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VOLUME XXVIII NUMBER 3 NEW SERIES 2007

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THE
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BULLETIN

VOLUME XXVIII NUMBER 3 NEW SERIES 2007

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All correspondence should be addressed to Stephen D. Crocco, Editor, *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, P.O. Box 821, Princeton, NJ 08542-0803; e-mail: seminary.bulletin@ptsem.edu.

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Editor's Note

The appearance of this issue of the *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* quietly marks one hundred years of publication. First appearing in 1907, the *Bulletin* was for years more a summary of news about the Seminary than the collection of lectures, addresses, sermons, and book reviews it is now. These early issues provided news of commencement and lists of graduates, faculty appointments and promotions, necrology, missionary activities, athletics, ties with Princeton University, and the Seminary Library. By the 1930s, summaries of lectures gave way to publications of the lectures themselves.

The entire run of the *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* is now available online and fully searchable on the Seminary's Web site, at www.ptsem.edu/seminarybulletin.

The digital *Bulletin* is a treasure trove of information about the history of the Seminary as well as a splendid record of theological and homiletical thought of the past one hundred years. This online version gives readers the freedom to get rid of their numerous piles of paper copies. If you have a large accumulation of *Bulletin* issues, and it is in excellent condition, contact the Theological Book Network (www.theologicalbooknetwork.org) to see if it can be used in a library in the Majority World. Otherwise, you may recycle your issues in good conscience. (This is coming from a librarian!)

As a matter of stewardship, we have looked long and hard into whether to continue publication of the *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*. We have concluded that it still has a useful role to play. So I am pleased to report that the *Bulletin* will continue, but don't be surprised when you get word of a new format. It's time to change the familiar blue cover of the *Bulletin*, which has been in place for over fifty years!

One of the interesting features of this particular issue is the lecture on Toyohiko Kagawa by Anri Morimoto, a distinguished graduate of the Seminary and professor at the International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan. Along with this stirring account of one of the most fascinating people ever associated with the Seminary, we have included a sermon by Kagawa. Willett and Clark, the original publisher of *Meditations on the Cross*, the book from which the Kagawa sermon was reprinted, no longer exists. Although we have exercised due diligence to discover whether this work is still under copyright, our efforts have been unsuccessful. The full publication information for the book is included with the article.

STEPHEN D. CROCCO
EDITOR

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Some Thoughts on Doing Theology in Public

by JOHN R. BOWLIN

Dr. John R. Bowlin is the Rimmer and Ruth de Vries Associate Professor of Reformed Theology and Public Life at Princeton Theological Seminary. He delivered this lecture at the Seminary's opening convocation in Miller Chapel on September 18, 2007. Dr. Bowlin is the author of Contingency and Fortune in Aquinas's Ethics (1999) and On Tolerance and Forbearance: Moral Inquiries Natural and Supernatural (forthcoming).

There is a lot of spirited talk these days about public theology—about what it might mean to express our faith in a public setting—and I want to explore some of that talk by considering two meanings of public theology that have appeared in recent scholarly reflection on the Christian moral life. In the first meaning, public theology refers to the fact that the church itself is a public realm, a society of some sort, which in turn compels us to ask what kind of society it might be and what effects its social forms might have on the souls of its inhabitants. In this meaning, the phrase concerns the moral formation of Christians in the intermediate realm that the church now occupies between *oikos*, Greek for household or family, and *polis*, the state. In the second sense, the phrase public theology refers to the fact that theological commitments are often expressed in public and, more often than not, in social settings outside of the church: in friendships, in clubs, on the job, and in the civic realm. With this meaning, there is no assumption that the theological commitments expressed to others in society will be shared by them all, and with this sense of the phrase, the questions posed typically concern matters of legitimacy. Can this or that theological utterance be legitimately expressed in this or that public setting? Is its theological content too blatant or too subtle given the character, aims, and norms of propriety of the society in question?

It is this latter meaning of the term public theology that I want to explore, and I suggest that these worries about legitimacy are, in fact, misguided. Shared by both secular and theological critics alike, they do not get us to the real problems posed by the public expression of theological commitment, not in our day and not in the political societies of Europe and North America, or so it seems to me. How might we better understand these problems? Let me suggest that the contours of at least one such problem come into view once we unite St. Thomas Aquinas's reflections on the natural persistence of religion with the well-known facts of Christian disestablishment. What

emerges is a problem on the horizon, one that will come into view with the next religious establishment.

Now, I admit that it might seem somewhat odd for a newly appointed professor of Reformed theology and public life to seek inspiration from a thirteenth-century theologian. It is well known that the Reformers had few kind words for Friar Thomas. I will eventually work my way to Kuyper and Barth, but I request your endurance because I foresee one possible response to an obvious problem posed by the public expression of theological commitment. If we Christians are to give our faith public voice in this age, then we will need to give and receive forbearance, the gift of love that, according to St. Paul, God extends to both Israel and the church and that Christians must provide to both Jews and Gentiles. But this is to get ahead of my story; let me return to the beginning.

Consider first the well-known and much-discussed position associated with the late John Rawls.¹ I say "associated" because years of qualifications and provisos may have divorced his original opinion from the position associated with his name. But no matter; I leave that question for the exegetes. In broad outline, this view is clear enough. When citizens of a liberal democracy consider questions pertaining to constitutional essentials or matters of basic justice, they should be prepared to argue for their conclusions by appealing to reasons that all reasonable persons can endorse. By these lights, social cooperation can be secured and fair treatment established only as the citizens of a free society agree to identify discursive principles and practical norms that all consider reasonable, to abide by those principles and norms whenever they take up the most pressing public matters, and to refer to them whenever they are asked to justify what they say and do. Local norms and parochial commitments might encourage participation in the public realm and reflection on important matters, but once engaged in public debate and once confronted with citizens from other locales, all must be willing to put home truths aside and rely on principles and norms that all might share. Parochial commitments need not be abandoned, only shelved. At the very least, they cannot enter public reasoning in any essential way. As the friends of this view see it, the citizens of a rightly ordered society will proceed in precisely this

¹ Rawls spelled out this position in *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). He recast his views in the 1996 introduction to the paperback edition of that same work and in his essay "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited," which originally appeared in the *Chicago Law Review* 64 (Summer 1997) and was subsequently included in *Collected Papers*, ed. Samuel Richard Freeman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) and in John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

manner. If *we* desire a society of this sort, we must follow their lead, or so these friends insist.

But notice what this means. If, in the end, citizens can engage each other as just and reasonable persons only as they proceed in public with the commitments they share, then in societies such as ours—societies divided by disagreements about first and last things—many will have to restrain themselves and forsake appealing to those theological commitments that quite often motivate them to speak, act, and reason as they do. Those who refuse to exercise this kind of linguistic self-policing, who find that they cannot give *their* reasons for a certain proposal without noting its theological causes and warrants, will find themselves cast among the unjust and the irrational. If, stubborn and forthright, they proceed nevertheless, they also might be lumped among the ill mannered. As Richard Rorty, also of blessed memory, would have it, those who make public appeals to religious reasons deserve the awkward silence and gaping looks that we typically reserve for those who speak of private matters in public settings.²

So goes a well-known complaint with theology that is made public. We are encouraged to conclude that it is unjust, irrational, and ill mannered and can therefore hardly be considered legitimate. But this complaint is misplaced. Jeff Stout has argued, convincingly I think, this account of theology and public reason is a poor description of what actually occurs in societies such as ours.³ It cannot accommodate the facts on the ground, where reasons traded back and forth in democratic debate about the most important matters frequently contain theological content that is neither shared in common, nor consistent with what any reasonable person would accept (whatever that might mean), nor accidental to what is actually said or proposed.

This complaint also runs counter to our own catalogue of exemplary democratic discourses. It cannot explain the admiration we feel for the sermons of Martin Luther King Jr., the journalism of Dorothy Day, or the second inaugural address of Abraham Lincoln. In each of these examples, we find words loaded with theological content and images rich in biblical referents, yet few of us can imagine wishing that content away or preferring images drained of sacred substance. Indeed, it seems unlikely, to me at least, that King, Day, and Lincoln could defend their conclusions about basic matters of justice while at the same time shelving their theological commitments. By the same token, it is difficult to conclude that their resort to

² Richard Rorty, "Religion as Conversation-Stopper," in *Philosophy and Social Hope* (London: Penguin, 1999), 168–74.

³ Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 63–91.

religious reasons made these men and women irrational or their remarks unjust. Of course, in their own day, much of what they said brought certain conversations to a screeching halt, and some contemporaries certainly considered their remarks ill mannered. King penned *Why We Can't Wait* in response to precisely this charge from Birmingham's white clergy. Still, from our vantage point, the disruptive character of their words only increases our admiration. Certain dominant conversations *need* to be stopped and then restarted in other directions, and often the best way to do this is to locate the topic discussed—be it slavery, racism, or war—in theology's broad horizon of creation, fall, and redemption.

Now consider a version of this worry about legitimacy that emerges from theology's own quarters. In this rendering, trouble accompanies theology that goes public not because the commitments expressed run afoul of the principles of public reason, whatever they might be, but rather because Christians will be tempted to trim their convictions in order to get a hearing. In the rough and tumble of democratic debate, a proposal wins the day only as a majority concedes its warrants. But this means that Christians will be tempted to defend warrants that a majority can concede, and quite often this will demand that they keep their own commitments in check. Theologically robust versions of their views will only offend, and thus, concessions to the secular consensus will have to be made. Christians will have to accept standards of reasonableness and principles of justice that are not their own, recognize moral exemplars other than saints and martyrs, and assume accounts of the way things are that give little purchase to the reign of Christ. In short, they will have to domesticate the gospel, compromise its prophetic substance, and lose themselves in the world outside of the church.

So goes another well-known complaint with theology that goes public, a complaint associated most prominently with the recent work of Stanley Hauerwas and John Milbank. By these lights, when Christians speak in public they risk losing a robust sense of their own moral identity. Above all, they will be tempted to forsake Christian virtues for their secular semblances, the real article for mere vice in virtue's clothing, true courage and genuine justice for rank imposters. If there is a fear that motivates this complaint, it is that the secular defiles, that virtues cultivated outside of the church, while seductive, are always pretenders, just as secular reason, while frequently enchanting, is always false, always a fraud. If there is a solution to this fear, it is that Christians must do all they can to retain their unique identity. They must set themselves apart, resisting the wiles of secular reason and inoculating themselves against the sources of secular virtue. If, in order to do this, they must

retreat from civic life, with its temptation to concede and compromise, then so be it.

But again, this complaint is misplaced and like the one before it, neither gets the facts right nor gives an adequate account of our normative commitments. On the one hand, the sharp distinction it assumes between a secular public realm and a church set apart is false. These have never been radically separate societies but always and everywhere porous and mutually absorbent. Equally misleading is the distinction between selves formed by secular narratives and exemplars and those formed by the gospel and the saints alone. As the examples of King, Day, and Lincoln indicate, there is more church in the world and more world in the church than sharp distinctions can accommodate; the boundaries are fuzzier than that. On the other hand, and perhaps even more important, it is not at all clear that a sharp and obvious distinction of this sort is desirable or that it sits comfortably with everything else that we Christians tend to believe and have traditionally asserted.

As Jennifer Herdt points out in a forthcoming book that explores the sources of Christian anxiety about the semblances of virtue, this opposition between a secular public realm and a church set apart, like the divide between pagan and Christian virtue, assumes a competitive account of divine and human agency, a rivalry between nature and grace.⁴ While prominent at various times in church history and defended in various theological circles, this competition and this rivalry threaten what we typically assert about God's sovereign rule over all things created, even human agency, even secular virtue. Nor does this type of competition align well with what we have confessed about the moral and spiritual ambiguity of human life as we find it in the time between the ascension and the Parousia. Augustine calls this time the *saeculum*, the secular age, by which he means not a time when the churches retreat and the gospel goes quiet but rather an age when the sacred significance of events is difficult to make out, when the societies we happen to inhabit and the selves we happen to have possess porous boundaries, when each is subject to a variety of external influences, and when, as a result, each bears complex identities. This complexity and this ambiguity apply to Christian churches, to Christian selves, and to the broader societies that we Christians inhabit. As a fact about the world that abides between ascension and Parousia, it is not to be denied and, perhaps more important, it is not to be lamented. Only porous selves and societies can be transformed from without, and we proceed with the assurance that God's Holy Spirit will do

⁴ Jennifer A. Herdt, *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming).

precisely that, redeeming our fallen humanity and re-creating our broken lives so that we can be fitted to the divine life for which we were made and for which, by grace, we yearn.

Where then does this leave us? If the problem with theology that goes public in a liberal democracy is neither its conflict with the so-called principles of public reason nor its concession to secularity, then what *is* the problem?

Consider what St. Thomas says about the persistence of religion (*Summa Theologiae* II-II.81). By religion he means the prayers, sacrifices, and ceremonial rites of a people, typically a people who share a political community. These acts of worship are offered in honor of the power or powers considered divine, and honor is due because these powers care for the community that gives worship, or so its inhabitants believe. Worship is due repeatedly, with the repetition that typically distinguishes ceremonial rites, because the gifts provided from above exceed in measure and significance that which can be offered in return from below. Thus, to worship is to know that one has a debt that cannot be repaid with the honor and gratitude that one nevertheless provides again and again. So described, religion falls under justice, and a just community will be a worshipping community precisely because it recognizes its dependence on powers that transcend it. By the same token, a worshipping community will be one that can claim authority for its own affairs. It can assert that its temporal rule stands in correct relation to those powers that rule eternally, and as such, it can insist that its laws be obeyed and its periodic resort to violence accepted.

St. Thomas thinks it is a common propensity to recognize dependence, offer worship in return, and claim legitimacy as a result, stating that it comes packaged with our humanity (*Summa Theologiae* II-II.81.2.3). For St. Thomas, the point is strictly ethnographic. Look around, he seems to say, and you will find human beings everywhere who offer prayers and sacrifices to the powers that are thought to govern all things. The details of that worship, of course, vary considerably. The diversity of religious custom and practice is there for all to see. Still, behind this diversity lies a common sense of our dependence, a common need to align our political affairs with divine power, and a common desire to justify the violence that invariably comes packaged with temporal rule. When pressed for an example of this propensity, he twice refers to the story in I Samuel 8, in which Israel asks for a king. The reason given for their request is that the Israelites want to be like the nations, which St. Thomas takes to be an expression of the ordinary desire to link worship and rule.

Of course, St. Thomas thinks that, diversity aside, only Christian conviction tracks the truth about the power who creates, sustains, and redeems all things, and thus only Christians manage to offer right worship. All other religions fall short; all other peoples flirt with injustice. It is a stern and exclusivist view, no doubt, and yet for my purposes what matters is the claim about human beings, politics, and religion. If St. Thomas is right—and I am inclined to think that he is—then, for the most part, we should expect to find political communities everywhere, all recognizing transcendent powers, offering worship, and legitimatizing their affairs through these acts. It is a claim that those of us who are Americans are ill disposed to concede, largely because we tend to think that the constitutional prohibition against an established religion rules out the possibility that a tacit religious establishment might accompany an established political regime. But again, if St. Thomas is right, then regardless of what the first amendment says, every American political establishment comes packaged with an established piety of some sort, legitimatizing its affairs and justifying its rule. Historians of American religion and politics tend to agree, and most insist that the last de facto American political establishment—the one that emerged at the end of World War II and continued across the decades of the Cold War—came packaged with the prayers, devotions, and ceremonial rites of the mainline Protestant churches. And of course, as everyone knows, this political establishment collapsed in the closing decades of the twentieth century, an event that was followed quickly, in turn, by the demise of its attendant Protestant establishment.

Now at this point, some of you are probably thinking that this is old news, and I suppose it is, and yet if St. Thomas is right about the persistence of established religion, then we should expect this age of religious disestablishment to pass with the coming of the next American political establishment. We may have to wait a while, of course—divided as we are into red state and blue, horns locked in culture war battles of various kinds and subject to a Supreme Court perpetually split five to four on decisions that reverse previous five to four decisions. Yet a new political establishment will eventually emerge, and a new established piety will almost certainly come in its wake.

It is at this moment, after thinking along these lines, that a problem with theology that goes public comes into view. If it is, in fact, difficult to image a political society without an established piety that unites powers beyond with affairs below, then one wonders which piety will play that role in the next American political establishment. If I had to guess, I would not pick mainline Protestantism; indeed, I would not pick any particular variety of Christianity at all. I am speculating, of course, but it is precisely this prospect that poses

a problem for Christians who hope to give public expression to the faith they confess. Many speak of the advantages of post-Christendom, of the benefits that the Protestant churches enjoy now, free of the burdens of establishment. But I suspect that these perks come precisely because we live in an age of disestablishment and pluralism, an age when no coherent politics holds sway, when no piety in particular legitimates our common life, and when the public square is a cacophony of competing voices and competing pieties. Change the facts on the ground, imagine the establishment of some other politics and some other piety, and I suspect that the advantages of post-Christendom will be harder to recognize. Indeed, as the Lukan story of Paul's ministry makes plain, it is rarely easy, and often quite dangerous, to speak the substance of our faith in a public square dominated by the ceremonial rites and court theologians of some other religion.

This, I take it, is the coming problem of public theology. The question is this: how will Christians find a public theological voice in an age when some other piety legitimates our political affairs? How will we speak in a public square occupied by the prayers and sacrifices of some other god? What will we say? What moral posture will we take?

I have no hip-pocket answer to these questions, but I do have sources of inspiration. Surely those of us in the West should look beyond the borders of what was once Christendom to the example and experience of those brothers and sisters in Christ who live in public squares long dominated by pieties not their own. From them we have much to learn.

So too we should look to European social thought, Protestant and Catholic, from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. What unites figures as diverse as Abraham Kuyper and Pope Leo XIII is the recognition that European Christendom perished in the revolutions of the 1840s, that a secular piety of autonomy now legitimates the nation states of Europe and occupies their public squares, and that the churches must find a public voice nevertheless. Both men insisted that Christians speak without cutting theological corners and without dumbing down their commitments, yet without the expectation that Christianity will function as an established religion. The accents are no doubt different, yet Kuyper's talk of common grace and sphere sovereignty has much in common with Leo's emphasis on natural law and subsidiarity. Both made use of these notions to find a way to assert the rule of Christ over all things but without making that assertion a source of legitimacy for any particular political establishment. At the same time, both men found a way to make peace with the new political establishments of Europe and with the new emphasis on individual rights and democratic freedoms. Both found much to admire in these political arrangements and

much that was compatible with the gospel. Yet in the end, both accepted a dissenting role for the churches. Both recognized that at times Christians must speak boldly and make nuisances of themselves, above all when the worship of some other god or the devotions of some other piety legitimate injustice inflicted upon the weak by those who rule.

And finally, I suggest that we find inspiration in the Apostle Paul's reflections on God's forbearance—reflections that were adopted by St. Thomas in his treatise on charity (*Summa Theologiae*, II-II.33.1-2, 6) and by Barth in his excursus on divine patience.⁵ As Paul sees it, it is precisely God's willingness to bear our sins, to endure our differences, and thus to wait upon our repentance that both generate and sustain God's covenant with humanity, first with the Jews and now also with the Gentiles. When differences divide the church, when the words and deeds of some are trespasses and offenses in the eyes of others, then, as St. Paul tells the Galatians, we fulfill the law of Christ—not only as we seek forgiveness for our own misdeeds and uncharitable judgments—but also as we bear the burdens of those who trespass and offend (Gal. 6.1-5). To the church in Rome, he predicts that this forbearance will come and this patient love will emerge, only as the Spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells in their company (Rom. 8.9-11; 15.13).

It is, I think, a perfect virtue for our times and for the times soon to come, both within the church and beyond its walls. Of course, deep down, most of us resist the hard demands of forbearance. The reasons are many, but surely first among them is our fear that the societies we love, be they political or ecclesiastical, will be transformed by the differences we forbear. None of us wants our church or our politics shaped by commitments and practices that, by our lights, trespass and offend, and yet it is precisely this possibility that comes with the call to forbearance. Indeed, by grace, it is this possibility that the truly forbearant manage well, with the ease that distinguishes true virtue.

And so, forbearing those differences that should be endured in a society established by some other piety and making nuisances of ourselves when that piety justifies injustice—these, I suspect, are two of the tasks before us as we give voice to our faith in public. Let us raise that voice together, trusting in God's promise to be present when we speak God's word, and let us proceed this year, in this place, speaking to each other and to the world, with a confidence born of that promise.

⁵ Karl Barth, "The Perfections of the Divine Loving," in *Church Dogmatics*, vol. II, part 1, "The Doctrine of God," ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1964, English translation), 406-39.

Death Threat

by LUKE A. POWERY

1 Corinthians 11:17–34a

Dr. Luke A. Power, the Perry and Georgia Engle Assistant Professor of Homiletics at Princeton Theological Seminary, preached this sermon at the Seminary's Opening Communion Service on January 28, 2008. He is the author of "Holy Spirit/Passion," and "Postcolonial Criticism," in the New Interpreter's Bible Handbook of Preaching (forthcoming).

“**F**or as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” Paul can’t be serious that this is what we are to proclaim on the very first day of the spring semester, which is supposed to be about a new beginning with new classes, new ideas, new projects, new professors, new grades, maybe even new attitudes. Proclaim death when we’ve been killed already by taking and grading final exams and papers? You’ve gotta be kidding me. We don’t want to hear this bad news, Paul. Advent just finished. We just sang “Jesus What a Wonderful Child.” Santa Claus just came to town. Lent hasn’t even started yet and you, Paul, want us to proclaim a disturbing death?! We already hear and live enough bad news in our world. We want to hear some good news for a change! We want to clap and shout, or declare hallelujah and praise the Lord, or pass the peace, sit in silence, and live in another world even for a little while so we can forget our reality—of death. But Paul doesn’t allow us to do that. Every time you eat this bread and drink the cup, whenever we have Communion, we declare death. You can’t run from it. You can’t hide from it. Death is at the heart of the Christian faith and at the heart of Christian hope and Christian worship.

If you don’t believe me, just consider the peaceful founder of the Taizé community in France, Brother Roger, who was fatally stabbed to death by a mentally ill woman during a prayer service. If you don’t believe me, just consider Archbishop Oscar Romero, who had just finished his homily and was about to begin the liturgy of the Eucharist in El Salvador when he was fatally shot in the chest and bled to death. If you don’t believe me, just consider Alberta King, the mother of Dr. Martin Luther King, who, while playing some smooth harmonies on the organ at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, had her life stolen by a sniper’s bullet. Worship is a dangerous act because we are threatened by death every time we enter those Miller Chapel doors, and I’m not talking about being bored to death. The table of death is staring right at us this morning.

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” Death is not only at the table, it’s all around us.

We're slowly dying even now. Every tick of the clock, we're in funeral preparation mode. In fact, we're in a funeral procession. Death is threatening us everywhere we turn. Death has even set up a Web site—deathclock.com. All you have to do is put in the necessary information and Death will be so kind as to predict how much longer you have to live. I have about 40 more years!

But we know friends, loved ones, strangers, enemies—the known and unknown—who didn't have that long to live. Death has snatched them from this life. Death is no respecter of persons. Death is all around us. Death threatens us. He's unavoidable, and it seems like he's winning, whether by murder or mistake. Death is snooping around looking for his next victim. But don't be fooled—death is not just physical, caused by a man in Omaha, Nebraska, randomly shooting people at a shopping mall, or a man hearing voices in his head telling him to shoot people in a Colorado church, or suicide bombs going off in Algeria or Pakistan, or an Iraqi soldier tortured to death because of a cruel war, or a former prime minister being assassinated, or senseless machete-style killings in Jamaica or Kenya due to raw politics, or an orphan dying of AIDS in Trenton, or a plastic surgery gone wrong with Kanye West's mother, or losing a loved one to cancer. No. Death is not just physical. Death is also relational.

This is Paul's context. The Corinthian church is one big mess. It could be the church that calls you! The parishioners need pastoral counseling. They smell like death. When they come together, things fall apart. They are dying a slow and agonizing death as a church. Sound familiar? Paul says, "When you come together it is not for the better but for the worse." There are factions. There are divisions. There are cliques. There are gangs. There are theological camps. There are socioeconomic class societies. Princeton and Trenton. West side and east side. The haves and have-nots. The rich haves have the best food and drink while the poor have-nots have nothing, going hungry while the rich gluttons get drunk, eating their "own supper." No sharing of food or resources. No eating and drinking together. No communion. No helping hand, just a back hand. Mistreating one another, actually humiliating those who have nothing.

All of this right in the private confines of someone's home because the Lord's supper was a meal eaten by a community in a private home as part of the common meal. So in someone's home, at the table, there are those who don't wait for the others to start eating and those who disregard individuals who have nothing to eat. Talk about bad table manners! Paul is not dealing with wrong sacramental theology but with wrong social relations in the community. He's dealing with "practical ecclesiology," as one scholar calls it,

ignoring a need and selfishly worrying about only “me, myself, and I.”¹ This sacrament of unity is one of disunity for this congregation. They’re not being one, and they don’t care. There’s no sense of the common good. It’s one big mess. They’ve forgotten how to love God and each other. They forgot what it means to be Christian, and they “demonstrate an odd amnesia about Jesus’ death.”² They smell like death—and it stinks.

Don’t be fooled. Many times we too smell like death because of the way we treat each other. It’s not just that one church in Corinth, it’s us. We are dead men and women walking, the living dead. A friend and I were sitting in a restaurant sharing a meal one afternoon. Rose began telling me about her relationship with her husband over the years and how he had abused her and her daughter, and yet she remained married to him. At one point in the conversation, after hearing the horrific stories and seeing the tears of pain drop from her face, I said to her, “That’s not living.” Then she said something to me that I’ll never forget. Rose said, “Luke, I died a long time ago.”

You see, you don’t need a gun to kill someone. Many of us are dead because someone told us we would amount to nothing and had no gifts, and we still struggle with this, even in pristine Princeton. We’re dead because someone killed us with hateful words, linguistic bombs, seminary terrorism. Many of us are dead because we’ve had an abusive past and see no reason for living in the present. This hurtful past does not seem to go away as others walk past us every day on this campus without even looking at us to acknowledge our humanity. If we had it all together, if we weren’t dead, President Torrance would not have to send out an e-mail to us titled “Courtesy.”

If killing someone else isn’t enough, sometimes we cause our own death by comparing ourselves with others, competing and striving to be better than another in order to climb the ladder of academic and ecclesiastical success—trying to write more books and get more A’s as we try to stand out and to market our uniqueness—not waiting for the others at the theological table because that would mean not thinking of ourselves first. We cause our own death sometimes when we demonize and disregard those who are different from us—those who don’t look like us, act like us, think like us, worship like us, sing like us, dance like us, talk like us. We die because we destroy our relationships with other people just because they are not us! We kill each other by our actions toward one another, and by doing so, we kill ourselves, committing relational homicide and suicide. We forget what Desmond Tutu says—“We

¹ Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 300.

² Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville: John Knox, 1997), 199.

are all parts of each other.”³ That’s why the Corinthians were dying—relational homicide and suicide. But I smell death here. Even the death of Christ.

There’s blood all over this passage. “Every time you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord’s [bloody] death until he comes.” Why would Paul place the words of institution, calling us to remember Christ’s broken body and poured out blood, in the midst of talking about this community’s division? Why? At first, it made no sense to me, and I wanted to recommend Paul to the Seminary writing center because he seemed to need a writing tutor. The flow and structure of his argument appeared to be interrupted abruptly by this Christocentric inclusion. It seemed out of place. But then I realized that Paul knew exactly what he was doing. He wanted us to remember that Christ too suffered death, not just this congregation. Christ was a “lynched word,” as theologian James Cone says.⁴ He was terribly tortured. He was pierced in his side. Nailed in the hands. Had a crown of thorns crushed on his head. Bruised and broken. Hung out to dry and die on an old rugged cross on a hill far away. He died a bloody death, so our worship has drops of blood all over it.

My daughter, Moriah, wanted to know about Good Friday and Easter, and of course, my wife waited for me to get home to give her a deep theological answer. Moriah was very excited to hear and learn about it, and she sat at the dinner table with a smile of anticipation. I sat down and began with Good Friday. When I told her that Good Friday is the day we remember the death of Jesus, she immediately said, “That’s no fun.” She didn’t even want to hear about Easter after that.

She’s right. Death is no fun, and it’s not funny to lynch an innocent man on the cross or in an electric chair or in a dungeon of torture in Iraq. We can’t clean up the bloody Christ with spiritual bleach or leave the blood of death, because death keeps Christianity real and connected to the way life really is. We can’t praise and worship without acknowledging pain. You can’t have resurrections without crucifixions. You can’t truly celebrate until you learn how to lament. There’s shed blood all over our worship, and the only thing we can shed (and hardly do shed) is a tear. There’s blood on the organ, blood on the choir, blood on the pews, blood on the pulpit, and blood on the table. We proclaim the Lord’s death. The crucified Christ. Not just Christ but a crucified One. A Messiah, a king who dies like a criminal. A Lamb

³ See Desmond Tutu’s prayer “Reflections on Wholeness” in his *African Prayer Book* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 110–14.

⁴ James Cone, “Strange Fruit: The Cross and the Lynching Tree,” Geddes W. Hanson Lecture, Princeton Theological Seminary, November 16, 2006. (This lecture was also presented October 19, 2006, at Harvard Divinity School and is available online at: http://www.hds.harvard.edu/news/events_online/ingersoll_2006.html [accessed March 11, 2008].)

standing as if it had been slaughtered (Rev. 5). A bloody crucifixion that ultimately puts an end to the way we kill each other, our death.

That's why Paul highlights the death of Christ here in the midst of the deathly actions of the Corinthians—Christ's death is supposed to put an end to all death. Recalling his death is a reminder to this community that Christ died to destroy our death-breeding divisions. Wake up, Corinthians! It's no coincidence that right in the middle of chastising this church for their social division he proclaims the death of the Lord. Death right in the middle of division and discrimination and death. More death in the midst of death. But Paul is saying Christ's death destroys death. His death negates death. His death denies death. His is a death threat to death for the life of the world.

His death means life for the community of faith. The phrase "until he comes" implies that he went somewhere and that death did not defeat him. As the Apostle's Creed notes, he "descended into hell," and eventually, "he ascended into heaven." Christ defeated death so that the Corinthians would not have to kill each other anymore. Death to divisions and social discrimination and stratification. Death to selfish behavior and hoarding of food and drink. Death to disrespecting another human being. Death to the split between haves and have-nots. That's why, after reciting the words of institution and proclaiming the Lord's death, Paul tells them to "examine" themselves, to "discern the body," and says, "when you come together to eat, wait for another," for Christ is already there waiting for them at the table. The death of Christ alters how they should relate to each other. "Examine yourselves" in light of the selfless death of Christ. Paul doesn't call for examination until he declares the death of Christ. The cross that inaugurates the turn of the ages calls the Corinthians to turn toward God's way of being in the world, God's way of being in community where the worldly status of wealth and power does not privilege the rich over the poor and weak. Rather there is mutual respect and love for one another as the future new creation of God manifests in the present. It's a call to probe and match their present with the eschatological promise.⁵ The death and blood of Christ pours life into the church community because an eschatological blood transfusion from Jesus Christ restores life.

By no means is this a celebration of death and violence, it is the acknowledgment of the ultimate destruction of death and all means of violence. It is a call for the end of death and violence in any shape or form. Christ died to put an end to death, and he kills it with his life and love. That means that the

⁵ See the hymn text for "View the Present through the Promise," written by Thomas Troeger (Thomas Troeger, *Borrowed Light: Hymn Texts, Prayers, and Poems* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1994], 123.)

way we kill each other, by death, does not have the final word, is not the way it ought to be or will be, is not God's vision for God's people. For death did not ultimately defeat Christ, so we can say with Paul, "Death has been swallowed up in victory" and ask, "Death, where is your sting? Grave, where is your victory" (1 Cor. 15:55)? Resurrection life steals death's sting. Because of Christ's death, we can have life even now in this Seminary community. That's what the Lord's Supper is about—being the one body of Christ, life in community. Christ dies that we might come together, being broken for each other, poured out for each other, waiting for each other. That we might really have communion. When we remember the body and blood of the Lord—"do this in remembrance of me"—we literally re-member, put back together, the broken body of Christ. This is our hope, and we get a glimpse of our future together every time we take the Lord's Supper, because we "discern the body" in this action. We get a "glimpse of glory," a vision of God's kingdom on earth, because everyone at that moment has something to eat and drink. No one is going hungry. No one is going thirsty. The way it ought to be. Every time we eat the bread and drink the cup we proclaim death to the way it is, even to the way we live. The Lord's table is a death threat.

Death to the division between Republicans and Democrats. Death to the divisions between black, brown, and white. Death to the divisions between rich and poor. Death to the divisions between those imprisoned and those who benefit from the prison system. Death to the divisions between American citizens and illegal aliens. Death to our theological tribes. Death to war. Death to violence. Death to drugs. Death to racism. Death to classism. Death to sexism. Death to any other "ism." Death to hatred of any kind. I'm sending out a death threat to death this morning. Death to the way things are and Life to the way things ought to be.

Life to the way God wants it to be. Life when the lion lies down with the lamb. Life to God's new beautiful creation. "Death will be no more. Mourning and crying and pain will be no more" (Rev. 21). No more denominational divides. No more religious divides. No more conservative or liberal labels. No more "I'm an Obama kind of Christian," or "I'm a Holy Huckabee kind of Christian." No more divisions. No more death. Just more Life. Life everlasting, eternal, now. In our proclamation of the Lord's death, we discover what life is really about, even if it's just for a moment. In proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes, by eating and drinking, we proclaim our own death for the life of the community. Christ was broken apart that we might be put back together. At the table, Christ kills us with love, even love unto death for our life.

And his death of love keeps us singing. His death of love keeps a song in our hearts every time we gather for worship. Every time we come to the table,

we're singing. We're singing at Death's funeral. Singing because of life. Singing despite life. Singing into life. Singing against death. Singing despite death. Singing over death.

In December 2005, my 10-year-old niece, Christiana, died from a disease with a long name that shortened her life—juvenile dermatomyositis. As her casket was lowered into the ground, death seemed to have said the benediction, the last word. But in the silence and lament of tears, there was a sign of hope and life that death did not have the final word and victory. As my brother Dwight, Christiana's father, stood with his family, looking over the grave into the hole, he began singing "Here I am to worship . . ." What would make a father who'd just lost his youngest child to death sing a song of worship over death? I'll tell you what—life! Life was saying the benediction through his song. Death did not have the final word, will not have the final say, will not win. Life will win. God will win so we can keep on singing into life until he comes.

There is just one problem. Death does not believe me. So I told him to turn in his NRSV Bible and read where Paul writes, "The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26). But guess what? Death still didn't believe me. Proof-texting wasn't enough. So I told Death to go ahead and log on to his own Web site, deathclock.com, to see if I was telling the truth. If he didn't believe my word, maybe he'd believe his own. Death went down into his dreary office in the basement of Tennant Hall and logged on to his site to get a prediction of his end. Death put in all the necessary information. What he saw next bewildered him. The length of his life was predicted to be "until he comes." Until he comes? He had no idea what that meant because dead people do not usually live again, so he rebooted his computer to receive another prediction. He needed an answer that made sense. Death input the same information again and result was the same—the length of Death's life was "until he comes." This made no sense to Death, but it makes absolute sense to us, because we know that not all dead people stay in the grave.

Christ is here at the table. He has come with death-defying power, and death dies every time we eat this bread and drink the cup. The Lord's supper is a death threat to Death's empire, and this is a threat that only God can fulfill. "Every time you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." Paul can't be serious. Oh yes, he is. He's as serious as death—and life. For as we eat and drink the elements, we carry "in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies" (2 Cor. 4:10). As you come to the table, know that Bonhoeffer was right—Christ calls us to come and die, or should I say, come and live.⁶

⁶ See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1995).

Walking Worthily: Missional Leadership after Christendom

by DARRELL L. GUDER

Dr. Darrell L. Guder, Dean of Academic Affairs and Henry Winters Luce Professor of Missional and Ecumenical Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, delivered these two Payton Lectures at Fuller Theological Seminary on May 2 and 3, 2007. Dr. Guder's most recent book is The Continuing Conversion of the Church: Evangelization as the Heart of Ministry (2000).

LECTURE 1: THE WORTHY WALK OF THE MISSIONAL CONGREGATION

Introduction

IT IS A very great honor to be invited to deliver this year's Payton Lectures. I am delighted to be back here at Fuller with both old friends and new friends. I look back on many linkages with this theological community, including years of teaching as an adjunct between 1975 and 1985, when I was coordinating Young Life's partnership with Fuller through the Institute of Youth Ministries that we jointly sponsored. One of the results of that partnership was the initiation of Fuller extension courses in Colorado Springs, which evolved into the now-thriving Fuller in Colorado program directed by my former colleague in the IYM, Will Stoller-Lee. Many members of this community have profoundly shaped my own pilgrimage, among them David Hubbard, Glenn Barker, Paul Jewett, Donald Hagner, Robert Meye, Wilbert Shenk, and Richard Mouw (whom Princeton was privileged to honor as this year's recipient of the Kuyper Prize).

I understand that my colleagues in practical theology instigated this invitation. I would like to demonstrate my appreciation by attempting in this two-part lecture to address a theme that relates missionally to what seminaries do to prepare missional leaders for the church after Christendom. I do this as a missiologist who, in the first two seminaries in which I served as a full-time faculty member, was part of the Practical Theology Department. Now, as a member of the Theology Department and especially as Dean of Academic Affairs, I am a missional theologian particularly concerned with the way in which the theological formation we do relates to the missional vocation of the church and to the realities and challenges of the mission fields our graduates will pursue.

The Concept "Missional" and Its Intended Polemic

Following the counsel I constantly give my students, I will begin by explaining the basic concept I am discussing. To no one's surprise, the operative term in my vocabulary is "missional." Having had something to do with the emergence of the neologism "missional" as one of our most recent buzz words, I realize that defining it has become difficult. When we gave our study the title "Missional Church" back in 1998, our little group of missiological researchers affiliated with the Gospel and Our Culture Network wanted to find a way to summarize the implications of the classic consensus statement advanced by Vatican II in both *Lumen Gentium* and *Ad Gentes Divinitus*: "The church on earth is by its very nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."¹ By adding the suffix "al" to the word "mission," we hoped to foster an understanding of the church as fundamentally and comprehensively defined by its calling and sending, its purpose to serve God's healing purposes *for* all the world as God's witnessing people *to* all the world.

We were obviously engaging in a polemic endeavor. We were critiquing theologies of the church that neglect the church's essentially missionary nature. We were critiquing reductions of mission to one of several clusters of activities that are proper to the church: worship, fellowship, service, and, in some cases, mission. We were following through on Wilbert Shenk's assessment that Western Christendom is Christianity without mission, although we moderated that statement by concentrating on the curious silence about mission in western ecclesiologies—a theological lacuna that characterizes virtually all systematic theologies in the West until Barth made mission the pervasive theme of his *Church Dogmatics*.

Avery Dulles illustrated this theological problem with the analytical method he adopted in his classic *Models of the Church*.² He explained each of the five models (in the revised version, he presented six models) in terms of various categories. Two questions are at the center of this discussion: What are the benefits afforded by a particular model, and who are the beneficiaries? For the first three models—the Institutional Model, the Mystical Communion model, and the Sacramental model—the answers are the same. The benefits that accrue from the existence of the church in each of these models are the gift and reality of salvation—eternal life—and in all three models, its

¹ "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity," Vatican II, *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, 7 December 1965, in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1975), 813.

² Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Garden City: Image [Doubleday]), 1978), esp. 39–79.

beneficiaries are the members of the church. The church is basically inwardly oriented, focused on itself and its members and on their savedness. Its activities concentrate on the mediation and maintenance of their salvation, along with the preservation of the institution itself. This understanding of the church reflects both a reductionistic soteriology and ecclesiology. At the heart of these reductionisms is a weakening of the centrality of the Kingdom of God as the central theme of the gospel. God's saving purposes for the world have been, in effect, reduced to God's salvation for the members of the church; the purpose of the gospel is the formation of the church as the community of the saved.

From Maintenance to Mission

This reductionism, which is broadly characteristic of the thought and practice of Western Christendom both within our so-called Christian societies as well as in the modern missionary movement, has been criticized, of course, for much of the twentieth century. Much of this critique has arisen out of the ferment of the emerging global church that resulted from the missionary movement, especially within the ecumenical theological discussion under the aegis of the International Missionary Council. Just as the demographic center of world Christianity has shifted from the North Atlantic to the global south, the understanding of the church has moved from seeing it as an end in itself to understanding the church to be God's called people sent as witness to God's gospel "in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." But the shift from a member-centered, vertical, salvation-oriented "who-is-saved" and "who-is-not-saved" understanding of the church is, for traditions shaped by seventeen centuries of Western Christendom, slow and painful. The pressure is enormous to "keep on keeping on" within the reductionisms of Western soteriology and ecclesiology. The institutional viability of our churches appears to be linked to their capacity to meet the religious needs of their members. The mind-set of religious consumerism does not welcome the missional probing of the church's purpose and actions. While the emphasis on the "missional church" has evoked much discussion and appears to have resonated with many who are struggling with the implications of the end of Christendom in the West, it also evokes a great deal of resistance in late Christendom churches when its radical implications begin to be understood.

For the purposes of this lecture, I have assumed that there is a consensus that Western Christendom has ended or is still ending. Ever since the 1920s it has been clear to perceptive observers across the theological spectrum that

the "idols are tottering."³ What started out in 1900 as "the Christian Century" in the West certainly did not end that way. What we have discovered in our discussions of the missional church, with which many of us have been involved since 1998, is that the mind-set of Christendom is much more resilient than its crumbling structures. The reclamation of the church's missional vocation is not an easy process, a thematic workshop that can turn your congregation around after one Saturday session (at \$500 a head), or a twelve-step method, or any of the myriad add-water-and-stir approaches to church renewal that are on the market—and I choose that venue advisedly. It is for that reason that I described my own further exploration of the challenge of missional vocation as "the continuing conversion" of the church, to make clear that we are not talking here about technique or strategy or manageable change but about the Spirit's mysterious and powerful work to bring about repentance and both the desire and the ability to walk in a new direction. For congregations and denominational structures focused on maintaining what has been, this is a truly daunting challenge.

The implications of the shift to missional ecclesiology are as daunting for theological education as they are for the practice of particular congregations. If we are educating for the inward-oriented sense of the church, then our graduates should be equipped to deal competently with the religious needs of the churches' members and to maintain the structures and traditions of the institutions that exist to address those needs. We continue to need ecclesiologies that focus on the attainment and preservation of the individualistic assurance of personal savedness, on rites and sacraments, politics and ordered ministries, provision of services and programs to the religious consumer, and preservation of religious customs and celebrations valued by our secularizing culture. If, like Lesslie Newbigin, we are challenged to recognize that our own context has become, within an astonishingly short time, a post-Christian mission field, posing enormous challenges to the received forms and attitudes of Western Christendom, then that inward-oriented, church-maintaining approach to theological education will not work. Education for maintenance is not the same thing as education for mission.

The Goal: The Formation of the Missional Community

If it is the mind-set of Christendom that results in the seminary's educating for maintenance, then we need to explore together how the end of Christendom profoundly changes our educational goals or, to use the current

³ Karl Barth, "Der Götze wackelt": *Zeitkritische Aufsätze, Reden, und Briefe von 1930 bis 1960*, ed. K. Kupisch (Berlin: Käthe Vogt, 1964).

academic jargon that dominates the world of accreditation, our academic outcomes. It was not hard to fashion the outcomes of theological formation for the maintenance of Christendom. What needed to be done was to keep on keeping on. There was little perceived break between the theological theory that we taught, the ministry that we practiced, and the cultural context in which it all happened. After all, we have been a church in Christian societies; we have been a part of cultures that have privileged our faith; we have lived in partnership with the state and have at times even been the dominant power shaping corporate human affairs. We have become used to clout, accustomed to a consensus of favor and endorsement—and, in the process, we have become culturally captive. The paradigm shift through which we are moving is confronting these givens of the Christendom legacy, the concessions to power, influence, wealth, and privilege that we have made, and the institutions they have generated. It is, as I constantly remind my students, a difficult task to learn how to deal with our legacy within the liminal passage in which we find ourselves. It is a dialectically shaped challenge that must be addressed with both modesty and conviction as we seek to discern how God has been faithful and we have been unfaithful in the same story—and yet God's Spirit has never left the church, and the gospel has not ceased to be heard and the vocation passed on.

But how will we determine the impact on our theological education of this paradigm shift to the missiocentric church? The academic enterprise theology is, in terms of the history of Western education, classically defined with the other two university disciplines, law and medicine. All of them produce professionals—holders of advanced degrees at the level of at least a master's degree—whose life and action are defined by what they profess. As Christendom continues to decline, however, a significant difference emerges between the academic disciplines of law and medicine on the one hand and theology on the other. This difference has to do with the actual purpose, the intended outcomes, of these academic enterprises. My hunch is that the educational strategists who develop the desired outcomes for the study of medicine think primarily in terms of the proficiencies and competencies that must characterize a professional medical doctor. I doubt that they devote much attention to the idea that the real outcome of their work should be a healthy and wholesome society. Similarly, lawyers should graduate from our law schools competent in all the complexities of the formulation, interpretation, and application of public law. I doubt that they are focused on the desirable outcome that we should live in a just, well-governed, equitable society.

But from a missional perspective, the desired outcome of theological education is *not* the competent, well-equipped professional clergyperson. Or,

to put in its historical dynamic, that cannot be our point of orientation in a post-Christendom world in which the focus on the maintenance of the church must be absorbed into and redefined by the overarching missional purpose of the church. Rather than just the clergy, it is the entire missional community that is the central agency that God's Spirit employs to bring about God's healing purposes for the creation. The test of missional theological education is the equipped and faithful witness of called and sent communities. The people of God in concrete assemblies and fellowships must be the focus of missional theological formation and not merely the incumbents of ordered ministry structures. To borrow Lesslie Newbigin's now-classic phrase, it is the community that is the hermeneutic of the gospel.⁴

The Apostolic Strategy and the Missional Community

This understanding of the missional community derives from the original apostolic strategy that brought about the initiation of the Christian movement in history. It begins with the earthly ministry of Jesus, where, according to Gerhard Lohfink, we can learn about the "community that Jesus intended."⁵ From the moment that Jesus appointed *twelve* disciples, it was clear that the ancient emphasis on God's calling and separating apart a *people* for his service was finding its continuation in the strategy of Jesus. That ancient variant on Mark 1:14 which, in our modern translations, wanders back and forth between the text and the footnotes, documents this continuity from the calling of Israel through Abraham to the formation of the church: "And he appointed twelve, *whom also he named apostles*, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons." For the disciples who went to school with the Rabbi Jesus, graduation would mean apostolate. And apostolate, initiated by the twelve who are the core of the people of God sent into the world, was equipped and commissioned to form witnessing communities. The apostolic mission was not merely the saving of souls and their collecting into communities of the saved. The apostolic strategy, whose message was the event of salvation accomplished in Jesus Christ and whose method was defined by the earthly ministry of Jesus, was the formation of witnessing communities whose purpose was to continue the witness that brought them into existence. They were to "disciple the ethnicities," which meant that they were to reproduce in every newly formed church, in which-

⁴ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).

⁵ Gerhard Lohfink, *Wie hat Jesus Gemeinde gewollt?* (Freiburg/Basel/Vienna: Herder Verlag, 1982); Gerhard Lohfink, *Jesus and Community: The Social Dimension of Christian Faith*, trans. J. P. Glavin (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

ever culture they were engaging, what they had experienced with Jesus; they were to “teach them to observe everything that Jesus had commanded them” (Matt. 28:16–18), after these communities had been set apart for God’s mission by their baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. They were to implement the definition Jesus gave to the church on the Mount of the Ascension: “You shall be my witnesses”—and they would be enabled to do this by the empowering work of the Holy Spirit: “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (Acts 1:8). They were to be “a letter from Christ delivered by [the apostolic missionaries], written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” (2 Cor. 3:3).

The Apostolic Scriptures and the Continuing Formation of Missional Communities

The apostolic strategy, the formation of equipped and empowered witnessing communities, finds its continuation in these ancient documents written to such communities, which over time were collected and became the canonical New Testament. It is frequently observed that there are virtually no evangelistic or missional imperatives in the New Testament. Even the celebrated Great Commission describes what Christians are to be doing all the time, wherever they may be, as they are going about in the world—the text is really a summary of the entire gospel message of this book, and the apostolic ministry it summarizes is a comprehensive definition of the entire life of the witnessing community. Matthew 28:16–20 cannot generate a narrow, individualistic, benefits-centered evangelism. Here is a vision of the missional church that is centered in the authority given to Jesus in heaven and on earth. Here is a definition of discipling that is happening wherever Christians go in the world and that is intentionally multicultural. Matthew’s Gospel, like the other three, invites the Christian community into a relationship of intense personal formation, a process of discipleship paralleling the three years of schooling of those first followers of the Rabbi Jesus. The outcome in every instance is to be a repetition of Jesus’s ministry with these disciples. This formation is to flow into apostolic witness, into making the good news known to the world. To be called to Jesus will always result in being sent out by him. Like the first disciples, every Christian community is to learn from Jesus and with Jesus both his message and how it was to be communicated. They were taught to see the world through his eyes and to understand the whole course of human history from the central event that he

was and is. Each of the four gospels is an immersion learning experience in missional vocation.

The epistles function in a similar way. They continue the formation for apostolic witness that the first missionaries were doing in the weeks and months they spent in each newly formed congregation. They react to the challenges and problems these fledgling missional churches were experiencing. They encourage and admonish these communities as they struggle to discern how they shall be Christ's witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. They are all occasional writings, but basically they are all linked by the same occasion: the missional vocation of the congregation. There are, therefore, no evangelistic or missional imperatives because the assumption that informs the New Testament is that each of these communities—be it Thessalonica, Colossae, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, the Matthean or the Johannine or the Marcan community, or one of the seven churches to whom John the Seer sent his letters—understood itself as existing to continue the mission that had brought it into existence. All of them, living in the light of Easter and mobilized by the confidence that Jesus Christ was truly risen, were shaped by the dominical claim "As my Father has sent me, so I send you." As George Hunsberger has argued, the New Testament functions as the "warrant" for the missional vocation that defined every first Christian congregation.⁶

If we want to know, then, what a missional community looks like, our primary resource is the New Testament. We interrogate the text from the perspective of a missional hermeneutic. Assuming that the purpose of every New Testament scripture is, in some way or another, the continuing missional formation of particular communities with particular challenges in particular places, we constantly ask each text some version of the question, "How did this text equip the missional church, then, for its vocation, and how does it do that today?" Each New Testament book will render distinctive insights when explored in this way. The concrete situation of any congregation that wants to be faithful to its missional vocation, in today's rapidly changing world, will be illumined in radically converting ways by this rigorous scriptural formation.

Biblical Formation of the Missional Community: Walk Worthily

If there are no evangelistic imperatives addressed to the emerging Christian movement in the New Testament communities, there certainly are

⁶ George Hunsberger, "Is There Biblical Warrant for Evangelism?" *Interpretation* 48 (April 1994): 131-44.

imperatives. Jesus defined his missionary movement with the “commandments” so often referred to in John’s gospel. Matthew’s commission stresses that these apostolic communities emerging in every ethnicity should observe all that he had taught them. All of the epistles arrive, at one point or another, at the pivotal “therefore” that leads from the exposition of the gospel to its implications for the witnessing community. There is, in particular, a pervasive and thematic imperative in these documents in which Paul continued the formation of his missional communities. It is formulated in a variety of ways beginning in the earliest epistle, 1 Thessalonians, in which Paul reminds them of the formation they had received during his initial and prematurely interrupted visit in their city: “You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our behavior to you believers; for you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory” (1 Thess. 2:10–12).

In 2 Thessalonians, this pervasive theme shapes his prayer for this community: “To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his call, and may fulfill every good resolve and work of faith by his power so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 1:11). He prays in a similar way in his epistle to the Colossian community: “And so, from the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:9–10).

The text that many regard as the thematic center of the Philippian epistle takes up same motif: “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ” (Phil. 1:27). Finally, this theme forms the bridge in Ephesians from what John Mackay called the rhapsodic statement of the gospel to its implications for the life of the witnessing community: “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1–3). “Walking worthily” appears to be a key description of the life and conduct of these communities as they continue the apostolic witness that is their very reason for existence. They are to walk worthy of God, of his call, of the Lord, and of the gospel of Christ. The missional congregation, then, may be defined as the community that walks worthy of the calling to which it has been called.

Vocation as the Defining Center of Biblical Ecclesiology

If we are to develop a biblical ecclesiology for the missional church, the theme "vocation" will be its defining center. Understood against the backdrop of the biblical drama of God's calling, God's election, God's setting apart of a people and within it, of particular persons to carry out God's blessing of all the nations, we understand the missional church to be created and defined by its calling, its vocation. Just as the original community of twelve, representing the continuation and extension of the whole people of God, resulted from Jesus's calling them, the church is the response to God's initiation, God's calling, God's invitation, and God's empowering. It is God who calls, God's Spirit who enables our hearing and responding, and the triune God who determines that this unlikely community will be the agent, the foretaste, the first fruits of the inbreaking kingdom.

Karl Barth incorporates this understanding of the fundamental ecclesiological importance of vocation into the great design of his theology of reconciliation. In that project, which is the topic of the several books making up volume IV of his *Church Dogmatics*, he expounds the gospel of reconciliation in terms of justification, sanctification, and vocation. These actions of God are all essential components of the gospel that we have been enabled to believe and that we now witness. But our grasp of the gospel is too small if we stop with justification and sanctification. To do so is ultimately to fall into that individualism and reductionism that characterizes Western Christendom's central theological and missional problem. The good news of God's gracious accomplishment of salvation for all, which we appropriate as God's justifying us and sanctifying us exclusive of any merit on our part, must necessarily define who we are and what we are as those who have received these benefits. The justified and the sanctified are, by virtue of their enabled response to God's gospel, the called. If, according to Luther, Christians should start every day by touching their head and saying, "I am baptized," then they should necessarily continue with Jesus's Easter announcement, "As my Father has sent me, so I send you." We enter into the world into which we are sent defined by Jesus's statement "You shall be my witnesses."

In placing vocation together with justification and sanctification in this theological linkage, Barth laid out the doctrinal framework for the missional church. With this emphasis on vocation, he challenges what he calls the "classic definition of what it means to be a Christian."⁷ That classic definition dwells primarily on the benefits of the gospel, what the Christian receives by

⁷ See discussion in Darrell Guder, *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 121-31.

virtue of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. These are the benefits summarized by our classical theologies of justification and sanctification: reconciliation with God through Christ; restoration of wholeness; forgiveness of our sins; removal of our guilt and abrogation of our deserved punishment; the gift of eternal life and the promise of eternity with Christ and his people in heaven; and the victory over sin, Satan, and his minions. All of these benefits testify to the fact that God's radically new reign in the Kingdom of Christ is now being revealed in those who are the first fruits, the earnest, the *arrabon* (foretaste) of the gospel. Those who respond in faith and obedience to that calling receive the healing word of the Holy Spirit, assuring them of their salvation and granting them the confidence that God will complete what God has begun. These benefits are wondrous and merit our constant praise, worship, and thanksgiving. They are the motivation and the grand theme of our assembled worship. They are the lyrics of the church's song and the good news to be shared with every neighbor. All of this is summarized and expounded theologically by the doctrines of justification and sanctification in their distinctive and essentially interlocking character.

But Christians are defined by more than their reception of these benefits, as sure as they may be that these benefits are undoubtedly theirs. God's calling is not solely for the benefit of the called who are incorporated into the called-out people, the ecclesia. God's calling of a particular people is for God's saving purposes for the world, for Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. For God so loved the world, God was, in Christ, reconciling the world. And for the sake of that world, created and fallen, God's calling creates, forms, equips, commissions, and sends the church to carry out the witness for which it exists. Its vocation, then, is centered and defined by God's salvific mission for the world, and its action is in service of that vocation. One cannot legitimately use Christian calling in any other sense than as calling to the life and service of witness.

The Vocation to "Walk Worthily"

Not Works Righteousness. The way that the missional community carries out its calling is to walk worthily of it. The question then is what walking worthily is all about. It is a phrase that appears to receive precious little attention in the lexical resources, even though it is obviously a prevailing theme in the Pauline corpus. It is certainly possible to talk about what it is not. It is clear that worthy walking does not imply some merit or spiritual accomplishment on the part of the called Christian. Works righteousness is not reentering ecclesiology by the missional back door. Markus Barth says it

plainly in his commentary on Ephesians, "Those called possess no worthiness of their own."⁸ The reclamation of the church's missional vocation is not a reversal of the great soteriological battle fought and won in the Reformation. There is to be no compromise of the doctrine of justification by faith alone: *sola gratia, sola fide, sola scriptura* all stand and must not be diluted. But the fact remains that the missional vocation of the church is the pervasive, shaping theme of the New Testament scriptures, reflecting, I believe, the central thrust of the apostolic mission and the purpose of Jesus's own formation of the disciples. We are to understand the imperative to walk worthy of the calling to which we have been called not as an act of spiritual accomplishment but as evidence of empowered obedience. The imperatives, and the conduct they form, have to do with the church's missional calling to be, to do, and to say witness. Markus Barth again: "Imperatives can be a means of preaching the gospel."⁹ They are, he suggests, an outworking of the transforming goodness of the gospel: "... the way in which Paul introduces his exhortations shows that he *honors* his readers by expecting of them a specific conduct. His very imperatives imply a privilege the saints can enjoy, not a burden they ought to bear."¹⁰

Not the Perfected Community. "Walking worthily" is, moreover, not to be construed as a claim that the Christian community is perfect. The sanctification that is, with Calvin, the inseparable outworking of justification is ongoing. Worthy walking takes place in that protected and empowered space between what God has already done and what God will most certainly do. It is the nature of our pilgrimage, the kind of life we live as followers of the Way. It takes place in the confidence expressed by Paul to the Philippians, "I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). It is the vocation of those who, as Peter describes us, "are born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," who are thus certain of that "inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven" for us while we "are guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:3-5). Walking worthily does not ignore the frailty of those joined together on this pilgrimage. It is shaped by the earthly ministry of Jesus, who dealt as much with the disciples' obtuseness and competitiveness as with their insight into their calling. Those walking worthily are

⁸ Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974), 454.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 455.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

enjoined to forgive each other seventy times seven. We are to know that we are but “earthen vessels” who are afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, struck down, but in all that not crushed, not driven to despair, not forsaken, not destroyed. Instead, in our forgiveness we are enabled to “carry in our body the death of Jesus that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies” (2 Cor. 4:7–10). Walking worthily happens as a constant demonstration of dependence on God’s grace, a determination with Paul “to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” Thus, the apostolic model in our midst is one of “weakness, much fear, trembling,” not relying on “plausible words of wisdom” but on the “demonstration of the Spirit and of power,” for our faith does not “rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:2–5).

Not Institutional Success. Just as worthy walking is not to be misconstrued as personal or corporate claims to spiritual or moral perfection, it is not a matter of institutional success. To be sure, it is the apostolic intention that the gospel be made known and that the movement of witnessing communities should grow. Paul follows his realistic depiction of our earthen vessel character with this strong and confident assertion: “For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God” (2 Cor. 4:15). The purpose of that extension of grace is the increase of thanksgiving, of eucharistia, so that God may be glorified, may be made known, acknowledged, and served in the restoration of the relationship of Creator and creature that is the actual shape of the new creation. This apostolic longing for the extension of grace to more and more people is tempered by our Lord’s clear instructions that kingdom planting is our task, but kingdom harvesting is not. We are to sow in all kinds of soil, not conduct feasibility studies to determine where it would make sense to sow. The harvest, when it comes, will be God’s, and it will be out of all proportion to any of our labors. It is also the harvester’s responsibility, not ours, to separate the weeds from the good wheat. Just as witnesses betray their calling when they attempt to slide over onto the judge’s bench, kingdom sowers disobey their Lord when they claim that they can either strategize or produce the kingdom harvest. Church growth is not so much the New Testament concern as it is grace growth, thanksgiving growth, growing attestation of the glory of God.

“Walking Worthily”

What “Walking” Is About. The compelling emphasis of Paul’s injunction that we walk worthily of the calling to which we have been called is on the

action of walking. This favorite Pauline verb speaks of purposeful movement accompanied by distinctive conduct. We struggle with its translation, looking for ways to capture its comprehensive character. In the RSV proposal, several passages render the peripatetic nature of our calling as "leading a life." The one Pauline passage that does not use the Greek verb translated as "walk," Philippians 1:27, presents even greater challenges. Here our English text speaks of "letting our manner of life be worthy of the Gospel." The focus here is political, public, having to do with the way that our calling shapes our entire shared life and conduct before a watching world. Taken together, the focus on walking conveys that the calling of the missional community is a process, a discovery mixed with struggles, a growth that is gradual and yet at times granted sudden leaps of insight. Precisely as walking, it is formed by the biblical imperatives that focus on *how* the community walks, *how* its public conduct is to be congruent with its public testimony, *how* it incarnates the good news that God wants all people to experience because "God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17).

What "Worthy" Is About. That "how" seems to be the thrust of the defining concept "worthy." It is puzzling that there appears to be so little attention to this little adverb *axios*. It is, as far as I can tell, not discussed in Gerhard Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. But some recent commentators, whose work reflects a growing awareness of the missional formation that is actually the *scopus* of these New Testament texts, are helping us to grasp the enormous importance of "walking worthily." Karl Barth, lecturing on Philippians in Göttingen in 1924, dwelt on the public and corporate meaning of "walking worthily" in Philippians 1:27. The root of the verb here is *polis*, and Barth works with that "political" understanding of worthy walking when he translates, "Your state must be worthy of the gospel of Christ."¹¹ He explains, "In their state, their 'form,' their bearing, under the invisible discipline of that kingdom, they must be en route here and now, moving along in ways corresponding with *the* 'state' that is to be reflected in their conduct, 'worthy' of the gospel, the gracious message that in Christ was issued to them and received by them concerning that kingdom."¹² Stephen Fowl proposes a translation that also picks up on the public and political nature of worthy walking: "Order your common life in a manner worthy of

¹¹ Karl Barth, *Epistle to the Philippians*, trans. J. W. Leitch (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 44; see Karl Barth, *Erklärung des Philipperbriefes* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1928), 37–38.

¹² Barth, *Epistle*. (revised), 46.

the gospel of Christ,” which he explains as Paul’s “enjoining them to act in a manner consistent with or appropriate to the community’s identity in God.”¹³ He goes on to say that “walking worthily entails that the members of the body display certain types of habits, dispositions, and practices toward one another”¹⁴—to which I would like to add—“that demonstrate before a watching world what the inbreaking kingdom of God is really all about.”

The meaning of “worthily walking” is expounded in the whole range of imperatives directed toward missional communities to enable them to continue their formation for their calling. It is striking that the paranetic passages in the epistles—those translations of the gospel into conduct that follow on the key “therefores” in the arguments—deal consistently with the corporate life of these communities. There is a constant concern about the public nature of the missional community that is emphasized by the apostolic use of Greek terms such as *polis* and *ecclesia* for the church. Their conduct toward one another is to be congruent with the message they proclaim. In the context of Philippians, for instance, the thematic injunction to “order your common life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ” is followed within a few verses by the instruction that they should “have the same love, being in full accord and of one mind, doing nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility counting others better than yourselves, looking not to your own interests but to the interests of others” (Phil. 2:2–4, paraphrased). Worthiness has, then, to do with the ways in which the community members practice their calling toward each other. It has to do with the “mind” they are to share in the imitation of Christ, what Fowl translates as “the pattern of thinking, acting, and feeling.”¹⁵

Immediately following the Ephesian version of the injunction, the apostle focuses on the way in which the community, before a watching world, displays the gospel at work in its relationships. Worthy walking is characterized by lowliness and meekness, patience, forbearing one another in love, eagerness to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We could examine all of the paranetic passages in the epistles to document how this concern for the witnessing character of the community’s life is an overarching and constant theme. This is how the gospel is to be made known, through Christian communities walking worthily of their calling. What they say about the gospel arises out of and is expounded by how they live as called and sent communities. In this emphasis, the epistles expound the same fundamental

¹³ Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 59–60.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

understanding of the witnessing power of the community's shared life that we find in John's gospel: "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

Walking Worthily as Congruence. The congruence between their communication of the gospel with their visible conduct is a further crucial dimension of "walking worthily." This is often a matter of the integrity of their life and witness—speech and act cannot be separated. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul is concerned that they have learned from the apostolic example, practiced in their midst, by which the "declaration of the gospel of God" took place without error, uncleanness, guile, or attempts to please humans, and not with words of flattery, as a cloak for greed, or as seeking glory from men (1 Thess. 2:2–6). Communication with integrity is connected to relationships that demonstrate the gospel's healing power at work. Their walking worthily took the shape of a gentle, nourishing, caring self-giving in relationships, illustrated by the image of a mother nursing her child: "Being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us" (1 Thess. 2:8). The love that Christian community members practice toward one another enables the demonstration and explication of that love as good news to their neighbors, those next to them, and those to whom they are sent.

"Models of Worthy Walking?" In a study that followed after the Missional Church project, a small group of us asked the question, "What would a model of a missional congregation look like?" We discovered in the process that we were being archetypically Western, late modern, and American pragmatist with our "model" question. We were looking for the solution to a problem, the stencil that could reproduce the successful missional church. We were operating from classical cause-and-effect thinking. We were forgetting everything we had learned from David Bosch and Lesslie Newbigin about modern mission shaped by Western Enlightened assumptions. We turned to scripture and found in 2 Corinthians a different world of inquiry. We were challenged to think about ourselves as clay jars, as unlikely vessels whose unlikelyness was precisely part of the witness to the extraordinary power of God that was, by his grace, at work in us. Guided by these texts, which David Bosch had powerfully expounded for Mennonite missionaries many years earlier as a "Spirituality of the Road," in his book of the same title, we turned away from the self-confident search for models and began to look for patterns that witnessed to God's spirit converting congregations to their missional

vocation.¹⁶ In a great diversity of congregations, we found that the formative role of scripture was a central factor in their ongoing change processes. But we also found that this rigorous scriptural formation was always hard, demanding, and challenging, and it often evoked resistance.

The Imperative as Missional Formation. It is especially when we pay attention to the imperatives in the New Testament that we find ourselves getting nervous. When obedience becomes the theme, our Reformed antennae begin to vibrate as we pick up suspicious hints of the terms “righteousness” and “legalism” creeping into our discourse. It is, in fact, from the problematic lessons of Christendom that we have rightly learned to be cautious about how we read the Bible, knowing full well that we are prone to reduce the gift of faith to a program that we manage and control. That proclivity has only been intensified by the centuries of silence about mission in the church’s theological reflection about itself and its purpose. The New Testament imperatives are not so much soteriology in a causative sense as they are ecclesiological, focusing on the witness to salvation that is our calling and not on our efforts to cooperate in our salvation.

The New Testament, serving as the Holy Spirit’s instrument for the formation of witnessing communities for their vocation, is necessarily and gloriously full of imperatives. Jesus told his disciples in the Great Commission to “teach them to observe all that I commanded you” (Matt. 28:20), so that they could, indeed, “disciple the ethnicities.” He assures his disciples in John’s great missional formation discourse that “if you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15), because Jesus “chose them to go and bear fruit, fruit that will abide” (John 15:16, adapted). Paul admonishes the Philippians to imitate Christ, to imitate Timothy and Epaphroditus, and to imitate himself. Using the same verb that we translate as “lead a life worthy of the calling,” in Ephesians 4, the apostle also says earlier in that epistle that “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10). Conduct, obedience, visible alternativeness—these are all clearly essential dimensions of the New Testament missional church. The sense of an imperative is that it must be obeyable unless the purpose of the text is to render us hopeless and despairing. What God’s spirit requires of God’s people, God’s spirit equips them to do. It is an equipping that centers on God’s gracious acceptance of us “while we were yet sinners.” It is not perfectionist but still confident: “God who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of

¹⁶ David Bosch, *A Spirituality of the Road* (Scottsdale: Herald, 1979).

Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:6). It lives out of forgiveness, humility, profound gratitude for the unmerited and healing power of God's love made real and personal in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Walking Worthily as a Parable of the Gospel. In volume IV.3.2 of Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*—specifically, in paragraph 72, titled "The Sending of the Community of the Holy Spirit"—Barth weaves all the strands of his missional ecclesiology together and addresses in quite concrete terms just how this community understands itself and functions as God's people sent into the world. This leads to some highly perceptive insights and formulations, described in the subsection titled "The Community for the World," which can guide the missional congregation theologically to recognize and reject the false equations and reductionisms to which we are so vulnerable as heirs of Western Christendom who still lay claim to our calling as witnesses. The missional community does not equal the gospel. It does not constitute the kingdom of God. Its vocation and holiness do not abrogate its human fallenness. It does not believe *in* itself as an object of its creed but rather believes itself to be, in reality, what God the Holy Spirit both calls and enables it to be. The third article of its creed states *credo ecclesiam* (I believe the church) and not *credo in ecclesiam* (I believe in the church). The limitations of English will always make this hard for our congregations to understand.

Barth emphasizes, first of all, that the Christian community recognizes that its emergence and its continuation can be attributed solely to the particular power of God, on whose constant newness it is completely dependent for its future.¹⁷ The venerable traditions and valuable insights of the movement of the church over time do not replace the community's constant dependence on "birth from above" as it is called and gathered by God's action. Furthermore, it recognizes that, empowered by the Holy Spirit, what it can really do, effect, and bring about in its creaturely spontaneity is focused entirely in its professing its commitment to Jesus Christ.¹⁸ That is the purpose of the missional community. Thus, the community recognizes that its profession of its commitment to Jesus Christ as its particular and distinctive action, to which it is empowered by the Holy Spirit, can only be, in all its human and natural spontaneity, its thankful response to the fact that Jesus Christ has professed his commitment to it, continues to do so, and will continue to do so.¹⁹

¹⁷ Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, vol. IV.3.2 (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1959), 899–900; Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. Geoffrey William Bromiley, vol. IV.3.2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1962), 786–87. The paraphrases in the text are my free renderings of the German.

¹⁸ Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 901; Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 787.

¹⁹ Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 903–04; Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 790.

This clear delineation of the theological sense that the missional community can and must have of itself and its purpose leads, then, to a creative, interpretive proposal that relates the biblical Word to the process of divine vocation and spirit-empowered response. The missional community is enabled to, and should, understand itself as a *parable* in the full New Testament sense of that concept.²⁰ It shows the watching world what the kingdom of God is like. It conveys in understandable pictures and explanations the “wonderful deeds of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). The divine reality of the gospel as event comes first, and in response to it, in interaction with it, as witness to it, the church represents parabolically and provisionally what this good news is all about. It is preceded and followed by that reality, portraying it imperfectly, inadequately, both illuminating it and at times casting it in the shadows. Its witness can describe the inbreaking kingdom of God in Christ but never in a way that fully captures this wonderful event. But like the parables in the gospels, it can disclose essential aspects of the kingdom of God that is coming and is now very near. It can render this overwhelming good news in such a way that the Holy Spirit can awaken faith and extend the calling that results in the growth of the missional community. This community, as we have said already, cannot duplicate the salvation event that has happened once and for all in Christ. It equals neither the gospel nor the kingdom. But the community is derived from that event, is shaped and called by it, lives to make it known, and thus participates in it, in spite of all its imperfections.

As a parable of the kingdom, the community’s witness is God’s instrument to draw others into the same encounter with the loving God who calls and empowers the response of obedience. The reality that the community as parable reports to the world begins with the resurrection of Jesus and looks forward to the ultimate and consummate revelation of the kingdom, which Barth describes as the “establishment of the sole, all-encompassing, all-pervasive and all-defining rule of God of the Word, of the Spirit of God, in the entire creation. Jesus Christ himself is this kingdom in its total perfection.”²¹ And the confessing, witnessing, missional community is his parable, reflecting his truth to the world into which it is sent in its actions, its communication, its visible dependence, and its equally visible fallenness. Understanding itself as gospel parable, the missional community can practice its vocation with the appropriate and necessary combination of modesty and conviction that God uses to build his church.

²⁰ Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 906; Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 792.

²¹ Ibid.

"Walking worthily" may, then, be understood as parabolic witness, the demonstration of the truth of the gospel in what the community says and does, including the evidences of its human frailty and its dependence on the grace of forgiveness. Understood with the earthen vessel realism that is characteristic of the biblical Word, the community can respond to the imperatives that shape missional witness with confidence in God and modesty about its own capacities. The power of parables lies in the work of the Holy Spirit, who interprets them to the heart and mind and makes them into instruments of gospel exposition and invitation. The parables in Jesus's proclamation were vehicles of prophetic proclamation and explication. Barth says, "A parable, in the sense and power of the one who creates and uses it, refers beyond itself to that which He wants to point out and represent by using it."²² That is at the heart of what it means to walk worthily of the calling to which we have been called: the missional community is invited and formed by Jesus to be his parable, to be an illustration for the watching and listening world of what the Good News that has already happened and that is yet to happen really means. As such a parable, the missional community points not to itself but to the Lord, who continues to tell the story and illustrate it with and through his called-out people. The parable and the witness, two powerful and formative New Testament concepts to interpret the church's purpose and action, always function like St. John the Baptist in Grünewald's great painting of the crucifixion in the Isenheimer Altar, which Barth loved so much. Like John, the missional community points as parable and witness to Christ, testifies to Christ, makes Christ known, anticipates Christ, and rejoices in both his truth and his presence in their midst. In doing that, it is walking worthy of its calling.

LECTURE 2: FORMATION OF THE COMMUNITY FOR WORTHY WALKING

Missional Leadership Based upon Missional Community

Having examined at some length the priority of the missional community as the strategy God's Spirit uses to carry out God's mission, I now turn to the leadership of such communities. There is theological significance in this sequence. The general vocation of the missional church must be dealt with before we turn to the special vocation of those who carry out the ministry of leadership within it. This parallels the ecumenical consensus about baptism: the corporate celebration of baptism is the community's acknowledgment of God's faithfulness in building his church, one by one. It is as such the act of

²² Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 909; Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 794.

calling and setting apart each Christian for his or her vocation as a witness within the missional community. We are becoming used to speaking of baptism as the general ordination of all Christians to their shared calling before we think about the special ordination of some. The latter is dependent for its meaning on the former. This understanding of baptism is therefore the framework for the theology and practice of the so-called ordered ministries. Special ordination is a subset of general ordination, and the vocation of the entire people of God precedes, surrounds, and shapes the vocation of its specialized servants.

This is, of course, all based on the conviction that the “church is missionary by its very nature” and its corollary, that the particular missional community is the primary agent of that vocation. Another way of framing missional theology is to understand mission as the concrete implication of the good news that God’s love for the creation results in God’s action to restore, heal, reconcile, and make new this rebellious creation. The event of Jesus Christ is the culmination of that action, and now, the salvation accomplished on the cross and ratified at Easter is to be made known to all people. For that to happen, God continues the strategy of calling a particular people to be his witnesses, to make it known that God so loves the world that he has sent Jesus. The gospel of salvation generates the called and sent people, the ecclesia; mission, as Martin Kähler famously argued, is the mother of theology.²³ God’s mission necessitates a missiological ecclesiology.

This understanding of the missional church implies a radical revision of traditional ecclesiologies, which have, as I noted, largely neglected the central biblical theme of mission. The doctrinal challenge is to develop every theme and subtheme relating to the theology and practices of the church from the central and foundational understanding of the church’s missional vocation. Whether we are discussing the church’s worship and liturgy, its structures and organizational forms, its practices and disciplines, or its ordered ministry (to use the technical term), the thematic door by which we enter is the missional vocation of the church. Thus, we could move at this point to a discussion of the assembled life of the community and especially its worship, and we could explore how these essential church practices both demonstrate missional vocation and equip all members for their living out of their calling. It would be especially important to address the central and defining role in missional equipping that is carried out in very distinctive and unique ways by the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Table. We could examine the

²³ Martin Kähler, *Schriften zu Christologie und Mission* [Theologische Bücherei 42] (Munich: Chr. Verlag, 1971), 190.

practices of faith formation as well as the resources of spirituality and discover their crucial importance for the actual practice of walking worthily. And we could talk about the corporate life of the community and its visible koinonia in terms of the collective witness it presents to the world of its neighborhood. We could examine the community's acts of prophetic challenge in interaction with the world into which it is sent, its conscious alternativeness in its larger context, as worthy parables of Christ's kingdom breaking in. In all these dimensions of the life and practices of the local congregation, the calling to walk worthily can be exemplified, and worthy walking can be learned and practiced. Our focus here is on missional leadership because missional leadership is of such profound importance for the worthy walking of missional communities. But, we must ask, why and how is missional leadership of such importance for the worthy walking of witnessing communities? To get into that question, we will first consider, very briefly, the roots of "ordered ministry" in Christendom so that we can then assess the situation in which we find ourselves after Christendom.

The Roots of "Ordered Ministry" in Christendom

Without any claims to comprehensiveness, I will paint in broad strokes the process of the ordering of ministry within the Western Christendom project. My purpose is to place in high relief the situation in which we find ourselves today as Christendom is ending. We begin with the theme of "office in the New Testament scriptures," bearing in mind that the term "office" is itself a construct of ecclesial tradition imported into this discussion. Our theme is set against the background of the apostolic mission strategy as interpreted in the first lecture. That strategy was (and is) to form communities of witnesses whose calling is to continue the apostolic witness that brought them into existence and who do so by, together, walking worthy of the calling to which they have been called. The New Testament investigation of this apostolic mission strategy makes clear that these witnessing communities had leaders. Knowing that this is somewhat risky, I will propose some summarizing statements about the way the scriptures address this leadership, these "ordered ministries," within the formation and continuing activity of faithful missional communities.

Although there is little documentary material there, it can be argued that structures of leadership were an essential part of the early Christian movement. The apostolic missionaries who planted communities to continue the Christian mission in particular places identified those whom they discerned to be the Spirit's gifts to these communities for various ministries of leader-

ship. They are described in diverse ways, with terms such as apostles, overseers, elders, deacons, or ministers. The pastoral epistles address the qualifications and practices of these “officers” explicitly, but there are several references in the Epistles and Acts that would allow one to conclude that structured leadership was a given, perhaps a necessity, but that the structures themselves were diverse. The emphasis of all four gospels on the calling and formation of the disciples clearly underlines their importance for the subsequent apostolic mission. In general, however, the structures of leadership do not really form the central emphasis of the New Testament scriptures. They appear instead to have been part of the contextualizing of the various communities in their particular locations. The necessary functions of leadership are in some way carried out so that the witnessing communities can function in their particular settings, but the shapes and forms of that leadership vary. It is indeed striking that the one mention of overseers and deacons in the unquestioned Pauline epistles is in the salutation to Philippians, after which they are never mentioned again, and the entire epistle clearly focuses on the entire community and not on its leadership.

In their desire to reengage the mandate of the apostolic church, Reformed ecclesiologies tend to gravitate to Ephesians 4:1–6 for their scriptural understanding of the ordered ministry. Markus Barth calls this section “The Constitution of the Church.”²⁴ Barth translates verses 11–12, which are the crux, as: “He [Christ] is the one who appointed these to be apostles and those to be prophets, some to be evangelists and others to be teaching shepherds to equip the saints for the work of service for building up the Messiah’s body.” The purpose of these appointments is especially important: to equip the saints for the work of service for building up the Messiah’s body. That is, if you will, the missional mandate of every particular community: to do the work of service or ministry that builds up the Body of Christ before a watching world. It is a definition of the practice of walking worthily—and that work needs to be equipped. How will that happen? It happens through the distinctive persons whose functions are laid out at the beginning of the text. Christ gives gifts to the church in the form of certain persons. These persons are all, as Markus Barth points out, ministers of the Word—they share the common task of speech in the service of God’s message. In diverse ways, they serve the proclamation of the Word, be it apostolically, prophetically, evangelistically, pastorally, or pedagogically. It takes, as it seems, a range of gifted people to provide the Word formation that truly equips the

²⁴ Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4–6* (*The Anchor Bible*, 34A) (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974), 425–96.

saints for their shared calling, which is the work of ministry that builds up Christ's body. What these ministers of the Word do, in their various ways, enables the missional community in a particular place to walk worthy of its calling, which is the overarching theme with which the Ephesian "Constitution of the Church" begins. The power of these ordered ministries is the power of the Word at work in the community. Formation by the Word makes it possible to respond to the apostolic imperatives as a privilege and an honor, a spirit-enabled obedience.

Whether they are called apostles, prophets, evangelists, teaching pastors, overseers, bishops, elders, or deacons, their work is subservient to the missional calling of the communities they lead. Markus Barth again: "The task of the special ministers mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 is to be servants in that ministry which is entrusted to the whole church. Their place is not above but below the great number of saints who are not adorned by resounding titles. Every one of the special ministers is a *servus servorum Dei*."²⁵ They are not mediators between their communities and Christ, although they certainly proclaim Christ. They are not primarily liturgists, although their communal worship is reflected in the citation of corporate prayers, creedal affirmations, and hymns that are scattered throughout the texts. They are not custodians of arcane mysteries to be preserved for the initiates, although they certainly recognize the difference between milk-drinking and meat-eating Christians and deal with it sensitively. They are continuing the rabbinical ministry of Jesus, teaching the disciples in each community what it means to know this Jesus now as risen Lord and to be his witnesses where they are sent. The only power they have as they carry out their task is the power of the Holy Spirit, who uses their frail human efforts to evoke faith, enable obedience, and draw together one missional community after another. The only tangible resource they will ultimately have is the scriptures that begin to appear and to be collected: gospels and epistles mainly addressed to or formulated for particular missional communities. The credentials for such missional servants are not standardized. It is not who they are but what God is making them into that counts. Their authority is not innate but conferred, not so much their essence as their function, an outworking of the Word that they proclaim, expound, and demonstrate.

That basic pattern of missional leadership undergoes enormous changes in the course of Christendom. As the church moves from the margins to the center of society, as it is given the mixed blessings of wealth, property, and power, the diversely ordered ministries of the missional church in the apos-

²⁵ Ibid., 481.

tolic and subapostolic period change. Much of this change is appropriate contextualization—as we said, there is no specific polity or structure for church leadership laid out for us in the New Testament. With the essentially multicultural character of the church, which is both intention and struggled-for reality from Pentecost on, come diverse ways of organizing the Body of Christ for its missional vocation in particular places.

But as we look back on the centuries of the Christendom project, much of the change is also problematic. What was originally missional leadership becomes something different when the sense of the missional vocation of the church begins to fade. The ecclesiastical terminology that emerges in Christendom is evidence that the church no longer understands itself as “missionary by its very nature.” The word *presbyter*, or *elder*, which becomes the most widely used concept for missional leadership in the particular community, evolves ultimately into the modern term “priest.” The legacy of Christendom, however, is that this does not mean “elder” in the New Testament sense. The concept has the etymological shell of the biblical *presbyter*, but its kernel is the *hiereus*, the sacerdotes, the priest of sacred rites and prerogatives whose ministrations do not so much equip the saints as they supply the saints what they need for their own salvation. This office, within the now-essential historic succession of bishops who alone can make men into priests, evolves gradually into a human–divine institution whose special functions are dogmatically necessary for the salvation of the people. The separation between clergy and laity becomes a divinely maintained order, and ordination becomes a sacrament. The church is identified with its hierarchy, from pope, to bishop, to priest, to deacon. The ecclesial hierarchy administers salvation in a church now defined by its geography, its cultural hegemony, and its partnership with the state. In a Europe in which everyone lives within hearing range of church bells, mission disappears from the theology of the church. But the theologies of office become ever larger and more complex.

The Reformation challenges those centuries of institutional evolution with its strong assertion of the “priesthood of all believers” and its emphasis on the essential teaching ministry to equip the saints. Although there is no language of mission here, there is something profoundly missional in the Reformers’ commitment to the biblical literacy and doctrinal understanding of the entire faith community. Luther and Calvin translate the Bible into the vernacular and write catechisms and institutes to teach the faith to the laity. That catechetical formulation always moves from doctrine to practice, so that the concern to walk worthily of our calling is present, even though our calling is not redefined as missional.

As Alan Roxburgh notes, the dominant model of church leadership shifts at the Reformation from priest to pedagogue.²⁶ The New Testament emphasis on teaching ministries to equip the saints is reclaimed, but it functions differently in a Christendom that is largely unchallenged in the magisterial Reformation. Calvin devotes much attention to the relevance of Ephesians 4:1–16 for the formation and structuring of the church. But after centuries of Christendom, he has some problems with Christ's gifts of some to be apostles, prophets, and evangelists. So, he argues, "These three functions were not established in the church as permanent ones, but only for that time during which churches were to be erected where none existed before." He acknowledges that there might be special situations in which these offices become necessary again, but they will remain, in his view, "extraordinary." But, he goes on, "Next come pastors and teachers, whom the church can never go without."²⁷

Of lasting significance, of course, is the massive reorientation of the understanding of office away from an ontological priesthood that is theologically necessary for the spiritual welfare of the believers to a more functional understanding of office that focuses on the service of the church, the upbuilding of the believers, and the integrity of the community. The Reformed churches saw in the great diversity of terms and structures of office in the New Testament a rationale for diverse and complementary ministries in the service of God and his people. They also welcomed patterns of ordered ministry that eschewed the accumulation of both temporal and spiritual power in one person, especially the bishop. The result has been the Reformed politics of complementary offices: the teaching elder, the ruling elder, the pastor, and the deacon.

In the almost five hundred years of Protestantism, there has been an enormous proliferation of concepts and structures of office, in which the old patterns of Christendom and revisions of the Reformation are intertwined and adapted. For all the talk about the priesthood of all believers, there are many traces of Christendom's legacy in the ways that the ordered ministry actually functions. The clergy–laity distinction persists in spite of all Protestant affirmations that we are all a part of the *laos*, the laity of God. Congregants still tend to think that their ministers are there to provide the

²⁶ Alan Roxburgh, "Missional Leadership: Equipping God's People for Mission," in *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, ed. Darrell L. Guder, et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 183–220, esp. 190–93.

²⁷ Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* vol. IV.3.4, [*The Library of Christian Classics*, XXI], ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford L. Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 1057.

services that meet their religious needs, based on the assumption that their ordinations, however celebrated, convey a special spiritual status on them. One might say that the pedagogue model of the Reformation did not replace the priest but merged with it. That merger continues in the modern metaphor of the minister as professional, as suggested by Alan Roxburgh, with priestly attitudes and expectations operative, whether the emphasis is on the professional technician, the therapist, or the manager.²⁸

Ordered Ministry after Christendom

As Christendom ends and the Western world becomes an ever more difficult mission field, churches are challenged to reclaim their missional calling. That is the vocation of the missional community we addressed in the previous lecture. This process means that their inherited forms of leadership are also subject to review and change. And change is happening, although not without a lot of resistance. Those priestly attitudes and expectations are, as I have noted, very resilient. The drive to maintain Christendom, or even to return to it, is widespread across the entire spectrum. There are examples, of course, of very successful Christendom maintenance if the measure of success is numbers, budgets, well-attended programs, and satisfied members. Much of our formal theological education still has the Christendom priest/pedagogue/professional in view, in spite of all our protestations that we are in touch with the changing context. However the focus on organizational maintenance may take concrete shape, it effectively obstructs any movement toward continuing conversion to missional calling. It appears that maintenance leaders rarely equip saints for missional vocation.

If, however, Christendom over time generated ministry structures oriented to hierarchical power, rank and title, privilege and position, and to the trappings and perquisites of office, what happens to all of that when the Christendom project begins to disintegrate? What happens to these inherited orders of ministry when the Spirit does surprise a community with conversion to missional vocation? Communities *are* beginning to move beyond reaction to the end of Christendom and to explore what missional obedience might look like now. Questions about the cultural captivity of Western Christendom *are* raised and discussed, as threatening and unsettling as they are. Ministers with their members *are* beginning to read the scriptures with different questions in mind—questions about vocation, alternativeness, and

²⁸ Roxburgh, "Missional Leadership," 196–98.

liberation from idolatry. There is a growing awareness that there are basic patterns of missional faithfulness that can be nurtured and tested.²⁹

Out of this ferment is emerging a willingness to examine new and yet very old understandings of the purpose and practice of the ordered ministry. Communities *are* recognizing that there are people who, as ministers of the Word, do in fact, “equip the saints for the work of service for building up the Messiah’s body,” but that what they do is intimately related to the ministry of the entire community, not something just done on its behalf. How many congregations are trying to change these deeply rooted patterns of office and authority as they describe in their worship bulletins that all their members are ministers and put up signs over the exit doors reminding members that they are now entering the mission field, and they are sent? As the disintegration of Christendom continues and these explorations of missional vocation after Christendom gain traction, they will have far-reaching implications for our ministerial polities and our theological education.

Borrowing the concept of patterns from the project coordinated by Lois Barrett that produced the study *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*, I will suggest three patterns of missional leadership that, as I see it, are crucial to the continuing conversion of the church to its vocation of witness—crucial to the community’s walking worthy of its calling.

The Equipping Priority of the Word. Missional leadership is centered on and shaped by the word of God written. The initially verbal testimony of those apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teaching shepherds that equipped the saints for the work of service was formally captured in the various documents that ultimately became the New Testament canon. As noted in the previous lecture, the apostolic scriptures became the Holy Spirit’s instrument for the continuing formation of missional communities for their calling. That formation happens as their leaders serve as the interpreters, the catalysts, the resources for the exposition of that Word in all its formative power. For the Reformed concept of divided and complementary offices, this means that ruling and teaching elders, pastors, and deacons are all to function as Word-equippers. All ordered ministries are needed to equip the saints for the work of ministry. Every Christian is a witness who belongs to and represents Christ.

There are, however, subtle ways that we resist this broad and inclusive understanding of the ways that the Word equips the saints. Again, our

²⁹ Lois Barrett et al., *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

vocabulary itself reveals a lot. Terms such as “preaching” and “proclamation” tend to narrow our understanding of the enormous variety of ways in which, in the New Testament, the communication of the scriptural Word actually works in the community. Gerhard Friedrich pointed out that Martin Luther used one German verb—*predigen*, meaning preach—for the translation of more than thirty Greek verbs having to do with verbal communication.³⁰ If only the few who are clerically qualified can validly articulate the word of God, then missional formation is not likely to happen. Certainly if we Reformed Christians are to take missional vocation seriously, then we should emphasize that not only are the elders, deacons, and pastors all Word-equippers in their various ways, but all Christians are called to share in the communication of the gospel and should be equipped to do so.

I am persuaded, and have often said, that we in the Reformed tradition need to reclaim the teaching eldership. I have linked that plea with a critique of our decision in 1983 to replace that term in our constitutional documents with the term “minister of word and sacrament.” I believe that, for many reasons, that move is deepening the clergy–lay divide and handicapping us as we seek to respond to the challenges of our changing context. But I am not concerned about reclaiming the teaching eldership for reasons of authority or office. The purpose of this particular ordered minister is not to entrust the Word to the credentialed few so that everyone else might depend on them. That is yet another way to preserve the priestly office of Christendom. It is the priority of the Word for missional formation that requires that we all have the opportunity to engage scriptures in all the fullness and power of their meaning. For that, we need “learned clergy.” By that, I mean that we need students and expositors of the Word who are themselves convinced that the scriptures are the Holy Spirit’s instrument for the ongoing missional formation of the community, and we need them to be equipped with the tools to expound the scriptures missionally. They contribute to the equipping of the saints by helping the community to explore how the Spirit formed missional communities then and now.

The missional community will be formed through the work of Word-equippers who, in a great breadth of ways, can guide congregations into the risky confrontation with the Bible. We have to risk unchaining the Bible, risk real biblical literacy in our communities rather than dependence on the learned few, risk the free-wheeling conversation about what the Spirit is really saying to the churches through these scriptures. It is risky to constantly

³⁰ Gerhard Friedrich, “κηρύσσω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. III, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 703.

ask the text missional questions. It is risky to allow scripture to become the lenses through which we see ourselves and our neighborhoods. It is risky to move forward in the conviction that we are to walk worthy of our calling and that the biblical documents not only show us what that looks like but also tutor us in the practices that are truly worthy. The risk is that we might discover how that really happens, what that really means. The risk is that we might find ourselves being converted. We might be confronted by the discovery that our cherished and secure notions about who we are as church and what we are for must be revised. We might find ourselves being transformed by the renewing of our minds as the encounter with the scriptures reveals our conformities and God's spirit enables us to put them aside.

Such expectations of the encounter with the biblical Word are counter-cultural, to be sure. There are widely favored approaches to scriptural interpretation that do *not* start with God's mission or the missional vocation of God's people. They are *not* interested in the contention that this is what the biblical testimony is really all about. There are those who move rather from the context, *from* the human experience, from assessments of human religious need, *to* the text, asking questions that more often than not filter out the missional mandate and replace it with various responses calculated to meet those needs. And there are those who assume from the outset that the Bible is about my vertical relationship with God, my savedness, my eternity, and whose filters effectively evade all the claims about our mandate to be witnesses to the inbreaking reign of God in the Lord Jesus Christ. Even after Christendom, there is great resistance to recognizing that the biblical story is, from beginning to end, about God's mission and the calling of his people to be the witnesses and the parable of that mission.

Missional teachers of scripture can guide the community to engage the word of God as the lens through which we learn to see ourselves and our world. Through the biblical lenses, we do not see lepers and Samaritans, publicans and prostitutes, Pharisees and centurions, procurators and executioners, the clean and the unclean, the Jew and the Gentile. We see people made in the image of God, people in darkness for whom light has come, people who need to be made whole and for whom God's loving purpose is that healing. We learn to "see the crowds" the way Jesus did, as recorded in Matthew 9:36: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

The missional leader who is qualified as a biblical equipper and committed to its priority and urgency will help the community discover the new creation intended by the gospel as it is expounded by the New Testament imperatives. The biblical imperatives describe a real option for frail and sinful Christians.

God's spirit will enable us to hear, and, hearing, to obey. And God's spirit will continue to convict us of our sinful stumbling, assure us of our forgiveness, and enable us to take the next steps of obedience. This is how we learn to walk worthy of our calling. The command to love will cease being an abstraction or a sentimentality as the community learns the concrete actions that express God's love for us. God's love toward us is translated immediately into the practice of love that the followers of Jesus are enabled to have for each other—that is the special emphasis of the missional formation that Jesus carries out in the great final discourse of John's gospel. Those concrete actions are, however, not limited to the company of the elect and the called. The way that God loves the world is demonstrated by Jesus's encounter with people of all sorts and conditions, and we, with the disciples, learn how to continue that witness by watching and imitating Jesus. We are taught by him, through the Word, that our neighbors are the people we cannot avoid, the people we have to deal with, the unsightly and unseemly who are stretched across our path and whom we have to go to great lengths to avoid. We learn that we are sent to our neighbors, that our mission field begins with those next to us.

In the missional community, we need to experience the equipping power of the Word in the five diverse ways laid out in Ephesians 4. We need to be confronted by the biblical witness as it shapes us *apostolically*—that is, as the Word roots us in our Lord's mission and joins us to his sent-out people as those who continue the apostolic vocation. We need to encounter the *prophetic* formation of the Word—the Word becoming flesh in our concrete situations, throwing the bright light of God's justice on the situations of injustice that surround us. The prophetic ministry of the Word equips the saints for the work of kingdom ministry that gives evidence of the goodness and newness of the reign of God in Christ now breaking in. The *evangelistic* ministry of the Word equips the saints by showing us how to tell the story to those who have not heard it, how (as John Mackay put it back in 1928) to “win a right to be heard,” how to “share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us,” as Paul describes gospel ministry in 1 Thessalonians 2:8.³¹ The *pastoral* and *pedagogical* ministries of the Word equip the saints for the work of service by practicing the healing and restorative power of the gospel, by engaging in the cure of souls as a ministry of witness-making, by confronting our weakness, frailty, and brokenness as arenas of God's action that generate witness to the

³¹ John Mackay, “The Evangelistic Duty of Christianity,” in *The Christian Life and Message in Relation to Non-Christian Systems of Thought and Life* [The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, vol. I] (New York and London: International Missionary Council, 1928), 393 and subsequent pages.

goodness and grace of God's salvation. There is critical agreement that these last two terms in the catalog of the five ways of Word ministry are not distinctive but hyphenated: pastoral teaching, or teaching pastors. All pastoral ministry, all work of caring, nurturing, and restoration, shall in some way teach the Word so that the saints are equipped. All teaching shall be characterized by the care and oversight of attentive and responsible shepherds so that the saints are equipped. These are concrete ways of formation that turn us and our world around. They require and bring about "transformation by the renewing of our minds." They entail the "mindedness" that Paul speaks of in Philippians that would lead us to risk imitating the mind of Christ in the ways that we relate to each other. This biblical formation is what the missional community needs in order to walk worthy of its calling, and it is the defining priority of every form of ordered ministry. It is the central task of missional leadership.

The Collegial Character of Missional Leadership. The theological work done by the Consultation on Church Union left some important resources for a missional theology of ministry, even if the organizational outcomes of that project are not overly edifying. Their definition of the collegiality of ordered ministry, if read through missional lenses, is helpful:

All ministry in the uniting church will be *collegial*. Baptism and ordination alike associate the individual with others who share the same call. The ministry is a single task common to many. Thus no minister is independent or autonomous. Collegial relationships obtain among persons in different ministries as well as among those of the same ministries. Such relationships include lay persons as well as bishops, presbyters, and deacons. The interpersonal character of collegiality is a basis for partnership in governance and gives life and substance to the institutional structures of the Church.³²

Collegiality is defined by the many other terms in this statement that expound it: sharing, interdependent, inclusive, interpersonal, partnership. Although the term is hackneyed, it applies here: collegial ministry is relational, takes place in networks of relationships, and demonstrates the nature of God's love through the way that these relationships actually work.

Seen through missional lenses, the collegiality of leadership is a basic form of witness that guides the entire community in its formation to be Christ's witnesses. How the leaders of the community interact, how they love and

³² Consultation on Church Union, *In Quest of a Church of Christ Uniting: An Emerging Theological Consensus; Chapter VII: Ministry* (Princeton: Consultation on Church Union, 1980), esp. 39 and subsequent pages.

serve one another, how they “do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than themselves” (Phil. 2:3, adapted), equips the entire community for their work of service. Community formation happens through the mentoring and modeling that is the constant responsibility of the leadership community, the collegium of persons with distinctive gifts that are needed for the equipping of the saints. If the community is to respond faithfully to its biblical formation, if it is to walk worthy of its calling, then the biblical formation that is the priority of the missional leadership needs to be supported and fleshed out in the collegial relationships of equippers of the saints.

The collegial character of missional leadership is a pervasive theme in the New Testament. When Jesus came to the time in the disciples’ formation for missional leadership when they needed some field education experience, he sent them out two by two. When Peter stood up to proclaim the gospel at Pentecost, the text notes that he was “standing in the midst of them”—in the community on behalf of whom he proclaimed. When Paul set out on his mission from Antioch, he went with a team, as he always did on his apostolic ventures. Most of the New Testament epistles are authored by an apostolic team: Paul and Sosthenes; Paul and Timothy; Paul and all the members of God’s family who are with him; Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. Missional leadership in the New Testament is expressly and intentionally collegial. Because it is a message of healing love, of reconciliation, new beginnings, and thus of transformed relationships, its witness is always and essentially relational. The gospel is good news that can and must be acted out wherever it is received and passed on. The proposition of agape love is made known by the demonstration of agape love that begins in the apostolic teams and becomes the essential DNA of the newly formed missional community. The enabling of *koinonia* is essential to the witness, and it starts with the collegiality of missional leaders whose own practices shape the collegiality of the communities they serve. The imperatives of the New Testament relate mainly to the way that the community’s relationships function and thus to the corporate witness that the watching world can observe. As the missional leadership of the community walks worthy of its calling, it equips the entire community of saints to do so. The practiced collegiality of the missional leaders of the community will render questionable and ultimately passé the mind-sets of the old clergy–lay distinction.

To implement such collegiality for the missional formation of communities, much that we inherit from Christendom will be subject to critique and change. The privileges and spiritual specialness of ordained office need stringent review. The clergy–laity distinction is not simply a useful difference

in function, it still connotes a church with two castes. As I already emphasized, in spite of almost five centuries of Protestant emphasis on the "priesthood of all believers," Christendom's attitudes about office are still powerfully present in our congregations. Try as we will, especially in the Reformed legacy, to correct the impression that there is something sacerdotal, some necessary mediatorial givenness in the ordained minister, our members still want to put us on priestly pedestals. Although Presbyterians ordain teaching elders, ruling elders, and deacons with basically the same ordination rite, our members by and large look on their ministers, their pastors, as a distinctive and spiritually privileged breed. Those attitudes, those remnants of Christendom, obstruct the practices of collegiality. They fortify the impression that the words and actions of ordained clergy are more Christian, more holy, and more effective than what ordinary Christians do. They diminish the central importance of the public witness of the entire community by focusing on the actions and personality of particular officeholders.

How shall we liberate both congregations and their ministers from these constrictive mind-sets? It is a profound theological problem, but we could start with language. We spoke of the translation problem with regard to the enormous variety of ways the gospel is communicated in the Greek narrative of the New Testament and the reductionist mind-set that results when our members always hear "preach" and "proclaim" and see themselves doing neither. We could examine our speech to see how many ways we violate or diminish the fundamental collegiality of missional vocation. We could refuse to use the term "solo pastor." We could question what possible sense there still is in the use of the term "Reverend." We might look at such questions as the use of vestments. Do our congregations understand that Geneva gowns signal that there is a credentialed teacher standing in front of the congregation and nothing more? We Reformeds might ask ourselves how the collegiality of missional leadership could be made more explicit in the ways that we practice the diverse and complementary offices. We could make the discipline of the selection of ruling elders and deacons as careful and painstaking as the selection of teaching elders. We could require that these ordained officers be rigorously educated and credentialed for their responsibilities as part of the missional leadership of the church. We could ask ourselves searching questions about the restriction of sacramental presidency to ordained ministers. If the Lord's Table is the central encounter with the risen Lord in our midst—meeting us, nourishing us, and sending us—then should we not model there the collegiality of missional leadership?

But the collegiality of missional leadership is jeopardized not only by the momentum of Christendom that keeps priestly images alive in our minds and

communities. There is a further chemistry at work that creates even more problems for the collegiality of ordered ministers. Missional communities in our culture are handicapped by some of the distinctively American factors that shape us. The congregation as private association—as voluntaristic society, as member-funded and member-owned for the benefit of its members—has a hard time recognizing the missional collegiality that is essential to walking worthy of our calling.

Every Presbyterian session has been told by someone in the last twelve months, “What this church needs to do is run itself like a good business.” I suspect that this comment is also heard in vestries, boards of deacons, and church councils. There are undoubtedly important dimensions of stewardship that are addressed here, but there are also cultural influences that get in the way of missional collegiality. What is happening to the collegial ministries that equip the saints for the work of service when we adopt the language and values of the corporate world and describe ministers as chief executive officers, heads of staff, executive pastors, directors of this and directors of that? Why is it that ministers’ studies are now called offices? Those may be more superficial evidences of the problem. At a much deeper level, there is reason to speak today of the crisis of ordered ministries, especially in traditional denominations. Anyone who labors within the structures of the organized church has discovered evidence of this crisis. One third of our Presbyterian pastors do not go on from a first call to a second call. Since becoming a seminary faculty member, I have dealt with a disturbing number of my graduates who went on to appointments as associate pastors only to experience in often devastating ways the failure of collegiality, especially with senior pastors. Burnout is one of the most frequently discussed crises affecting those in ordered ministry.

The ethos of the corporate world joins with the values of the marketplace to complicate even further the practice of collegiality. I have contended that, in the United States, the partnership of church and state has been replaced by the partnership of church and marketplace, and the marketplace appears to be winning. What is going on when members are treated like customers and begin to understand themselves that way? What is the theology of mission that propagates mission statements that are intended to function primarily as advertising slogans? What kind of ecclesiology have we developed if our sense of ourselves is that we should be user-friendly, full-service, consumer-sensitive churches? What shall we make of the practical redefinition of the ordered ministries as a mixture of narrow-gauge behavioral therapist, organizational development expert, and program impresario? I remember a

church in Louisville that proudly announced its express worship service—in and out in thirty minutes.

The centrality of the missional community that we emphasized in the previous lecture finds its parallel here: missional leadership must itself be and function as missional community. That is what the pattern of collegiality is all about as it shapes the community's witness before a watching world.

Missional Leadership and the Personal Apostolate. We have discussed the role of missional leadership in terms of the priority of the Word for the equipping of the saints and the essential collegiality of leadership that models and mentors worthy walking. Until now, we have stressed primarily the communal character of the missional community's vocation: how its life together witnesses to the gospel before a watching world. It is unquestionable that this is a major emphasis of the scriptures. There are, however, two fundamental, interactive dimensions of the missional community. There is the dimension of its gathering, and there is the dimension of its scattering, its sending.

With the gradual establishment of Christianity in Western Christendom, the focus was placed increasingly on the gathering of the church. The more we assumed that our entire culture had been Christianized (curious term!), the less important was the dimension of our scattering, because wherever we went, we were still within the Christian culture, at whose center stood the church. Thus, we were most Christian when we gathered, but we were still Christian when we were scattered. And there was no real reason to think about being sent. We lost any sense of that ancient final injunction of the liturgy: *ite, missa est*—Go, thou art sent. Why would we think about ourselves as sent? Our culture was already Christian. The apostolic mission had been accomplished. The Kingdom of God was actually here in the structures and offices of the church. What we did when we assembled in our ecclesiastical buildings, therefore, came to be seen as the real reason we existed. Our liturgies, our sacraments, our music, our priestly action all gained a spiritual worth that was an end in itself. They lost any sense of equipping for the work of service. The primary service of God was the gathered and ordered worship of the community. To walk worthily meant to faithfully engage in the gathered life of the church, to participate in the sacraments, to share in the assembled worship and praise of God. Is it not still true that, for most people, "becoming a Christian" is equated with "starting to go to church"?

The problem is not the emphasis on the gathered church. The problem is the loss of the essential linkage between the gathered church and the scattered church. That we have no sense of sentness is, in effect, the expression of the loss of missional vocation in both our theology of the church and our

practice of the faith. Now, with the end of Christendom, that essential sentness reasserts itself every time we walk out of the church into the secularized, post-Christian world that is now our mission field. If the gathered life of the church is about our discipleship, then the sending is about our apostolate. Like the biblical disciples, we go to school with Jesus as we gather in his name in order to be sent out by him to proclaim the message. Missional leadership, centered on the Word, practiced with evangelical collegiality, must serve the gathered church by preparing each member for his or her apostolate. Whatever one calls it—the ministry of the laity, ministry in the workplace, Christian living Monday through Saturday—the presenting issue for the missional community is this: how do we equip each other to walk worthy of our calling in the personal apostolates into which God sends us every time we make the transition from gathered to scattered community?

If a missional community is to grasp this constant missional movement from discipleship to apostolate and back again, it is essential for its missional leaders to help the community to encounter scripture as they equip the community members for this apostolate. This will require some retooling on the part of the missional leaders. We became very adept, over centuries, at reading the biblical Word in such a way that the obvious could be ignored.

In Mark's account of the calling of the twelve, the missional understanding of vocation may be seen as exemplary of the pervasive missional orientation of the New Testament scriptures. We have previously referred to the reference in Mark 3:13–15 to the calling of the disciples to become apostles. We must also pay attention to the dimensions of missional calling that are clearly delineated in this text: "And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons." There are three purpose statements here that make up a fully developed theology of the missional church. The first dimension of the disciples' calling was "to be with Jesus." Those four words are a comprehensive theology of the purpose and action of the gathered church. We gather to be with Jesus because he promises to be present when we gather in his name. We gather to celebrate and testify to the fact that he is present. This is the motivating power of our public worship. We encounter him present in the proclamation of the Word. With the Second Helvetic Confession, we are bold to claim, "The preaching of the word of God is the Word of God."³³ He is present to us in the exposition of the biblical Word.

³³ Presbyterian Church (USA), "The Second Helvetic Confession," in *The Book of Confessions* (Louisville: Office of the General Assembly of the UPUSA, 1996), 55–56, sect. 5.004.

We meet him in his promised spiritual presence at the table, and we receive his gift of body and blood to nourish and cleanse us. And we are told, as we do so, that "as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26). The text itself reveals the essential linkage of the gathered dimension with the scattered and the sending dimension: going out from that table, we proclaim the salvation accomplished by our Lord's death and the assurance of our future with him, which he will seal in his promised return.

In the Marcan text, "to be with him" is followed immediately by "to be sent out to proclaim the message." The gathering leads immediately into the sending and the scattering. All through scripture, the movement from gathering to scattering is basic. This is the basic missional movement of the people of God: from their called-together life, in which the priority of Word ministry and the collegiality of calling are practiced, to their sent and scattered life, in which they serve as Christ's witnesses. This is the basic thrust of our Lord's emphasis on our calling to be light, salt, and leaven. Where Christendom constantly divides the gathering from the scattering, the biblical testimony insists on their necessary interaction. At the climax of a major thematic argument in 2 Corinthians, Paul assures the Corinthian Christians, "Yes, everything is for your sake" (2 Cor. 4:15). Christendom reductionism will often put a period there. The gospel is about my savedness. Christianity is about what we gain as benefits and blessings. The gathered life of the church is intended to maintain my salvation and assure me that it is valid. The light is to be put under a bushel. But the text does not stop there: "Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God." All that we receive, which is so very much, is aimed at the extension of grace to more and more people. Our gathered life around the table of thanksgiving, the Eucharist, is to be oriented to the global thanksgiving of those to whom grace has been extended. It is in that constant movement from gathered to scattered that God is truly glorified.

The test of our missional leadership lies here, at the junction between gathering and sending. We walk worthy of our calling in our gathered life so that we can learn how to walk worthy of our calling in our sent-out, scattered life, in our personal apostolates. We are not to focus on how successfully we do our gathered life, especially because most of the criteria for success in our culture are suspect anyway. We are to ask how our gathered life has truly prepared us for worthy walking where God is sending us. One of my colleagues in homiletics put it very well in a discussion a few days ago. She said that, in her work as a teacher of preachers, she is constantly asking, "What is the connection between what people hear, say, and do inside the

sanctuary in Christian worship and the way they interpret and respond to the world outside the sanctuary?" This is the question that must energize missional leaders if their missional communities are to walk worthy of their calling. But let me point to a particularly important nuance of her question. She speaks of the scattered and sent life of the community in terms of how they "interpret and respond to the world outside the sanctuary." She is referring, I believe, to the myriad ways in which our post-Christian context challenges us with questions, dilemmas, and seductions for which Christendom has not prepared us.

Among the great challenges to us of our mission field are the confusion and distortion of the gospel that are the residual deposit of Christendom. As missional communities, we do not live in a neutral or indifferent world as far as the claims of Christ are concerned. A missiological analysis of our particular context will reveal the prevalence of widely diverse attitudes about the Christian message and its organized expression in the church. The undeniably large numbers of committed and serious Christians are mixed in with many versions of cultural Christians, constituting a field that is truly made up of wheat and weeds.

Cultural Christianity comes in all shapes, forms, and expressions, but the one thing that is generally true of all its exponents is their rigorous separation of the Christian religion from every other dimension of their lives, especially the public square and the workplace. For cultural Christians, the idea that Christian identity is centered on the calling to witness is particularly repugnant. Then there are also the inoculated former Christians, the intentional rejecters of the gospel, or rather, of the particular distortion or corruption of it against which they are reacting. Their numbers are legion. There are the convinced modernists who are certain that at some point in the eighteenth or nineteenth century a new human race was born, the enlightened and rational Europeans who moved beyond the intellectual immaturity of the Christendom that preceded them. That component of our cultural chemistry dominates the university world.

There are also the religious pluralists and individualists, the various versions of "Sheila-ists" described by Bellah and his colleagues in *Habits of the Heart*, who craft their own religiosity from the resources of the world religions, New Age spiritualities, and a broad range of repopularized paganisms.³⁴ Their cultural power is evidenced in the large sections of bookstores devoted to spirituality and religion that in quantity and diversity far outpace the offerings in the general area of Christianity. There is also a growing

³⁴ Robert N. Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 221, 235.

contingent in North American society that is so shaped by the end of Christendom that it is effectively pre-Christian. The members of this contingent have never had contact with an organizational expression of the Christian faith. They do not know why so much jewelry is shaped as a cross. They are in some ways the most open to Christian witness because it is all new to them. Their numbers are particularly great on the West Coast.

It is into this diverse mission field that we are sent when we disburse into the world as the gathered church now entering into its apostolates. To equip the saints for the work of service must mean to equip Christian witnesses for this challenging mission field. In its times of gathering, the missional community must learn how to translate the gospel into these various contexts. Our discipling must, very concretely and practically, take account of the challenges that we meet in our apostolates. How shall the Christian teacher in the public school system carry out her apostolate in a context where conversation about the faith is virtually prohibited? How shall the Christian businessperson carry out his or her apostolic vocation when the neighbor you are to love is your competitor? How shall the Christian accountant advise his or her clients with integrity when the normative conduct of the prevailing culture is to manipulate the financial data for personal gain and reduced taxes? The missional leadership that can engage in this kind of formation for personal apostolates will have to practice a collegiality of shared experience and expertise. There are likely to be more qualified equippers of the saints among the ruling elders who live in that Monday-to-Saturday world than among the teaching elders.

The challenge of personal apostolates, of faithful witness practiced by all those sent out by the gathered community, takes us to the third component of that concise Marcan theology of the missional church. This statement gives all late-modern Western Christians pause. Together with our being with him and our being sent out by him, we are granted "the authority to cast out demons." I think that most Presbyterian congregations assume that one of the most important reasons to have a learned clergy is so that someone can explain why passages like this do not apply to them. But it may be one of the most important aspects of the equipping done by missional leadership for the conduct of personal apostolates in our post-Christendom world.

Together, we need to face fearlessly what Visser 't Hooft prophesied about the Western world more than thirty years ago.³⁵ We are living in a context

³⁵ Willem Visser 't Hooft, "Evangelism in the Neo-Pagan Situation," *International Review of Mission* 63 (January 1974): 81-86; Willem Visser 't Hooft, "Evangelism Among Europe's Neo-Pagans," *International Review of Mission* 66 (October 1977): 349-60.

of neopaganism that is becoming ever stronger and more diverse. We need to accustom ourselves to the fact that the demonic, the idolatrous, and the seductive are pervasive aspects of our cultures. We are talking about both the obvious and subtle ways in which people are held captive by forces that are demonic precisely because they are so well camouflaged. In biblical terms, these are those “principalities and powers” in rebellion against God that shape our attitudes, values, and expectations so effectively that we do not see how contrary to God’s good will our lives and societies are becoming. One can talk about the temptations of consumerism, the captivity to consumer credit, the obsessive preoccupation with youthfulness and fitness, the accumulation of things, the dictatorship of wealth, the manipulative power of advertising, the justification of violence in our entertainment, the rationalization of recreational sex—each of us can add more examples to this list. To walk worthy of our calling over against these tempting forces is, in Mark’s text, to demonstrate that in Christ we have the power to cast out such demonic forces. In Christ, there is the liberation of our vision to see the idolatries and demons that hold people captive and the empowering of the will to opt to live alternatively. The formation of the missional community by scripture will inexorably force these challenges onto our agenda. Missional leadership is called upon to risk engaging these realities, as threatening and unsettling as they are. They are for us the “meat offered to idols” realities that test our missionary vocation and afford the opportunity to walk worthily in a new and different direction.

The formation of the missional congregation to walk worthy of its calling and the responsibility of its missional leadership to guide its equipping for the work of service are clearly themes that call for a large conversation. Just as our book *Missional Church* was intended as an invitation to a conversation about what a missionally centered ecclesiology might look like, my intention in these lectures has been to describe the agenda and frame at least some of the questions that we, in all our diversity, must engage as Christendom fades from the scene. Because there is much at stake, because there are many contending visions that come together here, it is my hope that the conversations themselves will be so guided by God’s spirit that they will be examples of worthy walking.

The Forgotten Prophet: Rediscovering Toyohiko Kagawa

by ANRI MORIMOTO

Dr. Anri Morimoto delivered the 2007 Toyohiko Kagawa Lecture on October 29, 2007, in the Main Lounge of Mackay Campus Center. A professor at the International Christian University in Tokyo, Dr. Morimoto received a doctorate in systematic theology from Princeton Theological Seminary and is the author of Jonathan Edwards and the Catholic Vision of Salvation (1995). The Kagawa Lecture honors Toyohiko Kagawa (1888–1960), who devoted his life to the promulgation of Christian faith through acts of justice, compassion, and peace-making.

It is indeed a great honor for me to speak of a Japanese Christian who came to Princeton Theological Seminary almost a hundred years ago and became one of the greatest spiritual leaders of the twentieth century. At age twenty-six, after five years of living in the Kobe slums, Toyohiko Kagawa set sail for America to come to this place, where he studied for two years and received a BD from the Seminary and an MA credit from Princeton University. It is about the life and thought of this small Japanese Christian gentleman that I came to speak, hoping to learn from his wisdom and courage how to live in twenty-first-century Japan and America.

I. OBLIVION

After selecting the title of my lecture, “The Forgotten Prophet: Rediscovering Toyohiko Kagawa for Japan and America Today,” I searched the Internet to see if there were other prophets who happened to be forgotten. I found that “the forgotten prophet” was rather a common title for many great men of the world. From Sebastian Castellio to Alfred Adler, from Edmund Burke to Thomas Paine, from G. K. Chesterton to Solzhenitsyn, even to a recent software guru, the great spirits of the ages are often given the title “forgotten prophet.” So I figured it is quite common for prophets to be forgotten.

Never mind, though. The good news is that prophets themselves are often forgetful and, hence, forgiving. Much like the description of superman in Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morals*, great prophets hold no resentment against the general public when left to oblivion.¹ These great spirits of the ages

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 24.

simply forget any ill treatment they might have received. Only these noble people, in Nietzsche's view, are capable of following the biblical command to "love your enemies" in the fullest sense. We "plebeians" may somehow manage to love our enemy once in a while but not without rancor. Purity of heart is the hallmark of saintliness, and it cannot be achieved by mere effort.

Kagawa was no exception. Even in his lifetime, the prophet was not honored in his homeland. It is customary to speak of the "three great Bs" of German theologians: Barth, Brunner, and Bultmann or Bonhoeffer—depending on your preference. In a similar fashion, I would like to name the "three great Ks" of Japanese theologians: Koyama, Kitamori, and Kagawa. These three great Ks are known worldwide for their contribution to the richness of Christian history, but curiously enough, the Japanese Ks are hardly known in their home country. I will not go into the reasons Kitamori and Koyama remain unknown in Japan, as I have written on the subject elsewhere, but why is Kagawa forgotten?²

Before World War II, Kagawa was one of the best-known spiritual leaders of Japan. Yet even then, the Japanese would have been surprised to know how famous he was outside the country. When Emil Brunner came back from his short visit to postwar Japan in 1949, the two questions he was asked most were: "Did you see the emperor?" and "Did you see Kagawa?" To both of these questions Brunner replied in the affirmative, but he was so pestered by these questions that he ended up writing an article on Kagawa to squelch the persistent inquiries.³ When he came back from his second visit in 1955, however, after teaching at my university for two years, Brunner had to correct his first impression. He said that then, Kagawa's name did not have the same weight in Japan as it did outside. His fame was on the wane, and he was criticized by both liberals and conservatives. He had lost his influence on both laborers and intellectuals, inside and outside the church, but, Brunner said, Kagawa's ideals for social reform were bearing fruit.⁴ Kagawa was ahead of his time when he was young, but the world had caught up to him during the war. His postwar profile had become somewhat tarnished by what was taken to be his involvement in wartime propaganda and by his frivolous call

² Anri Morimoto, "Foreword," in *Theology of the Pain of God*, by Kazoh Kitamori (Richmond: John Knox, 1965; repr. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2005), 1–4; Anri Morimoto, *Asia Shingaku Kogi* (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 2004), chap. 3.

³ Emil Brunner, "Kagawa," in *Ein Offenes Wort*, by Emil Brunner and Rudolf Wehrli (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1981), 258. For the record of Brunner's encounter with Kagawa in Tokyo, see Shun-ich Yokoyama, *Kagawa Toyobiko Den* (Tokyo: Keiseisha, 1959), 446.

⁴ Emil Brunner, "Japan in der Entscheidung: Interview mit Emil Brunner," in Brunner and Wehrli, *Ein Offenes Wort*, 314.

for a postwar nationwide repentance. There are over thirty-five biographies of Kagawa in Japanese, English, and German, but few of them focus on these later years.

Brunner is still right today. The fruits of Kagawa's labor are tangible, but his name does not evoke any reminiscence of the past. Theological schools do not teach their students about him. There is a small group of scholars in Japan who gather for Kagawa studies regularly, but most of the members are past retirement age. Being a generation younger than my two predecessors in this lectureship, I never met him—I was three years old when he died in 1960. I received my seminary education in Japan in the early eighties without hearing a word about him, and I was first introduced to him here at the Princeton Seminary in 1988, at the centennial celebration of his birth. Accompanying Dr. Sang Lee, my *Doktorvater*, I met Umeko Momii, Kagawa's daughter, and began to wonder about this great person whom everyone at the Seminary was so eager to remember and celebrate.

II. CONTAGION

In order to rediscover something, one must first lose it. At the same time, one must remember what is lost. If I am going to speak of "rediscovering" Kagawa today, it means that I once lost him, and I still remember the fact that I lost him. Without continual efforts such as this lectureship, a generation after me would forget the fact of forgetting, and rediscovery would become nearly impossible. I remember what I lost by way of my Japanese theology mentor, who spoke fondly of his youthful encounter with Kagawa in his rural hometown. It was that one meeting and one handshake with Kagawa that converted this man, an ultra-rightist military elite, to Christianity. His dream, until then, had been to die for the emperor, but with the strike of one thunderbolt, he was converted to live for Christ instead. Indeed, that meeting must have been as electrifying for him as similar encounters were for many others of his age. When Kagawa was listed as a member of the committee to work for world peace in 1953, along with Einstein, Schweitzer, Russell, Maritain, Toynbee, Buber, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Reinhold Niebuhr, he was characterized as the "Japanese Christian leader whose religion is contagious."⁵ And his religion certainly was contagious.

Indeed, the word "contagious" was appropriate in a very real sense to describe him. During his years of selfless service to the deprived people in the

⁵ *New York Times*, "Rabbi Names Group to Work Out Peace," October 11, 1953. See also Robert Schildgen, *Toyobiko Kagawa: Apostle of Love and Social Justice* (Berkeley: Centenary Books, 1988), 268.

Kobe slums, he contracted trachoma, a highly infectious eye disease that was rampant in unsanitary areas of Japan at the time. He knew trachoma was a serious illness that had to be treated carefully, but his priority was the care of those around him, and he left his own eyes untreated. In 1935, when he was invited for the third time by the Federal Council of Churches in America and other governmental organizations to give a six-month lecture tour across the continent, he was barred from debarking and kept in the detention center in San Francisco because of the disease. The hosting committee made phone calls to President Roosevelt, who then intervened and ordered his cabinet members to take the necessary measures to release Kagawa. Two hours later, he was allowed entry with the order that he be accompanied by a doctor and a nurse to prevent contagion. The news of his temporal detention was widely reported, which unexpectedly became a powerful testimony to Kagawa's dedication and importance. Here was a man who had befriended and served the people whom civilization had tried to overlook. It was these people with whom Jesus would have associated, and it was Kagawa's firm determination to serve them, even to the point of sacrificing his own health. Some called him the "St. Francis of Japan," and others, "Japan's Schweitzer." *Time* magazine reverently carried an article titled "Quarantined Christian."⁶ The handshake that had converted my theology mentor was forbidden by his accompanying nurse on that trip, and he developed the humorous habit of shaking hands with himself when he met people for the first time.

I must confess that I held the same fear of infection in an imaginary meeting with him. I met him only through books—books that were long forgotten in the library and shelved away down in the basement. Every time I look for his book on the library computer screen, the mechanical retrieval system at my university library goes deep to the bottom of the storage space and drags it to the surface. Invariably, the book feels dusty and the pages crumbly. Turning through those pages and reading about trachoma, I imagined myself in danger of infection. You may laugh at my foolishness, but this is my way of illustrating how real and engaging his writings still are today. Reading Kagawa makes you feel like you are right in his presence. Kagawa is infectious indeed.

Back when he was allowed entry into the country by the intervention of President Roosevelt, there were people who feared another kind of contagion, again imaginary, but some felt it was far more threatening. It was the contagion of the spirit of socialism and communism under the guise of the consumer cooperative movement that Kagawa was advocating. The Ameri-

⁶ *Time*, December 30, 1935. See also Schildgen, *Toyohiko Kagawa*, 183–84.

can coalition of patriotic societies protested Roosevelt's decision to admit Kagawa into the country, saying "no attendant or practical precaution can relieve [the] peril of contagion."⁷ To the right-wing nationalists and nativists, Kagawa was a major threat to America's national security. When he went to Rochester to deliver the Rauschenbush lectures, he was greeted by people who were attempting to inflame this anxiety by calling his influence "more dangerous than outright Russian communism."⁸ In reality, nothing was further from his intention. Kagawa was an outspoken critic of communism for its employment of violent means and its materialistic view of humanity. He demanded only that Christians live out their faith at home and at work, in spiritual as well as economic terms. If his religion was contagious, it was because of his simple message that people should live their beliefs. When asked to explain what Christianity is all about, he smiled and instantly replied, "Look at me." How many of us have the audacity to say this and live up to it? When Gandhi was asked why he did not convert to Christianity, his response was, "Show me one true Christian, and the entire India will follow." Kagawa was not without his own human weaknesses, but by the sheer force of his life he was a living witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It made his religion highly contagious.

III. AMBITION

From an early stage in his life, Kagawa had his mind set to win world-class fame. Dr. Myers, a southern Presbyterian missionary teacher and his spiritual father, used to call him "Mr. Famous" because he was exceptionally ambitious from the day he received baptism.⁹ When he became a teacher, he would ask his students whether he was greater than Kanzo Uchimura, the renowned Meiji Christian, and told them that he would live long enough to be greater than Hirobumi Ito, the Meiji premier political leader.¹⁰ He "openly declared that his deeds would be recorded in history, and become a continuation of the *Acts of the Apostles*."¹¹ His youthful self-confidence was "almost embarrassing," Robert Speer writes.¹² But surprisingly, it would eventually reel in a matching reality. Megalomaniac, one might say, but he was a megalomaniac

⁷ *New York Times*, December 25, 1935.

⁸ Schildgen, *Toyohiko Kagawa*, 191.

⁹ Ren Miyake, "Ito Chiisaki Mono to Kagawa Toyohiko," in *Kagawa Toyohiko kara mita Gendai*, ed. Shin-ichiro Kanai (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1999), 55.

¹⁰ Shiro Kuroda, *Watashi no Kagawa Toyohiko Kenkyu* (Tokyo: Kirisuto Shinbunsha, 1983), 215, 350; Yokoyama, *Kagawa Toyohiko Den*, 71.

¹¹ Schildgen, *Toyohiko Kagawa*, 64.

¹² Robert E. Speer, "Biographical Sketch," in *The Religion of Jesus*, by Toyohiko Kagawa (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1931), 2.

for a cause. His ambition was to serve God and his neighbors, to improve the lives of millions of people, and to evangelize Japan and the entire world.

One early morning, his wife Haru noticed his absence and went out looking for him. She found him by a filthy stinking outhouse in the Shinkawa slums, completely absorbed in prayer. She was startled to hear him pray, "Dear God, make me a great apostle to go out to evangelize the whole world." Here was a newly wed young man who did not even have money to buy the day's food, and he was praying to be an evangelist to the world! Later, Haru was even more surprised to see this youthful prayer turn into reality.¹³ In 1924, eleven years after the toilet-side prayer, he was invited to give a major lecture tour in America and Europe, the first of many. Indeed, one should be careful what one prays for. "Do not pray for trivial matters," Kagawa taught his students.¹⁴ If he prayed for the salvation of souls, he prayed for the salvation of one million Japanese people, and he worked for what he prayed. If he sounded like a megalomaniac, it was because he did not speak about what *could* be done; he always spoke about what *must* be done to do God's will on earth.

It was his ambition, first of all, to go into the slums and live among the most deprived of all. The greatest goal a man can have, he believed, is to do everything in his ability to serve those in need. He expressed this holy aspiration through the mouth of the main character in his novel: "If I am going to die of tuberculosis in two or three years anyway, I will give my very best to lead the holiest life in the slums."¹⁵ It meant practicing the spirit of Jesus in an unadulterated sense, among the kind of people whom Jesus loved. The more he saw the darkness that surrounded the lives of the people in the slums—poverty, sickness, murder, crime, gambling, prostitution, and despair—the more he was convinced that it was destiny for Jesus to die on the cross and for him to follow in his footsteps (Kagawa 14:172).¹⁶

By 1914, when Kagawa came to Princeton, he had two major manuscripts ready for printing: a sociopsychological research paper on the poor and a novel based on his own experience. After two years of study, he returned to the same slum shack with a Princeton degree in hand. When his autobio-

¹³ Kuroda, *Watashi no Kagawa*, 216, 275.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 254, 262.

¹⁵ Toyohiko Kagawa, *Shisen wo Koete*, in *Kagawa Toyohiko Zenshu (The Complete Works of Toyohiko Kagawa)*, vol. 14 (Tokyo: Kirisuto Shinbunsha, 1959), 145. Hereafter, references to this twenty-four-volume edition will be included in the main text with volume and page numbers in parentheses. See also (Kagawa 14:143); Kuroda, *Watashi no Kagawa*, 353; Keiyo Torigai, *Kagawa Toyohiko to Gendai* (Kobe: Hyogo Buraku Mondai Kenkyujo, 1988), 30; Yokoyama, *Kagawa Toyohiko Den*, 58; Eiichi Amemiya, *Seishun no Kagawa Toyohiko* (Tokyo: Shinkyo Shuppansha, 2003), 253, 266, 279, 281, 284, 293.

¹⁶ Yokoyama, *Kagawa Toyohiko Den*, 57.

graphical novel *Crossing the Death Line* was published in 1920, it became a super hit and went through many printings, with total sales of 1.5 million copies.¹⁷ Kagawa instantly became rich, but he and his wife continued to live as humbly as ever, using all of their resources for the sake of his ministry to improve the lives of others. The publisher urged him to write second and third volumes, which he did, and each brought him increased fame and success.

The title of his second novel, *The Shooter at the Sun*, is suggestive.¹⁸ It was taken from the name of a bronze statue of a boy drawing his bow to shoot at the sun, a statue he actually saw in Montclair, a small town in New Jersey, twenty miles from New York City. According to Kagawa's explanation, there is a legend among Native Americans that whoever inherits the position of chief must prove himself by shooting at the rising sun. If the arrow does not reach the sun, he cannot inherit the earth. "The boy is staring at the sun with breathless intent to see whether the arrow he has just shot has reached the sun or not. If the arrow hits the mark, the sun will shake, and he is waiting to see."¹⁹ When he was studying at Princeton, Kagawa took a summer job in that town and visited the statue to remind himself about his own ambition. Those who inherit the earth must shoot at the sun, and no matter how far and remote an ideal may seem at the moment, the children of earth should aim to realize that ideal. For now, a person may be earning twenty-five dollars a month, but the time will come for him to shoot at the sun and inherit the earth. The sun will be shattered by his arrow into a million sparks of fire, and he will wear them in dazzling light. In the shadow of New York streets Kagawa saw Japanese immigrants who came for glory but sank into unholy living. The slums were the same everywhere, from New York to Kobe. The backstreets teemed with those who failed at the shooting test. "But," he writes, "I will succeed; I will persevere and grab the fame in these hands and inherit the earth" (Kagawa 14:383-85).

In the third novel, the main character, his double, ventures out on a mountain hiking excursion one day through the high peaks of the Japanese Alps.²⁰ While hiking, the mountain Sherpa gives him a small piece of advice

¹⁷ Tomio Muto, "Postscript" (Kagawa 14:609). The title of the English translation is *Before the Dawn* (1924).

¹⁸ Toyohiko Kagawa, *A Shooter at the Sun*, trans. Thomas Satchell (Kobe: Japan Chronicle Press, 1925). Like other Kagawa translations, this edition is rather an eclectic abridgment of the original. Some missing passages are supplemented from the original by the present author.

¹⁹ Kagawa, *Shooter*, 102; Yokoyama, *Kagawa Toyohiko Den*, 110. See also (Kagawa 10:317).

²⁰ Yokoyama, *Kagawa Toyohiko Den*, 181.

that would long remain in his mind: "If you want to climb through several peaks in one trekking," he says, "it is better to come in winter while there is much snow. When the snow melts away, the valleys become deeper. But when they are all covered with deep snow, you can travel from one peak to another without ups and downs." Kagawa takes this casual trekking tip deep in his heart and ponders. True, the shortest path from one peak to another is a straight line between them. That is the path a superman like him should walk. He should not be bothered by the mundane trails for commoners. "Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low, the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together" (Isa. 40:4-5). "March on the snow!" he exclaims (Kagawa 14:600-601). "Come severe weather, come heavy snowfall. It will prepare the high way for the Lord. Come danger, come peril, and I will walk on you triumphantly for the glory of the Lord!"

Indeed, that was how Kagawa walked his entire life, that is, from peak to peak, through the highest mountains in the dead of winter, to the dismay of the people 6,000 feet below. He conquered many peaks. He initiated and helped establish numerous cooperatives. He successfully led Japan's first labor movement. He was the designer and chief architect of Japan's comprehensive health-care system. He was a pacifist who fought until the last minute to prevent the war, was interrogated and jailed for his antiwar campaign, and after the war became a strong advocate for the renunciation of war. He served as counsel for the postwar Japanese government and influenced General MacArthur's decision to exonerate the emperor (Kagawa 24:413-16). He was the central figure in promoting general elections, land reform, agricultural aid, and in addressing the issues of environment, population, energy, etc. He was an accomplished novelist, columnist, researcher, poet, psychologist, social reformer, settlement leader, lecturer, and evangelist who traveled all over the world, including the United States, Europe, China, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, India, Brazil, Thailand, and Malaysia. He served as chair at many international peace councils and world government meetings. He was even nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1955. And all the while he remained the pastor of a church in Tokyo, serving there for thirty years, until his death.

IV. IMITATION

Kagawa's greatest ambition of all, however, was to be like Jesus. In fact, Jesus himself was a man of great ambition, he says (Kagawa 14:267). Kagawa

must have taken the lead from Albert Schweitzer to say that the ambition for the Son of Man to become God burnt intensely in Jesus.²¹ It was possible only in Jesus's age to call down God to humans and to thrust humans up to God. It was the one and only chance in human history, a divine *kairos*, "the fullness of time," (Gal. 4:4) for Jesus to become the Savior. In a sense, Jesus himself was a misunderstood megalomaniac. He was faithful to his ambition even to the cross and became what he was meant to be. Jesus's consciousness was 100 percent God-consciousness (Kagawa 3:241-42), and hence it was not Jesus's will anymore but God's. This divine dynamic was encrypted in the universe from the beginning of time, was operative in Jesus, and was what drove Kagawa from within.

Theologically speaking, his locution here sounds dangerously close to the adoptionist view of Christ. While reading Schweitzer, it dawned on him that knowledge is, after all, a product of the human impulse to live. The knowledge of science, religion, and art all derive from this impulse to live. Much like the historical unfolding of the Hegelian absolute spirit, knowledge is considered a natural extension of living. Knowledge is the budding of life, and faith its blooming. As the will to live inflames within, so does the will to know and to believe. The life that is about to wither does not seek knowledge. Viewed from this continuum of living and knowing and believing, the personality of Jesus appears to be one that is built entirely on the will to believe. A visionary of an extraordinary scale himself, Kagawa underscores the paramount importance of the will to believe. The desire of the human species to fly made flying a reality for humanity (Kagawa 1:148). If one wills to believe, Jesus's miracles, such as walking on water or feeding the five thousand, are not unbelievable at all. The will to believe is the will to live. Without this will to believe, Jesus in the gospel stories is nothing but "a crystal of delusions." The *Leben Jesu Forschungen*, in Kagawa's understanding, were "the slums of human science," a history of failed attempts to explain the outcomes of the will to believe by using the wrong category of natural science (Kagawa 14:266-67).

Kagawa was the product of his own will. His friends once teased his saintly posture that appeared to have conquered all his earthly desires. Unabashed, he replied that he was not without desires, but rather, he had the desire of the greatest scale for humans (Kagawa 10:26). "I want to be God, all-knowing and all-powerful, creator of supreme beauty. This is my essence. I want to get

²¹ Kagawa used the English translation: Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, trans. W. Montgomery (London: A&C Black, 1910). "The secret (*Geheimnis*) of the cross" was a phrase Kagawa often used in his writings (Kagawa 3:93, 103).

out of my skin and become God" (Kagawa 14:197). The statement is actually a variation of the one I quoted earlier. His desire was to follow and imitate Christ, which for him meant to be the earthly instrument of God. "Religion is about God experiencing human life in the form of Jesus. God did not deem it fit to stay in the form of God, but took abode in the human soul to experience human life" (Kagawa 1:150). Between Jesus and human beings in general, and Kagawa in particular, there is little distinction. Both are the appointed instruments of God by which God experiences humanity. The youthful Kagawa wrote in his diary: "Since God lived and worked in the worthless realm of humanity, why should I not also suffer and work like God."²² After all, it was St. Paul who said, "be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1).

Kagawa was a saint by choice, but even this saintliness declared his peculiarity. He would not give in to external sensations, but he claimed that he was a hedonist in his own manner. Not skin deep, he was a consistent hedonist of genuine gratification, for he was entirely truthful to his own instincts that arose from within, to the instincts that would create the long-lasting joy and the condition to feel pleasure without having to depend on external circumstances. In a similar vein, he cites seventeenth-century French bishop François Fénelon's phrase "holy indifference" to describe the nature of saintliness (Kagawa 8:147). The phrase is appropriate to describe Kagawa himself. Being in the state of "holy indifference" does not mean that the person is without any desire or will. In fact, Fénelon explains it to the contrary: such a soul absolutely ceases either to desire or to will "except in cooperation with the Divine leading."²³ In this sense, the person has the greatest desire, namely the ambition to be so wholly united with God that he or she no longer desires salvation for his or her own sake, but "chiefly as the fulfillment of God's pleasure." The person desires because God "desires and wills that we should thus desire and will." Neither is the person inactive in quietism. He or she has "indifference to anything and everything out of God's will; but it is the highest life and activity to anything and everything in that will," Fénelon explains. From here we can draw a clue to understand Kagawa's seemingly contradictory passions. He could not hide his own parading ego, which had to be constantly fed by an applauding audience; at

²² Torigai, *Kagawa Toyohiko to Gendai*, 29 (translation by the author). See also Kagawa, *The Religion of Jesus*, 34; and (Kagawa 1:150).

²³ Thomas C. Upham, *Life, Religious Opinions and Experience of Madame Guyon: Including An Account of the Personal History and Religious Opinions of Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambray*, new ed. (London: H. R. Allenson, 1905), 392.

the same time, he was indifferent to anything that would personally profit him.

Should we interpret Kagawa, then, as an optimistic humanist who had faith in the unfettered advancement of human civilization? This characterization is not without some measure of legitimacy. He defines sin as imperfection (Kagawa 3:398), explaining that sin is a halt in the process of development that should have continued until human beings became like God (Kagawa 3:135). Anybody not striving toward perfection is a sinner (Kagawa 1:165), he says, and it is sin to wander aimlessly without realizing what the person was created for. It is sin to remain in the status quo and not to try to "shoot at the sun." Whatever a person is endowed with by God, it must be brought to full bloom. "If we think of God, of our ambitions, and of the straight current of our life, the essence of sin becomes clearer."²⁴ For those of you interested in the genealogy of his thought, I can tell you that Kagawa's reading list contained Schleiermacher and Bushnell.²⁵ His Princeton days overlap with the height of the Social Gospel movement, though there is little evidence to indicate that he had read anything by the Social Gospel proponents of the time.

One does not understand the laws of electricity unless one sees it actually work in a circuit and light a bulb (Kagawa 1:147). Likewise, we do not understand God unless he comes into our lives and makes his effects felt. Christianity is about the transcendent God who possesses human beings and works through them (Kagawa 3:325). The redemptive love, the keyword of Kagawa's theology, underscores the incarnation rather than the cross and resurrection of Jesus.²⁶ More in line with Eastern Orthodoxy than with Reformation theology, Kagawa's God is primarily revealed in the mystery of incarnation (Kagawa 3:65–68). The divine economy of incarnation is not complete without the passion and the cross as its logical consequences, as the Christ-hymn in Philippians teaches. Nevertheless, Kagawa's emphasis was more on the ontological exchange of status at Christmas than on the mystery of Easter.

From these passages it is easy to understand why Kagawa took his faith out into streets. He may be called a liberal social worker who believed in human possibilities, but his liberal faith was securely couched in his faith in the incarnate God. His unwavering conviction was that since God moved Christ to come down into the lives of people in utter destitution, he was called as a

²⁴ Kagawa, *The Religion of Jesus*, 51.

²⁵ (Kagawa 3:5); Yokoyama, *Kagawa Toyobiko Den*, 32.

²⁶ See Eiichi Amemiya, *Mazushii Hitobito to Kagawa Toyobiko* (Tokyo: Shinkyo Shuppansha, 2005), 222–35, for a recent critical appraisal of Kagawa's faith in redemption.

Christian to do the same. In a meditation on the "meaning of incarnation," Kagawa states his understanding:

The spirit of Christmas supplies the fundamental drive behind the Christian social movement in modern times. He who is appointed to occupy a high position in society, abandons his freedom for self-aggrandizement in order to serve the common people by humbling himself. The laboring classes, too, must consent to give up some of the rights which they might be able to enforce. Right there the fundamental principle of the movement for social betterment can be discerned. Without renunciation, those in heaven remain there forever, and those on earth are destined to stay there permanently. Shattering this barrier between heaven and earth, Christ descended to the manger.²⁷

V. FRUITION

Those of you in the audience for this lecture may have a justifiable curiosity to know how Kagawa did here as a student. Actually, the theology faculty at our alma mater did not quite impress him. He writes in his novel that the Seminary was "boring" (Kagawa 14:381). This was the Princeton Seminary in 1914, the Old Princeton School with B. B. Warfield and Gresham Machen still on board. It was the year Ross Stevenson assumed the presidency and began to promote the curricular exchange with Princeton University.²⁸ Under the new regulation, Kagawa took university courses on embryology, genetics, comparative anatomy, and paleontology. The Seminary was exceptionally generous to this prodigal student. He was exempted from classroom attendance provided that he submitted the final papers. He was allowed to stay in Brown Hall and to attend the university classes, and he was granted a stipend of \$25 a month.

It seems that the Seminary's generosity did pay off. From these courses he learned that the theory of evolution was in perfect harmony with Christianity (Kagawa 3:23-26). Evolution from lower to higher forms would only attest to the increasing love among the created things. But his view was that the Darwinian theory of "the survival of the fittest" should be complemented with an equally critical ability of each species to cooperate among its members. Those who cooperate are "better equipped for survival," and mutual aid

²⁷ Kagawa Toyohiko, *Meditations*, trans. Jiro Takenaka (Westport: Greenwood, 1950), 99.

²⁸ William K. Selden, *Princeton Theological Seminary: A Narrative History 1812-1992* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 99.

is "a far stronger formula for success than competition."²⁹ This discovery added theoretical support to his conviction that cooperative union was needed. The labor union, the farmer's union, and the health care union are also the fruits of this inspiration that draws on the powers of cooperation and solidarity. On the way home from Princeton, he saw a workers' demonstration in New York City and also helped the labor union in Ogden, Utah. Today, the Kobe-Nada Cooperative, which Kagawa helped establish after his return to Japan, is the largest single cooperative union in the world, with four million direct and indirect members. He was often appointed to serve as counsel to the Ministry of Health and Welfare and published several articles advocating a comprehensive health care system.³⁰ One does not have to refer to the recent Michael Moore film *Sicko* to speak of the problems that plague the market-driven health care system in the United States. Japan today has Kagawa to thank for its national comprehensive health care package. He had to overcome the strong opposition of the national association of physicians, who feared competition from enterprises that placed "service ahead of profit."³¹

What do Japanese Christians in particular have to thank Kagawa for? Kagawa lived in an age when Japan's socioeconomic structure was transformed to the nascent capitalist society. He became increasingly aware of the limitations of radical socialist reform movements that were hampered by internal political conflicts (Kagawa 24:73). Their inherent tendency toward violence, determinism, and despotism also worried him (Kagawa 9:262-64), and Kagawa gradually drifted away from them. What drew his concern instead was evangelism. No social reform would succeed, he was firmly convinced, unless accompanied by spiritual reform (Kagawa 1:247), and that, he thought, was missing in the materialist philosophy of communism. "Without reconstruction in the inner man, society cannot be saved. It is for that reason, that while I am devoting myself to the Labor Movement, I am also zealous in the cause of religion. Social reconstruction is useless without the love of God."³²

Here again, his expression is peculiar and grandiose: evangelism is "God's gambling" (Kagawa 24:74), and he has staked all he has, his "pen" and talents and fortunes, on Christ (Kagawa 3:489). He had two full chances to bet, once before and once after World War II. The National Council of Churches in Japan invited John R. Mott in 1929 and adopted Kagawa's plan to launch a

²⁹ Schildgen, *Toyohiko Kagawa*, 74. See also (Kagawa 9:67; 9:361-66, 10:319).

³⁰ Kuroda, *Watasbi no Kagawa*, 362-63.

³¹ Schildgen, *Toyohiko Kagawa*, 176.

³² Kagawa, *The Religion of Jesus*, 33.

nationwide evangelism.³³ The “Kingdom of God” movement, as it was called, continued for five years under his leadership. Detailed records show that he preached to 787,223 people in 1,859 meetings. After the war, they had another three-year project during which he preached to 754,428 people in 1,384 meetings.³⁴

No doubt Kagawa made the best use of revivalist methods. His favorite evangelists were John Wesley, William Booth, and Billy Sunday. He could easily gather thousands of people for one meeting. At each meeting, his aides collected a small entrance fee to cover the cost and to ensure a committed audience. The practice was welcomed by rural underfinanced churches, while urban affluent churches resented that he took money for evangelism. He had read about the activities of George Whitefield, and following his model of “preach and print,”³⁵ Kagawa penned many pamphlets and booklets to bolster the evangelism. During the meetings he would urge the audience members to make up their minds, come forward to pledge their commitment to Christ, and to fill out the resolution card.³⁶ Many came, many pledged, but unfortunately, few began church life. Again, in parallel to eighteenth-century revivalism in America and elsewhere, the failure was largely due to the church’s lack of readiness. Japanese churches then were mostly composed of upper-class intellectuals, whereas Kagawa’s message appealed to day-laborers, peasants, and women with little education. Churches were ill prepared to receive them or to make them feel comfortable.³⁷ In addition, some church leaders in the Holiness tradition boycotted Kagawa for his past involvement in the communist movement, denouncing him as the “devil.”³⁸ Here we see an old antithesis of settled congregations and itinerant revivalism. I only wish that he would have read Jonathan Edwards instead of George Whitefield! Although Kagawa’s mass evangelism did not materialize into an increased worship attendance or church membership, he was instrumental in Christianity’s gaining citizenship and visibility in postwar Japan.

There is yet one more point that I have to make. Today’s Japan owes much to Kagawa for the basic constitution of the country. It was Kagawa who persistently and untiringly argued for “Article 9” of Japan’s postwar consti-

³³ C. Howard Hopkins, *John R. Mott: 1865-1955* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 673. See also Yokoyama, *Kagawa Toyohiko Den*, 281.

³⁴ Kuroda, *Watashi no Kagawa*, 276.

³⁵ Frank Lambert, *Inventing the “Great Awakening”* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 98. See also Yokoyama, *Kagawa Toyohiko Den*, 173.

³⁶ Kuroda, *Watashi no Kagawa*, 204.

³⁷ Yokoyama, *Kagawa Toyohiko Den*, 173; Kuroda, *Watashi no Kagawa*, 192; Schildgen, *Toyohiko Kagawa*, 180.

³⁸ Kuroda, *Watashi no Kagawa*, 105, 192; Yokoyama, *Kagawa Toyohiko Den*, 423.

tution, the article that pledges to renounce war forever as the means to settle international disputes. Kagawa may not have been the progenitor of the article, but he passionately defended it when a strong opposition raged to repeal it (Kagawa 10:423–34). No sovereign state has ever had such a constitution for such a long time. It was and still is an extraordinary experiment, a gamble, unprecedented in human history. Japan may have killed and afflicted people during World War II, but the Japanese military has taken not a single life under this postwar constitution, and the constitution has provided a secure foundation for prosperity.

Here is my special plea in the name of Kagawa to the people of America—to honor this Japan's postwar peace constitution. I say this because Japan and the United States share a common national trait: both nations are built as theological enterprises. Ever since the time of John Winthrop and throughout its history to this day, America has been a great moral experiment. According to G. K. Chesterton (one of those forgotten prophets), America is “the only nation in the world that is founded on a creed” that is “dogmatic and even theological.”³⁹ Postwar Japan, though in existence for a far shorter time, is also venturing on a great experiment, and according to the speech that General MacArthur delivered at the formal ceremony of Japan's surrender aboard the Battleship *Missouri*, the problem that postwar Japan is facing is “basically theological.”⁴⁰ It requires a spiritual improvement of human character to synchronize with the power of destruction acquired by the advancement of science and technology. MacArthur was obviously referring to the two atomic bombs that were dropped on Japanese cities less than a month before. Unless we develop our human character to take control of our own will, the entire world will be at grave peril. Our common task, whether Japan or America, is basically theological. “It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh.”⁴¹

CONCLUSION

Given the nature of Kagawa's amateur writings, today's audience will probably not find his writings on theology, economics, or natural science very

³⁹ G. K. Chesterton, “What I Saw In America,” in *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton*, vol. 21 (1926; repr. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 41.

⁴⁰ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (London: Heinemann, 1965), 275–76.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* For MacArthur's theological understanding of postwar Japan, see also Anri Morimoto, “The Irony of Success: Visions Maintained and Redefined in the Case of International Christian University,” in *Christian Responses to Asian Challenges: A Globalization View on Christian Higher Education in East Asia*, eds. Philip Yuen Sang Leung and Peter Tze Ming Ng (Hong Kong: Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society, Chinese University Press, 2007), 299–306.

appealing. His magnum opus of theology, which he wrote from the age of nineteen until his last years, explains the ultimate purpose of the universe based on what seems to be an extravagant concoction of everything from quantum physics to molecular biology (Kagawa 13:291–454). I can only admire Kosuke Koyama's effort, in his 2004 Kagawa lecture, to try to present "the forms and spirit of Kagawa's theology," because Kagawa himself did not value theology much. In the end, I think everyone must agree with Dr. Koyama's conclusion that "Kagawa was primarily a reporter of experience rather than a creator of theology."⁴² Neither would Kagawa be reevaluated for his economic theories, in which he praised brotherly love as a miracle cure for all evils of the capitalist society.⁴³

What made Kagawa so infectious after all? Nobel Prize novelist Kenzaburo Oe, who spent a year in Princeton recently, asks the same question.⁴⁴ As a novelist, Oe is naturally very intent on knowing why his own books are not as entertaining as Kagawa's and finally comes to the conclusion that Kagawa was a "trickster." A trickster is a mythological figure who does all kinds of weird things, makes nonsensical mistakes, and tries to trick others but is tricked instead. What is characteristic of a trickster across cultural differences is that he shakes and shatters the established order of society and creates new values. He does so without the faintest intention, all the while being despised and ridiculed by society, but later people realize that he was the key figure who unknowingly established the most fundamental structure of the present society. According to Paul Radin, who first conceptualized the model of the trickster from Native American storytelling, the trickster is invariably invested with some degree of divinity.⁴⁵ Kagawa was a trickster in most of these senses. In the end, much of what makes up the contemporary Japanese society—Article 9, the health care system, the cooperative movement, and the like—came into being or developed through his imagination and initiatives. Kagawa's unrecognized legacy can be found in almost every corner of the society.

I myself would like to retrieve the image of mountain hiking once again. We do not see the trail, but a superman like Kagawa sees and takes the unseen path that is beyond the power of the general public. It would naturally seem

⁴² Kosuke Koyama, "Go and Do Likewise! Toyohiko Kagawa's Theology in the Periphery," *The Princeton Theological Seminary Bulletin*, vol. 26, no. 1 (2005), 109–10.

⁴³ Mikio Sumiya, "Preface," in *Kagawa Toyobiko* (Tokyo: The Board of Publication, The United Church of Christ in Japan, 1966).

⁴⁴ Kenzaburo Oe, "Shinko wo Motanai Mono no Gawa kara Nani ga Dekiruka," in Kanai, *Kagawa Toyobiko*, 81, 91.

⁴⁵ Paul Radin, *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology* (New York: Schocken, 1956), 155; see also xxiii.

unwise, dangerous, and even ridiculous to venture the trip in the dead cold of winter, but when the snow melts and all the peaks he has conquered become visible, people down below realize how much he has accomplished. Through many of his adventures and experiments, failures and successes, Kagawa treaded the path that allowed only him, and only in his time. The age's promises and perils take shape in the figure of Toyohiko Kagawa, and it is a formidable challenge for commoners today even to try to imitate him. My lecture has been an effort to create a map of his contributions by locating some of the peaks he conquered, which we now see only from afar.

But the greatest challenge for all living Christians, whether in Japan, America, or anywhere else, is to recognize that there was a man who was asked what Christianity was all about and could reply "look at me"—a man who lived up to his reply without flinching—not in a tense, constrained manner but in a cordial and relaxed way. This is Toyohiko Kagawa, who continues to challenge us all to this day.

The Cross and Social Movements

by TOYOHICO KAGAWA

This lecture is reprinted from Meditations on the Cross, by Toyohiko Kagawa (Chicago and New York: Willett, Clark & Co., 1935, translated by Helen F. Topping and Marion R. Draper. This lecture was translated by P. G. Price.). For further information about Dr. Kagawa, please see "The Forgotten Prophet: Rediscovering Toyohiko Kagawa," by Anri Morimoto, in this issue.

These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, These were purchased from among men, to be the first-fruits unto God and unto the Lamb.
Revelation 14.4

Although the Roman empire had been greatly influenced by the movement initiated by Jesus Christ, when it was invaded by the Huns, a barbarian race which swept down from western China, it was not able to withstand the invasion. When Christian love proved unable to conquer the spears of the barbarians, the Emperor Justinian worked out a system of laws which accepted Christian principles only in part and tried to blend force and love. Modern law is based upon this law of Justinian. In England, for instance, love is adopted as the law of the home, to some extent as the law of the country, but even in this peace-loving country, barbarian practices are still the rule in foreign relations.

Why is it that Europe, where Christianity is familiar, still engages in war? It is because Europe is only half-Christian. Kenneth Saunders once said: "There is more than one kind of Englishman; Englishmen are both pirates and angels." Ever since the time of Justinian, we find these two elements, love and force, in the laws and customs of every country which has developed a system of government. The nations of the world present a double face; from one view they are angels, from the other, devils. The nations of our present time are Justinian. Not one of them is out-and-out Christian. Germany, England and America are "Christian" countries, but one side of the picture of their world is dreadful. In Japan we too have a similar world of terrible inconsistencies.

Individually we are also facing in the two directions. The instincts are blind. They want to go to the night club, to drink and to "see life." The conscious self wants to know God, to walk in the path of righteousness. Man has these two tendencies in his nature. Paul states this clearly. He calls the self which longs to become like God the "new" man and the instinctive self the "old" man.

Within us there is the instinctive self and also the conscious one. Caught between these two, we are in trouble indeed. Just as the Roman Empire was distressed by the conflict between these two, we of today are also suffering, and have made little progress beyond that day. True culture makes consciousness its foundation, and rejects instinctive, reckless, and blind thinking. That is why I challenge our age to awaken to full consciousness. With the conscious mind man has been wanting to follow God and Christ, but has not been able to do so because of his instincts. In the West these two tendencies have been apparent.

In the midst of that confusion a young man emerged in Assisi of Italy. He was a knight, handsome, gifted, skilful in making friends, given to sport and to sowing his wild oats. Until eighteen he was a prodigal son, but then he made a hard and fast resolution never again to surrender to blind instinct, and began a valiant endeavor to become a child of God. His name was Francis.

Endeavoring to enter into the Christ-life, he meditated on the Cross as the deepest and highest symbol of love. And they say that the marks of the Cross appeared upon his own breast. This is a famous story. After that Italy could not free itself from his influence. Wherever I went in Italy, the Roman Catholic churches did not have pulpits to preach in, but were places for worship. On their altars is the Cross, and behind it a picture, and usually one of Francis. In the cathedral of Milan, for instance, a magnificent marble temple big enough to hold a congregation of ten thousand, is a picture of him by Giotto. It is said that no other person has ever entered so thoroughly into the life of love which Christ lived, as St. Francis. Buddhism in Japan has been influenced by him. Nishida Tenko is a person who has tried to live a life like that of Francis. And among the Buddhists, Shinran Shonin, Ryokan, and others have lived lives similar to his.

What was it which transformed this wayward youth, who found the days too short to satisfy his craving for pleasure and for power, into a lover of little birds, a lover of nature, a lover of humanity? This noble personality was entirely the work of the Cross. We can discover the pure grace of God in a conversion as thoroughgoing as this one. We of this modern age ought to experience this sort of conversion.

We can study the Cross from many different aspects. We can consider the Cross as a social principle, for there must be a spirit of sacrifice if society is to advance. Again we may consider the Cross from the educational viewpoint, or from the standpoint of the emotions. The enthusiasm which the Cross inspires is a marvelous thing. When one meditates on the Cross, centering one's attention on it, what emotion sweeps through our souls! It is the Cross which gives us strength to endure sorrow and suffering! It is the Cross which

urges us on and challenges us to moral adventure! We are lost in adoration when we contemplate the scheme of life which is revealed in the Cross.

THE PLAN OF LOVE

Let us study the Cross as the principle of love. Man is part devil and part angel; he is capable of conscious choice, and at the same time he is a creature of blind instinct. I would like to let our minds dwell on the fact that, as children of God, we are able to grasp the fundamental meaning of the Cross for us, as his children. There is only one foundation principle; that is, love.

We think of love as like a longing for one's loved one, and indeed, the differentiation of sex takes its origin in this deep foundation principle of the universe. The universe is divided into male and female in order that the world may go on. The reason that amoebae do not evolve into something higher is because they reproduce by fission; new amoebae split off from the parent amoeba. But if you wish progress, there must be differentiation of sex. There had to be this marvelous arrangement of male and female in order to provide a starting point for the awe-inspiring process of evolution. God planned that his universe should progress through the human race, and in that plan love has its part.

In Christianity, therefore, the problem of sex is met in a reverent attitude because it arises out of the fundamental law of evolution, which is in turn a fundamental principle of the universe. Here we are in sympathetic accord with Jesus Christ, who said that a man would leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and they would become one. Christianity reverences marriage. It respects marriage and holds the highest ideals for it. Formerly Christianity was disliked because of its insistence on a high standard of morality, but it is generally recognized today that this principle of sex morality is a fundamental principle of development and progress. If we have a good heritage we are capable of progress to the point of becoming saints; yet because we take our ease before we reach the goal, we lose strength and power and regress. This is sin. We are inclined to think of sin as the infraction of some moral law, such as stealing, but it is sin for us, who should become the children of God, to be caught in a giddy whirl and cease to progress.

When, over and above that, our heredity is tainted by alcoholism, or with syphilis, the problem becomes even more complicated. For this reason there is nothing so sacred as the relations between the sexes. We should keep them as pure as though we were in God's presence. We should abandon all licentiousness. We must not treat sex as though it were half a joke. Hidden

within these mysteries is God's plan. It is not merely human love; it is God's love. We must become fully aware of this. God created the universe in such a way that it might progress through this love of God revealed to the human race.

That love keeps spreading out to society. It becomes sex-love, friendship, patriotism, and at last the love of the whole of society. All this is God's design. If love between the sexes sets forward the evolution of the universe, so does the love of society as a whole. All must put love into practice, working together with good will, each making his particular contribution towards the reorganization of society. Whether it be bookkeeping or an intellectual contribution, we must make our love thoroughgoing. We must learn to practice Christian love in our economic systems, in the educational world, in social matters, in every phase of life.

It is easy to understand this when we look at the educational world. No one individual can build up a university. One person studies optics, and produces a magnifying-glass. Another makes a study of atoms through that magnifying-glass. Another discovers some new truth about the cells of the brain, and thus there is advance. If there is selfishness, there is no advance. If we want freedom we must have love as the foundation principle.

If only we could learn simply to love one another, it would be the solution of our problems, but we are apt to seek rather our own selfish pleasure or advantage. We treat life lightly, as though it were play, and forget that love is ever welling up from the foundations of the universe, for love is the fundamental principle of the universe. When we grasp this principle, we realize that we must hold true to the course and strive to advance, be it ever so little, towards our goal. Christ's disciple, John, said, "We love, because God loves us" (I John 4:19). When we understand this love, we know how to love humanity.

When we meet someone to whom we are naturally attracted we say "I like so-and-so," and we think that we love him because of our own will-power, or because of our nature, but we must remember that the love which permeates the universe is making us love that person. It is God who makes us love in that way. Love is narrow at first, but it tends to widen and grow more and more inclusive until it becomes the love of all the universe. The more the world progresses, the wider our conceptions become. A man who has been concerned merely with his own family now begins to think in terms of his village. He becomes willing to serve as a member of the village or city council. Next he becomes interested in the problems of the prefecture, and is interested in becoming a member of the Prefectural Council; and then because he has

become concerned for his country as a whole, he runs for election to the Lower House of the Diet.

Suppose someone has done us a wrong. We are filled with a desire for revenge and all feeling that that man is human fades out of our thought. We are simply concerned as to how we can take our revenge; we may even plan to meet and kill our enemy. But when we look at that man as God looks at him, that is, from the standpoint of the universe as a whole, it is undeniable that he, though he may be my enemy, was born for some purpose and is useful in some way. Thus, by trying to get God's viewpoint, one may even come to love his enemy and to be filled with an eager desire to love those who hate and harass him.

Our love widens until it includes not only all humanity but all created things. When one examines a little mouse, he discovers that it is marvelously made, and when he stops to think that it is designed by God, love for the little creature wells up in his heart. That which is useless from the standpoint of a part may be quite essential from the standpoint of the whole.

This is the fundamental principle of love, and unless one enters into the conscious realization of the whole—that is, a conscious sharing of the viewpoint of God—it is impossible to understand it. If you examine the fingers of the hand each one by itself, they are not comely, but when the five fingers are all there, they are both shapely and useful. In the heart of the God of the universe, each child of his is as necessary to him as the fingers are to the hand. It is imperative to save each one, whether it be a little child, or a woman of ill-fame. In the marvelous design of the universe, not even a sparrow can fall to the earth meaninglessly.

THE RESTORATIVE POWER OF THE BLOOD

Those who have thought deeply on this love are the most useful to society and serve society as blood serves the human body. The blood is constantly circulating in the human body; if there is any injury anywhere, the blood repairs the damage. We call this regenerative process anagenesis, but that means merely that we possess powers of repair and renewal as well as powers of growth. This is the duty of the blood. If there are no individuals who undertake the work of the blood, the universe does not move forward.

Love has this restorative power; it does the work of the blood. This work of the blood is called in Christian teaching, the Cross. This is the blood of the Cross. There is no growth without the blood, nor is there any possibility of repairing the body, but through the work of the blood even contagious diseases can be cured, and the body which has wasted away can put on weight.

In the same way, those who have faults or defects may be restored through love.

Well then, if the blood has this function in the body, what is the work of those who represent the blood in society? It is their function to offer their lives as a sacrifice in order to serve others. Suppose that the oldest brother in the home is a profligate. If a younger sister takes care of her brother's children, and quietly and unobtrusively devotes herself to them, his faults are atoned for. Forgiveness becomes possible. A love that considers only its own advantage has no value to society.

Take for instance a labor union which makes an unsuccessful attempt to win some advantage from capitalism. When they are questioned by the police, the men disclaim all knowledge of the affair. But if the members of the union would hold together, no matter if they were defeated, and regardless of what sort of ill-treatment they received, or how cruelly they were punished, they would be fulfilling the work of the blood. Unless there is the conscious acceptance of the work of the blood, unless there is a conscious willingness to atone for the faults of others, there is no true union.

The blood circulates silently through the body. The people of this modern age are not willing to become the blood. There are many who want to serve society as the face serves the body. People today all want to become Prime Ministers. They all want to become "heads" of this or that. But if there is no one who has the desire to serve by healing the defects of others, in quiet, humble ways, even a home will fall apart. Sometimes when a man has been sent to prison, his wife will say she wants a divorce; she feels so disappointed in her hopes that she no longer wants to be his wife. She is usually convinced that he is at fault, and refuses to consider herself at all to blame. When the faults of others are disclosed openly, we disclaim all responsibility.

In South China it is the custom to run away from a dying person. It is said that this custom has arisen from the fact that it has often happened that a man would be given poison by another, who would wait near by until his victim was at the point of death. As soon as the man was dead, the murderer would search under the pillow of the dead man for his valuables. Therefore it has become the custom to flee from a dying person to avoid suspicion. But we must do exactly the opposite. We must strive to love the faults of men. We must try to atone for the defects of criminals, even to the point of shedding our blood for them. If a man's wife is given to shop-lifting, he must try to forgive her. St. Augustine said that even if a man's wife had committed adultery still he ought to forgive her.

We are utterly opposed to avarice. We are carrying on labor movements and village movements on behalf of the proletariat and the tenant farmers,

but the capitalists are also human beings, and therefore, if they are making mistakes, we must forgive them and do all we can to atone for their mistakes. Society will not grow unless we take this attitude. On the other hand, radical groups often threaten to overthrow the capitalists, to "do them up." If these men shared the feeling of God towards these capitalists, they would be eager to save them, and they would be convinced that if they did not save them, it would be an inexcusable offense towards God.

If one man commits a sin, the God of heaven and earth is grieved and that is why we must strive to lead such a one to a change of heart. This was Christ's attitude. We are opposed to capitalism and to the crimes and sins of the capitalist regime, but we must try to redeem its defects. It does not do to take an attitude of pure opposition, or to feel that we do not want capitalists in our churches. We should not censure them for having committed sin, but just because they have fallen into sin, we must save them. This is the fundamental principle which should be the starting point for our activities.

What if the blood were to take part in a class war? If the blood were to say, "I don't want to go to that detestable old head. I'll go only to the feet," and thus start a class war, the body would die. The blood must go anywhere, everywhere, without distinction. So with love. Unless it penetrates to every part of society, the nation cannot endure.

We stand absolutely for the right of every man to live, to labor, and the right to character. I stand for the universal right to livelihood, but if we who are taking the part of the blood by striving for the reconstruction of society were to be asked to participate in a strike here in Japan, I would be opposed to such a movement.* The people must become conscious of the blood and its redemptive work. We have a share in this sacrificial service to society. With the consciousness in our hearts that we are doing the work of the blood, we must willingly forgive crime, even the crimes of those who oppress us.

* Dr. Kagawa thinks that strikes are necessary in the very early stages of the development of the labor movement, but that they should be minimized after it is thoroughly organized. When the cooperative movement is strong, the labor union should be a producers' cooperative in that it has the service attitude toward other social groups rather than a controversial one. Especially does Dr. Kagawa deprecate the numerous strikes now being fomented both in Japan and the United States by communist agitators. In the beginning of his work with the labor movement in Japan he did support some strikes, but by 1921 he felt the movement had progressed far enough to do without striking. One of his associates, however, a man somewhat under the influence of communism, started the great general strike of Kobe and Osaka in that summer. Kagawa went into it to act as adviser and help prevent violence. He was imprisoned, along with a hundred other strike-leaders, at its close. It was at that time that he finished the novel, *Listening to the Walls*. After his release he informed the labor leaders that he would devote his time from then on for a while to organizing the farmers, and advised them, the laborers, not to strike any more. —H T [Helen F. Topping, translator.]

THE MEANING OF BLOOD

It was Christ's purpose to fulfil the function of the blood by love. That is the meaning of the Cross. The verse, "The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin," means just this. We must carry on the purifying work of the blood by going into the streets where the rogues live, and living with them; we must mingle with the prostitute women; we must make friends of the criminals, restoring and healing as the blood does, until crime disappears. When our blood becomes impure, the blood of Christ will cleanse it from impurity. There is in God a power which is eternally purifying, repairing defects, and cleansing once more that which has become corrupt. We must cherish the example of the Christ of the Cross, who lived this life of the blood.

For this principle did not take its origin from men; its source is in God. Faith in the Cross, faith in the blood, means that one asks for forgiveness because one believes in the love of God. One has faith in love, in God's love. If there is a real intention to receive the forgiveness of sin through love, to enter the experience of being born again, and to begin a new life, one is forgiven because of Christ's blood, no matter what sins or crime he may have committed.

The reality of love is the blood. Love must live again. It must wait till it lives again. This is faith. Those who have been saved through the blood of the Cross must from now on live the life of the blood; they must live the life of the Cross.

PRAYER

O God our Father: We thank Thee that through the blood of the Cross Thou dost cleanse our sins, forgive our shortcomings, and purify us. Even when we are in revolt against Thee, Thou dost have compassion on us. Even when we blindly grovel in sin, Thou dost have pity upon us. We praise Thy love which melts our hearts, hardened into rock by evil heredity and crime, and purifies and revitalizes them once more.

We confess the sins of our modern age. The world today has gone deep into partnership with crime; we are repeating the wickedness of the days of Rome. O purify us that we may enter more fully into the consciousness of the blood of the Cross and forgive the sins of men for the sake of the new age that is to come. Inspire us to strive to build a road of righteousness that man may walk thereon. Create us anew into men and women worthy of having received the redemption of the blood of the Cross and lead us so that we also may be able to live lives of loving service, lives actuated by the principle of the blood. We bless Thee for granting us redemption through the blood in this de-

praved age in which we live. The joy of redemption is more precious to us than precious jewels. Make us believe Thy mercy and cause us to stand on our feet, and bestir ourselves in cleansing our homes, and our nation. Give us the strength to purify our country, and our society. Cleanse our industries, purify us from the spirit of selfishly seeking the interests of our own class, and help us to enter into the feelings of the heart of God. Grant that we may hold fast, we beseech Thee, in unswerving determination to our resolution to follow the way of the Cross. We pray this through the blood. Amen.

Think Globally, Preach Locally: Constructing Vision in Twenty-first Century Congregations

by SALLY A. BROWN

Dr. Sally A. Brown, Elizabeth M. Engle Associate Professor of Preaching and Worship, delivered this Edwin H. Rian Alumni/ae Lecture on October 25, 2007, in Miller Chapel during the Princeton Theological Seminary's annual reunion.

You can find Princeton Seminary alumni everywhere, in nearly every country of the world. Sometimes you find them where you least expect to. I was wandering through an art gallery in a tiny town in Maine about a year ago and started chatting with the gallery owner. It turned out he was a Princeton Seminary graduate, class of '67 or so. While I was there, a local resident came in—a writer and publisher—and he, too, had studied here.

Princeton Seminary graduates can be found in an array of vocations, yet preparing women and men to lead the worship and witness of Christian congregations lies at the center of all we do. The newest class of Princeton Seminary graduates, the class of 2007, looked different from our honored reunion class of 1957. (I did not say “better,” just different.) For one thing, nearly half of the younger graduates were women. Many were Asian, African American, or Hispanic; a few came from other parts of the world. The class of 2007 looked different, and the world into which they went to take up their work—the world of 2007 and beyond—is different from the one that awaited the class of 1957.

Congregations pursue their life together in a different world than that of 1957. Their social, cultural, and religious environments have changed since 1957, and this is especially true for the Protestant churches in North America of what were once called the “main line” denominations. The heyday of those churches was 1957—but times have changed. The cultural and religious changes that have marked these past fifty years will only accelerate in coming decades.

In this talk, I will focus on the changed and changing cultural environments—and particularly the changed *religious* environment—that surround today's Christian congregations. I want to discuss what new tasks these changes place on the preachers' agendas. Specifically, I want to ask: how can those of us who preach do so *strategically*—in ways that help our congregations to engage their religiously diverse twenty-first century environment?

To answer this question, I will discuss several topics. First, I will very briefly sketch the changed and changing cultural and religious context within

which North American congregations pursue their public worship and public witness, speaking primarily from the perspective of North American congregational life—the expression of Christianity I know best. I recognize that some of you lead the church in other contexts, and I invite you to discern what similar dynamics operate in the contexts *you* know best. Next I will sketch some of the major responses that Christian congregations might make to the cultural and religious diversity that surrounds them. I propose that preachers have a crucial role to play in influencing a congregation's orientation toward those who are culturally and religiously "other." And finally, I will point to some specific strategies by which we can influence our congregations' ways of imagining and encountering those who are culturally and religiously different from themselves and discuss how we can do so with integrity and hospitality.

CHANGED CONTEXT OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Much attention has been given lately, and rightly so, to the challenges of "doing" church in the highly consumeristic, mobile culture that seems to cut across nearly every social stratum in North America. Where dual-career households are the norm, how do you recruit, train, sustain, and replace volunteers without competing too severely for precious family time? How do you develop giving with a generation of young people who do not place the priority on giving that their parents did, who may, in fact, be supporting their parents, may suffer from overextended credit, and may feel more loyalty to their local Starbucks than to their local church? How do you sustain Christian education among families who, if they are in town at all on a given weekend, are torn between the sanctuary and the soccer field?

These are the week-in, week-out challenges that pastors are facing, and they matter. But while I do not want to minimize the importance of these pressures, I want to broaden our horizon today and focus attention on three other factors that profoundly affect the worship and witness of congregations today: first, changing demographics in our society and in the wider church; second, the cultural disestablishment of the church in North American society; and third, the increasing religious diversity that frequently forms the backdrop of congregational life, not only in North American society but also around the world.

First—changing demographics. You know these facts, so I can be brief. By 2050, Americans of European descent will still be in the majority in the United States but by a much slighter margin. By midcentury or before, the largest minority in the United States will no longer be African American but

will trace their heritage to countries in Central and South America, and for many of them, English will continue to be their second language. Other large minorities will be Asian and Indian. The demographics of world Christianity are also changing. The vast majority of our brothers and sisters in faith today are neither of European descent nor mainline Protestant. It is worth noting that in the most recent past, more sermons were preached in the world in Spanish or in languages of the African continent than in English; Christianity is no longer a Northern European or Western phenomenon. As my colleague Dr. Cleo LaRue put it in a recent lecture, "Christianity is moving South and turning brown." What this has meant for his own work is that he has expanded the range of his research and writing beyond African American homiletics to record and reflect upon the preaching of persons of color around the globe—African American, Hispanic, African, Asian, Indian—and the preaching among the populations in the Pacific Rim and the Caribbean. The preaching of persons of color will dominate by midcentury. We who teach preaching today recognize that a new homiletical theory that does not assume preaching with a Western stamp is the norm.¹

A second major shift that influences North American congregational life today is what some observers have called the cultural disestablishment of the church, or the "post-Christendom" status of Christian witness today. Christendom—the long alliance of a particular Western cultural and political heritage with the authority, norms, and aims of the church—has broken down. The loosely termed Judeo-Christian consensus, which once could be counted on to form a backdrop of shared assumptions to fund public discourse in North America, no longer holds. While religious language about God, evil, and sacrifice is still invoked in political rhetoric, there are indications that the appeal to this rhetoric is somewhat less successful than it has been in the past. Religious language can no longer be counted upon to mobilize the general public toward political aims and actions.

Canadian theologian Douglas John Hall reminds us that disestablishment is not necessarily a bad thing. In a situation of disestablishment, congregations have the chance to define themselves and their mission afresh. "The Christian community is being required to live outside the protective walls of power and privilege . . . where its mission and message must authenticate themselves quite apart from any external props and pressures, rewards and

¹ Cleophus LaRue, unpublished lecture, Princeton Theological Seminary, October 17, 2007.

punishments,” Hall writes.² Unfortunately, he says, some congregations are slow to wake up to their disestablished status and tend to proceed as if nothing has happened.

A third major shift in the sociocultural “surround” of the church today is the increasing religious diversity of the world as a whole. In some European cities, Muslims and Hindus already outnumber Christians. The cultures of Western Europe and North America have probably always been more diverse than we have supposed, but the diversity becomes undeniable when the students with whom our children and grandchildren go to school are not only Jewish and Christian, but also Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, or of no particular faith. Included in this growing religious diversity are the ranks of those who consider themselves spiritual but claim no religious affiliation. Perhaps you saw the report in a recent *Christian Century* about the growing membership on campuses of the Secular Student Alliance—an association providing care and community for young secularists.³ Those in our pews must come to terms every day with a world of religious diversity.

NEGOTIATING A DIVERSE WORLD

Christian congregations and those who lead them have choices to make today about how they will relate to this diverse environment. As we know from the racial history of the churches in America, our track record is not stellar in terms of genuinely engaging those who seem racially or culturally different. Christian worship takes place in a situation of de facto segregation in most communities.

Religious diversity adds a new layer of challenge to the isolating social differences we already know—and it challenges us with particular urgency. We know all too well the long-lasting effects of September 11, 2001, on North American attitudes toward those of other faiths, especially Islam. Maybe you saw John Buchanan’s recent editorial in the *Christian Century* about North American views of Islam. Most Americans, Buchanan pointed out, have no idea that a sixth “pillar” has been added to Islam for American Muslims, and it is this: “Thou shalt condemn terrorism 5 times a day.” A Pew Forum survey showed that 70 percent of Americans believe Islam has little in common with their own faith, and 45 percent believe Islam advocates vio-

² Douglas John Hall, “Metamorphosis: From Christendom to Diaspora,” in *Confident Witness—Changing World: Rediscovering the Gospel in North America*, ed. Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 71.

³ “Century Marks: Religious Enigma,” *Christian Century* 124:21 (October 16, 2007): 6.

lence.⁴ Undoubtedly, this includes many who are active members of Christian congregations.

Homiletician Nora Tisdale, now at Yale University Divinity School, reminds us in her book *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* that congregations, like human individuals, have personalities and mindsets. Tisdale suggests that over time, congregations develop generally shared ways of understanding God and themselves, as well as generally shared ways of interpreting their world, especially their relationship to those who are culturally and religiously different from themselves. This set of attitudes and assumptions, supported by a web of practices and stories, is what Tisdale calls congregational imagination.⁵

Congregations tend to negotiate their relationship with those outside the congregation according to this shared congregational imagination that defines who they are, who those people beyond the congregation are, and what their relationship to those “others” ought to be. In other words, they operate with loosely shared, unspoken agreements about how the congregation will or will not engage its environment.

Of course, as all of you know as well as or better than I, congregations are not simple, monolithic blocks of consciousness. The job of pastoring a church might be simpler if they were. Represented in every pew are multiple views and opinions, personal histories, political and social commitments, hopes, fears, and pathologies. But experience also tells us that there really *are* dominant imaginative “lenses” or paradigms that characterize a congregation’s understanding of itself, of God, and of the world—particularly those cultures and religions that are different from their own.

Congregational leaders ignore this deep stratum of congregational imagination at their peril, warns Tisdale. Leaders need to do their homework, and nothing substitutes for listening—long, hard, and often—for the stories people tell as well as the ones they avoid telling, paying attention to the practices they treasure and the symbols they cherish. What language do congregation members use all the time, in committee meetings, and in prayer? What language do they never use? Only when we have taken time to understand a congregation’s language, stories, and practices do we begin to discern those critical points where congregational imagination can be affirmed, stretched, or challenged to enable the congregation to change the way it imagines itself and its role in the world.

⁴ John Buchanan, “Consequences,” *Christian Century* 124:1 (October 16, 2007): 3.

⁵ Leonora T. Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 110–21.

Twentieth-century philosophers of language suggest that our imagination of what is possible in the world is limited by the language we have available to describe it.⁶ Translated into congregational terms, that means that the only world we and our congregations can imagine, the only world we can navigate, is the world we can name. If available congregational terminology for those who are religiously different from ourselves is limited to words such as “pagan” or “unchurched,” we become oriented toward those neighbors in ways that have, to be honest, a certain adversarial quality about them.

ORIENTATIONS TO CULTURAL OR RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

It is possible to describe four basic orientations that characterize the ways congregations interact with their context, especially with those who are religiously different.

One way that congregations orient themselves to the religious diversity of surrounding culture is simply to act if it were not there or does not matter. But religious diversity *does* matter, and it is on our church doorsteps. If a congregation finds that growing numbers of its neighbors are Muslim, that congregation must learn how to converse with those of different faiths about common neighborhood concerns. If increasing numbers of the mothers and fathers bringing their children to the church’s day nursery school are Hindu, then religious diversity is already a daily fact within the embrace of the church’s outreach. Even if these situations still seem remote from a church’s experience, one need only consider the enduring impact of the events of September 11, 2001, on interfaith relations to understand how much religious diversity matters.

A second way that some congregations orient themselves to other religions today is to speak of other religions in terms of a brand of inclusivism. The least sophisticated version of this approach is the idea that “in the end, we really all believe the same thing.” At a more sophisticated level, though, inclusivism is an effort to establish an atmosphere of mutual respect among different faiths by limiting the interfaith conversation to a few mutually agreed-upon terms.

I want to distinguish this type of inclusivism from the very constructive statement “A Common Word,” released in 2007 by 138 leaders of the Muslim world, which explores the principle of love of God and neighbor found in the sacred texts of the three biblical religions of the world—Judaism,

⁶ For an accessible discussion of these issues, see Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 112–50.

Islam, and Christianity.⁷ Inclusivism more or less *limits* the conversation to a least-common-denominator language, which the “Common Word” document does *not* do. The chief weakness of inclusivism is that in its attempt to include all, it excludes much—in fact nearly everything—that is truly interesting and distinctive about the different religions that come to the table. Those who set the terms of these efforts run the risk of minimizing or misrepresenting the complexity and richness of the distinctive claims and practices that various communities hold dear. The version of Christianity that emerges from inclusivist accounts of it, for example, is nothing that most of us would recognize as our faith, and the same is true for other faiths.

A third alternative has had some persuasive spokespersons in recent years, and for that reason I will give it more attention. This is the stance of disengagement, to some degree, from one’s religious environment, a kind of deliberate circling of the Christian wagons. Driving a practical ecclesiology of disengagement is the conviction that the Christian congregation in relationship to its environment has the character of a contrast culture. The church has its own distinctive language, its distinctive root narratives, its particular worldview, and its distinctive shared practices. Therefore, rather than be alarmed at the religious otherness of our neighbors, we should emphasize and positively embrace our own religious otherness and distinctiveness. Our best response amid cultural diversity is to embrace more deeply our own particularities—to learn and speak our language, to teach and cultivate our practices, to be as religiously distinct as our neighbors.

This model has a certain appeal as well as certain strengths. Adopting a stance of relative disengagement has proven to have a remarkable social impact in some instances. Who could not be profoundly moved by the astonishing forgiveness practiced by the Amish community in the wake of the shootings of Amish schoolchildren at a schoolhouse in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania? Of course, in assessing such expressions of community witness, we should keep in mind that the separation of the Amish exceeds what nearly any other average Christian congregation would attempt—a social and economic rejection of the surrounding culture.

Yet even in its less radical expressions, disengagement has advantages. It presents a clear role for leaders: teach and tell the identity-forming stories, model and teach the core practices, protect the boundaries, and help my congregation members live and understand themselves as a people set apart. The countercultural congregation can feel very safe to its members: they

⁷ For complete information about this statement, see <http://www.acommonword.com> (accessed January 15, 2008).

share a common language and common practices. A tight web of supportive friendships provides stability in the face of the vicissitudes of life. Members sense there is a safety net of care in crisis.

Despite its appeal, however, this way of imagining the relationship between the congregation and its environment has limitations. Alvin Toffler has described the instinct that people have in times of social and cultural change for what he calls "stability zones"—places where things stay reliably the same.⁸ The temptation is tremendous these days for congregations to become just such "stability zones." Certainly, congregations need to be communities of reliable care to the stressed and distressed, places where one is known, taken seriously, and loved unconditionally. But if we allow our congregation members to imagine their life together as a religious "stability zone" amid the unsettling religious diversity of their world, we may not serve them well.

We run the risk of producing hothouse believers who can survive only when surrounded by the like-minded. The stability zone can therefore lead to congregations with little idea how to deal with the religious and cultural diversity of their neighborhoods, schools, or work places, and even congregations who become nervous about diversity within their own ranks. Social diversity and internal debate can be deeply threatening to communities constructed around consensus. Diversity of opinion within the community can be regarded as a threat, and where there is little room for difference, the different can be driven out for the sake of community survival.

Still more importantly, the person who is religiously "other" remains largely a stranger to such a community, categorized as the unbeliever or even, remarkably enough, regarded as "unchurched." The woman at the next desk at work who wears the veil and the turbaned shopkeeper down the street from the church may be objects of evangelistic concern, but they may be little known and little regarded in their own right as individuals credited with a coherent worldview or genuine love of God.

And perhaps the most telling strike against a practical ecclesiology of disengagement—one that holds itself aloof from cultural and religious diversity—is theological. At the heart of Christian faith is the belief in Incarnation, our belief in God's determination to come among us in utter love, and God incarnate in Jesus Christ is vulnerable and open to the other at the most radical level.

Instead of denial, or bland inclusivism, or some form of disengagement, consider a fourth alternative: hospitable engagement. British theologian

⁸ Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York: Bantam, 1984), 378.

George Newlands argues for a theology—and indeed a church—that opts deliberately and forthrightly to engage its social, cultural, and religious context. Newlands contends that the core dispositions of God toward the world are generosity and hospitality; together, these set the agenda for the church's engagement with a world of religious diversity. He writes: "Christology, more precisely the kenotic, vulnerable, generous Christ who is the incarnation of the self-giving, creative, responsive love of God, is a basis for public theology which is open to dialogue with all humanity, religious or non-religious."⁹ He goes on to say that "creation itself is God's first act of generosity; and reconciliation is the ultimate unconditional squandering of God's love for the *new* creation."¹⁰ The mission of God, the *missio Dei*, is one of love for the *world*. The mission of God continues in the mission of the church. Deeply engaged, self-risking love for the other remains the governing framework of the church's mission.

CONFESSIONAL FAITH

To be sure, engaging those who are culturally and religiously different from ourselves is not easy—it takes energy and persistence. It is so easy to fall back into our "stability zones," our like-minded enclaves—and I suspect that goes for Muslim and Jewish and Hindu communities no less than Christian ones.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, in his book *The Dignity of Difference*, argues for a mutual hospitality of faiths but does not imply that it is easy. "Nothing has proved harder in the history of civilization," he writes, "than to see God, or good, or human dignity in those whose language is not mine, whose skin is a different colour, whose faith is not my faith, and whose truth is not my truth."¹¹ He calls for religious and cultural conversation—"respectful, engaged, and reciprocal"—in which one confesses one's own faith in one's own language, listens as well, and is willing to be changed by the conversation itself.¹²

Engagement with those religiously different from ourselves does not require giving up our own beliefs any more than it requires settling for bland inclusivism, says theologian Hall. Instead, hospitable engagement requires us

⁹ George Newlands, *Generosity and the Christian Future* (repr. London: Redwood, 1997), 268.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 266.

¹¹ Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* (London: Continuum, 2002), 65.

¹² *Ibid.*, 86.

to speak (and preach) confessionally.¹³ Confessional faith, says Hall, is a personally owned description of one's faith that allows one to be transparent about internal and external struggle, a faith that enables one to take seriously alternative ways to understand God and does not require believers to shut their eyes to contrary evidence. When we *confess* our faith instead of defending it, we testify that we have been found by grace, but we do not pretend to have resolved every ambiguity or to have an answer to every objection.

Confessional faith is not monolithic, determined to crush all religious alternatives. It does not hide behind a barricade of formulaic pronouncements. Confessional faith takes the form of testimony. It is modest, rooted in that ambiguous place where revelation meets the vicissitudes of daily experience. Confessional Christian faith invites the faith confessions of others who understand and believe and practice differently, in a practice of what Shirley Guthrie has called "mutual testimony."¹⁴

PREACHING TOWARD HOSPITABLE ENGAGEMENT

Consider again the statistics I mentioned earlier about American attitudes toward Islam: 70 percent of Americans believe Islam has little in common with their own faith, and 45 percent are convinced that Islam advocates violence. Most are unaware of the Muslim declaration "A Common Word." These are the kinds of misimpressions and gaps in information that we preachers have the opportunity to challenge and change, week upon week. We need to seize these opportunities far more than we do.

Before I get to specifics, here are some general guidelines. By what we say and what we do not say, we can take care that we keep our congregations alert to the religious and cultural diversity around them, and we can be careful not to encourage our congregations to imagine that the church is a refuge from difference, a "stability zone." Instead, we can help our congregations to imagine the church as a place to learn skills of hospitable engagement with those who are culturally and religiously different from ourselves. We can help our congregations imagine the terms of that engagement as mutual confession, no party attempting to trump all other confessions and all other claims, no party seeking to dominate the conversation and unilaterally set its terms.

We can support the message of our preaching with leadership in other areas of the congregation's life. Theologian Paul Knitter suggests that much

¹³ Douglas John Hall, "Confessing Christ in the Religiously Plural Context," in *Many Voices, One God: Being Faithful in a Pluralistic World*, ed. Shirley C. Guthrie, Walter Brueggemann, and George W. Stroup (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 69, 75.

¹⁴ Shirley C. Guthrie, quoted in Hall, "Confessing Christ," 76.

would be gained if we would put shared praxis with communities of other faiths ahead of attempts to identify shared beliefs. For example, we can engage in mutual practices of peacemaking or compassion with different parties, undertaking that practice on the basis of quite different confessional narratives. We can *live* our way onto common ground instead of waiting to move until we have hammered out a theoretical platform of agreement acceptable to all parties.¹⁵

Let me close with some concrete advice for pastors who want to bring global thinking into their local preaching. (What, after all, is a homiletician for?)

A first step is to *broaden our own imaginations* of the world. We can hardly lead our congregations to imagine the world broadly and hospitably unless we are doing so ourselves. Fortunately, even those of us who do not have the luxury of world travel can use the World Wide Web creatively to bring the world into our studies with unprecedented ease. Make a habit, for example, of scanning beyond your favorite Web news services. Use Google or other search engines to search a specific news story that intrigues you, or to search a theme, or to follow up on an issue that seems to have dropped off of the main Web pages but might have far-reaching consequences. You can audio-stream newscasts from other parts of the world and read up on global issues from different angles of vision, such as from a Middle Eastern, Asian, or African perspective.

Discover what is being written by independent journalists or by women on subjects such as religion and violence, women and poverty, AIDS research, immigration, global trade, child labor, or hunger. If you can read the news in Spanish or German or French or any other language, all the better. Learn about Islamic peace organizations and initiatives. Do not avoid Web sites with political stances clearly different from your own.

The point, of course, is not diversity for diversity's sake or to pepper your sermons with tidbits from the Web just to show you are savvy. The point is to become more deeply acquainted with the diversity within and beyond North America, to hear less prominent voices, and to cultivate in ourselves and in our congregations a more adequate imagination of the global human community.

Second, *review a couple of years' worth of your sermons* and think carefully about what you are saying and what you are not saying. What we do not say shapes congregational imagination as surely as what we do say. You may

¹⁵ Paul Knitter, *No Other Name?: A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes toward the World Religions* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985), 205–31.

discover that you have been unwittingly reinforcing some negative stereotypes held by the congregation about persons of other faiths, or, at least, not challenging the stereotypes as effectively as you could.

For example, if I typically present only Christian believers as the representatives of compassion and justice in the stories I tell, I am constructing congregational imagination about a religiously diverse world in a particular way—whether I intend to or not. If the central characters of the stories I tell from the pulpit are all men, or all women, or all Anglo; if I never tell the story of a Hispanic or Asian church leader or saint or martyr, or if I am white and the only African Americans ever featured in my sermons are Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr.—as blessed as those names are—I am constructing congregational imagination in a particular way. Conversely, if I am African American but tell no stories of Christlike love exemplified by an Asian, Hispanic, or white individual, then I am constructing local congregational imagination in a particular way.

A third step is to take examples of human struggle and suffering—and also goodness and joy—from *the global community, including the religiously “other” global community*. Honor examples of courage and compassion that lie outside the local culture of the congregation, outside North American culture—and even outside Christianity.

I know some preachers believe this is a dangerous practice. Some fear that we diminish Christian faith by acknowledging that real compassion and insight arise in other faith communities. Yet I, for one, find persuasive Michael Welker’s suggestion that the promise of Spirit poured out on *all flesh* gives us at least some good grounds for expecting that the Spirit is active for human good in faith communities other than our own. Perhaps we suffer from too narrow a vision of what it means to long for the reign of God if we speak as if the only acts of courage and compassion that count in God’s eyes are those that are Christianly motivated.¹⁶

Fourth, *draw the biblical text into close relationship with contemporary global realities*. I still remember a sermon on the woman at the well that was preached here in the Seminary’s Miller Chapel. We know that story; we’ve grown comfortable with that woman at the well. But on this occasion, the preacher threw the familiar story into an entirely new framework. She placed that biblical woman of Samaria shoulder to shoulder with a contemporary woman of the very same region, the region that was once Samaria. She

¹⁶ Michael Welker, “‘. . . And Also Upon the Menservants and the Maidservants in Those Days Will I Pour Out My Spirit’: On Pluralism and the Promise of the Spirit,” *Soundings* 78:1 (Spring 1995): 49–67.

introduced us to this other Samaritan woman, a woman with intensely religious concerns: she introduced us to the first female suicide bomber in the Palestinian freedom movement. What does it mean today to be hungry and thirsty and to ask for a drink from such a woman of Samaria? For what does she hunger and thirst? What prejudices, what assumptions, must we shed if we really mean to speak of faith with her?

Finally, consider deliberately pursuing *partnership in a shared practice of compassion and justice with a culturally and/or religiously distinct congregation*. I know that many such partnerships exist between North American congregations and other Christian congregations all over the world. But consider the shared praxis of compassion with the community that is religiously other—preferably one close at hand, so that the experience is not reserved for the few who can afford to travel.

CONCLUSION

We preachers are, in a sense, stewards of congregational imagination. In this world of profound and sometimes unsettling cultural and religious diversity, we need to get to know the mind-sets and perhaps the fears of our congregations about those who believe and practice their faith differently than they. Where congregational imagination has become parochial, fearful, content with too small a horizon, we need to preach strategically to stretch that horizon of imagination.

The real world in which we Christians practice public worship and witness is a world of burgeoning cultural and religious diversity. We need to learn the art of modest, hospitable, confessional engagement. When we do, we will bear fitting witness to the God that we know in Jesus Christ, the One whose fundamental nature is hospitable, self-giving, self-risking love.

The Grateful Life

by WILLIAM STORRAR

"I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord. . . ."

1 Timothy 12–17

Psalms 50: 7–15

Luke's Gospel 17:11–19

Dr. William Storrar, Director of the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, preached this sermon at Princeton Theological Seminary's Miller Chapel on September 19, 2007. Dr. Storrar was formerly Professor of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology at the University of Edinburgh and is the author of Public Spirit: Connecting Citizenship and Discipleship in a Global Era (2006) and, along with Duncan B. Forrester and Andrew R. Morton, the editor of Public Theology for the 21st Century: Essays in Honour of Duncan B. Forrester (2004).

I am told that one of President Torrance's predecessors at Princeton Seminary, James I. McCord, the founder of my own Center of Theological Inquiry, used to walk around the Seminary campus firing this question at unsuspecting students: "What are you reading these days?"

I am sure it is a campus myth that new students at the Seminary were secretly prepped by seniors to reply: "Barth's Church Dogmatics Volume 4:3:2, sir!"

What McCord wanted to know, in fact, was whether his students were reading more widely than their course work and prescribed texts—he thought that budding pastors and theologians should also be in touch with the wider culture, reading the latest serious novel or controversial book on science in public debate. I don't know if it is still a presidential practice to ask that intimidating question of unsuspecting students walking innocently around the campus. (You have been warned!) But I have to tell you, quite seriously, that the late President McCord still asks that question of me every day.

Every morning, as I come in to work at the Center of Theological Inquiry, the portrait of the formidable founder of our research institution stares down at me. "Well, Mr. Director," those penetrating eyes seem to ask me, "what are you reading these days?"

That impassioned, urgent question that McCord loved to ask of us all is the reason he founded the Center of Theological Inquiry, almost thirty years ago now, in 1978. James McCord was deeply persuaded as a Christian in the Reformed tradition that all things hold together in the cosmic Christ of Colossians—the universe and humanity, the sciences and the humanities, popular culture and the arts, politics and the economy, new and emerging

fields of inquiry—all things hold together in Jesus Christ. That was why he wanted to know what his students were reading. Faith in this cosmic Christ demands of us that we expand our horizons of reading and learning beyond the curriculum to make sense of it all, including the curriculum. James McCord was an ecumenical statesman of the mid-twentieth century who believed that the church needed a place where theologians could pursue new fields of inquiry in dialogue with scholars in other fields—a Center of Theological Inquiry—because he knew that if you brought together outstanding research scholars who were reading across different fields and on the frontiers of our understanding, then that might just be the catalyst for a fresh and deeper grasp of the ways in which Christ Jesus our Lord, revealed in scripture, holds all things together.

McCord's vision of theological inquiry applies to the freshman student as much as to the seasoned scholar. The question is always the same, and it is relentless. What are you reading, beyond the curriculum? Tell us. Let's talk about it. How does it challenge your course work and reading? How does it turn the thinking of your discipline upside down, or show us things from a new angle, or bring into question hallowed, unexamined assumptions, or shed fresh light across the shadows of our limited understanding? Does your wider reading help you to grasp, in some small, faltering, flickering way, that in Jesus Christ all things hold together in profound and unexpected ways?

McCord's question has haunted me all summer as I have been reading this passage from the First Letter of Paul to Timothy, last Sunday's lectionary text, in preparation for preaching in chapel this morning. What reading have I done that I could bring alongside this portrait of the Apostle Paul in order to cast some fresh light not only on the text, but also upon the things to which it speaks as the word of God?

The portrait of Paul in I Timothy chapter 1, verses 12 to 17, is not an attractive one: "I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor and a man of violence." But it is strangely familiar to us today in the media. If you go out to the Borders bookstore on Route 1 in Princeton, as I did recently, you will see a new shelf of books in the religion section. Somewhere beyond the *Left Behind* series and C. S. Lewis, you will find a new popular genre of writing on religion. I call it "Books for Angry Unbelievers." You know what's on that shelf: Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion* and now Christopher Hitchens's new book, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. I think that the Paul portrayed in I Timothy would have been quite happy at one stage in his life to sit on that shelf with Dawkins and Hitchens, in the "Angry Unbelievers" section.

We first meet Paul in the New Testament when he is called Saul, an angry accomplice to a public stoning. You remember that the Book of Acts says that Saul approved of the brutal killing of the martyr Stephen for his public testimony to Jesus. Precisely as a devout Jew, a fervent believer in God, Saul is a furious unbeliever in this Jesus as God's chosen one. And so he turns his public anger against these believers in Jesus, as ferociously as any Dawkins or Hitchens, and worse than them, because Saul turns to violent persecution in his anger. And yet when we come across the later portrayal of his life in the New Testament, in the First Letter to Timothy, we meet a very different person, one who can testify: "I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor and a man of violence."

What brought about this change in Paul? Let us not be too quick to give the familiar Sunday School answer: his conversion on the Damascus Road. We Christians are always in danger of reducing the mysterious whirlwind of this angry unbeliever Saul into our own little box, neatly labeled "Paul." I remember hearing a preacher in my own Church of Scotland proclaiming to his congregation, with a patronizing air, "Of course, I disagree with Paul here," as if he were the new authority and Paul the dated thinker, when in fact the preacher had read nothing beyond the more radical critics in New Testament 101.

Contrast that smug and all-too-common attitude in the church with the view of Paul among some of the most brilliant minds of our time. Remember that for every angry atheist speaking up for unbelief today there is an intrigued searcher after Paul. George Steiner, a leading European scholar of comparative literature, once remarked that he could just about comprehend the creative process by which Shakespeare came home for lunch one day and announced, "I have just written *King Lear*!" But the conversion portrayed here in I Timothy, the conversion that led Paul to write his Letter to the Romans, was beyond Steiner's intellectual grasp, he said. It left him in awe and wonder as a literary critic when he read its consequences in Paul's epistles. Hearing Steiner on the literary consequences of Paul's conversion, I begin to have a deeper grasp of the mystery and world-changing consequences of Saul's transformation under the relentless questioning of the Risen Christ. Reading Steiner, I begin to understand afresh why the world changed again when a Luther or a Barth was gripped by that same Letter to the Romans.

When Jacob Taubes, a distinguished Jewish philosopher of religion at the Free University of Berlin, was dying of cancer in 1987, he insisted on

traveling to Heidelberg to deliver his final lectures, so ill that in the day between delivering them, he had to go into the hospital's intensive care unit. What drove him to this final act? Before he died, he said, he was determined to lecture on Paul as that most Jewish of thinkers: exactly the Jewish Paul who could end his meditation on Christ Jesus his Lord in this passage from I Timothy with these words of praise, surely echoing the ancient doxologies of his own people Israel: "To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

By reading the philosopher Taubes on Paul as a Jewish thinker of such importance that he devoted literally his last days of life to lecturing on him, I am confronted afresh with the mystery beyond fathoming, the grace beyond measure, that this Jewish Paul should long to bring me, a Gentile, the light of his people Israel, and enable me, a Gentile, to join in this song of praise to Israel's God.

At the heart of this passage from I Timothy chapter one, in verse 15, there is that great declaration: "The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost." I did not grasp something of the measure of this saying until I read the novel *Silence* by the Japanese Catholic writer Shusaku Endo (at the encouragement of President Torrance, it should be said, many years ago in Aberdeen). It is the story of a Jesuit missionary who is sent to Japan during a period of persecution of the Christian community there, when the Japanese rulers had closed the country's borders to all Westerners. The missionary is eventually captured by the Japanese authorities and held in prison. During the night, he hears the cries of the Christian peasants he once served as a clandestine priest, now being tortured for their faith. He is told by the authorities that if he stamps his foot on an image of Christ in renunciation of his faith, then the villagers will be spared. All through the night he wrestles with this dilemma. If he stamps on the image of Christ, he will save the villagers, but he will also renounce his own calling as a Jesuit priest and be disowned by his order, an outcast himself. In the end, he decides to trample on the image to save the tortured peasants. But as he raises his foot to do so, the image of the crucified Christ cries out to him: "Trample, trample, for this I came into the world."

With this story and these words, the Japanese novelist helped me to see the extent of the trustworthiness of Paul's declaration to us here: "The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Trample, trample, for this I came into the world." Finally, I was left with Paul's opening words: "I am grateful to Jesus Christ our Lord, who

has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service.”

What could I read, what had I read, to cast light on this aspect of Paul’s portrait here, his gratitude to Jesus Christ for rescuing him from his wrecked life and giving him the dignity and purpose that his life lacked? Morning after morning, as McCord’s eyes greeted me this summer, they seemed to be saying to me: “Well, what have you learned from all your reading about Paul’s gratitude for a life restored?” All the usual stories of gratitude for the generosity of others seemed banal compared with Paul’s gratitude for so great a salvation. But then I remembered reading the stories of two women of faith told, surprisingly, by two secular philosophers, and then I grasped again something of Paul’s grateful life.

Raimond Gaita is an Australian philosopher whose family arrived in that country as immigrants from Romania after the Second World War. Both his parents suffered from mental illness in his childhood and he has written movingly of this experience in a little book, *Romulus My Father*, now made into a movie, which I commend to you. Gaita shows an extraordinary empathy with those such as his parents, who suffer with mental illness. But where did he learn that? In a mental hospital in Melbourne, he recounts, in one of his philosophical writings, where he worked as a seventeen-year-old care assistant in the 1960s, helping to wash and clean the patients. At first he thought that the young progressive psychiatrists in the hospital, who were campaigning for reforms and always speaking about patients’ rights, were the noble friends of the mentally ill. Then one day, he writes, a nun came around the wards and showed the young Gaita something he had never seen before, unconditional love for the mentally ill as fellow human beings, without any condescension. This is what truly rescued these vulnerable human beings from their incarceration in a failed hospital system: not just the badly needed reforms of the doctors but the unconditional love the nun showed to these fellow children of God. This is what turned Gaita the psychiatric technocrat into a philosopher of gratitude for our common humanity.

Reading Gaita’s story of the nun in the mental hospital, I begin to understand the unconditional love in Jesus Christ that gripped Saul the violent persecutor and turned him into the strong and faithful servant called by God to bring the gospel to the hated Gentiles.

And finally, another secular story of the grateful life. Tom Nairn is a leading theorist of globalization. He also happens to be Scotland’s leading atheist thinker. But this atheist intellectual is no Richard Dawkins or Christopher Hitchens. In a short essay, he movingly describes going to a hospital to visit an elderly friend who is dying. This elderly lady had befriended Nairn

when he had been a struggling intellectual living in her village. She was a pillar of the church in the village, Nairn writes, and had no time for his atheism. But she was also his friend. It was "like having a small, bullying angel on one's side," he writes, "but on my side she remained over years of setback and failure, and in the end of shipwreck." Reading Nairn the atheist's words of deep gratitude for the unfailing love of his village angel, who rescued him from years of setback and failure and shipwreck, I begin to grasp again something of Paul's gratitude to Christ Jesus our Lord, whose unfailing patience and mercy stood by him through those times of blasphemous and violent unbelief and rescued him from shipwreck.

What are you reading? It turns out that McCord's question is in the end not about a life of theological inquiry so much as it is about a life of gratitude. The heart of the scholarly life is the grateful life. It is gratitude that drives the deepest inquiry into the human condition, the meaning of the universe, the problem of suffering, and the purpose of living. Paul knew that. As we come to this holy table, and the Great Thanksgiving, may we too know it. Thinking this semester begins with thanking our Savior and discovering in all his works and in all our reading the saying that is sure and worthy of full acceptance: Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Thanks be to God.

Memorial Minute for W. J. Beeners

by CHARLES L. BARTOW

Dr. W. J. Beeners, Carl and Helen Egner Professor of Speech Emeritus, who taught speech at Princeton Theological Seminary for forty-seven years, died on Tuesday, June 26, 2007. Dr. Charles L. Bartow is the Carl and Helen Egner Professor of Speech Communication in Ministry at the Seminary. He delivered this memorial to Dr. Beeners at a meeting of the faculty of the Seminary on October 10, 2007.

He'd read with profit the works of Barth, Brunner, and Tillich, and he frequently spoke appreciatively of the thought of theologian-ethicist Paul Lehman. Among the homileticians of his time, he admired most his colleague Paul Scherer. Paul Scherer and J. Christiaan Beker enlisted his services in teaching with them the remarkably demanding, yet popular, interdisciplinary course "Preaching from Romans." But he was primarily an intuitive practical theologian, adept at provoking students to serious critical reflection on the theology implicit in their own and others' readings of scripture, preaching, worship leadership, and administration of the sacraments. He stressed the eventfulness of these ecclesial practices and took strong exception to sermons that, for example, as he put it, appeared to be "embalmed and put on view." The public character of his reformed piety was shaped primarily by his careful ministerial and pedagogical use of the 1946 *Book of Common Worship* of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

As regards the eternal Word of God that, in the beginning, was with God and was God, he found its attestation in the Hebrew scriptures compelling for his own development as a person of faith and as a minister of the gospel. Above all, he cherished the psalms that he recorded for syndicated radio broadcast. I still remember vividly his desperately prayerful reading of Psalm 22, his voice capturing the voice of the psalmist's perduring trust compassed by menace.

He loved the church and its Lord with a passion as fervent as his zeal for life itself. And he was not a man of modest temperament, talent, belief, or appetite. Nor was he lacking in ambition and discipline. Like Olivier playing Lear while dying of cancer—this I myself saw—Beeners more than once rose above pain and debilitation through sheer force of will to take charge of a platform or pulpit moment with a seeming ease and thoughtful dexterity that astonished. One might ask, what within him could account for such a thing? His own reply—"cussedness." He was the master teacher of speech, and he

DR. W. J. BEENERS, CARL AND HELEN EGNER PROFESSOR OF SPEECH
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DR. W. J. BEENERS (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHUCK ROBISON, APRIL 24, 1988.)

was, no less, the master practitioner of what he taught. His presence could be at once daunting and charming.

Wilbert John "Bill" Beeners was born on May 19, 1921, to William and Sophia Beeners of Lennox, South Dakota. His first language was not English but German—Hochdeutsch, he insisted. At Lennox High School he excelled in oratory, debate, and athletics. He was awarded a university football scholarship but forsook the gridiron for the stage. After graduation from the University of Dubuque in Iowa, he acted and did stage carpentry for the Shakespearean theatre of Bayview, Michigan. In 1944 he enrolled in Princeton Theological Seminary, but he left the Seminary for service in the Merchant Marine during the final months of World War II. He was ineligible for the US Navy because of a severe leg injury sustained during the wrestling scene in his performance of the part of Orlando in *As You Like It*. At war's end, Bill returned to the Seminary and received his Master of Divinity degree in 1948. That same year he was ordained to the gospel ministry in the Presbyterian Church and received an appointment to the faculty to teach speech at Princeton Seminary, whose president at that time was John Alexander Mackay.

Making use of his considerable skill in carpentry and allied crafts, Bill Beeners, with his own hands, built Princeton Seminary's first speech and media studios on the third floor of Stuart Hall. "Cardiac Hill to Beenersville" was what President James Iley McCord later called it. Beenersville became a legend, as did the speech teacher who built it. In Beenersville, habits of speech ill-suited to clarity and integrity in the public reading of Holy Scripture, leadership in worship, and preaching were each given frank and exacting critiques, and corrective interventions were initiated. These critiques and interventions were undertaken on the basis of Beeners's precise knowledge of vocal production, articulation, phonetics, studies in the emerging discipline of kinesics (with special reference to the empirical researches of Ray Birdwhistell at the University of Pennsylvania), the elocutionist and expressionist traditions in speech education, the then current developments in oral interpretation and the oral study of literature (or, later, performance criticism), and his own carefully honed hermeneutical sensibilities and theological convictions.

If W. J. Beeners's first language was Hochdeutsch, his personal taste in spoken English tended toward what Margaret Prendergast McLean in the early 1950s identified as *Good American Speech*. Bill looked for intelligibility, though, rather than adherence to an inarguable standard of correct pronunciation and articulation. He likewise took to the notion of "good readings" of texts as opposed to any fixed standard of "right readings." So too, he drew

from but was never in thrall to prescriptive theories of oral interpretation. He was all for rigorous scholarship that informed practice and criticism, but he resisted what he considered the systematizing and academizing of speech.

Above all, W. J. Beeners had little concern with externals and no patience for expressive technique that drew attention to itself and thus to the speaker herself or himself. As he often said, "Nobody wants to waste time listening to somebody listening to himself." He also favored content over style and delivery. He insisted, again in his own words, "You can't say 'nothing' well." On the other hand, he also had no patience with the notion that what felt natural to the speaker was, in fact, natural. What felt natural could be merely habitual, a bad habit at that. "Natural," he said, "does not mean habitual. It means true to the nature of things." And careless habits of vocal usage or physical comportment could draw attention away from thought and to the speaker as readily as masterful expressive technique in service to itself.

Dylan Thomas observed, "... the voice discovers the poet's ear. ...". Likewise, Bill Beeners asserted that "speech begins with the ear, not with the mouth." Or again, "impression precedes and exceeds expression" if what is expressed is to be believed as, in fact, understood and believed by the speaker. So also, therefore, as Beeners observed, "the secret of poise is pause," a capacity for what Beeners's friend and colleague Bill Brower called "public solitude." And for one last slang-precise Bill Beeners aphorism to sum up the matter of expressive technique in relation to thought, "You can't give what you ain't got."

Bill Beeners's pedagogy in speech was focused more on the student than on the subject. He thus broke up all of his classes into small sections of seven to ten students no matter what the course enrollment. His elective "The Spoken Word in Worship," for instance, typically had an enrollment in excess of one hundred students. That meant he had a minimum of ten sections, plus three or more sections of the basic speech course, and a number of preaching practicums. In his day, preaching practicums always were team taught by both a speech professor and a professor of homiletics. Bill—and his speech colleagues too—thus often taught what now would be considered a double load, at times even a triple load, of class hours per week. He also was convinced of the importance of personal evaluative conferences, individual instructor-led reviews of audiotaped or videotaped work, and voice and diction drill sessions. In fact, in the late fifties and early sixties, Bill himself held half-hour private drill conferences with every single junior. I remember well my conference with him, and I have never forgotten, nor have I ceased to be grateful for, all I learned from him about voice, about text, about self,

about ministry. Worth mentioning too is Bill Beeners's service to the Seminary as Acting Dean of Instruction in the late sixties and early seventies.

All this Bill did while preaching on weekends, giving lectures in churches on personal communication and Christian faith, addressing business leaders on communications issues in interpersonal relations, serving on presbytery committees and denominational bodies such as the General Assembly Council on Mass Media, and teaching part time at New Brunswick Seminary, at the Salvation Army training center in Suffern, New York, and in the US Army chaplaincy training program. Thus, by vocational choice, and not inadvertence, W. J. Beeners left us no body of published work by which scholarly attainment in academic fields commonly is assessed.

What Bill Beeners did leave us, however, is a church (in the most ecumenical sense of the term) full of ministers and grateful congregants who have profited, probably for the most part in immeasurable ways, from the trek of so many seminarians up "Cardiac Hill to Beenersville," and, in the last days of Bill's tenure, down the hill to Templeton Hall. The extent of that profitability and gratitude has been celebrated, at least in part, in the two thick, bound volumes of letters from Princeton Seminary graduates who, by invitation, wrote Bill only weeks before his death to thank him for what he meant to them as they learned to come to terms with themselves as communicators and to achieve clarity in the public speaking tasks associated with the ministry of Word and sacrament. As his wife, Hanneke, and his children informed me, Bill read aloud, through tears, every single one of those letters, all the while expressing heartfelt gratitude for the affirmation given and the kindness shown.

The Reverend Dr. W. J. Beeners (Bill's honorary Doctor of Divinity degree was from the University of Dubuque and was awarded him in 1960) is survived by his wife, Hanneke Calmon-Beeners; his children, Susan Beeners, Sally Beeners Tanis, and Brian Beeners; and their spouses. He also is survived by his stepchildren and grandchildren by his former wife, Dorothy Presnell Beeners, and by his sister, sister-in-law, nieces, and nephews, and their families. Not least, he is survived by those of us here gathered, some of whom he mentored in ministry and in the teaching of speech for ministry, and who cannot begin to express the full extent of what he is owed for what we are about in service to the servants of the Word.

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