An Academic Intensity: Scholarship, Hermeneutics, and Theology

The first, an academic intensity, is connected especially with a five-year period during that time at Birmingham University. At the suggestion of our mutual friend and colleague, Frances Young, she and I co-authored a book called *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians*. It brought five years of intermittent but intensive conversation, study, translating, and writing together with a Master's course and a discussion group of colleagues also focussed on this short, dense letter. What were the lessons from all this for reading together—besides the happy and by no means unimportant confirmation that study and friendship can so richly enhance each other?

The first was *how crucial and generative the activity of translating is*. We had both been trained in Greek and Latin classics, which meant that both of us were dissatisfied with all the available translations; but I do not think either of us had tried collaborative translation before. Franz Rosenzweig said that you know a text for the first time in translation. (And there is a sense in which our most important relationships, whether between friends, disciplines, traditions, religions, or generations, are exercises in translation.) Wrestling together with Paul's knotty, concentrated Greek not only led into all dimensions of philological scholarship; it also threw up one historical, literary,

hermeneutical, and theological issue after another. I remember the feeling of sheer inadequacy when faced with chapters 8 and 9 about the collection for the poor in Jerusalem. Nils Dahl said these chapters are "impossible to translate."[1] Paul is using one key term of his Gospel after another in order to speak simultaneously about actual finances and the "economy of God."[2] The metaphorical and the literal are complexly interconnected, and this embodies linguistically "the coinherence of the financial and divine economies (a matter, Iain, that you may want to reflect upon as you head this well-endowed—though, I am sure, in the opinion of the trustees, never sufficiently well-endowed—institution): in 2 Corinthians the mutuality of spiralling giving and thanksgiving culminates in the ultimate value, the glory of God (8:19; 9:13)."[3] "Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift" (9:13). Again and again the labor of translating difficult passages led us on into questions for which scholarship—whether philological, historical, sociological, or literary—was not sufficient, but neither was hermeneutics alone nor theology alone.

This was the second lesson, *the necessary coinherence of approaches to a text such as this*, which generally means that interpretation must be collaborative, a conversation between readers steeped in differing disciplines and their habits of inquiry. This in turn calls for practices of long-term collegiality that are rare enough in the academy. Appropriate academic intensity requires forms of sociality that pose a little-recognized challenge to our institutional creativity. How can we create settings and encourage relationships that enable the best practice of such disciplined reading together?

[1] N. A. Dahl, *Studies in Paul* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 31.

[2] "The collection itself is called *charis* (grace, gift of grace, favor, benevolence, gracious work, 8:6,7,19; cf. 8:1,9; 9:14; 1 Cor. 16:3), *koinonia* (partnership, sharing, fellowship, 8:4; 9:13; cf. Rom. 15:26), *diakonia* (ministration, service, relief work, 8:4; 9:12,13; cf. 8:19,20 [the verb *diakonein*], and Rom. 15:21), *eulogia* (open-handedness, blessing, liberality, willing gift, 9:5; cf. 9:6), *leitourgia* (service, voluntary public service, priestly religious service, 9:12; cf. Rom. 15:27), *haplotes* (single-minded commitment, simplicity, generosity, 8:2; 9:11,13), *hadrotes* (large sum of money, plenitude, liberal gift, 8:20), *perisseuma* (overflow, abundance, 8:14), *endeixis tes agapes humon* (proof of your love, demonstration of your love, 8:24), *sporos* (seed-corn, seed, resources, 9:10; cf. 9:6) and *ta genemata tes dikaiosunes humon* (the offshoots, harvest or yield of your righteousness, 9:10; cf. Hosea 10:12). Even this limited focus shows the collection linked into key terms in Paul's Gospel and 2 Corinthians. The ordinary word for collection, *logeia* (1 Cor. 16:1, 2), is not used at all here. The chapters are certainly about money and basic attitudes to possessions and prosperity, but these are inseparable from the character and glory of God, the practice of faith and love in the church and the dynamic reality of grace. The metaphorical application of economic terms to the gospel is given a new development as key gospel concepts, including economic ones, are in turn directed at reconceiving financial attitudes and relationships." Frances Young and David Ford, *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1987; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 176f.

[3] Ibid., 180.

A third lesson has taken longer to draw. It came clear last year when thinking about another co-authored book, called *Thinking Biblically: Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies* by Andre LaCocque, an Old Testament scholar, and Paul Ricoeur, among many other things a hermeneutical philosopher. (I think Paul Ricoeur, with Karl Barth, is among the very greatest Christian minds of the twentieth century—two thinkers of the Reformed Protestant tradition who are also deeply complementary to each other, and converge, one through philosophy and the other through theology, on the utter centrality of biblical interpretation.) LaCocque and Ricoeur draw together the more retrospective, archaeological approach of LaCocque with the more prospective approach of Ricoeur, who engages with the text's reception through the centuries and with its meaning for today. Thinking about the traditions and disciplines of interpretation which they bring to bear on texts from Genesis, Exodus, the Psalms, the Song of Songs, and other books, it is as if they are attempting to recapitulate the most fruitful exegetical and hermeneutical practices of the Western academy since the foundation of universities alongside the monastic schools of Medieval Europe. There is, especially in Ricoeur's rich and daring exposition of the Song of Songs, something of the monastic *lectio divina*, a meditative, contemplative reading allowing for many senses, and oriented above all towards the worship of God. That monastic tradition often resisted the scholastic, argumentative discourse of the new universities and their concern with Aristotle and other philosophers, but Ricoeur shows how to learn from the scholastics too as he discusses the *Ego sum qui sum*, "I am who I am," of Exodus 3:14. As the Middle Ages turned into the Renaissance and early modernity, scholasticism was in its turn challenged by the humanists. The Christian humanists' return to sources, their emphasis on Greek and Hebrew, and their appreciation of poetry, rhetoric, and history are all reflected in the studies of LaCocque and Ricoeur. And in later modernity we might discern the strands most obviously represented by the two authors: the strongly *wissenschaftlich* German philological and historical critical tradition, and that of philosophical and theological hermeneutics.

The lesson I draw from this is that *we read scripture together not only with those in the various disciplines of the academy but also with our predecessors in the communion of saints*; and these include monastic saints, scholastic saints, humanist saints, hermeneutical saints and (even!) saints who are historical critics. It would be surprising if each of the regimes of reading that have at various times dominated the academy did not have something to teach us (even when practised by those we might not identify as within the communion of saints at all), and this encourages us to welcome representatives of all

of them (the religious and the secular, and those who are complexly both) into the circle of those with whom we read and discuss scripture.

An Ecclesial Intensity: Wisdom Interpretation for the Church in the World

I now turn from the academic intensity of scholarship, hermeneutics and theology to a second, which I am naming *an ecclesial intensity*, one centered, in the church in the world. This has many aspects—local, regional, political, ecumenical, and more—but for now I will confine myself to one formative involvement of my own over another five-year period.

The 1998 Lambeth Conference for the 800 bishops of the Anglican Communion took Second Corinthians as its theme text, studied together by the whole conference in small groups every day in the context of morning prayer. I was part of a group that organized the opening and closing plenary sessions with a focus on the Bible through drama, video, discussion, and addresses. This later led into my participation, as leader of the Bible studies and theological adviser, in four annual meetings, between 2000 and 2003, of the Archbishops and Presiding Bishops of the Anglican Communion, called Primates' Meetings.

As is well known, during all this time the Communion was engaged in vigorous argument, especially over issues relating to homosexuality; and these in turn were inseparable from deep differences over the interpretation of scripture. This has been one of the most public and long-running disputes in our time over how to read scripture together. I need not remind you that this is not just an Anglican problem: the issues here resonate around the world in many Christian churches and in other religious and non-religious communities. So although I am selecting the tradition that I know best, there are analogous tensions in other churches and traditions.

Within the Anglican Communion, the culmination of the most recent phase was the publication of the Windsor Report by the Lambeth Commission on Communion set up by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which is now in the process of reception and was discussed last month by the Primates' Meeting.[4]

[4] Appropriately for our theme today, its discussion of scripture is under the heading of "The Bonds of Communion." What it says about the authority and interpretation of scripture in the Church is as good as any brief statement I have read. Its finely balanced affirmation of authority says: "If the notion of scriptural authority is itself to be rooted in scripture, and to be consonant with the central truths confessed by Christians from the earliest days, it must be seen that the purpose of scripture is not simply to supply true information, nor just to prescribe in matters of belief and conduct, nor merely to act as a court of appeal, but to be part of the dynamic life of the Spirit through which God the Father is making the victory which was won by Jesus' death and resurrection operative

What is to be learned regarding reading scripture together from this Anglican experience between Lambeth 1998 and this year? One encouraging result is that it shows it can be done fruitfully; the discouraging thing is how easily this achievement can, at least in the short term, be undermined, ignored, or undone, especially through the activities of well-financed and well-organized interest groups skilled in dealing with the media. The 1998 Lambeth Conference sub-group that spent over two weeks considering human sexuality was made up of over fifty bishops, ranging from Bishop Jack Spong to conservative Nigerians. They began extremely polarized but ended by agreeing on a common statement that was no empty compromise.[5] Yet this sub-group report was brushed aside by the highly politicized plenary session that discussed sexuality. In successive Primates' Meetings something similar happened. In each one that I attended, a common life interweaving worship, the study of scripture, serious listening to each other in a spirit of mutual accountability, the sharing of issues from each province, and engaging with a wide range of demanding questions, from canon law and theological education to HIV/AIDS and world poverty, led to unanimous joint statements. Yet surrounding each meeting, and sometimes penetrating the meeting places, were the dedicated lobbyists pressing hard for quick, decisive, and inevitably divisive solutions according to their own clear criteria. And in between meetings the political pressures were sustained, encouraged by some of the Primates, often exerted through the mass media, but also through creating single-issue solidarity across continents.

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within the world and in and through human beings." *The Lambeth Commission on Communion: The Windsor Report* (London: Anglican Communion Office, 2004), 39.

This recognition of an authority that is part of the dynamic of the Spirit involved with all the contingencies and complexities of history and community life, and open to fresh interpretations, leads it to recognize the current situation as, against the odds, an opportunity for the Bible even to become a means of unity: "If our present difficulties lead us to read and learn together from scripture in new ways, they will not have been without profit. . . . In fact, our shared reading of scripture across boundaries of culture, region and tradition ought to be the central feature of our common life, guiding us together into an appropriately rich and diverse unity by leading us forward from entrenched positions into fresh appreciation of the riches of the gospel as articulated in the scriptures" (Ibid., 42).

[5] The ingredients, as observed by a member of the plenary group that I was part of, Dr. Tim Jenkins, a social anthropologist, included shared worship, small group Bible study, thorough preparation by resource people, a commitment to respectful conversation, a really able secretariat of three bishops (who produced a draft proposal each day, circulated it, registered and coped with criticisms and disagreements, and redrafted it overnight), all enabling a process of coming to a common mind. This process was one in which no one was expected to give up a convinced position (especially on the way scripture was to be understood) and so bishops had to allow a certain discretion and integrity to each other, while at the same time they took into account and took responsibility for the effects of their own position on other participants and dioceses, offering to each other an imaginative understanding and compassion.

But it is worth trying to name the sort of scriptural interpretation that went on in that sub-group at Lambeth, in the Primates' Meetings at their best, and probably (though here I do not speak as an eyewitness) in the Commission that produced the Windsor Report. How might we describe this interpretation?

It is *centered in worship*, the primary locus for reading scripture together. It grows out of *intensive, respectful conversation* in community, conversation around both scripture and the issues of church and world. It is alert to the *varied modes of interpretation* in the tradition and in the contemporary church and academy and it appreciates the abundance of meaning in Scripture. It is *imaginative and compassionate* in understanding and assessing the interpretations of others. It recognizes the *immersion in messy history* both of the biblical characters and authors and of the whole intricate and conflictual tradition of interpretation, including ourselves.[6] It *resists the temptation to reach for the security and satisfaction of clear, decisive answers* to questions in dispute among faithful Christians, and the consequent temptation always to speak emphatically in the indicative and imperative moods, when it might be more appropriate to use the interrogative mood, or the exploratory subjunctive mood of "may be" and "might be," or the optative mood, the "if only" of desire to see face to face in the future while acknowledging that now we see through a glass darkly. It is willing, on the one hand, to enter into *dispute for the sake of God's truth and love*, allowing that challenge, disagreement and admonition can be life-giving in any good family life, but, on the other hand, it is also willing to *live patiently with deep problems*, if necessary for many years, rather than break up a family bound together by the blood of Christ. Finally, it trusts that, if the two great commandments are about love, and God is love, then *no interpretation is to be trusted that goes against love*—that is Augustine's great *regula caritatis*, the rule of love. *If love is the rule, then the "how" of reading scripture together is as important as the "what."* To come to conclusions in a separate group about what the Bible means and then to try to impose these

[6] Part of sensitivity to history is exploring why a particular issue regarding scripture has become so "hot" at a particular time. What are the conditions for it becoming the focus of attention? In whose interest is it that this be at the center of attention? Should this centrality he affirmed or challenged? If its importance is granted, is it so important as to be church-dividing? One example worth reflecting upon is that of predestination to salvation and damnation. This has been deeply divisive, especially among Protestants, and has split churches, local communities, and families. There is a great deal of scripture relevant to it and no single interpretation has been generally agreed. Why at some periods has it been "hot" enough to divide the church whereas at others, without heing resolved, it has not been central? Are there lessons to be learned from the ways in which this issue has at times been taken off the boil and enabled not to he church-dividing even while also not having been given a clear, decisive answer?

on others by polemical websites, worldly political strategies, and a good deal of caricature, selective quotation, and anger, is deeply unchristian. But to follow an ethic of holy communication in love, to apply to our reading together the maxims, for example, of the letter to the Ephesians (that great epistle of unity, much of whose ethical teaching concerns the use of language):

> Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God (Eph. 4:29–5:2).

That is, to be committed to long-term patience with each other, often to give up chances of political advantage, and therefore to be politically vulnerable.

I suggest that one possible name for all this is: *a wisdom interpretation of scripture*. Wisdom in a full biblical sense somehow catches the blend of understanding, sensitivity to historical circumstances and to persons, concern for human flourishing, and passion for God and God's purposes that are in line with the wisdom and love through which all things were made. And it allows for the arts as well as the sciences, for depths beneath depths, for complexity that resists any overview, even for paradoxes, unresolved difficulties, unclarity, and the mystery of God. Just think of Job!

And thinking of Job immediately sets this wisdom in the context of the most terrible anguish, the cries of those who suffer, who seek against all the odds to make sense of things. Wisdom in the Bible is closely related to cries: the cries of wisdom herself, the cries for wisdom, for justice, for forgiveness, for peace, for prosperity, for healing, for life, for God; and the cries of God. I remember the effect at the Primates' Meeting in Kanuga in 2001 of the Rev. Gideon Byamugisha, someone with HIV/AIDS who gripped the whole gathering with his account of the AIDS pandemic, its implications, and what might be done about it. Really hearing this cry put the Church's internal difficulties into another perspective and directed attention to scripture in a different way. As we interpret scripture in order to work out our salvation in fear and trem-

bling before God (Phil. 2:12), that we hope is the beginning of wisdom, *are we within earshot of the cries of our world that go up to God?*

Above all, are we within earshot of the cries of Jesus Christ from the cross, and of Paul's proclamation of "Christ crucified. . . the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23–4)? In my judgement, the most significant event of the meetings during those five years centered on the cross. It happened in Porto, Portugal in 2000, in the course of a Bible study on the Letter to the Ephesians. A discussion of "the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name" (Eph. 3:14) led into a discussion between two African archbishops about authority in families. This connected with the discussion of Ephesians 2 about being brought together by the blood of Christ, "For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us" (Eph. 2:14). The core realization was that if it is virtually unthinkable to turn away and break off from our natural families, how much more unthinkable and scandalous should it be to turn away from those with whom the blood of Christ unites us? The measure of suffering to which we are called for the sake of our unity is nothing less than that seen in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. This led into a statement in the meeting's communiqué that seems to me to give a prophetic wisdom for Christians in our new millennium: "As in any family, the assurance of love allows boldness of speech. We are conscious that we all stand together at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ, so we know that to turn away from each other is to turn away from the cross." And that statement is quoted in the final sentence of the recent Windsor Report.

One final lesson from those five years was a growing realization that, if time were to be given to the Anglican Communion to continue together, one area above all would need to be addressed: theological education. It had become clear that theological education was actually deteriorating in many regions, and that many clergy, let alone laity, were not being formed in ways of prayer, worship, scriptural understanding, and engagement with the world in the best traditions available. The pivotal issue was the interpretation of scripture. In the aftermath of one standard Book of Common Prayer it was apparent that the common language of the Communion has to be shaped afresh by the Bible, but that it has not anything like a common mind about the ways in which the Bible should be studied, interpreted, taught, and lived. This is a core challenge to be met if there is to be a healthy Anglican Communion; *I have become increasingly convinced that here in the reading of scripture together there is also a core challenge for Christianity as a whole.*

An Interfaith Intensity: Jews, Christians, and Muslims Reading our Scriptures Together

Now to the third intensity, which is closely related to the academic and the ecclesial. Of recent publications that manage to describe and embody wisdom in interpretation I think the best and most accessible is the publication of the Scripture Project sponsored by the Center of Theological Inquiry here in Princeton, with participation from this seminary by William Stacy Johnson, edited by Ellen Davis and Richard Hays, and called *The Art of Reading Scripture*.[7] They summarize their joint conclusions in nine theses on the interpretation of scripture: distillations of their wisdom which are as good guidelines as any yet offered for reading scripture together in the twenty-first century.[8] The eighth of the nine theses reads: "Christians need to read the Bible in dialogue with diverse others outside the church."[9]

The third intensity is the engagement of a community of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in what is called Scriptural Reasoning. Its origins are in a Jewish group called Textual Reasoning that began to meet at the American Academy of Religion (AAR) in the early 1990s, with Professor Peter Ochs as one of its founding members. They are Jewish text scholars (of Scripture and Talmud), philosophers, and theologians who found that there was little deep engagement between their different discourses centered on texts and reasoning, and so they started to study together. Some Christians, myself among them, used to sit in on their argumentative, learned, and extraordinarily lively sessions.

[7] Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

[8] The nine theses are as follows:

1. Scripture truthfully tells the story of God's action of creating, judging, and saving the world.
2. Scripture is rightly understood in light of the church's rule of faith as a coherent dramatic narrative.
3. Faithful interpretation of scripture requires an engagement with the entire narrative: the New Testament cannot be rightly understood apart from the Old, nor can the Old be rightly understood apart from the New.
4. Texts of Scripture do not have a single meaning limited to the intent of the original author. In accord with Jewish and Christian traditions, we affirm that Scripture has multiple complex senses given by God, the author of the whole drama.
5. The four canonical Gospels narrate the truth about Jesus.
6. Faithful interpretation of Scripture invites and presupposes participation in the community brought into being by God's redemptive action—the Church.
7. The saints of the church provide guidance in how to interpret and perform scripture.
8. Christians need to read the Bible in dialogue with diverse others outside the church.
9. We live in the tension between the "already" and the "not yet" of the Kingdom of God; consequently, Scripture calls the church to ongoing discernment, to continually fresh rereadings of the text in the light of the Holy Spirit's ongoing work in the world. (Ibid., 1–5).

[9] Ibid., 4.

Soon we joined together to form a second group of Jews and Christians, Scriptural Reasoning, studying the Tanakh and the Bible; and a few years later were joined by Muslims with the Qur'an. Scriptural Reasoning is now, like Textual Reasoning, a unit with a life of its own in the program of the annual meeting of the AAR, there are groups in various parts of the world, an international Scriptural Reasoning Theory Group that has been meeting twice a year at AAR and in Cambridge, a grassroots body called the Children of Abraham Institute (CHAI), the online *Journal of Scriptural Reasoning*, a research group focussing on medieval scriptural interpretation in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity that is convened here at the Center of Theological Inquiry, postgraduate program in the University of Virginia, and much else.

The core identities of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have always been inseparable from their scriptures and accompanying traditions of study, interpretation, argument, doctrine, ethics, and worship; and this is unlikely to change in the third millennium. *It makes deep sense for these rich and widely influential reading traditions to engage as thoroughly as possible with each other.* They are already complexly related in content, and also with regard to issues of transmission, translation, normativity, methods of interpretation, contemporary relevance, and so on. Both historically and in many parts of the world today, communities that look to these scriptures have lived and are living together, often with considerable tensions. But whereas both the academic and the ecclesial intensities of scripture reading are served by many forms of collegiality, the interfaith intensity has almost a complete lack of collegiality. Where in our world do Muslims, Jews, and Christians gather to read our scriptures together in mutual hospitality and attentiveness? *I believe that a crucial challenge for faith in the third millennium is to create new forms of collegiality gathered around our scriptures and their accompanying traditions of interpretation and application.*

The practice of Scriptural Reasoning is to spend some time in plenary discussion but most time in small groups studying passages of the three scriptures that in some way relate to each other. We have focussed on texts concerning revelation, law, economics, teaching and learning, prayer, love, and much else. Last month a group in Cambridge was joined by Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, for a two-hour session on Joseph and Potiphar's wife in the Qur'an and Tanakh, and, from the New Testament, the woman who anointed Jesus' feet. Hebrew, Arabic, and Greek flew around the room; the Hadith, the Talmud, and patristic and medieval interpretations were drawn in, and all sorts of contemporary issues raised. In the phrase coined by Dr. Aref Nayed, each of us brings to the table our "internal library." When all these libraries are resourcing the reading of three

texts at the same time, the result can be a dazzling intensity that combines the premodern, modern, and postmodern that can produce startling surprises, that defies overview, systematizing or adequate reproduction in print, but yet—for those of us with academic vocations—has an intrinsic impulsion towards a theorizing, a doing of philosophy and theology, and a writing that can never do anything like full justice to what is going on but still tries to approximate to it as well as possible.

What happens at best in such sessions is close engagement with each others' texts in a spirit simultaneously of academic study, of being true to one's own convictions and community, and of truth-seeking and peace-seeking conversation wherever that might lead. It does not usually lead to consensus—the differences between us often emerge more sharply, and at these points there is often a deepening awareness of the meaning of one's own faith. It does often lead to friendship. *The mutual hospitality of each being both host and guest in relation to the others is at the heart of this collegiality.* Each tradition needs to offer its best food, drink, and cuisine.

For me that means preparing and offering those academic and ecclesial intensities in coinherence. In particular, that involves striving to embody and communicate something of what I have tried to describe through my account of the best practices of interpretation in the Anglican Communion in recent years. All of the strands in that wisdom interpretation cry out to be worked through appropriately in Abrahamic, interfaith reading of scripture: the intensive, respectful conversation in community, focused on both scripture and the issues of church and world; the abundance of meaning in scripture and the consequently varied modes of interpretation in the academy, in the tradition and in the contemporary church, synagogue, and mosque; the value of imagination and compassion in understanding and assessing each others' interpretations; recognition of immersion in messy history; the need to resist the temptation to reach for the security and satisfaction of clear, decisive answers to questions in dispute among Jews, Christians, and Muslims, and to value mutual questioning and exploration; the willingness, on the one hand, to enter into dispute for the sake of God's truth and love, and, on the other hand, to recognise the strength of our bonds in the family of Abraham and the call to live patiently with our deep differences; and throughout to conduct our reading according to an ethics, and even politics, of justice, love, and forgiveness.

Yet, as in the Anglican Communion, so in each of the Abrahamic faiths: such practices of wise reading are extremely vulnerable. The politics of scriptural interpretation can be crude, manipulative, and literally violent. I do not think that Scriptural Reasoning, or any other peace-loving practice

among Jews, Christians, and Muslims, can flourish without building up of forms of dedicated collegiality and collaboration that are prepared to meet strong opposition within each community and in the secular world. Our world needs such signs of hope, and it needs the resources for peacemaking that each of these traditions can offer. And among these resources is one that is incomparable.

God, The Ultimate Intensity

This is the fourth intensity: God. In recapitulating the lessons learned from recent Anglican experience I omitted the first: reading needs to be centered in worship as its primary location. This points to the most obvious (yet extremely easy to ignore) truth about Muslim, Christian, and Jewish scriptures: that they are above all concerned with God. Within each tradition, doing justice to this is a never-ending challenge. Between them it is even more difficult and sensitive. For most members of each tradition, including myself, worship together by Muslims, Christians, and Jews is not appropriate. But if, as people who pray, we enter into joint scripture study together, perhaps this is as near as we can or should come to sharing in the intensity of worship that is at the heart of synagogue, church, and mosque. Around the Scriptural Reasoning table are people who acknowledge that *this reading is done before the living God*, however differently we might identify God.[10] Reading in the presence of the God of Abraham, the God of peace who wills to bless all peoples through Abraham: that is the ultimate source of encouragement and hope for such reading together.

And there is a consequent lesson for our reading, one which I believe goes to the heart of each of our traditions, and which, if we learn it well and follow through its endless implications, will guide us into the richest scriptural wisdom of all. The lesson is that each of us, both within our own traditions and when we come together, should *read our scriptures for God's sake*. We are

[10] This is not to imply that Scriptural Reasoning must be confined to practicing Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Within universities, for example, it can be appropriate to have scholarly readers of scriptures who are not necessarily members of one of the three traditions: they might be members of other religious traditions or not identify with any. This creates a different dynamic than when all are Jews, Christians, and Muslims, but one that is especially relevant to the complexities of our religious and secular world. My view is that within universities there should ideally be both types of groups; but in practice, given the complexity of the religious identity of many people today in both religious and secular contexts, together with the related complex interplay of religious and secular dimensions in communities labelled either "religious" or "secular," actual groups are likely to have very different make-ups and often be extremely hard to categorize. Such complexifying of boundaries is intrinsic to any worthwhile, transformative interfaith practice in a religious and secular world.

to read for the sake of God and God's purposes. This is the ultimate orientation of reading among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Of course our reading can have worthy penultimate motivations and aims, but the ultimate desire is to hallow the name of God, to bless, praise, and thank God, to acknowledge that God is great, good, compassionate, forgiving, holy, and has whatever other perfections are expressed in worship, to relate to God all that we are and think and hope and do, and to read and live in ways that please God.

Epilogue: On Friendship

Finally, a word on one of God's purposes, friendship. I remember a distinguished graduate of this seminary, Dr. Preman Niles, saying to me that in his view the success of the first decades of the Christian ecumenical movement was to a considerable extent due to friendships that were formed across Protestant and Catholic boundaries and were strong enough to endure severe pressures. Much more than friendship is, of course, required if a major movement is to flourish long term; but, without friendships at the heart of it, it is unlikely that its fruitfulness will have the right quality and depth. And might it be that relations between faiths have in our century something of the same urgency and sense of *kairos* that the Christian ecumenical movement had in the mid-twentieth century, and that they will both flourish in this millennium only if they are engaged in simultaneously?

For me, this occasion today is a deeply moving feast of friendship. Iain Torrance, whose friendship I share with my collaborator in scriptural interpretation, Frances Young, has invited me to celebrate with him and many of his friends (and, no doubt, some who will in the future be friends), and to deliver this address not only alongside two of my friends from among those who do Scriptural Reasoning, Peter Ochs and Aref Nayed, but also alongside one of Iain's other friends, Setri Nyomi, whom it has been a great honor and delight to meet here for the first time. *It may be in such exchanges and extensions of friendship among readers of Tanakh, Bible, and Qur'an that the clearest signs of hope for faith in the third millennium are to be found and, hopefully, multiplied.*

Reading Scripture Together in Sight of Our Open Doors

by Peter Ochs

Dr. Peter Ochs is the Edgar Bronfam Professor of Modern Judaic Studies at the University of Virginia. He delivered this address in Miller Chapel on March 10, 2005, at a symposium on "Faith in the Third Millennium: Reading Scripture Together," held in honor of Dr. Iain Torrance's inauguration as sixth President of Princeton Theological Seminary.

> David gave his son Solomon the plan of the porch and the houses [of the Temple]. . . .King David said to the entire assemblage: "God has chosen my son Solomon alone, an untried lad, although the work to be done is vast, for the Temple is not for a man but for the Lord God". . . . David said, "Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel our father from eternity to eternity" (1 Chr. 28–29).[1]

Dear President Torrance and members of the congregation of Princeton Seminary, may God bless you all in this extraordinary time of inauguration. This occasion stimulates my Jewish biblical imagination to reflect on the transition of leadership from David to Solomon. But before I say anything more about the Chronicles text, let me assure you that I realize that neither outgoing nor incoming president is or would be King and that this House in which we stand is neither Davidic Palace nor Solomonic Temple.

But I did, literally, turn to these scriptural texts when I sought guidance about how to appreciate God's place in this week's events. Sharing a few words about what these and a related text mean to me on this day, I hope also to illustrate a few features of my own way of practicing the scriptural reasoning I share with David Ford and with Aref Nayed and our peers. I say "my own way of practice," because scriptural reasoning allows us to seek after God's word in our own ways, even though these ways pass through the very happy place of dialogue and warm fellowship. As long as the fellowship is strong, I have no need to worry that my way is not the same as David's or Aref's.

One feature of my scriptural reasoning is that I turn to Scripture for guidance on how to understand and act in the world. A second feature is that, in terms drawn from Scripture, "turning for guidance" means *lidrosh et*

[1] All translations from the *Tanakh* in this essay are adapted from *Tanakh: a New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985).

hashem, "inquiring after God," where the verb *lidrosh* connotes *derashah*: searching through the words of Scripture for meanings that are already there but not yet disclosed to me. For me, scriptural reasoning thus presumes both that God's instruction is revealed in Scripture and that what is revealed cannot be readily seen in the plain sense of the words of Scripture. Now, the sages of the Talmud warn, *lo yotse . . . mide peshuto*, the meaning of Scripture must not depart from the plain sense, but this is not a call for literalism. As I understand it, it means, "on your travels deep into Scripture, be sure to follow the path prepared for you by the grammar, the text-historical context, and the semantic fields of the plain sense. Otherwise, you will be searching after something other than the Creator's will."

A third feature is that the plain sense speaks for all eternity, but the deeper meaning is disclosed only for the time and place of the seeker. A fourth feature is that *derashah*, seeking into the depths of Scripture, is a form of prayer: it is asking God, "How shall I understand this day? And what shall I therefore do?" A fifth feature is that the seeker believes that God answers back, as it were, and then the seeker asks a more refined question, then God answers back, and that the back and forth dialogue between prayerful seeker and the God of Scripture is what we mean by *studying into the depths of Scripture as Scripture*, provided we remember that this kind of study speaks only to the time and place of study.

And so my prayer for today was to ask, "How shall I understand this day?" and, "How shall I express my gratitude for being invited, as a Jew, to share in it, and my wonderment about what this event of sharing may mean?" This prayer moved me to read about David and Solomon. But what *is* it in the depths of the story of David and Solomon that speaks to me on this occasion? I shall limit my remarks to four lessons from the deep.

A Reflection on Time and the Millennium

What would David feel if he were present at the dedication of the House he planned? What did Solomon feel? These questions led me to think of the psalm I pray at the beginning of the Jewish morning prayer service each day, and which Jewish mothers traditionally pray when they arrive in public for the first time, to name their new son or daughter:

mizmor le chanukat ha-bayit ledavid. . . .

aromimecha adoshem ki dilitanu v'lo samachta oyve li . . .

A Davidic Song for the Dedication of the House:
I will extol you O Lord; you have raised me up and not
Allowed my enemies to triumph over me (Ps. 30).

The initial verses of the psalm voice a sense of witnessing the time of wonders daily with us in the daily renewal of creation. This is regular time, since it happens everyday, but the psalmist reminds us that this *need not* happen every day. The miracle of creation is the miracle of God's being with us, *we hope and pray*, again each day as the day before. This feature of the psalm thus gives voice to my joy of witnessing a moment of periodic succession, from one seminary president to the next as from David to Solomon and, here, our prayer is that God may grant Princeton the miracle of normalcy.

To say that *God* renews each day is to speak, however, not only of a repetition, but also of a non-identical repetition: a renewal that must contain something new since it is the fruit of divine action and whatever God does will surprise us with unanticipated features. In this sense, the psalm gives voice to a sense of witnessing some new birth within this inauguration: some unanticipated way that Princeton Seminary will be a surprise to itself. (Shall I pray for surprise, or simply offer the rabbinic affirmation, *titchad'shu*: may you be refreshed in your renewal?) Since I am not part of the everyday of the seminary or of the church, it will of course not be for me to see or speculate about what in this renewal may be new.

That thought leads me to consider my own presence here and my sense of being lifted up by the invitation to share in this occasion. "I will sing to the Lord for he has lifted me up." Lovely! But then the psalmist adds, "and not allowed my enemies to triumph over me." What shall I do with this? Because of the reference to "enemies," I almost abandoned the idea of sharing this psalm with you today: surely, succession and renewal are not about overcoming enemies! But then I remembered that the *reader* remains an inextricable part of scriptural reasoning and that the reference to triumph over enemies could have something to do with my own presence here today as a Jew inside an intimate moment in the life of the Presbyterian Church. Soon, the psalm seemed to unveil an unexpected meaning about my life as a Jew. Perhaps, by standing here today, I am invited to taste the new life Judaism may experience when it is released from at least a portion of the still stultifying trauma of the Holocaust or *Shoah* ("utter devastation").

With all the apparent success of Jewish life in the United States, it may seem odd for you to hear me say that the Jewish people have still not

recovered from the *Shoah*.[2] But I am speaking of the spiritual condition of Judaism, and I believe that the Jewish literatures and sermons of my parents' and my generations give only muted evidence of the fire of faith and vision that animates the literatures of earlier generations. And what is muted in the literatures is also muted in the pews and classrooms and homes. And when that fire is muted inside our homes, the whole world around us looks much darker and more frightening. And then the terrible and real evidence of the *Shoah*, retold from parent to child to child, leaves us not only marked by the unhappy truth of humanity's deep stain but also darkened by it, so that we no longer display to ourselves, let alone to the world, the Creator's light that is also our mark—no, much more than a mark, it is our inheritance, our gift, and our obligation to share: to declare each morning, "by Thy light do we see light!" "Praised are you O Lord . . . Who illumines the world and its creatures with mercy. . . . Praised are you, creator of lights."[3]

After the traumas of its life in Europe, how will the people Israel "refind" its gift of light, share it again with the world and take its place as a light to the nations? As it has done after the catastrophic losses of earlier years, the people Israel may yet have another generation or two of waiting and work until, from deep within itself and within its literatures, the Creator-and-Revealer's indwelling light may shine through again, re-creating, re-order-

[2] Perhaps because so many of Judaism's great spiritual masters and teachers lived in Eastern Europe and therefore died in the *Shoah*, leaving us still weakened in the number and depth of our spiritual teachers; or perhaps because the enormity of loss—for example, one million children and babies gassed or burned alive—overwhelmed our traditions of theodicy (or accounting for God's actions); but I really do not know why: "how long, O Lord?" For whatever reason, our people appear to have been left, too often, to draw merely logical inferences about relations between Jews and Gentiles and, because the data often exceeds comprehension, the inferences are often contradictory, and the net result despairing. The dominant inference of our parents' generation was: if we had reason to fear and mistrust our European and Christian neighbors before the *Shoah*, we have all the more reason now; so that if, we had sought a somewhat separate life before the *Shoah*, we should be seeking a fully separate one now. But much of our own generation draws the contrary inference from comparable data: before the *Shoah*, it took courage to maintain our separate faith in the face of a world that rejected us; after the evidence of the *Shoah*, it is simply foolish to try. The lessons of experience, in other words, have pulled Judaism into the contradictory ways of separatism and assimilationism. Historians might indeed reassure us with the unhappy news that the religion as well as the society of the Jews have suffered yet survived catastrophic loss several times before: after her Babylonian Exile, for example, Israel returned with a renewed but profoundly transformed religion of the Book and of Temple worship; after Rome destroyed the Second Temple, the religion of the Book gave way to a religion of synagogue prayer and *derashah*, or rabbinic text study. But, as yet, no historian can tell us what new form of rabbinic Judaism may eventually enflame our hearts after these most recently traumatized generations have passed. No one can say when an epoch of despair has passed and one of renewed faith will begin. Meanwhile, we study, pray, wait, and look for possible signs of a new epoch.

[3] From the traditional Jewish daily morning prayer service.

ing, and re-vivifying as it shows the world yet another face of Judaism for yet another moment of the people Israel's relation to humanity.

None of us can predict or force the time of this rebirth. But we may be able, in the time between the times of rebirth, to pick up signs of what is to come. And, without fearing error, since my error should not have the power to worsen anything, I confess to you that I believe this occasion has the appearance of such a sign: I mean this occasion on which the leader of a great seminary of the Church invites a religious Jew to share words of Torah at the time of his inauguration—and a day on which the Jew agrees.

Signs of course are seen only through the light of other signs, and I would not be able even to hallucinate such a sign as this if it had not been preceded by prior signs, proleptic signs. Such as the day, about twenty years ago, when I sat at Yale with Hans Frei, may his memory be for a great blessing, and George Lindbeck, studied with them the meaning of plain sense, learned their method of reading Scripture, and heard, to my surprise, the important role of rabbinic hermeneutics in their method—in particular, as prototype for Christianity now as a "minority religion" (to echo Setri Nyomi's words).[4] Or the day, about twelve years ago, when I sat in Cambridge with

[4] See Dr. Nyomi's address in this collection, which echoes the remarkable words by Hans Frei: "A far more urgent issue for Christian interpretation is the unpredictable consequences of learning the 'language' of the Jewish tradition. . . . To discover Midrash in all its subtlety and breadth of options and to understand *pshat* (the traditional sense) may well he to begin to repair a series of contacts established and broken time and again in the history of the Church, whenever linguistic and textual Old Testament issues became pressing in intra-Christian debate. . . . The most fateful issue for Christian self-description is that of gaining its autonomous vocation as a religion, after its defeat in its secondary vocation of providing ideological coherence, foundation, and stability to Western culture. Beyond that, however, the example of Judaism in the modern Western world might be a beacon to a reconstituted Christian community" (Hans Frei, "The 'Literal Reading' of Biblical Narrative in the Christian Tradition of Scripture: Does it Stretch or Will it Break?" in *The Biblical and the Narrative Tradition*, ed. Frank McConnell [New York: Oxford University Press, 1986]; repr. in Hans Frei, *Theology and Narrative*, eds. George Hunsinger and William Placher [New York: Oxford University Press, 1993], 117–152). For me, this approach to Jewish-Christian hermeneutical dialogue has been continued most acutely in the work of George Lindbeck and Stanley Hauerwas. Consider, for example, Lindbeck's study of "Martin Luther and the Rahbinic Mind" in Peter Ochs, ed., *Understanding the Rabbinic Mind: Essays on the Hermeneutic of Max Kadushin* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990); repr. in George Lindbeck, *The Church In a Postliberal Age*, ed. James Buckley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 21–37, where he writes: "Christians increasingly experience the kinds of socio-political marginality which may have contributed to the development of rabbinic Judaism. . . .Christians may then find models for their practice in both the pastoral/catechetical Luther and contemporary rahbinic reformers" (37). And consider his study of "The Church as Israel" (for example in "Postmodern Hermeneutics and Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Case Study," in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, eds. T. Frymer-Kensky, et.al. [Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000], 106–113). And consider Hauerwas' many writings on a post-Constantinian Christianity. In relation to Judaism, consider his claim in "Christian Ethics in Jewish Terms: A Response to David Novak" (in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, 135–140) that "Christians in the West are just beginning to

David Ford and Daniel Hardy and studied Torah and Gospel with them and learned of their "sapiental pneumatology"—their following after God's Spirit through its life in the churches, in the academies, in the world—and in this way I heard, again to my surprise, of the vibrant place of Jewish textual reasoning in a conversation that promised to bring Muslim, as well as Jewish and Christian scholars into close fellowship with one another. Or the days, over the past seven years, when I as a religious Jew have been welcomed beyond merit into so many wonderful conversations on scripture, theology, and the world with so many Princeton Seminary scholars—among them, Clifton Black, Beverly Gaventa, George Hunsinger, and many others;[5] and the day two years ago when I sat at the Center of Theological Inquiry with Wallace Alston, Stacy Johnson, and Robert Jenson, shared their joy in Scripture and saw scriptural reasoning emerge as a program of research at the Center of Theological Inquiry.[6] Or the days I sat in Drew University ten years ago with my student Basit Koshul, and again in Cambridge three years ago with my colleague Aref Nayed, and studied Qur'an and Torah and discovered that we were brethren and that our texts called one to the other.

The memory of all these days enables me to read this day, today, as a sign of how Judaism may sit with its neighbors in the day that it "refinds" its light. In that day—and for this I pray!—Judaism will feel loved by the Church—and by the Mosque!—in a way that it has not been loved before, and Judaism will sense God's love in a way that it has not sensed it before, for this will be a love not only from the Creator who lights each day for us and from the Revealer who lights each redeeming word of Torah for us, but also from at least two congregations of the Adamic creature who, as *tselem elokim*—"image of God"—remains the subject, hope, and frustration of Israel's work in the world. Loved by Church and Mosque, Judaism may once again be granted visions of the endtime when we are all visited by the indwelling Redeemer

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learn to live the way Jews have had to live since Christians took over the world by making Caesar a member of the Church" (140); and, earlier, "Remembering as a Moral Task: The Challenge of the Holocaust" (in *Cross Currents* [Spring, 1991]; repr. in S. Hauerwas, *The Hauerwas Reader*, eds. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright [Durham: Duke University Press, 2001], 327–347). Among my own reflections on this topic, consider P. Ochs, ed., *The Return to Scripture in Judaism and Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993) and "Recovering the God of History: Scriptural Life after Death in Judaism and Christianity," in *Jews and Christians, People of God*, ed. Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 114–147.

[5] And Patrick Miller, Max Stackhouse, Bruce McCormack, James Kay, Kathy Sakenfeld, Kathleen McVey, and even then I am, for lack of space, illustrating only a few of our many interlocutors on matters of scripture and theology at Princeton.

[6] The CTI Scriptural Reasoning Research Group has a three year tenure (2004–2006) and is co-chaired by William Stacy Johnson and Peter Ochs.

who, marrying "image of God" to *shem Hashem*—"the divine name"—completes the divine name in its life on earth. Enflamed again by such visions, Judaism may again take its place as a vessel of light poured out from the Creator as light to the nations.

Do we stand then, now, in a new millennium? Each Sabbath, or *shabbat*, you know (and each Holy Day and each moment of blessing during the everyday), religious Jews experience a taste of life in the world to come. But then there are six days of work, six-sevenths of the world to redeem. Given the not-yet state of my people's recovery from the *Shoah*, I do not know that I sense a new millennium upon us. But standing here, today, I believe I taste it like a taste of a world that is yet to come. In this sense and for this moment, I sing with the Psalmist, "I will extol you (O Lord) for you have lifted me up and not let my enemies triumph over me"—the enemies, that is, of dark memory and fear that still stalk my people and occlude and veil the light that would shine in them.

To close this longer first section, let me record a sixth feature of scriptural reasoning: *that it marks* out special times for bringing a part of the eschatological future into the present.[7]

A Reflection on Space: the Meaning of the Term "House" as Referring to the Place of Kairos

If we really do taste the millennium, then where shall we say we are when we taste it, that is, when the *kairos* breaks in? When I say "we" in this question, I include myself, Aref, and David, so that I am not asking what each of us will say within the terms of our traditional doctrines but what, faithful to our separate doctrines, we may say to and with one another about that aspect of kairotic time we might co-inhabit. Our scriptural reasoning group uses the term "House"—*bayit*—to refer to a specific tradition of worship and belief. I suggest we might also use the term to name the particular spacetime into which *kairos* breaks in.

In our first text from Chronicles, *bayit* refers both to David's Palace and to Solomon's Temple, and the ambiguity may remain in the Psalmist's title "A Davidic song for the dedication of the House." But the *Tanakh*, or Hebrew Scriptures, offers several other uses of the term *bayit* as well: a dwelling place (like the house Jacob built for himself), or a family line (like the house of

[7] I have in mind Robert Jenson's teaching that the presence of God among us is also the presence of the eschatological future among us: for example, that "God in Christ is [here following Gregory of Nyssa's own words] 'infinite over the past and infinite over the future.'" See Robert Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, vol 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 216.

Ruth), or a multigenerational community, or also a temporary stall for animals, even as temporary as a spider's web, or more generally any vessel or receptacle (like a perfume bottle); or, more abstractly, a body, a human body in particular; or, most abstractly, an adverbial construct that means "within" or "inside" or "inwards" such *mi bet leperochet*—inside (in the house of) the veil of the holy of holies (Ex. 26:33).[8]

What do we learn from the many meanings of this word *bayit?* The first lesson I learn is that individual Hebrew words of Scripture are generative not of single meanings but of broad fields of meaning and that, if we want to retrieve a single meaning from out of those fields, we cannot sit idly by the text and wait for disclosure but must bring ourselves openly to the text, declaring who and where we are and then searching actively for the meaning that seeks *us* out in this time and space. Here we may observe an eighth feature of scriptural reasoning: that we read each word of scripture as generative of broad fields of meaning, from which we are led to encounter certain deeper meanings appropriate to this given day.

The second lesson I learn is therefore specific to today. If today's occasion is a sign of some *kairos*, or breaking into our space-time, then let us name the place of *kairos* simply "house," *bayit*: the dwelling, receptacle, or body into which the divine presence in its Infinity conforms itself to the finitudes of our creaturely world—the direction of the adverbial movement of the Infinite

[8] Here are full references for each of these uses of *bayit*: As "house," "Jacob journeyed on to Sukkoth (which word means temporary hut or stall, by the way) and built a house for himself (*vayiven bayit*) and made stalls (*sukkoth*) for his cattle" (Gen. 33:17). In this case, "house" is a home that a person builds (from the root *bahan*, "to build"), even temporarily, for protection and security. But the phrase "build a house" (*boneh bayit*) can also be used to mean something less physical: to establish a family, as in Ruth 4:11 when Ruth the Moahite joined the house of Boaz, "All the people at the gate and the elders answered: May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built up the House of Israel" (*boneh bet yisrael*). But the phrase "House of Israel" suggests that "house" may mean not only family but also multigenerational community. In that sense, and as we saw in the sense of David's Palace or Solomon's Temple, the house may be something quite grand and seemingly permanent. The term can also be used in a diminutive sense, however, to refer to impermanent constructions. In the Book of Job, for example, we hear that the hope of an impious or evil person is like the house (*bet*) of a spider (8:14–15)—that is, a web, or the house of a bird—that is, a nest (27:18). In each case, the house is something that soon blows away: at best a *sukkah*, a temporary booth, or even less, a gossamer web soon blown by the wind. More abstractly, *bayit* may refer to the minimal form of all these things we have mentioned: a receptacle, as in Is. 3:20: "[starting with vs. 18] On that day my Lord will strip off the finery of the anklets . . . the amulets and *batei hanefesh*"—the houses of spirits—that is, receptacles of perfume. More abstractly perhaps, *bayit* may refer to a body, as in Job 4:19: "Those who dwell in houses of clay, whose origin is dust"—that is, in the human body seen in its stark mortality and impermanence. Or, perhaps most abstractly of all, *bayit* may appear in an adverbial, construct form to mean "within" or "inside" or "inwards": as in *mi bet leperochet*—inside ("in the house of") the veil of the holy of holies (Ex. 26:33).

into, just into. And where is the *into*? Whatever receives the *kairos:* perhaps your individual bodies, the body of your president, perhaps the body of this congregation of Princeton Seminary, perhaps the transgenerational community of the Presbyterian Church, perhaps just this house, or this event, the broader space-time of a millennial change.

Here we may observe a ninth feature of scriptural reasoning: that to search for scripture's deeper meaning for this day is to pray for illumination and to search for signs of that illumination in our text traditions and in our study fellowship. Wherever the *kairos* breaks in and is let in, let us name that place a House and let us Bless the House: *mah tovu ohalecha yacob*, "How goodly are your tents O Jacob, Your dwelling places!" (Nu. 24:5); *v'ani b'rov chasdecha avo betecha*, "Your abundant love draws me into your House"(Ps. 5:8); *ashrei yoshvei betecha, od yehaleluha selah*, "Happy are those who dwell in your house; they shall forever praise you" (Ps. 84:5). We may then receive David's blessing as a blessing to all those who join and guide the work of a House: "Be strong and of good courage and do it. He will not forsake you until all the work of the House of the Lord is done" (1 Chr. 28:20).

A Reflection on the Dedication of Space-Time: That a House is Dedicated to Prayerful Education

If we allow "House" to refer to a place of kairotic breaking in, then what would it mean to speak of "dedicating the house," *chanukat habayit*? Is the *kairos* not itself a dedication? I begin again with reflections on a Hebrew root word, in this case *chanakh*, "to dedicate," and once again you are about to hear a broad field of meanings. The word appears most often in the way we have used it: *chanakh* as dedicating a new house,[9] or also dedicating God's House, the Temple, in which case the act of dedicating is also named an act of "making holy," or sanctifying a place to the service of God.[10] But *chanakh* can also be used in another sense, which is "to train," in either the sense of training a wild horse or of educating a child. Perhaps you recognize the classic example of this usage, from Proverbs 22:6: *chanokh l'naar al pi darko gam ki yazkin lo tasur mimena*, "Train a youth according to his way, and even in old age he will not turn away from (your teaching)." To dedicate something

[9] Deut. 20:5. A general addresses his troops this way: "Is there anyone who has a built a new house and not dedicated it? Let him go back to his home and dedicate it, lest he die in battle and another dedicate it."

[10] The classic example is, as you may expect, Solomon: "Thus the King and all the Israelites dedicated (*vayachnekhu*) the House of the Lord. . . . That day the King sanctified the inner court" (2 Chr. 7:5). See 1 Kings 8:64.

is thus related to the act of training something to its purpose; for later rabbinic and modern Hebrew, this meaning produces the word *chinuch*, education.

Etymologists speculate that this field of meanings may have evolved from the term *chakh*, the palate of the mouth, for there was an ancient Semitic custom to place date honey on the palate of a baby before it began to suckle, so that the baby was in this way led by sweetness to its work of suckling—trained for its own sake you might say, or perhaps dedicated to its mother. (And, just yesterday, I learned from Aref Nyed that the etymologists are, in fact, describing a Bedouin practice he still observes in Libya!) If this etymology bears scrutiny, then consider the following field of connotations: taking in the word of God like a baby takes in mother's milk, allowing our bodies to become houses of God's wisdom, allowing our houses to become places of God's indwelling, dedicating our temples of worship to be places of education, and sanctifying our places of study so that they are also places of ingesting God's word.

On today's occasion, might we therefore use the term "dedication" to refer to an extraordinary ceremony—like an inauguration—in which members of a House re-member the kairotic moment that founds their lives together? If so, we may observe that this memory also brings with it memories of other times of dedication, so that the present moment of dedication may draw all members of the House together tightly to relive narratives of their shared past: about how and when and why their forebears stopped, on occasion, to re-collect their origins as a House and thus re-collect their shared blessing and mission. In this way, we may see how dedication, *chanukah*, is also education, *chinukh*, or re-training the members of a House *al pi darcham*, "according to their own way," so that their hearts may be re-enflamed with the fire of faith and vision that characterizes their House. We thus have reason to pray that the members of *this* House be blessed with this week's inauguration as a time to be drawn tightly together in re-membering their shared educational mission.

A Reflection on Scripture as Vessel for Transmitting the Ways of Prayerful Education

A tenth feature of scriptural reasoning is that each member of a study fellowship is a member, first, of a House shaped by *kairos* and reshaped over time by practices of remembering that *kairos* and of being educated through its memory and its renewal. An eleventh feature is that the English term "scripture" may be used to refer to the record of kairotic moments that is sanctified and preserved by such a House. The English term is useful because its Latin root—*scribere*, "to write"—captures the focus on writing and thus

reading that characterizes each specific tradition of scripture. It is useful as well because it leaves otherwise undetermined how a specific tradition will name and thus understand its scripture.[11] This introduces a twelfth feature of scriptural reasoning, which is that scriptural reasoning refrains from otherwise generalizing about the way a scripture will be named and maintained within a House. The way a House names its scripture belongs to the way it is received into intimate relation with God, and no name offered outside the House can be adequate to this intimate naming. A House therefore houses a scriptural tradition; to read scripture as scripture is to read it first in a House.

Does this mean that there is only one scripture we can call "scripture" in these terms? If so, is there only one House we can call "House?" If so, then what do we say of the other traditions that claim to house scripture? Do we say their record of kairotic moments is a false record? Or confused? If, on the other hand, we say there is more than one, then by what criteria is scripture named as scripture and a House as a House? If the criteria are strictly within

[11] This time, I have not drawn lessons from the Hebrew sources, since each tradition speaks about scripture in a distinctive way. For comparative sake, however, some readers may want to consider the variety of Hebrew roots that may translate the English term "scripture." One pertinent Hebrew root is *ktv*, to write, like the Arabic *ktb* or, etymologically, "sewing together," as "sewing words together." The emphasis here is on the act of connecting letters and on the surface on which they are collected, or "inscribed." This surface could be stone tablets (such as Moses brought down from Sinai) or parchment or it could also be the heart (as in Pr. 3:3: "inscribe them on the tablet of your heart"). Scripture, in the sense of this cognate, is an inscription and thus recording of the letters of divine speech. In rabbinic Hebrew, the most telling expression is the term *torah she b'khtav*, "the Written Torah" or canonical Bible as received by the rabbis, as contrasted with the *torah she b'al peh*, "the Oral Torah," or the inherited and transmitted wisdom through which the rabbis articulated the deeper meaning of Torah for a given time and place in their communal lives. On which, see David Weiss Halivni, *Revelation Restored: Divine Writ and Critical Responses* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997) and *Peshat and Derash: Plain and Applied Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). A second, pertinent Hebrew root concerns this very orality of scripture; it is *kra*, "to call," "to proclaim," "to read," appearing in a noun form, for example, as *mikre*, "reading" or "convocation" (for proclamation or reading). In rabbinic Hebrew, *mikre* is also used to refer to the "reading *par excellence*," or the written Torah, which usage is etymologically related to the Arabic *kor'an*, from "recitation." A third, pertinent Hebrew root is *sfr*, "to count, recount or relate," in both a quantitative sense of measuring an amount and a narrative sense of relating a story. Among noun forms are thus *mispar*, number; *sipur*, story; *sofer*, scribe; and *sefer*, book. For our uses, the most pregnant usage is *sefer Torah*, the book of Torah, or the Five Books of Moses, which were traditionally inscribed on parchment by scribal priests, *soferim*, and deposited inside the Temple in the Holy of Holies. A fourth Hebrew term to consider is *torah* itself, or "instruction," most likely derived from the root *yrh*, "to throw," "shoot" (arrows), "point out" and "to teach": where the teaching is of a directional sort, pointing somewhere or to some action, as in "instructing" priests how to be priests or Israel how to be Israel. Other cognates are *torah* in the sense of "custom" or "practice," and *moreh*, or teacher. From my own Jewish perspective, the English term "scripture" is most useful for our purposes in scriptural reasoning, both because it bears the connotations of all these Hebrew terms and because it captures the overlapping attention all three Abrahamic traditions pay to sacred text traditions.

the House, is there then no basis for judgment, let alone dialogue, between House and House? By way of response, I return to the image I shared earlier: of a millennial day when Judaism will feel loved by—and will love!—the Church and the Mosque in a way that it has not loved or been loved before. Standing here in your House today is, for me, a proleptic sign of such an end day, the kind of sign you can actually taste and enter. And when David Ford, Aref Nayed, and I share our study fellowship, I believe we taste such an end time for that moment of study. And I believe that it is only within that moment that we know how to respond to the question, "Is there only one House?" without replaying the unhappy dialectic of the old millennium, in which we are forced to choose: either our House alone or the identity of all houses, either revealed truth or some universal humanity.

While tasting a new millennium in our moment of shared study, we can practice some third way. Meeting together outside all three of our Houses—but still in sight of their open doors—we can examine our scriptural sources together: considering in what ways each plain sense speaks to the other, and how each relates to our deeper readings and to the contemporary concerns that lead us to read more deeply.[12] After hours of such study, even days, we may notice that our differences have become the topic of a reasoning out of scripture that opens each of us, somehow, to both greater love and understanding of our new peers and their scriptures *and* a greater passion for our own tradition and House.

"God is great," we might say in parting, knowing that what we have tasted is nothing we could ourselves prepare but that, for God, it may be no more difficult than giving us the sun again each day when we awake. Just yesterday, Aref Nayed taught the following text to David Ford and me, drawn from an anthology of the words of the Muslim sage Ahmed al-Rifa'i: "There are times of injustice, when the oppressed cry out but no one heeds nor takes pity." But there are also times when God fashions human affairs so that hearts converge with kindness, mutual support, and mutual love. Such a divine gift can indeed mend a troubled era.[13]

[12] This image comes literally from the way our scriptural reasoning societies work. We most often study together in places outside a specific House or at least, to be sure, outside the worship space defined by a single House. Yet, each Jewish or Muslim or Christian sub-group of us turns periodically away from this shared space to a space for separate prayer; but doors to this separate space remain open. I am therefore offering a rather literal image, rather than a general metaphor that might confine the ontological precincts of a "House" so narrowly.

[13] *Al Kulyat al-Abadiah* (an anthology of the words of the Muslim Sage Ahmed al-Rifa'i), ed. Abu al-Huda al-Siadi (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thakafa al-Dinyah, 2004), 147. Translation by Aref Nayed.

Reading Scripture Together: Towards a Sacred Hermeneutics of Togetherness

by Aref Ali Nayed

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In the Name of God, Merciful, Compassionate.
Praise be to God.
Blessings be upon the Messenger of God.

Reading, along with writing, is a fascinating activity that is foundational for our very humanity. The many activities we call "reading" have been studied by so many fields from so many angles. One of the fields fascinated by reading and the associated activities of interpretation and understanding is general hermeneutics. Ever since Schleiermacher's pioneering work, general hermeneutics has tended to assume that all reading activities (and by association, interpreting/understanding activities) are essentially the same. General hermeneutics is often built on the assumption that it is possible to give a general and universally valid account of what reading/interpreting/understanding basically is. Normative general hermeneutics has even strived to dictate how reading/interpreting/understanding ought to be conducted.

Prior to Schleiermacher's foundation of general hermeneutics, it was quite common to sustain that the reading/interpreting/understanding of scriptures was a unique activity due to the unique nature of scriptures as revelation. In the days before Schleiermacher, *hermeneutica sacra* was often contrasted with *hermeneutica profana*. Schleiermacher started a trend that continues until today, which is quite evident in the works of such different thinkers as E.D. Hirsch and Hans-Georg Gadamer, to see *hermeneutica sacra* only as a special application of a universal general hermeneutics. While I very much respect the quest for a general hermeneutics, I find that the leap to it is often too hasty and too facile. I know of only one recent thinker who has truly attempted to first carefully classify different types of activities that go by the name of reading, interpreting, and understanding, and only then go on to put forth a general hermeneutics. That thinker is Emilio Betti whose approach was definitively, but unfairly, undermined by Gadamer and his school. General hermeneutics, before hastily generalizing, must carefully study and

phenomenologically describe the many activities that go by the names of reading, interpretation, and understanding.

I believe that the activity, or rather the many activities of reading scriptures as scriptures (and a lot depends on which scripture, and who is reading it, and with whom), is of a radically different kind from other activities that go by the same name.

Furthermore, I believe that the activity, or rather many activities of reading scriptures together (and, again, a lot depends on which scripture and with whom) is also radically different from reading scriptures alone (if that was ever possible). Reading scriptures is quite different from reading non-scriptures. Reading together is, in general, again, quite different from reading alone. Reading scriptures, in particular, alone, is yet again, quite different from reading scriptures together.

It is this last "reading scriptures together" that is the theme of this happy occasion of inter-religious togetherness in this esteemed place of togetherness. Reading together is a most fascinating kind of reading, and today, in our cruel and torn-apart world, it becomes a divine imperative for all of us. We urgently need a sacred hermeneutics of togetherness. Such a hermeneutics would set as its main task that of describing how reading scripture together works, and how it can mend and repair our shattered world.

Urgent as the description of reading together is, it is perhaps very difficult, or even impossible, to undertake before each one of us attempts to explicate what reading scripture is like for him or her. In the short time I have, I will do my best to describe to you what reading my scripture (the Qur'an) is like for me, and then hope to find indicators in that of how I can possibly describe reading scripture together.

Phenomenological description, when it does not make pretentious universalizing leaps, is necessarily personal and quite local. Thus my attempt at a description of reading scripture alone will necessarily be personal. The personal witnessing that I learned from in the papers of my most esteemed teachers who spoke before me encourages me to share with you, as best as I can some of my personal experiences of reading my scripture: the Qur'an, first alone, and then together. My approach is based on the fact that the character (*khuluq*) of our dear Prophet (Allah's peace be upon him) was described by his wife (A'isha, May Allah be pleased with her) as being the Qur'an itself: "His character (*khuluq*) was the Qur'an." Much of my work on understanding the activity of reading the Qur'an has been an attempt to come to terms with this important *Hadith*, which affirms that reading the Qur'an, for a Muslim, ultimately means actively striving to be transformed and "characterized" by it. The great writings of such Muslim sages as al-Ajuri,

al-Makki, al-Muhasibi, and al-Ghazali on what they termed "bearing the Qur'an" (*hamil al-Qur'an*) have been quite helpful in coming to understand this notion of "reading as being transformed in one's very character."

As a Muslim, I am certain that the Qur'an is the very speech of Allah, and I strive to live the full implications of this certitude. I strive, all the days of my life, to bear the Qur'an in my heart, and to allow it to transform me from the inside so as to become my very character. Following a clear tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him), I believe that the difference between the Qur'an and mere creaturely books is like the difference between Allah Himself and mere creatures. I approach the Qur'an with the reverence and respect that is ontologically and morally due to the very Speech of the Creator.

I take this Speech (which is the expression of an eternal divine capacity to speak, a speech which was already spoken by Allah to Himself in eternity, and which was from eternity in His divine Knowledge) to be a personal letter addressed especially to me, by my loving and compassionate God, in my present day circumstances. Through the Qur'an, I strive to hear my very Creator speak to me personally. I receive the Qur'an as a personal gift from Allah, a gift that is freely given, and that demands of me (precisely because it is so freely given!) a life-long task of thanksgiving and righteousness. I learned from my tradition that the Qur'an in the heart is like the inhabitant of a house who transforms it into a "home" by living in it and maintaining it. I know that without the Qur'an my heart, mind, and body would collapse just as a deserted house eventually degenerates. I know this because my beloved Prophet of Allah told me so, and because I experience the rejuvenation and degeneration first hand as I maintain or neglect my daily recitations. I invite the Qur'an to inhabit my heart, and to strive to let it eventually become my very *habitus*.

I do not merely read the Qur'an as I would read intellectually stimulating books. I do not even recite it in the way poetry is recited. I recite it in that very special way called "*tilwah*." This *tilwah* is a devotional and ritual activity that can be practiced only after ritual purification has been performed. It is to be practiced while sitting or standing facing the Ka'ba in Makka (Mecca). Like ritual prayers, *tilwah* or Qur'anic recitation must be performed with that intentionality and directedness that facing the Ka'ba fosters, and with the prerequisite proper manners (*adab*). I do not recite with my *nous* or *ratio*, but with my heart (*qalb*, *lubb*). My *tilwah* does involve intellection, but my intellection (*'aql*) is an activity of my heart, and not of my calculative mind. My heart is the center of my whole concrete being and includes my corporeality as well as my spirituality. I recite the Qur'an with my center letting its

transformative effects flow through my body and soul. I sway with it, bodily and spiritually, and go where the spirit of my Lord takes me.

I respect the sequential order of the Qur'an and recite it in cycles as my forbearers did. I submit my heart to its sequential operations just as a piece of wood submits to the sequence of cutting operations of a lathe. I let my heart be shaped, transformed, and worked into a new heart: a Qur'anic heart. I do not pretend to wield the Qur'an instrumentally in the name of "applying" it to this or that project of mine, but simply yield my heart to it as a divine instrument of guidance and salvation. I do not think of the Qur'an as a deposit of ready-made, off-the-shelf solutions to my problems. I know that Allah has endowed me with the intelligence and faculties necessary to solve my own problems. However, I do realize that my own solutions can become Qur'anic and divinely blessed if I would only let myself become a Qur'anic being by letting the Qur'an shape my very humanity and character. If I can ever become truly Qur'anic, my activities and solutions will be Qur'anic ones.

I strive to keep my heart-sight on Allah throughout the commotion and flux I see in my outer and inner travels because I see everything as an *aya* (or operative sign) of Allah. The Qur'an, itself a sequence of *ayat* (operative signs), speaks about and illustrates the transformative power of *ayat* on every page. The Qur'an teaches me to see the mountains, the heavens, and the earth as *ayat* of Allah. It teaches me how to see processes of alteration and growth as *ayat*. It teaches me to see the Prophets of Allah and the heavenly books they are given as *ayat*. It illustrates the operative capacity of Allah's *ayat* by calling the *asa* of Musa (Moses) that becomes a snake, and that opens up the sea an "*aya*." I strive to see the operative signs of my Lord everywhere. I strive to be constantly aware of God's presence. The Qur'an further teaches me that, besides the outer *ayat* (*ayat* of the horizons) there are also inner *ayat* (*ayat* within persons). The more I manage to bear the Qur'an, the more I become a wonder-struck watcher of the signs of my Lord that operate within and upon my own soul. My appreciation of the *ayat* within me, lead me to wonder about and appreciate the operative *ayat* in the persons around me. I come to see others too as divine signs.

The world, my soul, and all other persons become an ocean with an incredible variety of *ayat*. I learn from the Qur'an to live concretely the realization that diversity is a wonderful gift. I experience, first-hand, the fact that my Lord celebrates the variety that is present in things ranging from trees, to different types of honey, to clouds, to people themselves. Seeing variety as a divinely given operative sign in things and persons, I respect it, cherish it, and celebrate it. This seeing increasingly becomes a seeing "with the eye of compassion" (*bi'ayn al-rhma*). It is a seeing that is the condition of

possibility for my reading of scripture together with others. As I read the Qur'an alone, I find out that I am never really alone. As I read, the Prophet of Allah (Peace be upon him) and all his testimonies (*hadiths*) are with me. As I read, my beloved teachers are with me. As I read, scholars and sages from the fourteen hundred years of Muslim living are with me. My family, my friends, my neighbors, and my entire community (*umma*) are with me. It turns out that my reading alone is really a reading together! As a matter of fact, it turns out that my reading companions as I read "alone" are not just Muslims. My Calvinist teacher from Guelph is with me. My Catholic teachers from the Gregorian and the Biblical Institute in Rome are with me. My Orthodox teachers from Lebanon are with me. My Jewish teachers from Guelph, and more recently, the members of the Scriptural Reasoning community are with me. My reading companions even include all my teachers of philosophy, engineering, and all the topics that I have learned over my entire life.

A sage once told me, when I complained to him that I was about to leave and would not see him for quite sometime, that space and time have no power over things of the spirit. He said to me that all I needed to do to be with someone in my heart was to love them. He cited our beloved Prophet (Peace be upon him) who has taught us that "everyone is with the one he loves." I learned that if I truly appreciate and love all the people that have ever taught me (formally and informally), they will be together with me as I read the Qur'an "alone." Allah has given me the gift of a very strange and rich life. In my life, I have been privileged to read scriptures together with others, not only in the above sense, but also in the sense of concretely reading with others. As a teacher I have often read the Qur'an with other Muslims in Malaysia, and in Libya as an occasional attendant of a recitation group that has been meeting every single evening (without fail) since the early fifties. The experience of hearing Allah speak to His community (*umma*) and of the response of the community to its Lord has been transforming. I have also read the Qur'an with Christians and Jews in Rome as a teacher at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies and as a participant in Scriptural Reasoning meetings. The experience of mutual illumination that comes about through the sharing of scriptures has been nothing short of a divine grace. I have also read the Bible with Muslim students as a teacher in the Islamic College in Libya. The experience of learning more about others and about ourselves through studying their scriptures has been wonderful. I have also read the Bible and the Torah with teachers and friends who truly believed in them as scriptures. The experience and honor of partaking in the transformation that you see in the other as he or she is transformed by his or

her scripture has been most illuminating. The experience of spiritual deepening in my own tradition has been humbling.

I need to reflect more deeply on my experiences of reading alone and reading together in order to even begin to outline the "sacred hermeneutics of togetherness" that I truly believe we should seek to articulate. However, I do believe that there are a few simple things which I have learned over the years that can be offered as a rudimentary contribution towards such a hermeneutics. First, reading scripture is radically different from any other kind of reading. Second, reading scripture demands a sacred hermeneutics that respects the sacred origin and nature of scripture. Third, togetherness is already present in the reading of scripture to the extent that love of God and of others is present in our hearts. And fourth, reading scripture together makes such love in God stronger and makes the togetherness deeper and more lasting. May we emerge from this blessed concrete togetherness of today with a heart-felt togetherness that can only get stronger and stronger, through love, beyond the limits of time and space.

Bet on the Church

by Thomas W. Gillespie

Thomas W. Gillespie was the fifth President of Princeton Theological Seminary. He delivered this charge to President Iain R. Torrance at the inauguration service in the Princeton University Chapel on March 11, 2005.

Mr. President, Professor Torrance, my friend Iain. Please accept my hearty congratulations upon your appointment as the sixth president of Princeton Theological Seminary. Let me also thank you for your kind invitation to give you the charge at your installation into that office. I begin with a confession. I have long forgotten the formal charge given to me on this occasion twenty-one years ago by my predecessor, Dr. James Iley McCord. But I have long remembered the informal charge he gave me over lunch at the Nassau Club one day early in my tenure. It is that charge that I wish to pass on to you today.

We were discussing what ministry was like in the turbulent 1960s and '70s in this country, he as a seminary president in Princeton and I as a village pastor on the San Francisco peninsula. I explained that my context included the Haight-Asbury—the symbolic home of the hippie counter-culture movement—only eighteen miles up the El Camino Real. Across the Bay, the students at "Cal" were continually threatening to burn Berkeley down in protest of the Vietnam War. Then there were the Black Panthers over in Oakland reminding us militantly that the civil rights struggle was far from over. The Bay Area was also home to the Symbionese Liberation Army, a revolutionary group renown for kidnaping William Randolph Hearst's daughter Patti and robbing banks. Needless to say, it was a challenging time to be the minister of a highly educated, upwardly mobile, and increasingly polarized Presbyterian congregation.

I recall chiding Dr. McCord about the lack of support from the theological academy in that critical time. The so-called "death of God" theologians may have been academically trendy, but they were not helpful to those of us engaged in the practice of ministry. Neither were those seers who, by the titles of their best selling books, told us that we were wasting our time trying to get *God's Frozen People* out of *The Comfortable Pew* into *The Secular City* and keep them *Honest to God*. My luncheon partner conceded that the theological consensus of the forties and fifties was "in shambles," and then told some stories of his own having to do with seminary students who were themselves the product of the cultural revolution, the anti-war protests, and the civil rights struggle. They may never have lived in the Haight-Ashbury, or marched in Berkeley, or joined the Black Panthers, but they were determined

to challenge and change all they could on the Seminary campus. "I gave in on everything that didn't matter," he confided, "and on nothing that did." By that he meant he held the line on anything that threatened academics—the excellence of the faculty and the integrity of the curriculum. And I knew that I was being charged to do the same.

Dr. McCord went on to say that he too had read those books predicting the demise and irrelevance of congregations, but had considered the authors false prophets. "Tom," he said, "Princeton Seminary bet on the church—and won." By that he meant that the school's historic mission of training pastoral leadership for the Presbyterian Church remained valid into the 1980s because it was still being validated by the crying need of churches for well-trained ministers (and, I would add, that need continues even now into the twenty-first century). Given the fact that subtlety was not one of my predecessor's many gifts, it was clear that he was charging me to place my bets on the church too.

Some will say, of course, that orienting the seminary to the church and its ministry is the surest way of compromising academics. But that is a prejudice of modernity that will not wash in our post-modern era, for it is increasingly recognized that all knowledge claims include assumptions that are ultimately matters of faith. It is simply untrue that scholarship suffers from Christian commitments. Others may say that being responsibly related to a particular denomination compromises the Seminary's ecumenicity, both in the ecclesial and geographical senses of that term. I would argue, to the contrary, that it is precisely Princeton Seminary's Presbyterian identity that has made it both inter-denominational and international in the scope of its mission virtually from its founding in 1812. John A. Mackay, one of the leading ecumenical leaders of the last century and Dr. McCord's immediate predecessor, insisted to my student generation that he was never more enthusiastically ecumenical than when he was authentically Presbyterian.

If betting on the church does not compromise the Seminary's academics or its ecumenicity, neither does its primary role as a graduate professional school that grants the basic ministerial degree diminish the importance of its other academic and auxiliary programs. Preparing professorial leadership for the future of theological education through a rigorous doctoral program is absolutely strategic. So is the continuing education of ministers as well as the training of leadership for youth ministry. All of that is justified and required not by the interests of the academy but by the needs of the church.

When our luncheon concluded that day, I realized that I had been re-charged—informally, of course, but charged nonetheless. I was to guard and enhance the academic excellence of Princeton Theological Seminary. And I

was to do that for the sake of preparing qualified leadership for the Presbyterian Church as well as other communions in the great Body of Christ. You might well be tempted to dismiss all of this on the grounds that the times have changed, that that was then and this is now. But I would remind you that our intellectual culture is still living with the consequences of the cultural revolution of the 1960s and '70s, that the issues of race and ethnicity are still pressing, and that we are again engaged in a war that is increasingly unpopular. What goes around comes around. So on this grand occasion of your installation, and borrowing from the apostle Paul, "I deliver to you as of first importance what I also received" (1 Cor. 15:3).

Mr. President, use your office to serve the Presbyterian Church.

Professor Torrance, pursue academic excellence for the sake of Christ's whole Church.

My friend Iain, bet on the Church, and Princeton Seminary will thrive under your leadership.

Beyond Solipsism

by Iain R. Torrance

Dr. Iain R. Torrance delivered this address in the Princeton University Chapel on March 11, 2005, on the occasion of his inauguration and installation as the sixth President of Princeton Theological Seminary.

My question is where to begin and how to use an occasion such as this. The congregation in front of me is ecumenical and international. It contains representatives from the church, from seminaries, and from universities. We are honored by the presence of believers from the other Abrahamic faiths. I thank those who have traveled far to come here. I thank those from here who have welcomed them and me, and especially those who have organized this remarkable service. In particular I would thank Tom Tewell from the Board of Trustees, and James Kay from the faculty who have given such meticulous attention to detail. We all thank Joan Lippincott, Eric Plutz, Penna Rose, Andrew Megill, and Martin Tel for the music. I am grateful to John Ferguson for his wonderful arrangement of Saint Columba's hymn. None of us will forget the voices of William Nemon Heard and Angela Dienhart Hancock. Thank you. And I am grateful to Donna Kline, Kathy Matakas, Cheryl Gardner, Barbara Chaapel, Kathy Whalen, and Sharon Kozlowski for the diplomacy, industry, skill, and kindness they have shown in the complicated organization of these two days. And to Sandy McNutt and to Darrell Guder for their advice.

So where to begin and how to use such an occasion? The decision to place scripture at the center was deliberate. I mean "scripture" as sacred text across the Abrahamic faiths, following from the seminars yesterday, and thus to allow the notion of scriptural reading to question our practices, institutions, and curricula. I'll begin with a characteristically challenging quotation from Stanley Hauerwas, a friend from whom I have learned so much. Hauerwas suggests, "No task is more important than for the Church to take the Bible out of the hands of individual Christians in North America." He continues, "North American Christians are trained to believe that they are capable of reading the Bible without spiritual and moral transformation. They read the Bible not as Christians, not as a people set apart, but as democratic citizens who think their common sense is sufficient for the understanding of scripture."[1] It is Hauerwas' perception of individualized, idiosyncratic, and possessive reading of the Bible which interests me. When that is combined with

[1] Both quotations are from *Unleashing the Scripture* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 15.

great self-certainty we have several of the ingredients which have produced such divisions in western Christianity.

What strategies are there for moving beyond such individualistic readings? Let's begin from where I stand. To my left there is the banner of the University of Edinburgh. It is there because Edinburgh was the university of John Witherspoon who stands outside in bronze. Witherspoon was such an interesting person that it is worth digressing for a moment. He was born in 1723 in Gifford, Scotland, so he came from the same village as John Knox. He graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 1739, and actively supported the Hanoverians against the Jacobites in 1745. In 1752, a lobby in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed a measure for the expulsion of an orthodox and godly minister named Thomas Gillespie. I could hardly resist that! Tom, he must have been your forebear, and one to be proud of! Thomas Gillespie had fallen foul of his presbytery for refusing to participate in the installation of an unpopular clergyman in the parish of Inverkeithing. Now the issue at stake was "patronage," the right of the landowner to present a nominee to a parish. Behind this was a growing conviction of the independence of the church as a distinct spiritual voice. Witherspoon sided with Gillespie against those who came to be known as the Moderates; that is the group which supported patronage. Witherspoon satirized his opponents in an anonymous pamphlet entitled *Ecclesiastical Characteristics*, and gaining influence, turned his sharp pen to other polemics. He was granted an honorary doctorate by the University of St. Andrews in 1764, and two years later, as we all know, was called to the presidency of the Presbyterian College of New Jersey at Princeton. Here, unlike his moderate rivals, and true to his early instinct against patronage, Witherspoon supported the American cause. Again, as we all know, in 1776 he became the only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence.[2] Witherspoon, I suspect, was not good company, and he was famously lampooned by the urbane leader of the Moderates, Alexander Carlyle, who described him as "very sensible and shrewd, but of a disagreeable temper, which was irritated by a flat voice, and an awkward manner, which prevented his making an impression on his companions of either sex."[3] Alexander Carlyle was one of John Cairns' and my predecessors as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and his portrait encouraged me daily in the house in Edinburgh which John and I successively occupied.

[2] See "John Witherspoon," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds., vol. 19 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 439–440.

[3] *The Autobiography of Dr Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722–1805*, ed. John Hill Burton (London and Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis, 1910), 34.

But, more to the point, Witherspoon came out of the milieu of the Scottish philosophers of common sense, and that is what I really want to talk about. Their greatest exponent was Thomas Reid, a professor from Aberdeen. Thomas Reid, above all else, defended a realist position with respect to our knowledge of the external world and of morality, and for him, the first step to be taken against David Hume was to recognize that "a faculty of sense is essentially a faculty of *judgment*, and a judgment is [quite] a different kind of thing from sensation or feeling."[4] Let me turn next to James Frederick Ferrier, a St. Andrews philosopher, who came just a little later, but offered a searching criticism of the thoroughgoing idealism or solipsism of Bishop Berkeley.

Ferrier, who has been described as "lucid, learned and iconoclastic," was evidently fascinated by the thesis of Bishop Berkeley's *New Theory of Vision*, that distance may not be perceived by sight. Berkeley's claim, which I think is true, is based on his observation that a person born blind, and later enabled to see, would not immediately understand perspective.[5] Strictly, all we see is color, and by sight alone we do not see what Ferrier called "outness." Ferrier then proceeded fairly effectively to undercut Berkeley's solipsism, by arguing that by use of the hand one can touch the eye, thereby blotting out the visual field, and teaching oneself to order visual perceptions in depth of field. One comes to see *objects*, not merely sense impressions.[6] Seeing objects is thus an act of judgment, as we have seen with Thomas Reid in the case of moral sentiments.

Now, why is Ferrier interesting, and what is the point of spending time on him? He is interesting because of his struggle to evade solipsism through breaking out of mono-lingual "sight language," first through finding a way in which the eye is located within its own field of vision, and second by making use of another sense, in this case touch. This moves us to what I am really interested in: with Ferrier we have the beginning of an analogy for how Christian scriptural reading may be released from its own self-absorption, competitiveness, and finality—the very difficulties cited by Hauerwas to which I referred at the beginning of this address. So what we are looking for are more constructive ways of reading scripture than many of those which are currently offered.

[4] Alexander Broadie, "Reid Making Sense of Moral Sense," in *Reid Studies* 1, no. 2 (1998), 15.

[5] Kirk Willis, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds., vol. 59, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 887–89.

[6] All of this is culled from James Frederick Ferrier, "Berkeley and Idealism," in *Lectures and Philosophical Remains*, vol. 2 (William Blackwood: Edinburgh, 1866), 291-350.

The Book of Jonah provides another kind of analogy for how a prevailing pattern of expectation may be shifted. It provides an example of scripture appraising itself. It may be seen as a contrived narrative intended creatively to reach out towards what had hitherto been inexpressible, namely the utterly unimaginable ability of God to forgive. If God could forgive Nineveh, could God not forgive Jerusalem?

About three weeks ago the Seminary shared with Mercer County Community College a day-long seminar on marriage organized by M.Div. senior Hui Chen and my colleague Nancy Duff. This was an exemplary collaboration between the Seminary and the community. Inevitably, issues of biblical interpretation came up. My colleague Peter Paris reminded us that in the War between the States, the pro-slavery biblical arguments were constructed not in the south, but from Yale, Harvard, and Princeton. What could better illustrate a pattern of thinking which was closed in upon itself? At the same seminar, someone asked what message of the gospel could be given to the gay community. Faithfulness was suggested by someone else. Be like those who are married. All of this was well meant, and I'd heard it before, but nonetheless, I felt it jar. Speaking *a gospel* is rarely achieved without having one's heart in one's mouth. Did this not risk failing to observe the otherness of the other? Did it not risk neglecting the persistent biblical theme that much of human relating is to do with an aching yearning for a significant other? How are we to find a vocabulary so as to be more observant both of text and of humankind?

As part of that search, let me tell you a rabbinic story, which was given to me by Jacob Neusner. It comes from Lamentations Rabbati Petihta 24. The context is a debate about the destruction of the sanctuary. In the course of the debate, Abraham, pleading for his children, said to the Lord: "Lord of the world! How come you have sent my children into exile and handed them over to the nations? And they have killed them with all manner of disgusting forms of death! And you have destroyed the house of the sanctuary, the place on which I offered up my son Isaac as a burnt-offering before you!?" The Lord replied to Abraham, "Your children sinned and violated the whole Torah, transgressing the twenty-two letters that are used to write it," and the Lord then called in turn upon each of the letters of the alphabet to bring testimony against Israel. Eventually, when they had all given evidence and Israel stood utterly condemned, Rachel sprang to Israel's defense. The pericope reads:

> Then Rachel, our mother, leapt to the fray and said to the Holy One, blessed be He, "Lord of the world! It is perfectly self-evident to you that your servant, Jacob, loved me with a mighty love, and worked for

> me for [my] father for seven years, but when those seven years were fulfilled, and the time came for my wedding to my husband, [my] father planned to substitute my sister for me in the marriage to my husband. Now that matter was very hard for me, for I knew the deceit, and I told my husband and gave him a sign by which he would know the difference between me and my sister, so that my father would not be able to trade me off. But then I regretted it and I bore my passion, and I had mercy for my sister, that she should not be shamed. So in the evening for my husband they substituted my sister for me, and I gave my sister all the signs that I had given to my husband, so that he would think that she was Rachel. And not only so, but I crawled under the bed on which he was lying with my sister, while she remained silent, and I made all the replies so that he would not discern the voice of my sister. I paid my sister only kindness, and I was not jealous of her, and I did not allow her to be shamed, and I am a mere mortal, dust and ashes. I had no envy of my rival, and I did not place her at risk for shame and humiliation. But you are the King, living and enduring and merciful. How come then you are jealous of idolatry, which is nothing, and so have sent my children into exile, allowed them to be killed by the sword, permitted the enemy to do whatever they wanted to them?!"

The pericope continues: "Forthwith the mercy of the Holy One, blessed be He, welled up, and he said, 'For Rachel I am going to bring the Israelites back to their land.'" That is in line with this verse of Scripture: "Thus said the Lord: A cry is heard in Ramah, wailing, bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children. She refuses to be comforted for her children, who are gone. Thus said the Lord, Restrain your voice from weeping, your eyes from shedding tears; for there is a reward for your labor, declares the Lord; they shall return from the enemy's land, and there is hope for your future, declares the Lord: your children shall return to their country" (Jer. 31:15–17).

Clearly, this pericope is not a speech about the ordination issue and I am not pretending that it is. Yet we are now in a context in which our tradition, the Christian tradition, has reached virtual deadlock over a whole series of issues, a zero-sum game in which if there are winners there are losers also. There are certain questions which we seem incapable of resolving so long as those issues are posed legalistically. When faced with the question, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" Jesus evaded the question "Is it lawful to do this or that?" and instead reached back to a fundamental vision or awareness for humankind. Jesus said: "In the beginning it was not so." The Rachel pericope, of course, is much later. Jacob Neusner described it to me

as being unique in the canon of formative Judaism. He wrote to me: "I cannot point in Midrash compilations that reached closure prior to this one to a passage of the narrative ambition and power of Samuel bar Nahman's. We are in a completely different literary situation when we come to so long and so carefully formed a story as this one."[7] The Rachel pericope is not definitive in the sense that it has no ambition for finality, but it is observant of human love at such a different level that it succeeded, in literary form, in eclipsing shortsightedness even in the Lord. I think it is that daring.

It is the eclipse of human shortsightedness in our sight-language only reading of sacred text which is my concern. God knows that we have need of such imagination in today's world. Torture is a stain upon the integrity of the Christian cultures of the West. It is evident that torture takes place when functionalism is given its head. Functionalism is another locking of oneself into a single dimension or sense. In the introduction to the massive book entitled *The Torture Papers*, published by Cambridge University Press early this year, reference is made to Jacobo Timerman, an Argentinian prisoner who was saved from likely death by pressure, and after release went to Israel. Anthony Lewis, who wrote the introduction to *The Torture Papers*, recalled meeting him subsequently, and discussing the interrogation of prisoners. Timerman asked whether Lewis would agree to torture a prisoner if he knew of a terrorist outrage which would shortly take place. Lewis attempted to avoid the question, but eventually said, Yes, he would. Timerman replied: "You cannot start down that road." The volume notes that "the Supreme Court of Israel, with many painful examples of terror, agreed with Timerman's view when it considered the question of torture. It rejected the use of torture, even when a suspect is thought to know the location of a 'ticking bomb.'"[8] What is at stake, as the book later remarks, is "the judgment of good men and women who flinch less from fear than from the loss of respect for one another."[9]

This is why scriptural reading matters, and why it is so imperative that we are enabled to move beyond the current impasse. That is why, as part of the celebration of this transition, we invited David Ford, Peter Ochs, and Aref Nayad to speak specifically about their project entitled Scriptural Reasoning. I do not plan to describe the project, because, like all projects attempting to change a perspective, it is busy defining itself and finding its feet. But I want to make some reference to the vision of Peter Ochs.

[7] In a personal e-mail, dated February 8, 2003.
[8] *The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Graib*, eds. Karen J. Greenberg and Joshua L. Dratel (Cambridge University Press, 2005), xvi.
[9] Ibid., xx.

In his delineation of it, the aim of scriptural reasoning is to reconstitute modern thought as a practice of reflection upon our actions, and thereby to discern in them traces of the divine will. Scriptural Reasoning questions and seeks to interrupt the contemporary process which polarizes on the one hand secular modernism, and on the other anti-modern religious orthodoxy. Peter Ochs maintains that truth claims are not impossible, but are more indirect than either side of such polarization permits. A sense of the indirectness of truth claims is what I have argued for throughout this address. As Peter Ochs puts it, and here I quote him, rather than mangle and objectify a subtle argument further: "Truth is recovered in Jesus' parabolic tradition, or in the Midrashic tradition, but certainly not through rude attempts to reassert a religious axiology by restating varieties of the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount as propositional creeds."[10] Consequently, in a process of what he calls "redemptive reasoning," Peter Ochs seeks to locate truth, now understood indirectly, with respect to its success or failure in resolving the problem or suffering which gave rise to the inquiry.

What is the very best thing we can do for good in this seminary, not only for the church, but also, I believe, for the benefit of the world at this juncture? In my first convocation address last September, I referred to the founding charisms of this school. Beyond doubt, part of our reason for being here is to acknowledge the gifts which we have been given and the remarkable leadership provided by my three immediate predecessors, all of whom were different, and each of whom led the school through times of turbulence. Part of our being here is to give thanks to God for their work. Yet history moves on, and each generation faces the challenges of its own time. The vision of the first Thomas Gillespie, and of John Witherspoon to uphold spiritual independence and to criticize patronage—the vision which subsequently became the American experiment—trembles if it ever becomes a persecuting force. It is here that we have to take account of the scandal of extraordinary rendition.[11] There are things which a seminary of the stature and quality of this can do to help at a time of changing values. We can make it our purpose to feed the imagination of our students and to wean it from the cultural narcissism to which I have referred. We can pay critical attention to our

[10] See Peter Ochs, "The Rules of Scriptural Reasoning" at <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/journals/ssr/issues/volume2/number1/ssr02-01-e01.html> (accessed March 22, 2005). My comments on Peter Ochs are attempts to summarize thrusts of his argument from this article. The text is found there in its entirety.

[11] See Jane Mayer's "Outsourcing Torture," *The New Yorker* (Feb. 14–21, 2005): 106–123 and *The Sunday Times* of February 6, 2005, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2089-1471913,00.html> (accessed March 22, 2005). I am grateful to my colleagues Dr. Stacy Johnson and Dr. George Hunsinger for bringing these to my attention.

curriculum so as to prepare people who do not fear or demonize difference; we can provide a context within which that which is controversial may be debated safely. We can teach about the indirectness of truth, whether in the thought of Peter Ochs or in Anselm's *De Veritate*.[12]

We can teach our students to avoid intellectual complacency and to relate abstraction to practice. The church has always proceeded through argument and that will not change. Most importantly, in an intellectual climate which lends itself to polarization, we can teach the virtues which militate against slippage from appropriate defense to crusade, from moral stance to demonization of the other, from caution before the evidence to intransigence and prejudice. I have been and am assisted by my colleagues in the Seminary. But I am also helped by other dialogue partners. Cornel West, Jeffrey Stout, Albert Raboteau, and Peter Brown have all reached out to show me friendship. I am glad to be installed in office in the chapel of this university and will do whatsoever I can to continue and to foster the links between our two institutions.

[12] Cf. Thomas F. Torrance, "The Ethical Implications of Anselm's *De Veritate*," in *Theologische Zeitschrift* (1968): 309–319. The *style* of my father's relentlessly critical realism and quest for open structures shaped my thinking, and continues to evade his scholastic imitators. It was no accident that James Iley McCord, fourth President of the Seminary, was my father's closest friend.

A Gauntlet with a Gift In't

by Charles L. Bartow

Text: Romans 8:28-30

Dr. Charles Bartow is Professor of Speech Communication at Princeton Theological Seminary. He delivered this sermon in the Miller Chapel at the Opening Convocation service on January 24, 2005.

The title for the sermon, "A Gauntlet with a Gift In't," is from a poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Thus the peculiar "in't" for "in it." And no, the gauntlet is not seminary and the gift in't is not reading week or even commencement. But more of that later. The specific text for the sermon is Romans, chapter 8, verse 28: "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." I don't think you will find a more ringing declaration of faith than that in the whole of sacred Scripture or in the history of the church. "We know"—do we?—"that all things work together for good." At this very moment, though, I can tell you of three grown children, two daughters, one son, who in the months prior to the atrocities of September 11, 2001, lost their father to a particularly gruesome metastasized cancer of the lungs and esophagus. To this day, for them, what we know may not be clearly true at all. With those grown children, and with their grief, the questions come thronging to put at issue what we know, and what Saint Paul insists we know.

In Darfur—Sudan—need we be reminded?—genocide has left thousands of daughters and sons fatherless and motherless, and parents childless. And in Iraq, Israel, and Palestine, grief abounds without let-up as terror and counter-terror take their toll in innocent or not so innocent blood. Even nature itself swells with terror, and, in an instant, sweeps away thousands upon thousands, as with the earthquake and tidal wave in the Indian Ocean last month. Nor has this campus this past academic year been spared visitation from "the last enemy."[1] Yet "we know," we say, "that all things work together for good." All things? Can war, pestilence, tyranny, and even natural disaster, those instruments of would-be-imperial death, be made to work to human advantage and divine purpose?

The issue can be joined nearer to home. With the poet "follow right to the bottom of the night. . ."[2] Trace the ignorance of charity, of what makes for peace and life's flourishing, to its root in the mind and heart of persons

[1] 1 Corinthians 15:26, NRSV. All biblical citations in the sermon are from the NRSV.
[2] W. H. Auden, "In Memory of W.B. Yeats," in *Selected Poetry of W.H. Auden* (New York: Random House, 1958), 54.

zealous for God even as known in Christ. Saint Paul spoke of it in himself, the war raging between his flesh and spirit. "I know that nothing good dwells within me," the apostle said. "I can will what is right but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do" (Rom. 7:18-19). And he cried out, anguished perhaps as some blind Lear upon a blasted moor: "Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death" (Rom. 7:24). Then, in the same breath, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:25); and, just a chapter later in his letter to the Romans, this: "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." No resignation to his fate. No truce with the death at work in him or in anyone or anything else. No careless speaking of "'peace, peace,' when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14; 8:11), but love, holy love, which hates what it must hate for the sake of loving what it must love if it is to know any lasting love at all. Therefore this further question: Who are those who love God? Who are those who are called according to God's purpose? I'll tell you who they are if Paul, the apostle, is to be counted among them. They are those who not only know the griefs common to humanity, but who know as well the struggles of mind and heart and body, the triumphs and failures, and danger too, of women and men for whom conformity "to the image of [God's] Son" (Rom. 8:29) entails, besides a "glory to be revealed" (Rom. 8:18), a cross to be taken account of, not only as a terrible fact of history, but as a scandal to be confronted daily in their own life.

When he wrote his letter to the Romans, a document some scholars regard as his last will and testament, Paul, the apostle, was in Corinth. There he was gathering the last of the gifts he intended to take from the wealthier churches of Macedonia and Asia Minor to the struggling poor of the church in Jerusalem. Jerusalem would not prove altogether welcoming to the apostle, however. Opposition to him would mount there among his former temple and synagogue brethren. In a short time, in fact, he would face harassment, arrest, and trial. His missionary work, primarily in the gentile world, would be interrupted. Later it would be brought to a full end. His immediate capture would culminate in a trip to Rome under guard. In Rome he would be subjected to house-arrest, yet have there, even in "the prison of his days," freedom sufficient to "teach the free man [or woman] how to praise."[3] Then, as tradition has it, he would be released for a while, only later to be imprisoned again. At last, scholars surmise, he was beheaded on the Ostian

[3] Auden, Ibid.

Way, during a period of persecution of Christians, whether they were citizens of Rome or not, in accordance with a policy instituted by Nero in A.D. 64.

In Saint Paul's day all it took to get yourself killed was to believe in and proclaim Christ Jesus, crucified, risen, regnant. In our own day the killing goes on, in Indonesia and Sudan not long ago, and, yet more recently, in Lebanon, Iraq, Pakistan, and Yemen.[4] There is in fact finally no safe place for anybody in a world where love for God can get a Christ crucified, or an apostle martyred, or a western woman, Margaret Hassan, converted to the Muslim faith, beheaded, who for love's sake, and for hatred of poverty and ignorance, and the devastation of armed conflict, gave of her substance, all that was in her, for the care and nurture of the children of Iraq "suffering in the wake of the Gulf War."[5] Yet, no matter our thronging questions, no matter the perils without or the torments within, Saint Paul has declared, and the church has confessed, and an army of martyrs has given witness to what people of faith have known from A.D. 64 to A.D. 2005, namely, "that all things work together for good for those who love God." And it just could be that someone in this chapel or elsewhere on this campus right now, has found comfort in such a thought, or sought to comfort somebody else with it. For the answer to the questions that stir up doubts as the subtext of faith is not to be found in arguments—which, in any case, must unsettle as much as they settle—but in the person of him who "has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases" (Isa. 53:4) and in the lives of the saints who love him, and in the lives of those women and men and children, saints or not, whom he loves. And whom does he not love? Believe it: "All things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."

It is an "effectual calling." That's the way the theologians speak of it. It is not an invitation to consider the possibility that perhaps the crucified Christ is Lord of the world and head of the church which is his body. It is, instead, a conscription into a way of life that attests his Lordship. To love God, in other words, is to live and die in testimony to Jesus' sovereignty. It is not to harbor a hidden affection for him. It is not to nurse a purely warm and intimate relationship to him. In fact, don't even think of praying for a more warm and intimate relationship with Jesus unless you are ready to get with it a full measure of self-dissatisfaction, and discomfort with the world as it is and with the church as it is, that consternation of the soul Saint Paul spoke of when he said, "I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand" (Rom. 7:21).

[4] Philip Yancey, "Hope for Abraham's Sons," *Christianity Today* 48 (Nov. 2004): 120.
[5] "Milestones," *Time Magazine* 164 (Nov. 29, 2004): 23.

Concerning prayer, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote, in her poem, "Aurora Leigh":

> God answers sharp and sudden on some prayers,
> And thrusts the thing we have prayed for in our face,
> A gauntlet with a gift in't.[6]

Or, as George Arthur Buttrick, scholar-pastor-preacher some generations ago, put it in a query: "What did Jesus 'get out' of prayer?" "The answer," said Buttrick, "might be 'Calvary.'"[7] The gift in the gauntlet thrust in the face of any prayer for a warm and intimate relationship with Jesus, or any relationship with Jesus of any kind, is Jesus himself, as he is attested in Holy Scripture, sovereign in our human affairs as he was sovereign at Calvary, lifting the burden of our guilt and agony, our doubt and despair, as a weight of glory. If you cannot find the love of God there, you cannot find it anywhere. If not in pain, then not in pleasure; if not in sorrow, then not in joy; if not in martyrdom, then not in deliverance from martyrdom; if not in death, then not in life, not even in eternal life. If not face-to-face with the scandal of the Crucified, then not at all, anywhere, ever.

Precisely because the church itself—and its academies—is so prone to the evils it abhors, as Saint Paul noted in himself and as the history of the church makes clear concerning the church, precisely because the church may mistake its will for God's will, its own way as the way of the Lord, precisely because it has not proven itself above hardball politics and even bloodshed, precisely because it has borne false witness against its neighbors—as seems to be the habit of contemporary political partisans—precisely because of all that, "We need to keep it constantly in mind," said missional theologian and erstwhile Bishop of the Church of South India, Lesslie Newbigin, "that when Jesus sent his disciples out into the world, he first showed them his hands and his side. The scars of the passion are the authenticating signs by which the church is recognized as his representative," its weakness, his strength, the foolishness of its gospel—the "good news" of the cross—the wisdom and the power of God.[8]

The father dying of metastasized lung and esophageal cancer, whom I mentioned at the start of this sermon, prayed, I heard him, "O God, may all

[6] Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "Aurora Leigh," vol. 2, ln. 952ff., in Horace E. Scudder, ed., *The Complete Poetical Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1900), 284. A gauntlet is the heavy, metal plated glove of a knight.

[7] George Arthur Buttrick, *Prayer* (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952), 37.

[8] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in Today's Global City*, Occasional Paper 16 (Birmingham: Selly Oaks Colleges, 1997).

this serve to glorify Christ and to increase the faith of my children." That father, not a theologian, not a minister of Word and sacrament, not a college or university graduate, not a would-be Master of Divinity, but an unsophisticated layman—and investment executive of exceptional integrity and accomplishment—knew in truth, in lived truth, what cannot be grasped or argued to clarity in the abstract, namely, "that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." And so the martyrs knew, martyrs so called not simply because they died, but because they died as they lived in testimony to the sovereignty of one who earlier had died to sin, once for all. And so other lovers of God knew when, violent decades ago, they entered the death camps at Auschwitz and Buchenwald, Belsen and Dachau, the *Shema Israel* or the Lord's Prayer on their lips, "of whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. 11:38). And so the lovers of God knew who were killed at worship in Indonesia just five years ago, or who were slaughtered in Palestine or in Israel in any year, or who were shot dead, or bombed dead, or beheaded in Iraq just this past year, this past month.

Jesus, the gift in the gauntlet thrust in the face of our prayers knew them, each one, even if they never knew him. He was their hope even if they never called upon God in his name to save them. And God's "effectual calling" of you and me into service to the gospel means that we are to make that hope known. "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." It is not a pious mantra to quiet still further an all-too-untroubled spirit. It is a shout, a call to contest, a gauntlet tossed into the teeth of our questions, our doubts, our prayers, "a gauntlet with a gift in't." And whether you have chosen to take up that gauntlet or not, it is yours as it is mine, and we will join the contest it demands that the love of God may be satisfied.

Our baptism signals the truth of it: "Whom God calls, God keeps ever as his own, against [all] odds, however great, for who or what can withstand God? [Yet] the greatest assurance of this tenacious love is the sacrifice of Christ to which believers are joined through sufferings incurred [in] fidelity to the Crucified."[9] That is your challenge and mine from God himself, to bear each day the scandal of the cross, to live every moment under the sovereign sway of Christ Jesus crucified, risen, regnant, whatever comes of it.

[9] Charles L. Bartow, "Romans 8:26–39," in Roger E. VanHarn, ed., *The Lectionary Commentary: Theological Exegesis for Sunday's Texts: The Second Readings: Acts and Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 94.

Be reminded, though, that it is not always a gauntlet of derring-do. Nor is it always a sad course we run, pain, suffering, anguish unrelenting, and a brave heart held high come what may. It can be a gauntlet of joy, though seldom such joy as is unalloyed, for the trials of the spirit can be subtle. Think of those named by *Time* essayist Roger Rosenblatt: "the modest, the quiet, the traditional, the faithful, the harmless, the on-time, the responsible, the unglamorous, the unambitious, the unchatty, the constant and the tender."[10] All things working together for good, that is to say, can be something known and affirmed by unremarkable people who perhaps have grown accustomed to thinking of themselves less highly than they ought. All things working together for good can be something known and affirmed by you and by me, who perhaps have only heard prayers for Christ's glory on the lips of the dying, only read about or wept over the slaughter of innocents—and not-so-innocents—at home and abroad, only faced up to the scandal of the cross in the Holy Bible, and in the sacred liturgy, and in the word of the gospel spoken, as Providence would have it, by some no-name preacher in some out of the way congregation, which is the way in which the proclamation of the gospel typically gets done.

Perhaps, in God's providence, we have been called here this morning to this chapel, to speak and hear the word of the gospel and to eat the bread of life and to drink from the cup of salvation at a time—

> When the Spirit must practice his scales of rejoicing
> Without even a hostile audience, and the Soul endure
> A silence that is neither for nor against her faith
> That God's will will be done, that, in spite of
> her prayers,
> God will cheat no one, not even the world of its
> triumph.[11]

For the crucified Christ is risen and regnant not only over the extraordinary, but over the ordinary too, the moment identified by poet W.H. Auden, just quoted, as "For the Time Being."[12] In a word, Christ is risen and regnant over the mind and heart set upon him day by day, and Lord's Day by Lord's Day, in pulpit and in pew, in classroom and in play-yard, in the affairs of our broken hearts—is there a heart worth having that cannot be broken?—and in

[10] Roger Rosenblatt, "The News About Jessica," *Time Magazine* (April 2, 2001): 34.
[11] W. H. Auden, "For the Time Being," in Chad Walsh, ed., *Garlands for Christmas* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 117–18.
[12] Ibid., 115.

the broken hopes of the body politic, ecclesial, national, and international. To rework a thought by John Calvin from his commentary on our text: All things which happen to the saints are so overruled by God, that what both the world, and perhaps the saints themselves, regard as inconsequential, the issue shows to be of greatest consequence.[13] So it was with Jesus at Calvary. And so it may be with us here, this morning, two weeks to the day after our national remembrance of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and just after the beginning of a new year, right at the start of a new semester's worship and study, conversation and recreation, days after the inauguration of the nation's president, and just a bit over a month before the inauguration of our seminary president. "All things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose," all things, including these things—these holy and ordinary means of grace, to which, if we would be free to love God, we are bound, and wherewith we are made holy—Word and sacrament and prayer.

Let Us Pray:

> In the cross of Christ we glory, O God, for it is there that we love you according to the manner of your love for us. There we know your Son as gift in the gauntlet thrust in the face of our prayers. There we know the meaning hidden in the heart of sorrow, disappointment, and grief. There we know that all things work together for good for those who love you, who are called according to your purpose. For your name's sake, grant that what we know may be evident in what we do and in what we say, day by day; that ever, and in everything, with thanksgiving to you, we may be to the praise of your glory; through Jesus Christ your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

[13] John Calvin, "The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans," *Commentaries*, vol. 19, trans. & ed. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 315.

Why Worry About Words?

by Marilyn Chandler McEntyre

Dr. Marilyn Chandler McEntyre is Professor of English at Westmont College. This lecture, the first of the 2004 Stone Lectures, was delivered in the Main Lounge of the Mackay Campus Center on October 4, 2004.

There is a lot to celebrate in our verbal environment: poets are featured weekly on public radio; dozens of versions of the English Bible are in print; Garrison Keillor is still telling stories; bilingualism is lively in our borderlands; Billy Collins, Toni Morrison, and Seamus Heany are very likely at their keyboards even as we speak. The sheer availability of words, written, spoken, and sung, is historically unprecedented. That is the good news. Let us cling to it while we consider our calling to care for all that language. Stewardship of such riches is, after all, a heavy responsibility. It is made heavier by the fact that words, like endangered species, are subject to forces that can vitiate their energy, diminish, and destroy their capacity to do meaningful work.

This is not new news. George Orwell in 1946 and George Steiner in 1959 lamented the way language, co-opted and twisted to serve corporate, commercial, and political agendas, could lose its resiliency, utility, and beauty. Their arguments are still widely cited. Orwell claims, for instance,

> [The English language] becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts. The point is that the process is reversible. Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble. If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly, and to think clearly is a necessary first step toward political regeneration: so that the fight against bad English is not frivolous and is not the exclusive concern of professional writers.[1]

This description, like Orwell's ominous vision of "newspeak" as part of a program of mind control in *1984*, may have an unsettling ring of familiarity. In a similar vein, but rather more bleakly, George Steiner reflects on what actually happened to the German language under the Third Reich:

[1] George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language," 1946, <http://www.resort.com/~prime8/Orwell/patee.html> (accessed March 23, 2005). Other quotations from Orwell in this lecture are from this source.

> The language was infected not only with . . . great bestialities. It was called upon to enforce innumerable falsehoods, to persuade the Germans that the war was just and everywhere victorious. As defeat closed in . . . the lies thickened to a constant snowdrift. . . . Languages have great reserves of life. They can absorb masses of hysteria, illiteracy, and cheapness. . . . But there comes a breaking point. Use a language to conceive, organize, and justify Belsen; use it to make out specifications for gas ovens; use it to dehumanize man during twelve years of calculated bestiality. Something will happen to it. . . . Something of the lies and sadism will settle in the marrow of the language. Imperceptibly at first, like the poisons of radiation sifting silently into the bone. But the cancer will begin, and the deep-set destruction. The language will no longer grow and freshen. It will no longer perform, quite as well as it used to, its two principal functions: the conveyance of humane order which we call law, and the communication of the quick of the human spirit which we call grace.[2]

Steiner makes two other points worth mentioning in this regard. As usable words are lost, experience becomes cruder and less communicable. And, with the loss of subtlety, clarity, and reliability of language—the failure of the social contract we count on when we speak—we become more vulnerable to crude exercises of power.

Remote as we may think we are from the horrors of the German propaganda machine, I believe the applicability of Steiner's concern to the condition of contemporary American English may be obvious upon brief reflection. The generation of students I teach expects to be lied to. They know about "spin" and about the profiteering agendas of corporate advertising. They have grown used to the flippant, incessantly ironic banter that passes for conversation and avoid positive claims by verbal backpedaling: "like" before every clause that might threaten to make a distinction one might argue with, and "whatever" after approximations that never reach solid declarative ground. They also know, because it is all they have seen in their twenty-odd years of life, that political discourse consists of a good deal of *ad hominem* argument, accusation, smear campaigns, hyperbole, broken promises, and lies or distortions. They are witnessing along with us the daily stream of euphemistic, hedging, overgeneralized, obfuscating discourse that passes for political debate. Consider, for example, the logic of this rhetorical sally from President Bush in the presidential debate of September 30, 2004: "The best

[2] George Steiner, "The Hollow Miracle," in *Language and Silence* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 100–101.

way to defeat them [the enemy] is to never waver, to be strong, to use every asset at our disposal, is to constantly stay on the offensive and, at the same time, spread liberty. We must deal with threats before they fully materialize."[3] My undergraduates are learning to be critical of rhetorical sloppiness, but the currency of public discourse, debased as it is, is what is available to them, and so their own language resources are diminished and uncertain. They need our help.

I do not know how many times over the past year I have heard from one student or another trying to make sense of what we are doing in Iraq or in Washington or in the advertising industry, "I don't know how to tell what to believe!" "How do I tell what's reliable?" "How do I distinguish what is true?" Their questions remind me of Wendell Berry's observation that the two epidemic illnesses of our time, "the disintegration of communities and the disintegration of persons," are closely related to the disintegration of language. "My impression," he writes, "is that we have seen, for perhaps a hundred and fifty years, a gradual increase in language that is either meaningless or destructive of meaning."[4]

Here is where I think the church and the academy are specifically and urgently called to act in the service of truth. We need to steward language in such a way as to model truth-telling, to honor the truths we believe in the telling, and to reclaim words that have been colonized and held hostage by commercial and political agencies that have riddled them with distorted meanings.

We have a lot to work with. Simply in terms of number of available words English is one of the richest languages in the world. (To point this out is not at all, by the way, to devalue other languages; we need them; each of them does something English cannot. But more on that issue in a later lecture.) Since most of us here live and work in English most of the time, I will focus my reflections on English as the particular gift we have to take responsibility for. The number of words in English is over a million today. An average educated person knows about 20,000 words and uses about 2000 in a week. More than half of the world's technical and scientific periodicals and three quarters of the world's mail are in English. About 80 percent of the information stored in the world's computers is in English. English is transmitted

[3] George Bush, "2004 Presidential Debate Transcript," *New York Times*, October 1, 2004.

[4] Wendell Berry, "Standing by Words," in *Standing by Words* (New York: North Point Press, 1983), 14.

to more than 100 million people a day by the five largest broadcasting companies.[5]

Consider these facts about Americans who speak English. According to the United States Department of Labor, at least 50 percent of the unemployed are functionally illiterate. The average kindergarten student has seen more than 5,000 hours of television, having spent more time in front of the TV than it takes to earn a bachelor's degree.[6] So the models of conversation they have heard have been heavily scripted in ways that allow neither in-the-moment response nor revision. And linguist Barry Sanders, among many others, has demonstrated a direct, causal relationship between early television viewing and impaired literacy. According to the American Council of Life Insurance, 27 percent of army enlistees cannot read training manuals written at the 7th grade level. A 1985 study by the Laubach Literacy Action, of 21–25 year olds showed that: 80 percent could not read a bus schedule, 73 percent could not understand a newspaper story, 63 percent could not follow written map directions, and 23 percent could not locate the gross pay-to-date amount on a paycheck stub. According to the Literacy Volunteers of America, 44 percent of all American adults do not read one book in the course of a year.

Why this decline in literacy is happening is too large a question to address adequately here, but if Orwell is right, and "the decline of a language must ultimately have political and economic causes" (not to mention, I would add, political and economic consequences), it behooves us to identify and address those causes. As "people of the book," for whom the Word begins and ends in the divine Alpha and Omega, I have taken as a premise that a significant part of our calling is to be good stewards of the gift of language. At this particular historical moment, I believe that a call to stewardship is particularly crucial to the health of the church and of our communities, to peacemaking, to the service of truth, and to equipping our children for an increasingly complex set of global problems. So let us consider how to rise to the challenge of resisting language erosion.

Generally speaking, to be good stewards means to deepen and sharpen our reading skills, to cultivate habits of speaking and listening that foster precision and clarity, and to practice *poesis*—to be makers and doers of the word. For these purposes we need regularly to exercise the tongue: to indulge in word play, to delight in metaphor, and to attend to language itself as routinely as we attend to our bodies so that we may use them well. This

[5] These and figures cited below are taken from the Literacy Council website: <http://www.main.nc.us/literacy/statitics1.html> (accessed March 30, 2005).

[6] Barry Sanders, *A is for Ox* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994).

deliberate focus on language is not simply an elitist enterprise. With over twenty-six million functionally illiterate people in this country, those of us who voluntarily and regularly pick up books, newspapers, and Bibles do, in fact, belong to a privileged group. Our job is not to eschew that privilege, but to use it for the sake of the whole. And though the stewardship strategies I want to map out in the succeeding lectures are not the sole purview of the church, they take on the character of sacred task and mission within the community of faith.

We will spend the bulk of our time together this week focusing on strategies of good stewardship, but bear with me tonight while I reflect further on the problems we face. As Thomas Hardy says in the poem "In Tenebris": "If way to the better there be, it exacts a full look at the worst." Think about the kinds of language abuse we've become so accustomed to, they seem normal: *Thoughtless hyperbole* that makes every new product or enterprise the "best ever," every church program "really exciting," every child's effort "terrific." Consider how words like "wonderful," "great," "fantastic," "incredible" and—most regrettably—"awesome" have progressively lost not only their original meanings, but their precision and impact by dint of a kind of verbal promiscuity. *Unexamined metaphors* that confuse important issues: for instance, the much bandied threat to "smoke" the enemy "out of their holes," or the appropriation of "family" to describe a corporation's workforce. Or the description of war as a "job" we have to finish. Or this, to describe the three years of unremitting war in Afghanistan and the Middle East: "We've climbed the mighty mountain. I see the valley below, and it's a valley of peace."[7] *Clichés and euphemisms* that provide quick closure and substitute for thought—what some have referred to as "little prophylactics that prevent the conception of an idea." Public rhetoric is full of these false comforts that postpone urgent scrutiny of national policies and public issues: "land of the free," "American way of life," "united we stand." *Overgeneralizations*, the most egregious of which, perhaps, are broad claims about what "the enemy" is doing or is likely to do; what the Muslim world wants; what the American people hope for, what matters to "our youth."

Simplistic sentences in news media driven by the sound bite and by an audience conditioned to a shrinking attention span: newspapers that write to a fourth grade reading level and so train readers to expect nothing more challenging. This editorial policy entails radical abbreviation of what needs careful qualification and creates a public who take their cues from, and

[7] George Bush, "2004 Presidential Debate Transcript," *New York Times*, October 1, 2004.

sometimes stop at, headlines. (Old newspapers did not have headlines, by the way—only columns of print that left the reader to sort out what was important in the course of reading.) *Shrunken vocabulary* results as words fall into disuse and the experiences they articulate become, themselves, less accessible. Think of the wide middle range of experience recalled in Jane Austen's novels with their rich vocabulary of nuance and fine distinction—words like "agreeable," "amiable," "affable," "genial," and "kind" all sounding different affective tonalities. With the loss of such subtlety we become more confined to broad strokes that obliterate careful distinctions and more vulnerable to the simplistic rationalizations that legitimate abuses of power. *Grammatical confusion*—and I am not talking about quibbling over fine points, but about slippage in the basic logic of sentence construction such as the lack of subject-verb agreement, misplaced apostrophes, inconsistency of tenses—mistakes that simply undermine clarity. *Codes and labels* that forestall reflection so that complex arguments for considered positions may be dismissed in a word that ends with "ism." *The pretentious diction* that George Orwell already identified as a danger: "Words like prioritize, totalize, paradigmatic (as a buzz word), phenomenon (or phenomena, often seen posing as a singular noun), utilize (instead of use)." *Diminished range of allusion*, a loss disturbingly documented in E. D. Hirsch's controversial book, *Cultural Literacy*.[8] (I have found, for instance, that in many undergraduate classes I have to explain the origins of terms like "luddite" or "phyrric victory" or "sacrificial lamb.") Few Americans now take enough Latin or Greek, or even modern foreign languages to have even a vestigial awareness of the etymological layers of meaning that enrich the words they use. Few of my students would recognize the kinship between "fabulous" as a descriptor for a rock concert and "fable"—a tale invented to instruct and school the moral imagination.

Slippery abstractions that carry little consensual meaning but carry a heavy emotional charge; consider, for instance, the currency of another of Orwell's points: "The word Fascism has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies 'something not desirable.' The words democracy, socialism, freedom, patriotic, realistic, justice have each of them several different meanings which cannot be reconciled with one another."

What journalist Paul Weaver called "a culture of lies," where public trust has been eroded by propaganda and "spin" to the point where serious debate of issues on the basis of evidence, is impeded by axiomatic questions of

[8] E. D. Hirsch, *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

credibility. As Steiner puts it, "Argument turns into banter, analysis into fatuous assertion."[9] To see the *loss of disciplined argument* as a vigorous means of getting at issues, one has only to remember the 2000 presidential debates. Or look at transcripts of those of 2004, to take some measure of how diluted, dumbed down, and euphemistic such highly scripted events can become. *Blather* that fills the airwaves—talk radio, talk shows, talk that passes for news analysis—anything to stay the threat of silence. More and more talk about less and less.

These kinds of poor usage affect public discourse across the board—political, commercial, and ecclesial. I have commented already on the first two; let me add that the church absorbs usages and habits of mind from both those realms in its efforts to be contemporary, to court congregations, and in its confusion of evangelization with marketing. Thoughtlessly imported language habits that capitulate to the terms of popular media culture make me think of Job's outcry, "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?" (Job 8:32).

One might account for the varieties of dumbing down and obscurantism in a number of ways, but I suggest that a core explanation is fear. I think of the fear of silence that keeps Beckett's characters conversing about nothing in *Waiting for Godot*. It is fear of self-confrontation and fear of encounter with the Divine. As Steiner puts it, "We crave remission from direct encounter with the 'real presence' or the 'real absence of that presence' . . . we welcome those who can domesticate, who can secularize the mystery and summons of creation."[10]

In light of that fear, let us return for a moment to the point I cited previously, that languages can absorb masses of hysteria and lies. I want to consider more specifically the contaminants American English has absorbed. The most insidious of what I am calling "pollutants" or "contaminants" are not conspicuously offensive; that is the point. Rather they are practices—metaphors, figures of speech, constructions, labels, and usages—that are so common and so imbedded in current discourse, we cease to be aware of their potential for harm. They are "normal."

A friend of mine teaches a course at Hiram Medical School called "The Tyranny of the Normal," whose title itself provokes reflection on how insidious and harmful unexamined notions of "normal" may be. Normality (or as President Harding would have it, "normalcy") is itself a dangerous term. Every time I hear the hope voiced for a "return to normalcy" I wonder

[9] Steiner, 141.
[10] George Steiner, *Real Presences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 39.

where that is, and whether it is a place we want to go. Given what we have normalized I might rather find myself elsewhere.

We have normalized the language of war. We use it to describe healing. We "battle" depression. We "bombard" infections with antibiotics. We want oncologists who devise "aggressive" strategies and are bold about "invasive" procedures. We use it to describe sports (and, more consequentially, we use the language of sports to describe war). We use it to describe work. We use it to describe our efforts to solve social problems, as in our conspicuously unsuccessful "wars" on poverty, drugs, and terror.

We have normalized racist and sexist language. Happily this fact gets a great deal of attention these days, but only the most obvious instances of bias have really changed. *We have normalized stupidity.* Magazines, textbooks, and television programming has significantly lowered their verbal and conceptual demands to accommodate (and so condition) a public less inclined to read. What accounts for that loss of inclination becomes a chicken-and-egg question. *We have normalized irony as a defense mechanism.* From Sesame Street onward, sarcasm, mild insults, and ironic banter take the place of story or sustained conversation.

We have normalized pedantry. Higher education and academic degrees do less to equip leaders to sustain functional democracy by speaking to the people than to preoccupy them with conversations conducted within and for the benefit of the guild. As Steiner wryly points out, "The mass of books and critical essays, of scholarly articles, of acta and dissertations produced each day in Europe and the United States, has the blind weight of a tidal wave."[11] Linguist John McWhorter offers a dreadful example of the jargon-ridden idiom tolerated and reproduced in too many academic journals that are "inaccessible beyond the ivory tower" and "aesthetically barren even within it" in a paragraph by a University of California, Berkeley gender theorist (who, I am happy to report, received the campus-wide 1999 Bad Writing award): "The move from a structuralist account in which capital is understood to structure social relations in relatively homologous ways to a view of hegemony in which power relations are subject to repetition, convergence, and rearticulation brought the question of temporality into the thinking of structure, and marked a shift from a form of Althusserian theory that takes structural totalities as theoretical objects to one in which the insights into the contingent possibility of structure inaugurate a renewed conception of hegemony as bound up with the contingent sites and strategies of the rearticu-

[11] Ibid., 24.

lation of power."[12] "As long as their colleagues understand them," McWhorter comments, "it wouldn't occur to the postmodernist scholar that there could be anything inappropriate in academic prose so demanding that no one can learn from it beyond their coterie, and so utterly unconcerned with euphony, rhythm, or style."[13] If this is even only half true, it is cause for concern.

We have normalized greed. The language of investment and profit, self-interest and increase pervade not only "motivational" seminars in the workplace, but even churches' evangelical campaigns. Let me pause for a moment over this last problem: the language of greed. To a certain extent the predisposition in favor of acquisition is built into the discourse of capitalism and that itself deserves some vigilance as long as people of faith live under the banner of enlightened self-interest. But I will not pursue the argument over economic systems here except to say that the marketing language that tends to dominate descriptions of human interaction in a capitalist economy makes us all vulnerable to a paradigm that obscures or decentralizes a much deeper understanding of the gift character of all that is, and our familial relationship to all life and especially to each other.

I recognize, of course, that Biblical language itself describes our relationship to each other and to God in terms of economic metaphors. I want to distinguish those from what I'm calling "marketing language." Though ideas like "atonement" and "redemption" are essentially economic ideas, they are imbedded in a cultural context in which obligation and exchange always take place under the shadow of the Almighty who, though he may be bargained with, cannot be bought. That there is that which cannot be bought and sold, and indeed, that there are times, places, relationships, and words that may not be subjected to the terms of economic transaction is an assumption that underlies those uses of money language.

What I mean by marketing language in a contemporary context, however, works rather differently. It is not hard to identify within the church and the academy—both supposedly bastions of freedom from civil and corporate control—a spreading usage of marketing metaphors (not to mention marketing practices) that subvert the very purposes for which they were designed. Let me give you a simple example from an advertisement I recently saw for fall courses at a local college—not, I hasten to say, the one at which I work, though the infection is spreading. The advertisement featured an ice cream

[12] John McWhorter, *Doing Our Own Thing: The Degradation of Language and Music and Why We Should, Like, Care* (New York: Gotham Books, 2003), 242.
[13] Ibid., 244.

cone bearing a tower of scoops of ice cream of every color in the Baskin-Robbins spectrum. The point to be grasped—once you got your salivation under control—was that the fall curriculum offered similar sumptuous variety and a similarly appealing array of consumer choices for the aspiring student.

If you think this is harmless, let me remind you how this kind of appeal plays out in the classroom. Most of us who have taught, even at Christian institutions, over the past ten or twenty years have encountered with some regularity what I think of as a "consumer" approach to education from students, parents, administrators, boards of trustees, and accrediting bodies. You have heard the language: we are to "deliver the product," give them the best "dollar value" in higher education (to be as *US News & World Report* puts it, a "best buy"). We are urged to produce measurable "outcomes," to sell them sweatshirts, rings, running shorts, and bumper stickers that bear the school's label, because they advertise for us as surely as they do for Gap, Abercrombie, and Nike. We have logos, identifying slogans, a carefully crafted institutional image, and spend considerable percentages of the institutional budget at small colleges like mine for marketing materials such as four-color brochures that arrive in the mail with a pile of similar appeals from our competitors for the perusal of those who belong to our "target" applicant pool. Those brochures are liberally decorated with images of young, healthy youth in poses suggestive of billboards and Pepsi advertisements.

The fact is, we do want people to come to our schools, so where is the harm? We advertise, they choose. But the arts of persuasion we use are not value-free, and the degree to which we adopt the language and discourses of corporate marketing, we associate our enterprise with their ends. We are "selling" something that can be bought. And more than one student has suggested that, having paid as dearly as he has—or more to the point, as his parents have—he is being sold short if he fails a course. The argument is rarely made so blatantly, but the attitude is rampant.

So much for the academy. Churches are following suit. Go to the websites of the biggest, most "flourishing" churches in the country and consider their logos, slogans, pop-up ads, and word choices. Many of them say, in effect, "we know you have many churches to choose from, and we're grateful that you selected First Suburban." Much that one finds there is good, indeed, and I do not mean to be cynical about the work being done. But the "what's in it for you" message is a powerful subtext, and the formulaic language, sound bite messages, and clever, quippy titles make an appeal so similar to those we see in mainstream media, it is hard not to wonder what message the medium is delivering.

Some of you may have encountered a particularly egregious example of this incursion of marketspeak in two "versions" of the New Testament designed for the teen market and published by Thomas Nelson Publishers in 2003: *Revolve* (for "girls") and *Refuel* (for "guys"). I bought an issue of *Revolve* for the occasion, though it pained me to support their enterprise with my $12.95. (I bought it used, by the way, so at least the purchase had the virtue of recycling!) The actual text one finds if one looks carefully between the colorful sidebars and self-help quizzes, is the New Century translation of the New Testament. But the distractions from that text on every page are of such insistent eye-appeal, it is difficult to stay focused for the duration of a paragraph on the text itself. The Word is being put into direct competition with words and vibrantly colored, highly distracting images which, though they address issues of Christian living and ethical confusions, mimic the language and style of *Cosmo Girl* so precisely, that the sacredness of the word—the way in which it is different from all other texts—becomes entirely submerged.

Normalizing the language of the marketplace within the academy and the church confuses and ultimately subverts our deepest purposes: in the one case, to promote critical thought and exchange of ideas free from coercion by those in positions of political or economic power, in the other to call people to something so radically different from the terms and paradigms of this world that it can only be spoken of in the variegated, complex, much-translated, much-pondered, prayerfully interpreted language of texts that have kept generations of people of faith kneeling at the threshold of unspeakable mystery and love beyond telling.

So what are the alternatives? Market language is the dominant idiom of the culture. If evangelization is different from marketing—and it is—how do we maintain that distinction? Resort to Jacobean English and sing plainsong in high collars? No. But we do have a discourse available to us, labored over and preserved for generations by dedicated wordsmiths that can still serve us well. We do not have to capitulate. We can surprise people with clarity and care in an environment of flat, lifeless (or cute or glib or trendy) language. We could give them something like the taste of an organic tomato among the pale piles of megafarmed fake-food look-alikes. Real words have taste. And real words nourish. Our charge as people committed to the Word and to words is to use them in life-giving ways.

Let me conclude what have been rather broadly diagnostic (and perhaps somewhat curmudgeonly) reflections with an ecological analogy that bears pondering. Like the food industry, the fuel industries, and the high-tech industries that make up the infrastructures we inhabit, the political, eco-

nomic, and social systems in which the word industry is enmeshed shape its ends and to a very large degree control its means. We are all involved in those systems. Words come to us processed like cheese, depleted of nutrients, flattened and packaged, artificially colored and mass marketed. And just as it takes a little extra effort and intention to find, buy, eat, and support the production of organic foods, it is a strenuous business to insist on usable, flexible, precise, enlivening language.

That is to say, in the same way that as we have commodified (and to a large degree privatized) the earth's resources—land, water, air (and more pertinently, airwaves)—we have come to accept words as a commercial product. Like the strip-mining we do on hillsides just slightly away from public thoroughfares, we have become accustomed to practices of light camouflage that allow us to forget how the rich soil of lively discourse is being depleted. Let me press the analogy a little further. I would characterize the ecological crisis we have witnessed in our lifetimes in three ways:

First, the ways we provide food, clothing, and shelter for ourselves in the industrialized West—methods of agricultural production, water management, fuel extraction, and resource use—have become unsustainable. That is to say that year by year we are depleting the soil, polluting the water, and filling landfills with non-biodegradable materials that will eventually require a fundamental change in especially North American habits of consumption. (Bear with me, those of you who thought you were coming to hear reflections on language—we will get back there.) With sad apologies to Gerard Manly Hopkins, it appears that "for all this, Nature [is eventually] spent."[14] Second, terms like "productivity" and "healthy economy" have obscured the idea of stewardship in ways that dull the conscience and blind the eye to practices that are fundamentally destructive of the common good. And third, the radical imbalance in resource distribution and control worldwide is unprecedented. Of the one hundred largest economies in the world, fifty-one are corporations; only forty-nine are countries (based on a comparison of corporate sales and country GDPs).[15] Thirty-one of the fifty most profitable of these corporations are American, and seven of the top ten.[16] Those of us in the North American church are, as Ron Sider so eloquently put it in his book

[14] Gerard Manley Hopkins, "God's Grandeur," in *Poetry X* 21 (July 2003), <http://poetry.poetryx.com/poems/925/> (assessed March 23, 2005).

[15] Anup Shah, "Corporations," September 3, 2001, <http://www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Corporations.asp> (accessed March 30, 2005).

[16] International Labour Organizatrion, "Largest Corporations: Concentration of Wealth," <http://www.itcilo.it/actrav/actrav-english/telearn/global/ilo/multinat/multinat.htm#Concentration%20of%20wealth> (accessed March 30, 2005).

title, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*. The practices that benefit us directly harm and deprive others.

To play out the analogy between the ecological crisis and the crisis of language, let us take these three points one by one. The first was about unsustainable practices that deplete natural resources. I suggest that our language practices in this culture are similarly unsustainable and that we are depleting a precious resource that can only partially and slowly be renewed, in ways that probably entail active resistance to the forces at work to erode it. The sheer volume of use is another language issue comparable to increased use of electricity, land, and fossil fuels. I have surveyed students regularly over the past several years as to how much silence they experience in the course of a day. Upwards of 80 percent (my rough estimate) now claim they do all their studying to background music or in the presence of background conversation. Many of them multitask as they study, fielding instant text messages and cell phone calls while at work on papers that too often exhibit the superficial thought and repetitive, imprecise language that is the inevitable result of work done under such conditions. In other words, their environment is glutted with words, sung, spoken, written, to be consumed thoughtlessly like disposable products, often as buffers against the pain of thought or the spiritual strenuousness of silence.

I do not say this to vilify the young or even to blame them for their practices. Many of them, despite what I describe, are thoughtful, prayerful kids, seeking a way through the morass. But they have been a "target market" their whole lives—literally victims of corporate forces so large, relentless, and skillfully camouflaged, many of them still have no sense that they are being used and abused by those who define and market privilege. (Bill McKibben tells a story of how "Teletubbies" hit the market: someone at a board meeting announced that they were not taking sufficient advantage of the one to two year-old market niche.[17])

Just as they have never known a world without abundant electrical energy and electronic conveniences, so they have enjoyed less silence in their media-saturated world than any previous generation. (When I teach Jane Austen, I pause over a description of the Bennett sisters hearing the sound of horses' hooves a mile away and ask students to try to imagine the ambient silences of the early nineteenth century where sounds were discrete and distinct, and the sounds of natural world were not obscured by white noise.) The point is this: because they hear so many words so constantly, their capacities to pause over

[17] Bill McKibben, *Hundred Dollar Holidays: The Case for a More Joyful Christmas* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 48.

words, ponder them, reflect upon them, hear the echoes of ancient cadences, attune themselves to allusiveness and alliteration, are eroding. I witness this every year. My evidence is anecdotal, but there are plenty of studies of language use and sensitivity to corroborate this observation.

The second part of the ecological analogy has to do with the dulling of conscience—the moral implications of careless stewardship of language. As we have normalized unsustainable levels of consumption, so we have as a people become largely inured to the language abuses I have mentioned—who tolerate the dumbing down, oversimplification, and imprecision of public discourse without much complaint. We complain to each other in department meetings and over wine and cheese, and some of us are still doing trench work in the classroom to defend the tongue, but the level of common discourse continues to degenerate (newspapers and magazines diminishing in vocabulary, public speaking consisting largely of slogans, clichés, overgeneralizations, and lies). It may be that in many such cases we encounter an instance when, as a colleague of mine put it, "tolerance is no virtue."[18]

Because of the immense influence English wields around the globe, those of us who speak English have tremendous power and consequently tremendous responsibility. The legacy of the English Bible alone is at least equivalent to owning all the oil in the Middle East (perhaps an odious comparison) in terms of the access and control (and therefore accountability) it gives us in public process. Consider, therefore, the implications of these facts for speakers of other tongues—for speakers of languages that have only recently emerged from predominantly oral to written cultures, for speakers of "dying" languages, for speakers of languages and dialects restricted to remote and local use. The very scope of English makes it a ready instrument of empire. It bears within it the imperial history of Britain and America which includes a highly developed discourse of justification for colonialism and domination (consider terms like "errand in the wilderness," "new world," "virgin land," "manifest destiny," "advancement," and "progress" as cases in point) that can not be eradicated simply by legislation or policy, but need to be addressed at the level of language itself—the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves, the euphemisms in which we cloak our greed, the biases that favor the point of view of the privileged.

This brings me directly to the final point I want to make for tonight. I speak to you as colleagues—to those of you who teach and preach and any who have access to public discourse—we need to focus on the word—on

[18] Stan Gaede, *When Tolerance is No Virtue* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993).

words—more explicitly, intentionally, and caringly as part of the practice of our trade. It is a kind of activism, necessary and urgent, to resist newspeak, to insist on precision and clarity, to love the bald statement, the long sentence, the particular example, the extended definition, the specifics of story, and the legacy of language we carry in our pocket Bibles and on the shelf with Shakespeare. We are in the business of working for the kingdom, and that means to be stewards of the treasures that have been put into our keeping. We are not doing too well with fossil fuels and wetlands. I commend those causes to you as well. But along with them, conversation itself—the long conversation that is the warp and woof of civil and communal life—is in need of preservation and renovation.

Peter's admonition to "be sober, be watchful" (1 Peter 5:8) applies to this enterprise. Noticing how things are put, noticing what is being left out or subverted, takes an active habit of mind. But what is our task as a logocentric people if not to cherish the word? God, whose robe is the light, whose canopy space, who also became the "word within a word, unable to speak a word," has put a measure of God's own power into our hands and on our tongues.[19] May we use it to good purpose.

[19] T. S. Eliot, "Gerontion," in *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1962), 19.

"Go and Do Likewise!" Toyohiko Kagawa's Theology in the Periphery

by Kosuke Koyama

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I am honored to give this lecture on the campus where I was a student when Dr. John Mackay was president. This lecture follows the one given by my esteemed friend, Dr. Carl Furuya in 2002 under the title "Who was Toyohiko Kagawa?" For my part I treasure the memory of Kagawa's own public lectures which I attended twice in Tokyo during the troubled days soon after the surrender of Japan in 1945. This paper aims to present the forms and spirit of Kagawa's theology.[1]

Theology in the Periphery

Professor Kenneth Latourette begins his multi-volume *History of the Expansion of Christianity* with the image taken from one of the parables of Jesus, the image of a mustard seed "which, when it is sown, it groweth, and becometh greater than all herbs." The kingdom of God grows by faithful acts as small as a mustard seed. Kagawa participated in the mystery of the mustard seed. Little power, security or prestige is attached to a mustard seed or to the periphery. "The man who declared forgiveness to sinners was crucified," wrote Kagawa (20:196). Yet, the life hidden in both images can upset history (Acts 17:6). Georges Khodr, the Orthodox theologian, says "Christ is hidden everywhere in the mystery of his lowliness."[2] "Everything, yes, everything," writes Kagawa, "I wagered on God.... my life, property, books, social criticism, freedom, action, all I placed on wager" (20:48). This is Kagawa's response to the mystery of Christ's lowliness.

[1] The main source for this presentation is the twenty-four volumes of "The Complete Works of Toyohiko Kagawa" in Japanese, published by *The Kiristo Shinbunsha* (The Christian Weekly), in Tokyo between 1962 and 1964. References to this edition of Kagawa's work will be marked in the text by numbers indicating volume and page numbers, such as (9:21). Though the publication is called "complete" there is still a large amount of material not in the "Complete Works." Each volume presents an average of 450 pages in small print. In his life time, Kagawa published over 200 books in all, including sixty on religion, forty on social issues, twenty-eight novels, and five books of poetry.

[2] Quoted in *The Ecumenical Movement, An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*, ed. Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 403.

Kagawa ("the modern Francis" Hendrik Kraemer called him) took the Bachelor of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1916. He was widely recognized as a remarkable person.[3] "Go and do likewise." With these words Jesus concluded the parable of the Good Samaritan. "Go!" Kagawa went to the periphery. "Do likewise!" Kagawa bandaged people's wounds. On Christmas Eve 1909, the twenty-one year old Kagawa, a theological student at the Kobe Seminary of the American Southern Presbyterian tradition, moved to the Kobe slum in Japan which, in the early years of the last century, was indeed an abandoned periphery of human existence. He lived there for ten years.[4]

Theologically speaking, periphery is a dynamic concept. Christ, the Center Person, has gone to the utter periphery, and in the periphery he has established his centrality. The fundamental *gestalt* of the gospel reflects this marvelous centrality in the periphery. The periphery is not a romantic idea. Christ lived in the tragedy and brutality of the racial, religious, economic, and social periphery. He "brings good news to the poor" by being crucified (Luke 4:18). When I speak of Kagawa's theology as "Theology in the Periphery" I see him "surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses" among millions of people caught in economic periphery of their time (Heb.12:1). Kagawa's life and work—his prayer, preaching, theology, welfare work, labor union, peace movement, consumers cooperative, farmer's union, credit union, peace and world federal government movements—began in the periphery in *imitatio Christi*. Since 1917, Kagawa was extensively involved in the labor movement. Kagawa wanted to start "a movement for good neighbor," not a charity (9:163). He chose to do this in the Kobe slum, for him "the holy ground" and for others a ground of filth and disease (Ex.3:5).

In the periphery, "Man's [Human] Disorder and God's Design" is radicalized.[5] There the usual pretensions of social cosmetics fall away. The hard truth is indeed "unconcealed" (*aletheia*) in the slum. Beauty comes with disfigurement. Grace, both human and divine, becomes tangible in the

[3] A paragraph in Hendrik Kraemer's historic book, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, prepared for the 1938 World Missionary Conference in Tambaram reads: "Kagawa, who is in every respect a man of exceptional dimensions, remains steadfastly the apostle of the application of the love of God to all human relations and conditions, whether personal or collective. This modern Francis is a great evangelist, a man of great artistic gifts, a prolific author, a splendid organizer, a prophet of social justice, an apostle, a mystic, and a great lover of men, who combats with heroic love all evil and suffering that come in his way. No disappointment or resistance can break his faith in the all conquering force of unselfish love and sacrifice" (394f.).

[4] "My life of 10 years in the Slum." See 9:156-164.

[5] The theme of the first General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Amsterdam, 1948.

smallest incidents. Reading Kagawa's slum narratives I am reminded of Tertullian who said "though enervated by lusts and passions, though in slavery to false gods, yet, whenever the soul comes to itself . . . it bears witness [to God]. . . . O noble testimony of the soul by its very nature Christian!" (*testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae*).[6] This is what Kagawa discovered. The life in the periphery is "two natured," as it were; it is human and divine. The spiritual is physical, and the physical is spiritual. Paul Tillich writes, "According to the Protestant principle, there is no Spirituality which is based on the negation of matter, because God as creator is equally near the material and the Spiritual."[7]

Kagawa's slum experience strongly endorses the Protestant principle. This "equal nearness" of the Creator to the material and the spiritual causes our encounter with an unexpected theophany (the *numinous*), and makes the periphery a "scandalous" space/time (1 Cor.1:22). It is in the periphery that the urgency of *here* and *now* is authenticated. In the 1922 book *The Human Apostle Paul* Kagawa wrote, "God is motion and life. God is the awesome power that uplifts us within time" (2:84). And in another place, he said "To love others means to lift others to the height of God" (3:99). He was convinced that the *uplifting* of humanity—that is salvation—can take place within this history, *here* and *now*, however broken human history is. That gave passion to his words. The periphery becomes a *locus* of wisdom for wisdom is nurtured in the uplifting of humanity, *here* and *now*.

The presence of the "the least of these" (Mt.25:40) personalizes the periphery. The prevailing culture sees them as impure. When Kagawa chose, as Jesus did, the freedom of *love* over the requirements of *purity*, he became an evangelist for all peoples. "I have become well acquainted with a number of prostitutes" (9:158) Kagawa says. This is a critical choice of Biblical wisdom. This choice is as important as the Christological definition of Jesus Christ being the "light from light, true God from true God" (the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, A.D. 381) for the way the light from light shines *for us* is the way of freedom and not of requirement. Love transcends the purity requirement. Shinran (1173-1263), the medieval Japanese Buddhist monk of the Pure Land School of the compassionate Buddha says, "Even a good man will be received in Buddha's Land, how much more a bad man!" Paul Tillich says, "For where the Divine Spirit grasps a human it does not

[6] Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 2 (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1962), 264f.
[7] *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 224.

suppress, but liberates each one to full freedom."[8] Remarkably, Kagawa said, "My religion is life itself."

At the meeting of the International Missionary Council at Tambaram, Madras, India, in 1938, Kagawa, then fifty years old, delivered an address titled "The Meaning of the Cross" which begins with these lines: "On Calvary I see the blood of Jesus dropping down from His body on the cross. I hear the sound of the agony of the Lamb of God for the sins of mankind. It was for me and for my nation and for my race and for the whole world. . . . Forgive us, Lord, for His sake and for the sake of the blood of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Savior."[9] In his 1931 *Meditation on the Cross* Kagawa wrote: "Christ was love itself in his thought and acts" (3:99). "Christ was a perfect person lacking absolutely nothing. But he walked towards the cross bearing the sin of the people" (3:165). Kagawa's whole life and thought are dedicated to concretize what he said in these sentences. William James says, "Knowledge about life is one thing; effective occupation of a place in life, with its dynamic currents passing through your being, is another."[10]

For Kagawa the gospel is the "dynamic current passing through" his being. What happened on Calvary is the demonstration of the "the redemptive love of Christ" (*shoku-zai-ai* in Japanese). "Christ has created the world through the consciousness of redemptive love. He is the glory and the image of God in his redemptive love" (4:361). Hence the Christ's love, *agape*, is indelibly imprinted upon the world by the cross of Christ. His is a theology of the cross, *theologia crucis*, of the redemptive love, *agape*, of Christ. The focus of his theology of the cross is life itself. This concept is so characteristic of Kagawa that I must give a string of quotations to confirm it. "My religion? That is to live! To worship! And to create! This is my religion" (21:172). "I dislike that which is narrowly confined in the past as religion often is. My religion is life itself" (21:172). "There is one absolute in the world of relative phenomena. That is life" (4:63). "Life penetrates both objectivity and subjectivity. So doing it grows. Only life can be called absolute. Though 'I' intuit life I also intuit that 'I' am not life itself. The life is inside me, but it also works in the world. Life is thus my God. Philosophically speaking it is reality, ethically speaking it is value, and logically speaking it is the truth" (4:82f.). Kagawa seems to say that when we experience life we experience God. When we are

[8] Paul Tillich, *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1996), 38.

[9] *Addresses and Other Records, Meeting of the International Missionary Council, Tambaram, 1938*, vol. 7, 21.

[10] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, reprint (New York: Modern Library, 1994), 532.

in touch with life we are in touch with God. To use the words of Albert Schweitzer, "reverence for life" *is* reverence for God.

"The religion of Jesus is a religion of life. It is trust in the God who is life itself. Since the religion of Jesus is the trust between person and person, there is no mythological secret, no liturgical secret, and it has no need of philosophy and theology. It is the religion of intuition. It consists of conviction about life itself" (21:175). For Kagawa the substance of the Christian faith is to become a living part of the truth of Jesus' saying "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25; 14:6). His language shows that it is not about the knowledge about life, but "to be alive" fully in the life itself. Hence, God is Life. Life is God. God and Life become interchangeable. "The simpler religion is, the better. Nothing is simpler than one. Life is one. God is one. The religion of life does not need a stone church building, veneration of the scripture, myths, philosophy, ritual and liturgy. All that one needs is faith in life and in the coming of salvation when one is sick. This is the religion Jesus taught" (21:175). In 1931, when he was forty-three years old, Kagawa wrote that he "approaches the truth of Christ's redemption without recourse to theology and philosophy. Christ's death on the cross was not about theology and philosophy. He poured out his love upon the cry of human souls. Accept this honestly, saying 'thank you,' and you will be saved" (3:176). Victor Matthews writes: "In the world of the Bible, the basis of law was not philosophy, but crisis."[11] Kagawa's way of thinking is biblical because it is motivated by the human crisis situations. In the following year, 1932, he wrote: "Religion is to live in God" and "I become pregnant by God" (3:241).

Theology, liturgy, symbols, and philosophy had only limited significance for this Japanese St. Francis. "Christ did not teach the philosophical understanding of the Trinity" (3:328). The religion of Jesus is, simply and powerfully, the religion of life. The simpler the better! In 1932, at forty-four, Kagawa wrote: "We are tired of the religion of many words. Give us your love, the social system based on love, and the resurrection of love" (3:191). The Indian mystic Sadhu Sundar Singh (1889-1929) a contemporary of Kagawa, said similarly, "We Indians do not want a doctrine, not even a religious doctrine; we have enough and more than enough of that kind of thing; we are tired of doctrines. We need the Living Christ. India wants people who will not only preach and teach, but workers whose whole life and temper is a revelation of Jesus Christ."[12]

[11] Victor Matthews, "Law," *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, David Noel Freedman, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 793-796.

[12] Robin Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1975), 105. In the ancient Buddhist *Dhammapada* we read: "As a flower that is

In 1934, Kagawa wrote "the experience of the Holy Spirit cannot be described by words. I myself have had several ecstatic experiences of bliss. . . . It is an intuitive experience of absolute bliss" (3:334). Kagawa was a mystic activist. For Kagawa "go and do likewise" is nurtured and strengthened by "an intuitive experience of absolute bliss." Kagawa's mystic quality was neither speculative nor metaphysical. It was psychological, practical, emotional, and poetic. His "ecstatic experiences of bliss" gave him the freedom to be near or distanced from theology. A non-normative statement that *Life is my God* echoes with Gandhi's saying "Truth is God." "Life is my God." To be alive is the most intimate and universal context of human experiences. Kagawa's contextual theology is built on the basic reality of all living beings. To say that "Life is God" brings God closer to human experience than to say God is Life. In another place Kagawa says, God "is our longing for eternity" (22:215), and this longing is found in "the core of our human nature. It cannot be destroyed" (22:214). In this longing for eternity we encounter God. "If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there" (139:8). Kagawa was a panentheist in the sense of the Letter to the Ephesians: "one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (4:6). He was a hopeful mystic activist who enjoyed the *visio dei* in all occasions. In 1948 he wrote, "For 40 years I have walked in the mud. But the mud shined silver by the light of the gracious God" (20:218).[13]

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lovely and beautiful, but is scentless, even so fruitless is the well-spoken word of one who does not practice it" (#51). In *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message* Paul Tillich writes in the tone of Kagawa, "Christianity is not based on an idea or a set of symbols. They are there. They are used. But the church is based on something that has happened in time and space—the appearance of a man who is called Jesus, who was received by the disciples as the expected Christ" (46f.). Martin Luther is quoted as saying that "Not reading books or speculating, but living dying and being damned make a theologian" (Gordon Rupp, *The Old Reformation and the New* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967], 15). Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose martyrdom took place when Kagawa was fifty-seven years old, left these words: "Cheap grace means grace as a doctrine, a principle, a system. It means forgiveness of sins proclaimed as a general truth, the love of God taught as the Christian 'conception' of God. An intellectual assent to that idea is held to be of itself sufficient to secure remission of sins" (*The Cost of Discipleship* [New York: Macmillan Paperbacks, 1964], 45). "Nihilism is not overcome by arguments or analyses; it is tamed by love and care" (Cornel West, *Race Matters* [Boston: Beacon, 1993], 19). Kagawa prefers the word "meditation" to "theology." Volume three of the *Complete Works* presents four theological meditations: *Meditation on God*, *Meditation on the Cross*, *Meditation on Christ*, and *Meditation on the Holy Spirit*. In 1913, Kagawa, at twenty-five, wrote a *History of the Christological Controversy*. This early substantial work certifies that Kagawa was a serious theological student (1:3-134).

[13] "The reason why I believe in the religion of Jesus Christ is that the thought of God and of eternity is unchangeable" (22:219). Psychologist James Leuba (1868-1946), a contemporary of Kagawa, writes: "Not God, but life, more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life, is, in the last analysis, the end of religion" (Quoted by William James, *op. cit.*,

Kagawa, mystic activist, is passionate as he participates in the *pathos* of God of which Rabbi Abraham Heschel prominently speaks.[14] No theology or philosophy can domesticate the *pathos* of God. Kagawa was captured by that divine *pathos*. Sharing in the divine *pathos*, and becoming pregnant by God, his theology was an untamed, naked theology. He was not burdened with any excess baggage of theological speculation. In the context of life in the slum he composed a *haiku* to express the spirit of the naked theology:

For the sake of God
Given away
My last garment (20:218).

Theology of Poetic Mobility

Kagawa lectured specifically on theology "only once" according to his life time co-worker Rev. Shiro Kuroda.[15] The lecture was given in 1929 under the title *Jitsu gen no Shingaku* or "The Reality of Theology." Let me highlight one leading idea from the summary of the lecture given by Rev. Kuroda who attended the lecture.[16] Kagawa understands that religious experience is always present in the background of theological experience. Kuroda characterizes Kagawa's thought method as inductive, moving from the particular to the general.[17] For Kagawa then, theology is always accompanied by an understanding of the particulars of the "varieties of religious experience." Professor Gerd Theissen agrees with Kagawa when he says: "If we are to

551). When Kagawa suggests that our longing for eternity, that is for "more life," it coincides with the longing for "God as life." There is a certain proximity between Leuba and Kagawa.

[14] Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 221-231.

[15] Shiro Kuroda, *Watashi no Kagawa Toyohiko Kenkyu* ("My Study on Kagawa Toyohiko") (Tokyo: Kirisutokyo Shinbunsha, 1983), 295ff.

[16] Rev. Kuroda lists the following six ideas in the lecture: (1) Kagawa thinks theology inductively. Therefore, theology covers many aspects of religious psychological experience. When he studies theology, he tries to see the religious experience that is at the base of it. (2) Kagawa feels closer to Biblical theology than to systematic theology which is, in his view, strongly influenced by the Greek way of thinking. (3) In the religious experience of Jesus, Kagawa sees God as the living love revealed in our conscience, not so much as a God of omniscience, omnipotence, infinity, and absoluteness. (4) True religion is the religion of conscience in which God is experienced. (5) Theology is only a method of practicing love in the world. (6) The conscience is a micro-cosmos. When we see the conscience we see the summary of the total cosmos. When we know God's work in our conscience, we have inner understanding of the meaning of the cosmos.

[17] A book on the young Kagawa, written by Rev. Amamiya Eiichi, *Seishun no Kagawa Toyohiko* ("The Young Kagawa Toyohiko") (Tokyo: Shinkyo Shuppansha, 2003), shows how his study of the crab ("The Armed Crabs" 24:361-367, published in 1905, when he was seventeen years old) led him to a newly found joy in God. And there he already demonstrated the inductive style of thinking.

know the innermost motivations of the first Christians we must investigate the whole of their lives and put their theological statements in semiotic, social, psychological, and historical contexts which are not directly 'theological.'"[18] Hence, to appreciate the religious experience of the stranger is a matter of importance for Kagawa. "Go and do likewise" means to "extend hospitality to strangers" (Rom.12:13). "It is sad to see many theologians who think the faith only logically, and not in the way of total life experience" (11:191). Kagawa's approach to others is not with hard logic, but with poetic embrace, in the manner of the embrace of Christ and that of the cosmos. This is a freedom that I think of as his poetic mobility.

For Kagawa the authentic religious experience takes place in the depth of one's conscience—the heart. Kagawa belongs to what Ted A. Campbell calls the tradition of the "religion of the heart."[19] Kagawa's religion of the heart uses the word "consciousness" (*ishiki* in Japanese) prominently. The word expresses for him the universal dignity of being human. In 1937, when he was forty-nine years old, he wrote, "I feel that I myself am a being beyond my comprehension. This is the mystery of 'I' as a conscious being" (22:238). John Polkinghorne says "in self-consciousness we are getting close to the centre of the mystery of personhood."[20]

Here are examples of how Kagawa used the word consciousness: "Religion and science are reconciled in human consciousness. Thus science and religion exist by and for consciousness. The starting point is consciousness" (21:327). These two great themes of human civilization depend on consciousness; neither would exist but for consciousness. This resonates with the Buddhist tradition that "Mind (*manas*) foreruns all conditions."[21]

In 1923 Kagawa wrote, "Religion is purified, beautified and sacralized by science. Science is reminded by religion that what it seeks is human truth" (21:174).[22] In the context of religious experience, the word consciousness is

[18] Gerd Theissen, *The Religion of the Earliest Churches* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 1.

[19] Ted A. Campbell, *Christian Confessions: A Historical Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 190ff.

[20] John Polkinghorne, *The Faith of a Physicist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 11. Teilhard de Chardin wrote: "Man is the only being, within the limits of our experience, who not only *knows*, but *knows that he knows*." *Toward the Future* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 171. "In humanity, the universe had become aware of itself." John Polkinghorne, *The God of Hope and the End of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 4.

[21] The Dhammapada, #2.

[22] "One must not limit the presence of mystery. For my part reason, laws and even the invention of the machine belong to the realm of mystery. More than anything else modern science led us to see the world of mystery. . . . I am a scientific mystic. The more scientific I become the deeper I step into the world of God. The focus of religion is always on life

particularly significant: "Sin is the brokenness of life. How are we to mend this brokenness? Enter then into the consciousness of God, which is the foundation of the cosmos" (3:378). Here Kagawa suggests a close connection among the consciousness of human brokenness, of God, and of the cosmos. Kagawa says, "We must be consciously responsible for the entire cosmos, and all creation in it" (3:164). In another place we read: "Materialism speaks about class consciousness. I speak about cosmos consciousness and solidarity consciousness" (4:448).

The following two quotations give us Kagawa's view of Christian consciousness. "There are three stages of religious experience; that is, the consciousness of God outside, the heavenly Father, the consciousness of God inside, the Holy Spirit, and the consciousness of the Son who penetrates us—this is called the Trinity in Christianity" (3:244). "One must have consciousness of redemptive love, the consciousness of social concern, and the consciousness of Christ" (3:164). "This threefold consciousness comprises the fullness of Christian consciousness, beginning with redemptive love, rising to social concern and finally to the immediate consciousness of Christ. How is such a fullness of consciousness possible? It is possible because Christ entered into the consciousness of God" (3:153). The Orthodox theologian John Meyendorff writes: "Christ's humanity is penetrated with divine energy."[23]

Kagawa says: "Christ is fully aware of social solidarity and of the meaning of sacrifice" (3:125). Christ believed that he was to die not just for a person, but for all humanity. This deep and sacred consciousness moved God to forgive all humanity (3:133). The atonement is achieved by Christ's "sacred sacrifice consciousness." And the movement for the kingdom of God is the movement of consciousness. It is a movement initiated by the Holy Spirit (24:507). Sacrifice is a means by which the compassionate God comes to us. It is not the essential definition of the loving God. For this compassionate God the thoughts of omnipotence and absoluteness are secondary. For Kagawa the word "consciousness" signifies "consciousness in action" which is none other than "extending hospitality to strangers." The form of Jesus

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while the focus of science is always on matter. Religion is always subjective while science is objective. Religion is concerned about purpose while science is concerned about the law of nature. . . . But this contrast is not fundamental. . . . They are not two separate worlds but one. . . . To know that the cosmos functions according to the law of cause and effect is a result of human observation. That is, under certain conditions, we observe the cosmos and conclude that the cosmos is ruled by law. . . . To say that a law governing the cosmos is absolute is to make human observation absolute. This is unwarranted (22:26).

[23] See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 332.

crucified is the most beautiful form of the love of God revealed (4:314). Here his poetic mobility is clearly at work. Consciousness is at the core of personal existence as knowledge is not.

In the 1958 collection of essays titled *Fed by the Birds of Heavens*, Kagawa wrote: "Jeremiah located the divine revelation not in heaven but in everyday life" (22:306). This is Kagawa's own confession. God is in the events, small and great, of everyday life. "The closer one comes to God the stronger one's sense of responsibility becomes. It is due to the 100 percent God-consciousness of Christ that he freely associated himself with despised people" (3:153). God-consciousness makes one's thinking *sociological*. "Be it done to you as you believe." "I take this sociologically" (3:232). Kagawa says, "The gospel means emancipation. It means emancipation from sin. Sin is spiritual sin, psychological sin, economic sin, physical sin, and social sin" (3:200). "Preach the gospel to the poor—economic, heal the spiritually wounded—psychological, let prisoners go—social, let the blind receive the sight—biological, free the oppressed—political" (3:231). For Kagawa the psychological and the sociological are intimately related. For the rich the miracle will hardly take place. It will happen to the poor who cannot pay the doctor (3:210). And he says, "Conscience movement and social movement must be united" (3:164).[24]

In the Bible we read "the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7). *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* comments on the passage by saying Adam then became a "psychological self." Kagawa's religion of the heart may be characterized as religion of the psychological self. He seems to have felt more at home with the psychological than the ontological. Vivekananda of India (1863-1902), who made a great impression at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions, said: "Do not care for doctrines, do

[24] Living in the consciousness of God, Kagawa was a man of prayer: "Prayer is the only way to meet God" (5:127). "The Father of heaven and earth, through Christ the Holy Spirit, came upon the apostles. In spite of all difficulties they spread the good news in the Mediterranean world. Give us your Holy Spirit. Then we may be able to write a new Acts of the Apostles in Japan. Send us your Spirit, so that we may bear witness to you, do the strange works you have given us, and share with the Japanese people the teaching of the cross. Give us the courage to stand up and accept suffering. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen" (3:309). "Our Father God, We are tottering in sin yet unaware of the gravity of sin. We thank you that Christ died for us and apologized to you for our sin. For the blood of Christ, forgive us and cleanse us of all our semi-conscious and fully conscious sin. Awaken within us the spirit of Christ. . . . Make us feel responsible for our sins. Amen" (3:119). Kagawa's last prayer was: "Strengthen the church, Save Japan, Grant peace to the world, in Christ's name. Amen" (April 23, 1960).

not care for dogmas, or sects, or churches, or temples; they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man which is spirituality."[25]

The word "spirituality" appearing in this context is consonant with Kagawa's concept of conscience/heart/consciousness. Spirituality is, for Kagawa, a "psychological self" which is the core of human personality. For Kagawa psychological self is symbolically a bodily self (*soma*) in the apostolic sense of "you are the body (*soma*) of Christ," and "I bear on my body (*soma*) the marks of Jesus" (Gal. 6:17). His psychological self is accompanied by apostolic dignity. Thus conscience/heart/consciousness/spirituality altogether is sacred. This sense of sacredness gives life to Kagawa's poetic mobility. Christian consciousness involves all aspects of human emancipation. Kagawa's preaching will be relevant "as long as the last slave and last prostitute remain outside salvation" (3:169).

Mend the Injured

For Kagawa our consciousness of the cosmos (*u-chiu* in Japanese) carries important theological significance. Let me give some representative sentences in which the word "cosmos" appears. "The God of the cosmos is love itself, the redemptive love itself" (4:361). "The love of Christ fills the cosmos" (4:315). "The secret depth of the cosmos reveals the plan of God" (3:185). "In Christ, God, the ruler of the cosmos, freely revealed his great mind" (3:191). "True religion illuminates an accord between life and the original purpose of the cosmos" (2:435). "We must redeem the shortcomings of others. This is to participate in cosmic consciousness" (3:164). "Prayer is telling God your need based on God's consciousness. This consciousness discerns God's spirit at work in the entire cosmos" (3:331). "Purposefulness of the cosmos is hidden in human conscience and in the great world of nature" (20:193). "Knowledge may fail to seek out God in the cosmos. Faith in life and conscience can lead us to see the purpose of God in the cosmos" (4:63). "Life guided by the Holy Spirit is a life of light. This light makes the cosmos transparent to us. Then the material world comes to us as the Word of God" (3:341). Then Kagawa puzzles us by saying, "In Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth, the spiritual power that is hidden in the bottom of the cosmos has surfaced" (3:191). The hidden spirit "in the bottom of the cosmos" must be the spirit of "God, the ruler of the cosmos." In these quotations, "cosmos" appears with Christ, Holy Spirit, God, faith, prayer, consciousness, and

[25] Quoted in Joseph M. Kitagawa, "The 1893 World's Parliament of Religions and its Legacy," in *A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions* (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1993), 6.

human conscience. The cosmos speaks for God, revealing the mind of Christ. For Kagawa, as it has been clear in many quotations given already, the cosmos has a remarkably exalted theological significance. Kagawa was an ardent lover of nature. Hence he was compelled to ask the question: "Why is there evil in this world which is created by the good, omnipotent, just and merciful God?" This he called the question of "Cosmic Evil." The question came to him as a serious personal challenge when he was nineteen years old. When he was seventy, in 1958, he finally published his life work titled *The Purpose of the Cosmos.*[26]

As he struggled with this problem for half a century he moved from the concept of *evil* to that of *purpose*. Kagawa writes, "I see in the mouse a creative work of God. Out of this thought comes the love of the mouse. . . . from the viewpoint of God, that is, if we see from the viewpoint of the entire cosmos, even our enemy may have its reason to be" (3:186). In another place, he says, "the work ants are doing is the work I am doing. If we fail to see this connection, the cosmos will remain uninteresting. One must find one's own life in the life of the bird. In the discovery of this connection, we learn that we wear the cosmos as our garment" (22:363). "Nature, the placenta, nurtures us with her purpose. Stars and atoms tell us about this" (22:366). For Kagawa, in short, the purpose of the cosmos is to reveal God's purpose. If so, through intimacy with the cosmos we may attain the *visio dei.*[27]

Kagawa concludes that evil in the created order is an unintended dissonance or an accidental gap (a *zure* in Japanese) that occurs in the ongoing process of cosmic evolution which is unimaginably delicate and complex. "Life itself is not evil. One encounters evil in the process of experiencing evolution" (4:61).[28] Kagawa sees no conflict between the theory of evolution

[26] "I was 19 years old when I began to tackle with the problem of cosmic evil" (13:291). Since 1943 Kagawa worked on the subject of "the purpose of the cosmos." In 1947 *The Creation of the Cosmos and the Recreation of Human Life* and *The Cosmos and Human Life* were published. Finally in 1958, *The Purpose of the Cosmos*, the culmination of his intellectual work, was published. This work (13:291-454) is hard to understand. The theological orientation of the book is that the cosmos is moving towards the creation of the new heaven and new earth suggested by the Book of Revelation. *The Purpose of the Cosmos* does not relate to the scientific discussion of the ultimate end of the solar system as: "In about 5 billion years the Sun will die, swelling up into a red giant, engulfing the inner planets, and vaporizing all life on Earth" (Martin Rees, *Before the Beginning: Our Universe and Others* [Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1998], 191).

[27] In 1916, Teilhard de Chardin wrote: "Even when I am confronted by suffering, my vision of the cosmos will justify me in remaining unmoved." *Writings in Time of War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 43. I note the similarity between Kagawa and Teilhard (1881-1955) on how the cosmos gives us the sense of purpose and security.

[28] "Those who condemn the true religion condemn nature, which is the matrix of humanity. Nature, the placenta, nurtures us with her purpose. Stars and atoms tell us about this" (22:366). Kagawa talks about the evolution of nature positively. "The cosmos is not

and the consciousness of God. To use the expression of Teilhard de Chardin, Kagawa "christifies the evolution"; indeed Kagawa christifies the cosmos. "The evolution is recognized by love. Only in love can we recognize that the purpose of the cosmos is one" (2:444). Kagawa is excited about the drama of evolution. "Wait a while to see the production of the cosmic evolution. I am witnessing the great cosmic drama without paying a fee" (13:451). According to Kagawa, "Evolution means to enter into the freer world" (4:70). The material world is, for him, the garment of God. "The material world is not God. God is beyond the material world, in the material world, and penetrates the material world. It is proper to think of the material world as the garment of God" (3:345). Because of the *zure* there is suffering in the cosmos. Then Kagawa says, "Making suffering holy—this is the last art of God" (20:189).[29]

Kagawa sees an altruistic motive at work in the process of evolution. The altruistic element "mends" the cosmic *zure*, the unintended gap. "Mending" (*shu-zen* in Japanese) is a word characteristic of Kagawa. He is impressed by the mending power of the blood, which he associates with the symbol of the blood in the Eucharist. The blood signifies "the power of life rooted in love" (3:129).[30] Mending is not discarding or replacement. Mending means to treat the broken or injured with special care in order to restore them to their

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dead. Behind matter there are power, growth, competition, order, law, purpose and life. . . . Therefore the more I study the theory of evolution the more religious I become. If the cosmos is in the process of evolution, I myself must be on the top of this process" (2:210). For him, Christ stands at the apex of evolution. "Christ was aware of the messages of the great minds in the past. As the billions of the brain neurons gather information, so no great person would appear except as the gathering of the great thoughts of the past" (3:217). The marvelous drama of the evolution of the cosmos, not the dispensationalist image of the Armageddon Battle, fully occupies his attention. Kagawa's devotion to the dynamism of the redemptive love of Christ in the cosmos freed him from the "poverty of historicism" to use the words of Karl Popper.

[29] However, this process is costly. "The world must evolve towards perfection; then someone must be sacrificed for the benefit of those who come after. . . . This is an eternal rule" (3:152). "The evolution of humanity necessitates that someone be given up" (3:118). "This love, demonstrated in the cross, this self-denial before God, is an act of sowing the grain. The grain of wheat is stepped upon, but it comes up with a new life in the spring. In the process of the evolution of humanity, someone must be sacrificed. We must understand the perspective of this great truth" (3:118). Obviously Kagawa is thinking of Christ's passion which for him meant truly the cosmic event.

[30] "When a finger is injured, it takes blood to heal it. . . . In order to give life, blood must be given. In this sense, Christ's giving his life is symbolized by the blood he shed" (3:137). "The blood restores the original form from the wounded scar. The blood has the power to empower the sick to regain life. So is love. Love restores the original healthy form" (3:129). "The love of Christ demonstrated in the blood shed on the cross, atones for all past human sins, and heals the wounds of human souls, restores the original form of humankind, and nurtures humanity by making them children of God—this is the message of the New Testament" (3:140). "The blood of the crucified Christ saves humans, atones for sinners and makes humankind to be sons of God" (3:141).

original health as pictured in the parable of the Good Samaritan.[31] Kagawa must have done a great deal of mending, mending of broken life, of financial disaster, of ill health, of physical surroundings, and of international wounds. In 1924 Kagawa wrote, "Production is for the sake of love, consumption is for the sake of love. Labor is for the sake of love, business is for the sake of love. We must go back to the world of genuine love. The world is devoted to production, but it has forgotten love" (7:146). This love-based economics was formally delivered in the 1936 Rauschenbusch Lectures in Rochester, New York. When economics is guided by love, money will circulate in society as the healing blood circulates in the body.[32]

The mending spirituality is hospitable. It embraces others instead of demonizing them. Demonization cuts off the circulation of the healing blood that carries nourishment. The mending spirituality affirms human solidarity. Mending is ecological. The ecological affirms community of all things by the principle of interdependence. The mending mind knows that isolation and alienation diminish *life itself.* It seeks to restore the healthy "webbedness" to the community of life. In this the mind of God is revealed. Here the ecological and the theological are attractively united. Therefore he says, "Away from nature, people will fall to sin" (2:440). And Rauschenbusch writes, "our universe is . . . a spiritual commonwealth with God in the midst of us."[33]

Is mending equal to the "new creation in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:17)? Kagawa's life shows that "go and do likewise" is an essential part of the new creation in Christ. The song of the Psalmist: "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" is joyfully chanted by Kagawa (Ps. 19:1). "For me the great nature itself is the religious art" (20:193). Nature is a sign (*semeion*) of salvation (Jn. 2:11). Kagawa seems to have little interest in the tempting forces of stars or stellar spirits of the cosmos as Paul speaks about the danger of "the elemental spirits of the cosmos" (*stoicheia tou kosmou*, Gal. 4:9; Col. 2:6ff.). Cosmos is for Kagawa a great mother who embraces all with warmth. He does not talk about the aspect of violence in the cosmos.

[31] "For Luke (and for Jesus) salvation is about the restoration of people's full humanity—both body and soul; both individual and corporate." See Stephen C. Barton, "Parable on God's Love and Forgiveness," in *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker ([Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000]) 211.

[32] The lecture was published in 1936 under the title *Brotherhood Economics.*

[33] Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917), 49. Sallie McFague writes: "In the universe as a whole as well as in each and every bit and fragment of it, God's transcendence is embodied." *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 133.

Kagawa's mending language is embracing and descriptive, not exclusive and condemning when he speaks about the world's great faith traditions.

"God who comes to us in Jesus is life—infinite life. This God is the creator of humankind within the flow of history. This God is revealed in the entire cosmos. This is the God of creation, and the God of evolution within the process of time. This God appears as the God of Israel. This God of history appeared in Jesus. This God formed the religious history of India and of Japan. Throughout the ages, this God expands as human understanding expands" (4:163). The mending mind, in unison with the generosity of the embracing cosmos, appreciates the universal presence of God in the general spiritual history of humanity. Kagawa's view on religions is, however, not "naïve" for he does not lightly attribute absoluteness to Christianity; though for him, to use the words of Ernst Troeltsch, "Christianity is the highest and most significant of the developed world of religious life that we know."[34]

In 1937, the forty-nine year old Kagawa wrote the following famous paragraph:

> Confucius directed our attention to the present. The Buddha denied the value of the present. Confucius was a high government official. The Buddha was a prince. Both are rightly called saints. But for me the messages of both are not quite satisfactory. The theme of religion is how to live. The truth of the religious life is located in the effort of pulling human life up to the level of God. I think Confucius reached the eighth station [towards the peak of Mt. Fuji], the Buddha reached the ninth station, but Christ reached the peak itself. I must affirm the present, recognize the past and future, follow the Buddha in rejecting past wrongs, and I must try my best to become a child of God according to the teaching of Christ (22:289).

Here Kagawa places Confucius, the Buddha, and Christ in reference to the same mountain. There are not three separate mountains. This image suggests the sharing of the universal *logos* in the way of the *logos* theology of Justin, Irenaeus, and Clement. The universality of the logos does not confer absoluteness ("cut-off-ness") on any particular position. For my part, absoluteness is an ideological construct incongruous with the image of the compassionate God. It is always either falsified or domesticated by the dominant group for its own benefit. Kagawa said "throughout the ages, this God expands as human understanding expands" (4:163). I take this to mean the horizon of

[34] Ernst Troeltsch, *The Absoluteness of Christianity and the History of Religion* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1971), 117. "Absoluteness is a universal characteristic of the naïve way of thinking" (132).

human language and culture widens because of the universal logos. He speaks of a "comparative difference," not of "superiority or inferiority" among world major religions. "Christ's ethics is different from the general ethics. Socrates, Buddha, Confucius were great persons. Christ was different from them in having the religious consciousness that he must die as the priest for humanity" (3:171). "The most distinctive thing about Christ is the message of the love of the enemies. . . . This means God worked in Christ. . . . There is no God in Confucius and the Buddha. Only Christ taught the moral ethics of God. Accordingly only Christianity can present the ethical movement which is rooted in God. . . .People who are distanced from God cannot have selfless love" (3:207). Kagawa employs neither argument nor condemnation, because religion is a matter of life itself. The life itself is a mystery. And all of us are invited to share the consciousness of this mystery.[35]

Somewhere Hans Küng says, there is "no peace among the nations without peace among the religions." Kagawa would respond: "It is only in love that the infinite and finite, absolute and relative, the large and the small, kings and beggars, spirit and flesh, tribe and tribe, class and class and finally God and people will be able to be united. The wise and the fools will find the point of connection in love, and the sick and the nurse will meet in love, the good people and bad people will understand each other in love" (3:191). Peoples of different religions can meet and be united in love. For love mends. Rauschenbusch has a hard thing to say about religion, "Some become worse through their revival experience, more self-righteous, more opinionated, more steeped in unrealities and stupid over against the most important things, more devoted to emotions and unresponsive to real duties."[36] Kagawa avoids this danger by giving a Christological focus to the concept of religion. "In Jesus we see the supreme sign by which we can come to know God. Those who have seen this supreme sign will know religion" (3:379).[37]

[35] "No other religions teach of life according to the Holy Spirit. Confucius and the Buddha do not teach that. Christianity made clear for the first time the possibility of human life lived with the consciousness of God" (3:309). "For Tolstoy what Christ means is the Sermon on the Mount. But there is not much difference between the Sermon on the Mount and the teaching of Mo Tzu of China. Their teachings are alike. The difference between them is that Christ loved his enemies and prayed for them even in the hours of his death on the cross. If ethical teaching is all you want, there is no need for you to go to Christ" (3:176).

[36] *Op. cit.*, 96.

[37] "The essence of religion is to determine the purpose of life, develop the quality of life, and to bring it to perfection" (21:328). "When one becomes religious, one sees the miraculous sign sent from God to humanity. . . . Then in all human conditions—poverty, suffering, sickness, and death—one becomes an instrument by which the glory of God will be revealed" (3:308). "Religion is a device to enable us to participate in the freedom of God.

"Mending the broken" is the "form" (*morphe*, Gal. 4:19) of Kagawa's theology and ministry.[38] "Religion is concerned with the whole society and even the whole cosmos" says Kagawa (4:448). World War II caused an enormous wound in the world that needed a great mending. Briefly I must touch on Kagawa around the year 1945. When Japan accepted unconditional surrender to the Allied Powers Kagawa was fifty-seven years old. Proud Japan was brought to her knees, with sixty-six major cities reduced to desolate wilderness by American air raids. The violence Japan perpetrated upon others and was herself subjected to left an enormous wound to be healed and mended. Kagawa was from his youth a convinced pacifist. How he lived and what he said in the war years is a story that would require far more space than this presentation can afford.[39]

Then religion is to empower the powerless, resurrect the dead, restore youth to the aged, health to the sick, and to make the poor rich" (2:223).

[38] "True religion must be one that works in the souls of people. The Sermon on the Mount summarizes all definitions of religion" (3:207). "Morality presupposes life. It deals with forms of life's expression. . . . Religion sees life itself as the expression of the cosmos" (4:84).

[39] He published a series of articles in the local newspaper on "World Peace" when he was eighteen years old. In April 1941, Kagawa gave more than 300 public speeches in America appealing for peace between America and Japan. In September 1941 Kagawa exchanged his view with the Japanese Prime Minister Konoe for three hours on the subject of avoiding the war. In May 1943, Kagawa was arrested in Kobe for his anti-war stance. He then withdrew his name from the War Resisters' International. On August 19, 1945, Kagawa preached national repentance and urged Japan to support the establishment of a "World Federation." Kagawa's letter to General Douglas MacArthur (Japanese version, Aug. 30, 1945) was printed in Japanese newspapers. The English version is found in *Toyohiko Kagawa: Apostle of Love and Social Justice* by Robert Schildgen (Berkeley: Centenary Books, 1988), 251f. This letter begins by explaining how the Japanese people had resolved to fight to the end and how they changed their war resolve when the emperor issued a single statement that the war was over. This indicated that the emperor had assumed the suffering of the people. Seeing this noble act of the emperor, the Japanese people repented. In this letter, he wrote "I believe the Rescript of Ending the War will rank above the one issued by the Emperor Asoka of ancient times" (24:414). He also presented his own idea of the World Federation to MacArthur. Kagawa was not among fifty-four representatives that made up a government commission to study the post-war Japanese constitution. Prime Minister Kijuro Hinohara impressed MacArthur by his conviction for the renunciation of the war (*Kenpo to Watashi tachi* ["The Constitution and Us"] [Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1963], 102). On September 27, 1945, Kagawa founded the International Peace Association with four articles: (1) We will work for the establishment of world peace according to the spirit enunciated in the New Japanese Constitution, (2) We will work for the elimination of aggressive wars and the radical reduction of armaments, (3) In a spirit of cooperative movement, rejecting exploitation and monopoly, we will work for international peace, and (4) Through religion, society, politics, economy, education, culture and all areas of human activities, we will work towards the realization of mutual love and help among humanity. In 1957, Kagawa expressed his view on the World Federation. He suggested there should be one representative for every five million people on earth. Then there would be 540 delegates for the World Nation Congress for the world population of 2.7 billion (24:444). On Kagawa during the war years, see Kawashima Sachio, *Kagawa Toyohiko to Taiheiyo Senso* ("Kagawa Toyohiko and the Pacific War") (Fukuoka-shi: Nakagawa Shoten, 1991). Ac-

Having lived through the carpet bombing of Tokyo myself, I can appreciate Kagawa's harsh condemnation of America. However, his case is undercut by failing to condemn with equal vigor Japanese atrocities in Asian neighbor countries, in particular in Nanjing. I remember my personal struggle during the time of the Far Eastern Military Tribunal (1946-1948) about the fairness of the victor's court. I recognized the immensity of Japanese crimes. But why were Hiroshima/Nagasaki and indiscriminate bombings not taken up by the International Tribunal? Nevertheless, Kagawa was consistently and passionately involved in his mission of healing and mending. He said: "Rejecting God, the creator of the cosmos, and placing its trust in myths and idols, the Japanese race fell to the nadir of defeat in war" (20:216).[40]

Concluding Remarks

The Kobe slum was holy ground for Kagawa. Like Moses, he removed his sandals (Ex. 3:5). Bare feet symbolize his ecumenical openness. Christ embraced the entire *oikumene* from the utter periphery (Jn. 12:32f). This is what Kagawa imitated. Kagawa lived in the "scandalous" freedom of Christ.[41] The gospel lived is the most important message of the life of Kagawa. This paper has traced the form and spirit of Kagawa's life-theology as follows: Kagawa's Christian life was vitalized by the *here* and *now* of grace in the holy ground of

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cording to Kawashima, Kagawa's becoming nationalistic during the war ("breakdown"—change of mind) was for three reasons: (1) Kagawa's deep seated reverence for the emperor, (2) Kagawa's strong tendency to take the side of the weaker nation, and in this war against America, Japan was, in his view, the weaker nation, and (3) Kagawa did not want to see all his social work and the institutions he had built destroyed by the military government. For Kagawa's 1944 "Woe to America" speech in Japanese, see 24:412f; in English, see Schildgen, *op.cit.*, 230f. For Gandhi's advice to Kagawa as to Kagawa's personal stance against Japanese military government, see Schildgen, *op.cit.*, 212. Hajime Ando's *Fukaki Fuchi Yori* or "From the Depth" (pub. 1959 in Japanese), 118-174 gives the historical background of the war and post war years to understand Kagawa's war and peace positions.

[40] In 1946, Goro Hani, one of the intellectuals who exercised great influence in the days immediately after the war, said, in effect, that the fact that the Japanese imperial system had continued for so many centuries shows that Japan had had no democratic revolution, and that, in turn, resulted in the sad continuation of feudalism (Rokuro Hidaka, ed., *Sengo Shiso no Shuppatsu* ["The Beginning of the Post War Thoughts"] [Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1968], 143-152). Shigeru Nambara, then president of Tokyo University, wrote in 1957 that Japanese people were controlled by the state ideology's definition of universality. Thus they were easily victimized by the minority's deceptive propaganda (Kiyoko Takeda, ed., *Jinken no Shiso* ["On Human Rights"] [Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1970], 46).

[41] I would suggest that in this freedom he also fulfilled the Buddhist Noble Eightfold Paths; right understanding, right motives, right speech, right action, right means of livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. Having overcome personal greed, *tanha*, he freed himself from delusion and thus became a Christian *arhat*, a worthy one. The Buddha preached the *dharma* (*ecce dharma*). Kagawa imitated the person of Jesus (*ecce homo*).

the periphery. Uplifting us to the height of God is the power of the gospel in Christ. The cosmos comes as the garment of God. Christ is on the move. Kagawa is on the move. Christ mends. Kagawa mends. Kagawa was a prayerful mystic activist.

Kagawa's enduring ecumenical challenges: The command to "go and do likewise" can be directed to every human being irrespective of his or her religious or cultural background. The universal validity of the call "go and do likewise" means "Yes, I am my neighbor's keeper" (See Gen.4:9). What does this affirmation mean to the religiously plural world today? Kagawa's ecumenism embraces every culture and religion through the universal charisma of "go and do likewise." The simpler the religion, the better, says Kagawa.[42] Kagawa challenges Christian language that has become too cerebral, too boxed in doctrinal networks. Edward Schweitzer writes: "Teaching in itself does not convey the living God. It may even hinder his coming, though it may be totally correct. It is exactly the most correct and orthodox teaching that would suggest that we had got hold of God. Then he no longer comes in his surprising ways."[43]

In the Westminster Shorter Catechism (Q. 3) we read: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." The God who is confessed comprehensively is a domesticated God. Such a God "no longer comes in his surprising ways." Brokenness—imperfection—must be the true mark of theology. Doctrines (institutions) are necessary. But they take away the surprise. Kagawa focuses on the raw experience of being uplifted by the saving "motion of God. God is motion and life. God is the awesome power that uplifts us within time" (2:84). Christian theology, mission, and ecumenism is today, as it has done before, recovering the sense of amazement (*ekstasis*, Mk. 2:12). Doctrinal Christianity, often propagated in the manner of the one-way teacher's complex, is being ecumenically repudiated. Human life, to be meaningful, needs both doctrine and practice. The great philosopher Kant warns that "if it [theory] was of little use in practice" it is because there was "*not enough* theory, which the man in question should have learned from experience."[44]

[42] "It is no good asking for a simple religion. After all, real things are not simple. They look simple, but they are not," says C.S. Lewis (*Mere Christianity* [New York: Macmillian, 1960], 46). Kagawa's simplicity is that of pathos not of rational discourse. His is the concentration upon the act of uplifting others.

[43] Edward Schweitzer, *Luke: A Challenge to Present Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 58.

[44] On the common saying "that may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice" see Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, tr. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 279.

What kind of light is it that Kagawa is shedding on this question? Kagawa was a *kairos* person. He lived in a critical undomesticated time in which the entire salvation history of Israel and the church is "recapitulated" (Irenaeus). Kagawa writes, "redemptive love cuts through the history of morality" (4:359). In this history, Kagawa's eschatological *here* and *now* happens. *Here* and *now* is for Kagawa the space of "grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). His was the untamed naked theology, for the Spirit of God moves "where it chooses" (Jn. 3:8). He followed "Jesus' own boundary-breaking ministry."[45]

Kagawa breaks boundaries usually given to theological thinking. Francis of Assisi, Hildegard of Bingen, Luther, Galileo, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Kanzo Uchimura, Rauschenbusch, Martin Luther King Jr., Daniel Berrigan, Dalai Lama, and so forth, also broke the boundaries. Where and what are the boundaries in God's spacious space of "grace and truth?" Who draws the boundary lines? When and where must we break the boundaries? Which boundary breaking is legitimate? Theology domesticates God. This is the unavoidable theological problem for theology itself. How does the *kairos/ ekstasis* boundary-breaking Kagawa challenge our thought on this? Raymond Brown writes, "A community came to believe in God's eschatological presence and action in Jesus before there were written Gospels."[46] Christian faith began not by teaching but by the amazing impression the person of Jesus of Nazareth left on the souls of the people who saw and heard him. The truth is, as Kagawa says, perceived more by intuition than by discursive process. Life itself was there before the written gospels. The Orthodox theologian, John D. Zizioulas, writes, "Love as God's mode of existence 'hypostasizes' God, *constitutes* His being."[47] The Jewish Rabbi Abraham Heschel writes: "The Prophets never identify God's *pathos* with His essence, because for them the pathos is not something absolute, but a form of relation."[48] For Zizioulas, love constitutes God's being. For Heschel the divine *pathos* points to the God/human covenant. Both in their own great traditions speak of the amazement of "God's eschatological presence and action" in history. Kagawa says "throughout the ages, this God expands as human understanding ex-

[45] Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1983), 211.

[46] Raymond Brown, "Hermeneutics," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 1147. Christians came before the doctrine of the transubstantiation, defined in 1215, the Seven Sacraments, defined in 1438, Papal Infallibility, defined 1869-70, and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, defined 1950. In church history Christians use the doctrines, but are not confined by the doctrines.

[47] John D. Ziziuolas, *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993), 46.

[48] *Op.cit.*, 231.

pands." What is the use of such happy expansion *if* the original amazement is lost in the process?

One of the *kairos* moments in church history is the definition of the great doctrine of *homoousiou* (Jesus Christ "of one substance with" the Father) of Athanasius and the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in the year 325. Alan Torrance writes, "Put simply, if I did not believe I could affirm what is being affirmed in the *homoousiou*, I would cease to be a Christian forthwith; I would resign from the church, from my vocation as a theological teacher, and go and do something useful!"[49] Throughout history Muslims—who decidedly reject the Christian doctrine of *homoousiou*—must have practiced "Go and do likewise" in great numbers. This observation can be applied to Buddhists, Confucians, Hindus, Shintoists, and a host of people who distanced themselves from religions. Is it possible that the Christian life may be more authentic through the practice of "Go and do likewise" than with the acceptance of the doctrine of the *homoousiou*?[50] Kagawa writes, "the nearer we come to God the more we become aware of our responsibility to those who are marginal. The reason why Christ has chosen the marginal people is that Christ possessed the consciousness of God one hundred percent" (3:153). Is the "one hundred percent" as decisive as Athanasius' *homoousion*? The thought of the *homoousiou*, implying the *deus incarnatus*, clearly encourages "our responsibility to those who are marginal." The sense of responsibility "to those who are marginal" does not need, however, specifically Christian theological foundation. The concept of "the nearer we come to God" admits to a range of degrees. The Orthodox Church's teaching of "deification," *theosis*, encourages the human to participate "as much as possible" (pseudo-Dionysious the Areopagite) in "that which surrounds the nature of God" (John of Damascus).[51]

To be honest to history means to speak the relative language of "as much as possible." In the holy ground, should the "absolute" be tempered by the thought of "as much as possible?" Is this a way to bring theology and ethics together meaningfully in today's world? Where and when do theology and ethics "kiss each other," to use the words of Psalm 85:10? Kagawa is primarily

[49] Alan Torrance, "Being of One Substance with the Father," in *Nicene Christianity: The Future for a New Ecumenism*, ed. Christopher R. Seitz (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001), 50.

[50] J. Denny Weaver's *The Nonviolent Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) presents a summary of the critical comments on the Nicene/Chalcedonian Christological definition of black and womanist theologians (104-109, 171-178). According to them, the Nicene definition, more philosophical than historical, is distanced from the acts and words of Jesus of the Gospels, responding to the cry of the dispossessed.

[51] "Theosis," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 2069.

a reporter of experience rather than a creator of theology. From the holy ground of the periphery Kagawa reports that what we need is *the resurrection of love.* He is not interested in the making of ideologies or doctrines. Faithful reporting is a work assigned to Biblical disciples. Kagawa displays a *pathos* which breaks the boundaries of doctrine. In 1944, Bonhoeffer wrote in prison: "What do a church, a community, a sermon, a liturgy, a Christian life mean in a religionless world"?[52] Kagawa (and Sadhu Sundar Singh, Vivekananda, Isaiah 1:11-17, Jeremiah, and so forth) is not concerned about the "religionless world" if by religion is meant "a stone church building, veneration of the scripture, myths, philosophy, ritual and liturgy" or the chant, "This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord" (Jer. 7:4). A "religionless world" could be a boon to humanity, according to Rauschenbusch, for often religion produces people who are "more self-righteous, more opinionated." Then, what is it that can stand truly meaningfully for humanity in the religionless world but the practice of "Go and do likewise?" Kagawa's wife, Haru Kagawa, was a dedicated companion who shared every moment of joy and sorrow of his ministry. Her life, with his, is an example of this final quotation: "To love others means to lift others to the height of God. Thus the cross demonstrates the highest point of morality. The cross is the center symbol of Christianity" (3:99).

[52] Deitrich Bonheffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (London: SCM Press, 1971), 280.

The Global Expansion of Radical Primitive Christianity

by David Martin

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The global expansion of a radical primitive Christianity, most dramatically evident in Latin America and Africa, differs from earlier expansions of the world's most widely dispersed religion. In the so-called Dark Ages, conversion took place at the behest of kings who sought links with the faith of a metropolitan civilization, and converts were often drawn by early versions of a power and prosperity gospel. Thereafter, it might take generations before much of the meaning of the new faith was properly absorbed. An even more forceful mode of conversion was practised by the Spaniards after the fall of Granada and its pathetic King Boabdil, and they carried the same style to the vast territories of New Spain. Half a millennium and twenty generations later the meaning of Christianity is still only dimly appropriated. Indeed, if we set aside the high points represented by such as Bartolomé de Las Casas, and the approach of natural lawyers at the University of Salamanca, the mass conversion of the New World was carried out in the name of a faith already deeply infiltrated by syncretism in the Old World. It then joined itself to all the religious varieties of its new environment. Latin America today exhibits a spectrum of practices all the way from virtually unreached tribes to smouldering and confused memories of solar and chthonic faiths, and thence to exuberant spiritism and orthodox Catholicism. No wonder Fernand Braudel commented at the beginning of the sixties:

> Each country in Latin America has its own folklore, its own music, its own stories, deriving from Indian, Spanish or black traditions ... Catholicism predominates: but it is a primitive, mediaeval form of Catholicism.... the Christian story mingles with Indian myths, and magical rites from the African past are confused or combined with Roman ritual. The fact that there are few priests encourages this free interpretation, which dilutes not only the Christian faith but also the native traditions. One day, Latin America will have to put its religious house in order. One historian of Protestantism, Emile G. Leonard ... believes that the spiritual situation is reminiscent of Europe at the time

of the Reformation ... there are keen spiritual needs poorly met ... signs of change abound.[1]

Of course, there have always been missionaries in the Pauline sense of the word, but the great missionary era began in the early modern period. Gradually this involved greater degrees of detachment from projects of colonial expansion where a Christian presence could be unwelcome to colonizing governments, for example, in northern Nigeria. Missionaries were sometimes critical of imperialism or at least of the mode of political and economic penetration. At the same time, they would still be viewed by the local people as potent visitors or as people representing superior political powers. Perhaps it is significant that those who originally took Methodism to the Cape were not missionaries at all but soldiers.[2] At any rate, through whatever channel, a distant metropolis impressed a province just as once Constantinople impressed Kiev. The cross referencing of different kinds of power, whether to heal or to conquer, is inevitable and endemic.

In today's global society, however, the missionary is much less dominant than previously. Spiritual news is not dependent on the dispatch of messengers or even on any kind of physical presence, though personal contact is still much the most effective. The primary channel of conversion is the mobility of individual believers moving round the global religious economy. Missionaries still exist, of course, and Paul Gifford has documented the massive influx of missionaries to Africa, some of it Protestant but even more of it Catholic.[3] Certainly there is an extensive foreign missionary presence in Latin America, both Catholic and Protestant. Nevertheless, the circulation of religious ideas is set in motion by the movement of people and the electronic transmission of ideas, above all the former.

Latin America offers ample evidence that "the Word" is spread by mouth on the part of mobile people, and it is that fact which helps explain an accelerated indigenization. So conversion is now an aspect of a multicultural situation driven by global communications, and it can happen quite independently of denominational planning or the influence of cultural potency and metropolitan radiation. Bodies and ideas circulate ever faster and time is concertinaed. The reformations of today, especially when populations are

[1] Fernand Braudel, *A History of Civilizations* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 457.

[2] N. Allen Birtwhistle, "Methodist Missions," in *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, ed. Rupert Davis, A. Raymond George, and Gordon Rupp (London: Epworth Press, 1983).

[3] Paul Gifford, "Some Recent Developments in African Christianity," *African Affairs* 93 (1994): 513-34.

young, happen at accelerating speeds. All these changes are part of global culture: plural worlds, competition, multi-cultural mixing, simultaneity, and diaspora.

An interesting feature of global mobility is the way the ex-empire acquires a disconcerting ability to strike back. La Luz del Mundo sets out from its base in Guadalajara, Mexico, to establish spiritual colonies in the United States[4]; the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God makes numerous converts not only at home in Brazil but in Portugal as well; Korean Pentecostals peacefully invade ex-imperial Japan as well as expanding in the United States and Germany; black Pentecostals carry the good news from Harare to Glasgow. Moreover, carriers of messages move from one ex-colony to another, as one sees in the evangelization of Mozambique by Baptists, Pentecostals—and Catholics—from Brazil.

Of course, in spite of the populist democratization of messages and the way they are taken in every direction, it would be foolish to ignore the power and attraction of the United Sates, any more than one can bypass the wider and older origins of these messages in Northern Europe and in the North Atlantic world at the interface of the British and American empires. One might also, in a slightly more speculative vein, consider the role of English. As Claudio Veliz has argued, the contemporary world was made in English and during its first phase of industrialisation it was literally "made in England."[5] So far as the United States is concerned, it now places on offer through its artefacts and images a version of universal culture, and there are plenty of takers. Cultural resistance to it comes more from national intelligentsias than from the poor, and it is not surprising nor even obviously reprehensible that there should be a religious version of the market in American goods. Faiths have to begin somewhere and they often end up far from their origins, sometimes as part of the outreach of a metropolitan political power or ethnic expansion but equally as part of a walk out from the pressure of other or more local powers. Islam, after all, created empires through traders or soldiers all the way from Dakar to Jakarta, sometimes by way of deliverance from more local oppressions, as in N.W. India, and it now indigenises itself world-wide through diaspora.

Clearly, the original velocity of Pentecostal ideas had much to do with the shared language of the North Atlantic world and with the way that language

[4] Patricia Fortuny, "On the Road to Damascus: Pentecostals, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses in Mexico" (Ph.D. diss., University College, London University, 1995); Bobby Alexander, "A Pentecostal-Styled Mexican Mission in Dallas," *Listening* 33 (1998): 175-87.

[5] Claudio Veliz, *The New World of the Gothic Fox* (Berkely, CA: University of California Press, 1994).

aided transnational religious investment. It was through the existence of a common medium that Britain was able to make massive religious investments in the United States all through the nineteenth century, especially through the mobility of its "peripheral" peoples in evangelical Scotland, Wales, and Ulster.[6] However, more than a linguistic medium was involved, because Pentecostalism, particularly as it broke out in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century, appealed to mobile and energetic people assembled from here, there, and everywhere. What spread the faith worldwide was their mobility and energy. Expansion had much to do with the kind of people they were. So a variety of processes was involved: first a base in a common language, and then a polyglot dispersion which, nevertheless, included a further increment of competence in English, and finally a kind of frontier restlessness taking the world as its parish for spiritual foraging.

The point is obvious, since to attend a Pentecostal or evangelical church in Latin America or virtually anywhere else is to encounter an enhanced understanding of English and increased contact with Anglo-American worlds. To that extent some of the comment about Americanization has modest force. It is in this context that Harold Bloom's characterisation of Pentecostalism as of the quintessence of America makes sense, as well as my and Harvey Cox's comparison with the genesis of jazz.[7] But then the quintessence of America includes a brew of cultures. Like jazz, Pentecostalism was born of a mixture of black and white, African and revivalist, creative despair and plangent hope. The lava flowed from a religious version of the American melting pot. And yet the evidence is unambiguous that in all the developments in Latin America following the Chilean revival of 1909, the onset of local power and expansion normally depends on a declaration of independence from North America. In any case many movements had local origins, as Kurt Bowen has documented even in the case of Mexico.[8] As in science so in faith people may stumble on similar discoveries in broadly similar circumstances, or rapidly reshape what originated elsewhere.

The realities of Americanization, local creativity, and indigenization have to be held together. If the footloose people coming together in Los Angeles in 1906 were the modern equivalents of the Cretans and Pamphilians gathered together in Jerusalem at the first Pentecost, they resembled them also in

[6] Mark Noll, David Bebbington, and George Rawlyk, eds., *Evangelicalism* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[7] Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1994); David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

[8] Kurt Bowen, *Evangelism and Apostasy* (London and Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1996).

their departure "to the uttermost parts of the earth." The ships, trains, and later planes were in place to take them, backed up by the telegraph and later by television, radio, film, cassette, digital, and Internet.

A map of the winds of the Spirit in the early 1900s shows arrows pointing in every direction: Wales, Chile, Brazil, Sicily, South Africa, Scandinavia, India, and Korea. Indeed, there is evidence in India of spiritual outpourings considerably earlier. But in the course of its transmission to Latin America evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity acquired a vast sounding board in the second world language, also created in the first instance by empire. It was Swedes recently migrated to the United States who fast forwarded the message to Brazil. The story of its transplantation into Italian and Italy is particularly instructive. Luigi Francescon, a humble but active Italian migrant to Chicago, was of Waldensian origin and so initially joined himself to Italian Presbyterians. Then in 1903 he founded an independent evangelical church which, over the next few years, made common cause with Pentecostals to become the first Italian Pentecostal Church. Thereafter it carried out missions and spread by word of mouth in the Mezzogiorno, Calabria, the Italian islands, and Sicily, as well as Argentina, Brazil, and Australia.[9] Nowadays such a story is commonplace. Nigerians take the message to the Philippines and Romanian evangelicals consort with their fellow believers in Buenos Aires. By an essentially independent dynamic, similar manifestations occur in Cuba and China, while a sizable proportion of the gypsies in Romania, Spain, and France are converted. So the connection with the United States may be important but remains contingent. Certainly it lends only modest support to the kind of approach represented by Gifford, Rose, and Brouwer in their *Exporting the American Gospel: Global Christian Fundamentalism*, though their data quite rightly indicates a differential American influence in such places as Liberia and the Philippines.[10]

An exemplary instance of indigenous agency—and of the relevance of patterns of migration—is provided in the analysis by Laurent of Pentecostal expansion in Burkina Faso.[11] This is a partly Muslim country with a Catholic minority of about 15 percent. It was through American agency as far back as 1921 that Pentecostalism arrived in Sierra Leone but thereafter it spread to Burkina Faso through black carriers. Though in 1970 Pentecostal numbers were only about 125,000, since the mid-eighties they have soared towards

[9] Eugenio Stretti, "'Il Pentecostalismo in Italia," *Prostestantesimo* 51 (1996): 45-52.

[10] Steve Brouwer, Paul Gifford, and Suan Rose, *Exporting the American Gospel: Global Christian Fundamentalism* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

[11] Pierre-Joseph Laurent, "L'Eglise des Assemblees de Dieu du Burkina Faso," *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions* 44 (1999): 31-98.

half a million, some 3-4 percent of the population of ten million. As so often, the context is one where urbanization has been very rapid and the state barely coping. Through migration and communications horizons expand in time and space and the structure of ancestral power, witchcraft and familial coercion collapses in favor of choice, particularly among young women. Notions of responsibility and culpability are both individualized and canalized in the religious group. Inevitably, since all revolutions encapsulate the past, the old hierarchical structures are mirrored in the Pentecostal pastorate. In a similar way the powers of the old order are incorporated *and* exorcised in the new spiritual family. Recapitulation accompanies mutation, and conflict accompanies incorporation. The point is crucial. The new space is carved out as an installment of modernity, in which opportunities for mobility, often through Bible Schools, generate rivalry and schism. Moreover, the traditional geographical mobility and itinerancy of the Mossi people in particular creates trails of conversion in neighboring countries.

The original Reformation fed on the invention of print and was a religion of the Word. Like the current Reformation it spread among young populations. The matter of language requires the same balance of complementary realities as the issue of Americanization and indigenisation. On the one hand English is the modern Latinity and the Authorised Version of the Bible has been its universal Vulgate. George Steiner in his preface to the Hebrew Bible reminds us that to speak English is to speak the Bible in all "the multitudinous societies where planetary Anglo-American is spoken."[12] On the other hand, the "text of texts" is now translated into over two thousand languages and in every conceivable medium. Moreover, in Pentecostalism its message acquires a freedom of the Spirit beyond the printed Word. To enter a wordless ecstasy of "tongues" is to recover an even wider universality across the barriers of culture. Pentecostalism complements the world as envisaged by McLuhan and it does so through story, ejaculation, image, and bodily movement. It bids fair to out-narrate its rivals.

Given that evangelicalism and Pentecostalism cross frontiers *and* take on local color, there are implications for their impact on cultural integrity. Properly to explore those implications would require a deconstruction of the notion of integrity in two contexts. One is the normative and admonitory element in what remains of functionalist anthropology with respect to the "seamless web" of local practices and institutions; and the other is the notion of authentic national culture as constructed by local intelligentsias, including

[12] George Steiner, "A Preface to the Hebrew Bible," in *No Passion Spent: Essays 1978-1996* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 57.

the use of master concepts like "Latin America." For David Lehmann the radicalism of Pentecostalism resides most evidently in its indifference to the constructions of authenticity *de haut en bas*.[13] (It was, incidentally, the French who disseminated the concept of "Latin" America for their own imperial purposes in 1865.)

Notions like "authentic," "integral," and "native" when deployed in relation to nations or tribes require deconstruction and need to be shown as simultaneously political and descriptive. One cannot selectively applaud multicultural exchange as enrichment and defend cultural enclosure. It is merely obvious that over much of the world, including Latin America and Africa, a pre-modern heterogeneity mingles with post-modern fragmentation and, moreover, it often does so without an extensive period of the modern in between. The post-modern dialectic of local and global partly bypasses the construction of national culture under the aegis of the nation state. Brazil is a pre-eminent example of mingled pre- and post-modernity.[14] In such a situation Pentecostalism and evangelicalism enter into the infinite variety of ideas and practices that have lain in the Baroque and Churrigueresque shadows of Iberian Catholicism, and the faith of the Holy Spirit reorganizes and frames the spiritual communications of Shamanism, often dispensing with mediations and their attendant financial costs.

Yet this is not, as Jean-Pierre Bastian has argued, the return of a repressed folk religiosity, though the very suggestion is interesting with respect to the controversy over authenticity. Rather, if one takes the example of Singapore, Pentecostalism (and charismatic Christianity more generally) acts as a bridge. In Singapore, according to Kevin Tan Siah Yeow, it radically reforms identity especially among those educated in English while retaining a practice of Chinese religion. There is a mediation between disparate universes, giving a personal and democratic accent to what had been a formulaic religious practice as well as redressing the abstracted rationality of the education. It is all part of an ability to "key in" to local cultural character.[15]

To cross borders and yet to go native, to have Anglo-American origins and yet to be free-standing, to express folk religiosity and yet to ingest it, to

[13] David Lehmann, *Struggle for the Spirit: Religious Transformation and Popular Culture in Brazil and Latin America* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1996).

[14] Bernice Martin, "New Mutations of the Protestant Ethic among Latin American Pentecostals," *Religion* 25 (1996): 101-17, and "From Pre- to Postmodernity in Latin America," in Paul Heelas, ed., *Religion, Modernity and Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 102-46. See also David Martin, "Religion, Secularization and Post-Modernity," in Pal Repstad, ed., *Religion and Modernity* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1996), 35–43.

[15] See Kevin Tan Siah Yeow (Bachelor of Social Science Diss., National University of Singapore, 1996-7).

combine poor black and poor white, to be varied and yet retain family likeness, to fuse modern mode and ancient spirit, to recover the Word and yet transcend it—such paradoxical combinations suggest a rare adaptability. The question which immediately follows concerns not just the geographical spread of Pentecostalism but the range of situations into which it enters. This is not *just* another "religion of the oppressed" or the marginalized.

In *Tongues of Fire* I argued, as have many others, that evangelicalism and Pentecostalism found their niche most frequently among the respectable poor, especially those who had some tiny area of independence or were reaching for it.[16] In particular there was an appeal to women through the restoration of domestic virtues. Either the husband was redeemed or else a lost husband was replaced from among the brethren. Within the spectrum of the poor who became believers there were some pushed to the edge of survival by new economic relationships and others poised to take advantage of those relationships. But most knew the maladies of poverty and were assisted in surviving them by self-control, discipline, initiative, aspiration, mutual help, spiritual healing, trustworthiness, cleanliness, trust in providence, and hope in adversity. All these qualities have obvious implications for economic life. Moreover, in their daily life the Pentecostals I have studied have a sense of cleansing from insidious corruption and a new wholeness achieved through the expulsion of unruly spirits and through healing. My evidence is entirely in tune with Andrew Chesnut's *Born Again in Brazil* where he underscores the centrality of healing in a time of crisis,[17] and, on the local scale with George Otis's analysis of the democratization of access to healing among the Huicholes of the Mexican Sierra Madre.[18] Where medical facilities are exiguous and misdiagnosis frequent, the importance of this is obvious.

In *Tongues of Fire* I also argued that the dynamic of personal and familial restoration depended on a "walk out" from the injurious external world. Only by erecting strong boundaries and by recovering a moral dualism of light and dark, of "Church" and "World," can new growths be successfully fostered. John Burdick in his *Looking for God in Brazil*, has illustrated how this "walk out" works for young people appalled by the expectations of macho adolescent culture and for women seeking release from neighborhood gossips.[19] He

[16] *Op. cit.*

[17] Andrew Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

[18] George Otis, "Buscando 'Vida,'" *Religiones y Sociedad* (Los Evangelismos en México) 2 (1998): 49-72.

[19] John Burdick, *Looking for God in Brazil: The Progressive Church in Urban Brazil* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994).

shows how it helps explain the ambivalence of believers towards becoming embroiled in politics. Again, my own evidence is entirely consistent with Burdick's argument. It is a dualism reminiscent of the early church, and for rather similar reasons with respect to the protection of a fresh start against the ravages of chaos and disintegration. A little surprisingly Manuel Vasquez makes the same point, underlining the superior viability of Pentecostal groups compared with base communities especially in the conditions of the late eighties.[20] It was clear when *Tongues of Fire* was written that believers were emerging in many other contexts beyond the respectable poor, and those contexts are all exemplified in my own research. For example, there have been new kinds of Pentecostalism with an appeal to those who were sunk by the seemingly random immiserations of the eighties, many of them people of color. Again, evangelical Christianity had an appeal among non-Hispanic peoples, for whom it offered a leap over the tentacles of the local Hispanic state to a wider evangelical world. In Brazil in particular evangelicalism began to appeal to thrusting small business people, or to the huge new white-collar class, or to middle class people anxious to escape the grip of the drug culture. In Nigeria evangelicalism could bind together new university educated elites[21] and in Guatemala Neo-Pentecostalism could even provide a discourse for a nascent upper middle class. The range of possible niches is astonishing: for example, the young men of Zimbabwe or tribal Mexico in their search for emancipation from the elders. In parts of Africa it—or rather some of its leading cadres—could be poised against the partial co-option of historic denominations by the state or, else fill in gaps in the legitimation of doubtful regimes when such denominations expressed criticism, as in Zambia and Kenya.

In one of the most insightful of recent analyses, David Maxwell stresses this versatility with respect to Zimbabwe (and neighboring countries) and his argument serves as a summation of much argued here.[22] For Maxwell the key is optimum adaptability to social change and the urban experience, meaning by that avoidance of destitution and some social mobility in concert with geographical mobility along networks of migrant labor to the towns. This is achieved by literacy, taking diplomas, disciplines of family and spiritual

[20] Manuel Vasquez, *The Brazilian Popular Church and the Crisis of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[21] Ruth Marshall, "Power in the Name of Jesus," *Review of African Political Economy* 52 (1991): 21-37.

[22] David Maxwell, "Delivered From the Spirit of Poverty," Conference paper delivered at the University of Zimbabwe, Sept. 1996, David Maxwell, ed., "Special Issue on Pentecostalism," *The Journal of Religion in Africa* 28 (1998); *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

fellowship, the redeployment of modern media and music within the protective boundaries of the church, and resolute refusal of credit and indebtedness. It also involves detachment from the commensality of the extended rural networks and from their cults of the ancestors, their beer parties and "wasteful" divinations. The old world is seen as evil and the church creates a new time and space with its own commensality allowing the young men and the women out from under the sanctified male gerontocracy. A "doctrine of talents" fosters what is initially a "penny capitalism," both inside and outside the church, financing and thereby expanding the voluntary association.

Women prosper themselves and the church by, for example, making pop-corn and maybe becoming indigenous businesswomen. You find them at the borders, buying and selling, discovering means of self-reliance in the face of male desertion. Everybody unites to "testify" an economic culture into existence and literally "sing away" poverty. They "graduate" from a "school of talents," rooting prosperity gospel in African sentiments, so creating yet another bridge between cultures. Of course, the inevitable tension arises between the older more populist Pentecostalism which values humility and acknowledges suffering and the dangers of riches, and a softer, smoother Christianity illustrating precisely those dangers in tendencies to authoritarianism, personality cult, display and greed in its leadership. (Africans, in common with Europeans, like the accoutrements of episcopal style: deference, vestments, and titles.)

Here it is worth mentioning research by Robert Garner into the differential socio-economic effects of Pentecostalism in a modern black suburb in South Africa, called Edendale, where violence, theft, and lack of trust are rampant.[23] The contrast is with mainline churches where a social critique was engendered against apartheid (but not against capitalism except among clergy) and with Zionist churches which created strong ties of solidarity among the poor around Zulu values, such as respect, discipline, and male dominance, but with little defence against promiscuity and AIDS. What Pentecostalism does is to maintain the Protestant link with capitalism and modernity, though with an ambiguity as between holiness and prosperity gospel. It emphasizes rejection of traditional practices and the pursuit of modern styles (including music), literacy, mutual trust, education, and the personal transformation of behavior, including sexual behavior.

Given this variety, flexibility, and adaptability one cannot arrive at a simple judgement or unequivocal sociological assessment. These worlds are too

[23] Robert Garner, "The Socio-Economic Consequences of Christianity in a Black South African Suburb" (Ph.D. diss., Cambridge University, 1998).

multifarious, even though the core characteristics are instantly recognizable. Movements play different roles at different times in different places, even while they retain continuity and family likeness. That is as true of Pentecostalism as it is of communism. The sheer variety of kinds of expansion is evident in organization and building: store-front gatherings in impoverished *favelas*, meetings of professionals in spacious basements, the use of converted cinemas, hangars, and theatres by those brought in from the drug culture, the large assemblages in fine new megachurches with multiple offices and functions, the vast penumbra of those within watching distance of television such as exists in West Africa. This is an expanding continuum of adaptive social inventions.

Much of this variety follows from devouring the Bible raw and entering into familiar conversation with its characters and its God. This is how "the Spirit bloweth where it listeth" and catches fire in the minds of lay people. The world of the New Testament appears reinvented all over again out of the materials of the text and it comes "with signs following." The Spirit of the text is interpreted by the charismata both of laity and pastorate, and the result is a dialectic of authority and participation. There could be no participation without this authority, because authority establishes the occasions of freedom and ecstasy. What offends our liberality grants opportunity and space in which to exercise power and enjoy genuine participation.

As for the pastorate itself, it would deserve a whole book focusing on what has been called "a buried intelligentsia." The pastors are a stratum of self-made men, exuding confidence and initiative as captains in the business of regeneration. Their energy, pragmatic canniness, and their ability to cooperate with miracle provide the foundation of Pentecostal success. And if one group succumbs to bureaucracy a fresh charisma rises up in schism and renewal. Leaders struggle for pre-eminence "in the Lord" and in power to dispose. So long as all this continues, the transition from Bible institute to seminary will be delayed and the leaders saved from becoming a subordinate arm of the western intelligentsia. Perhaps the delay will be permanent, especially if the influence of the western intelligentsia is itself undermined by a post-modern fragmentation of its centralized means of social and intellectual control. In that case the dangers arising through education to later generations of believers will be dramatically diminished. Pentecostalism need not follow the trajectory of Methodism, i.e. bureaucracy and a reduction to niceness and social service. Alternatively if a sector of Pentecostalism does do so, new groups will rapidly fill the vacated social space.

Throughout these varied developments populism is the key, both to the rapid indigenization and the relation to the original populist emporium in the

United States. The poor and intellectually despised reject mediation in order to mediate for themselves the gifts of the Spirit and the scriptural promise, claiming power on their own account, and demonstrating it in the exercise of authority and in giving vent to individual and collective voice. Pentecostalism *is* the unleashing of a Christian populism, parallel to Islamic populist insurgence but, because Christian, with a stronger individualist and voluntarist motif, distinct from the primal solidarities of nation and political power, however seductive these may turn out to be as time and opportunity permit.