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Is the Exodus Narrative about Freedom?

Lecture from Spring Academy 2013

Brooks Schramm

Good morning to you all.¹ The term “freedom” or “liberty” has been much in the air this week here at the Seminary, and it has been examined from many different perspectives. By way of disclaimer, I want to make it clear that I am all for freedom, that I am a big fan of freedom, and that in terms of contemporary issues and debates I take my bearings from the Bill of Rights.

When Mark Oldenburg asked me to do something on the topic of “freedom” from the perspective of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament, I thought it might be interesting to pursue this question from the perspective of a story that is widely known, and that is often understood, interpreted, and preached under the very rubric of freedom, namely the Exodus Narrative. I would like our time together this morning to flow very much like a classroom experience, meaning that we will try to keep this as informal as possible, and that it is completely appropriate for you to ask questions of me as they arise. In fact, I really hope you do so. But, just as in the classroom, I reserve the right to ignore your questions whenever I see fit.

Exodus and “Freedom”

Is the Exodus narrative about freedom? What do you think? My answer is: Yes, and No. Actually, a little bit Yes – but mostly No. The End. That’s it. That’s all I’ve got.

A little bit Yes – but mostly No. I say this in spite of the fact that if you were to ask basically any average Jew or any average Christian to describe the “movement” of the Exodus story, the answer that both would give is most likely something like this:

The story of the Exodus is a story of movement
 from slavery,
 from bondage,
 from servitude,
 to freedom.

And the average Jew and the average Christian derive this idea not just from the Exodus narrative itself but also from important passages in our respective liturgies, where this precise language is actually used. Take, for example, the *Flood Prayer* from the Christian liturgy of baptism:

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight. Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family, and through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By the baptism of Jesus' death and resurrection you set us free from the power of sin and death and raise us up to live in you.

On the Jewish side, note the wording of the *Maggid* prayer from the Passover *Haggadah*:

Behold the bread of affliction, which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Everyone who is hungry, let them come and eat; everyone who is in need, let them come and celebrate the Passover. Now we are here; next year in the land of Israel. Now we are slaves; next year free people.

...

In every generation it is incumbent on a person to regard themselves as having come forth from Egypt, as it is said: "And you shall tell your son on that day, 'It was on account of this that the LORD did to me when I came out of Egypt'" (Exod 13:8). The Holy One, blessed be he, did not redeem our fathers alone but also us along with them, as it is said: "Us he brought out from there, in order to bring us and to give us the land sworn to our fathers (Deut 6:23)." Therefore it is incumbent on us to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, honor, bless, magnify, and praise the One who did all these miracles for our ancestors and for us. He brought us out from slavery to freedom, from grief to joy, from mourning to a festival day, from darkness to a great

light, from servitude to redemption. Let us say a new song before him: Halleluia.

In both traditions, Christian and Jewish, there is indeed strong warrant for conceiving the heart of the Exodus narrative as a movement from slavery to freedom, and thus to think of the term – freedom – as the most appropriate catch-all rubric for the story of the Exodus. What is the Exodus narrative about at its most basic, fundamental level? "It's obvious, isn't it?" "It's about Freedom." "Exodus means Freedom." "Exodus implies Freedom." "Exodus and Freedom are synonymous."

My initial point here in setting this up is not to claim that this understanding of Exodus is completely false, or completely wrong-headed, because there is certainly a measure of truth in this description. The language of "liberation" – of "coming out" – of "coming out from under" – is clearly there in the narrative and marks the narrative at certain key junctures. My initial point is simply this: to make this description *the* most concise condensation of the message of Exodus is to miss something essential – something crucial – that the book itself holds at the center. And what I want to suggest to you is that that "something essential" that the book itself holds at the center is not freedom as such. My task this morning is to try to show you what that "something essential" is and why the distinction is important.

The Structure and Nature of Exodus

In order to approach this question, a few comments about the structure and peculiar nature of the book of Exodus itself are in order. Exodus is the second book of the Torah or Pentateuch, and it is quite distinct over against the book that precedes it, Genesis. What makes the book of Exodus distinct from its predecessor? What marks it as different? 1] Whereas Genesis was a collection of stories about the individual patriarchs and matriarchs, beginning with Exodus the narrative focuses on the people Israel, that is, it focuses on the coming-to-be of that people as a people. 2] In Exodus, the way in which God's actions are described undergoes a change as well. Rather than working behind the scenes in the ups and downs of family life – as God is portrayed as doing throughout the book of Genesis – in Exodus God's actions now move much more onto the public stage. In this respect, Exodus shares numerous parallels with the theology of the Prophets.

If one were to take the time to ponder the basic structure of the book of Exodus, though, one would readily perceive that the book is a rather odd conglomeration of thoroughly diverse kinds of material.

I] 1:1—15:21	The Deliverance Narrative
II] 15:22—18:27	In the Wilderness
III] 19—24	Covenant and Law
IV] 25—31	Blueprint for the Tabernacle
V] 32—34	Infidelity and Reconciliation
VI] 35—40	Building of the Tabernacle ²

The experience of the Exodus – the story of the Exodus from Egypt in its general parameters – is marked at literally every level of the literature of the Hebrew Bible. And one can say without exaggeration that no theme is as pervasive in the entirety of the Hebrew Bible as is that of the Exodus. In contemporary terms, it is a constantly “trending” theme in the Bible. But there is a density to the book of Exodus itself that makes the book read quite differently from a straightforward historical narrative. The best description I have read of the peculiar nature of the book of Exodus comes from Everett Fox. In his magnificent translation of the Pentateuch, called *The Five Books of Moses*, Fox writes as follows about the book of Exodus:

A hypothetical analogy, based on American history, may help to shed light on the historicity of Exodus. Imagine a book based on the following outline: first, a section on the American Revolution, with some biographical material on a few of the Founding Fathers, focusing mostly on the outbreak of the war and key battles; second, a description of the Constitutional Convention, including some of the more important speeches and discussions; third, the text of the Constitution itself; and finally, L'Enfant's original blueprints for the building of the new capital, Washington, D.C., interspersed with accounts of the first few presidents' inaugural addresses. What would be the underlying message of such a book? We are certainly dealing here with more than a straight journalistic description of the events, more than a legalistic discussion of constitutional law, and more than a technical presentation for architects. Such a book would actually be presenting the ideals of America's self-image: a nation founded on the willingness to fight for particular rights against Old World tyranny, established under democratic laws based on reason and providing governmental checks and balances, and whose ideals would be embodied in the construction of a brand-new, centrally located capital city that used classically grounded forms of architecture to express grace and reason as the basis for the new society.

Now this portrayal is very simplistic, but it gets its point across (and I would be willing to wager that, somewhere in this country, there exists a school textbook written along these lines). In a similar manner, although with much more weight given to God's role in the process, the book of Exodus unfolds. The dramatic story of Israel's deliverance from bondage, coupled with Moshe's own early development, is only the first part of the book, and accounts for less than half of it. It is followed by several stories of desert wanderings, and then by a presentation of the covenant made between God and Israel at Sinai, against a stunning natural backdrop. The second half of the book enumerates a series of laws which constitute the covenant, and the details of construction of a portable sanctuary designed both to symbolize and actually to accommodate God's presence among the Israelites (with the interruption of a major rebellion). So, like our theoretical American model, Exodus conveys far more than information about events. It is, rather, the narration of a worldview, a laying out of different types of texts bearing the *meaning* of Israel's historical experience.³

4 → *Leitwörter*

Given the way in which the Exodus narrative has so often been interpreted – in terms of the simple dichotomy between slavery and freedom, or between bondage and liberty – it may come as a bit of a surprise to learn that words for “freedom” and “liberty” are actually extremely rare in the Hebrew Bible. In fact, biblical Hebrew nouns that could reasonably be translated as “freedom” or “liberty” are virtually non-existent. We know that ancient Hebrew did develop a word for “freedom,” חֵירוּת (hērūt; the word that we saw in the Passover liturgy earlier), but the word does not occur in the Bible. The term חֵירוּת – or freedom – actually shows up for the first time in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and then on Jewish coins minted during the First and Second Revolts against the Romans. As it is used on these coins from the two revolts, it clearly carries the implication of national independence.

When I was teaching Biblical Hebrew on a regular basis, one of the things that I always included in the course syllabus under the Rationale was the claim that “expertise in the Hebrew language has the inherent capacity to bring joy to one's life.” I wrote that not in order to be cute but because I really believe it. One of these great joys of learning Hebrew and learning it well is the discovery of how the biblical writers loved to use what Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig called *Leitwörter* (leading-words). This term, *Leitwörter*, which Buber and Rosenzweig coined as part of their massive

project of translating the Hebrew Bible into German, was actually a borrowing on their part of Richard Wagner's musical term, *Leitmotiv*. Buber and Rosenzweig were highly conscious of the fact that the biblical writers love to repeat certain key or leading words "to signify major themes and concerns, like recurring themes in a piece of music."⁴ This crucial stylistic characteristic of the biblical writers is not to be seen as merely a static process, as a mechanical or wooden repetitiveness. A leading-word may appear "in different forms and contexts," with slightly changed meaning, and this subtlety – this slight change – is what lends "a sense of movement and development to the text and its characters."⁵

Just one example of what paying close attention to *Leitwörter* – leading-words – can do for better understanding the biblical text is the famous essay of Martin Buber, "Abraham the Seer." In this essay, Buber discovered that the entire story of Abraham, from Genesis 11-25, is saturated with various usages of and plays on the Hebrew verb "to see." And then the whole thing culminates in the story of the "Binding of Isaac" in Genesis 22, with word-plays on the Hebrew verbs "to see" and "to fear," words which are visually quite similar in Hebrew, and which are often confused by beginning Hebrew students. Here is a brief excerpt from Buber's essay where he deals with Genesis 22.

[The verb, "to see"] appears here [in Gen 22] more often than in any previous passage. Abraham sees the place where the act must be accomplished, at a distance. To the question of his son, he replies that God will provide ([literally:] "see to") the lamb for the burnt offering. In the saving moment he lifts up his eyes and sees the ram. And now he proclaims over the altar the name that makes known the imperishable essence of this place, Mount Moriah: YHWH Will See God sees the human being, and the human being sees God. God sees Abraham, and tests him by seeing him as the righteous and the 'whole' man who walks before his God (17:1), and now, at the end of his road, he conquers even this final place, the holy temple mountain, by acting on God's behalf. Abraham sees God with the eye of his action and so recognizes Him, just as Moses, seeing God's glory "from behind," will recognize Him as Gracious and Merciful.⁶

What is the point? By doing nothing more than paying close attention to this single leading-word, Buber was able to elucidate a depth dimension of the Abraham story that is clearly in the text itself. But there is a large problem here for those who only read the Bible in translation, and particularly

only in English. As a rule, English translators of the Bible *translate away* this absolutely crucial stylistic aspect of the biblical writers. That is to say, they translate away the *Leitwörter* or leading-words. Why? Because repetition supposedly sounds clunky in English, or so we have been taught at least since the third grade. But clunky or not, what gets lost in the process, one might say, is the heart and soul of the original Hebrew text.

Why do I bother telling you all of this? Because the Exodus narrative is no exception here. It too makes use of a number of leading-words, words that so often get translated away in English. But I would like to suggest to you that there is one leading-word – in its various manifestations – that is *the* leading leading-word in the "Deliverance Narrative." Exodus 1-15. Any guesses as to what it might be? The leading leading-word is built off of the root – עָבַד (ʿavad) – to serve, to be a servant, to be a slave, etc. (N.b., biblical Hebrew does not distinguish between "servant" and "slave"). Take the following example of differing translations of Exod 1:13-14, one that pays attention to leading-words and one that does not:

NRSV

The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

Everett Fox

So they, Egypt, made the Children of Israel subservient with crushing labor; they embittered their lives with hard servitude in loam and in bricks and with all kinds of servitude in the field – all their service in which they made them subservient with crushing-labor.

The point I want to make here is that this kind of thing happens with regularity throughout the "Deliverance Narrative" and provides us with the central clue as to what the narrative itself wants to be about. You would, however, never know this if you were reading only the NRSV.

Think back to where we started this morning, where we sketched the common way of describing the story of the Exodus in terms of a simple dichotomy: from slavery to freedom. But when one follows the Leading-Word – עָבַד (ʿavad) – throughout the narrative, that simple dichotomy simply breaks down and does not hold up. And what emerges as central appears, at least at first glance, to be quite odd. As odd as it sounds, the "movement" that the Exodus narrative describes is not at all one from ser-

vitute to freedom, but rather one from servitude to servitude. Or, stated differently, the question that the narrative is pursuing can be stated in any of the following ways:

Whose people is Israel?
 To whom does Israel rightfully belong?
 Who is Israel's rightful Master or Lord?
 Whose servant is Israel?

The Other Half of the Story

The reason that the dichotomy of slavery and freedom does not hold up in regard to the Exodus story is because it is only one half of the story. It is only a half-truth. Telling half of the story – half of the truth – is something characteristic of human re-telling. Think, for example, of what has happened to one of Martin Luther's most provocative lines. It is a line that he wrote to Philip Melancthon in a letter of August 1, 1521, from the Wartburg Castle. What gets "retold" by Lutherans is the first half of the line: "Pecca fortiter" // "Sin boldly." But does anybody even remember what the second half of the line is? "Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe and trust in Christ even more boldly, for he is the victor over sin, death, and the world."⁷

I submit to you that a similar thing has occurred with a central, repeated line in the Exodus narrative. Ask an average, biblically literate person the following question: What did God tell Moses to tell Pharaoh? "Let my people go!" will be the normal response. But listen to the passage in full, Exod 4:21-23 (Fox):

YHWH said to Moshe: When you go to return to Egypt, see: All the portents that I have put in your hand, you are to do before Pharaoh, but I will make his heart strong-willed, so that he will not send the people free. Then you are to say to Pharaoh: Thus says YHWH: My son, my firstborn, is Israel! I said to you: Send free my son, that he may serve me, but you have refused to send him free, (so) here: I will kill your son, your firstborn!

Not only do we tend not to retell the second half of the line, but our non-retelling is reinforced by basically not reading more than half of the book of Exodus. After Israel crosses the Sea, Christians stop reading, for all practical purposes. Be honest. Apart from the Decalogue, and maybe a little bit of

Exodus 32, how often have you read Exod 19-40? It is some of the least-read material in all of the Hebrew Bible by Christians. But this omission of – or this inattentiveness to – the Sinai portion of the book of Exodus comes at a high price. It leads to conceiving of the Exodus from Egypt as what Walter Brueggemann has called a "contextless emancipation."⁸ Stated differently, the Exodus from Egypt is neither the high-point nor the center of gravity of the book of Exodus itself. The Exodus from Egypt, we might say, is merely prolegomenon.

Where then is the high-point – this center of gravity? I would suggest that it is found in its most precise form in Exodus 19:3-8 (Fox):

Now Moshe went up to God, and YHWH called out to him from the mountain, saying: Say thus to the House of Yaakov, (yes,) tell the Children of Israel: You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to me. So now, if you will hearken, yes, hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be to me a special-treasure from among all peoples. Indeed, all the earth is mine, but you, you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. These are the words that you are to speak to the Children of Israel. Moshe came, and had the elders of the people called, and set before them these words, with which YHWH had commanded him. And all the people answered together, they said: All that YHWH has spoken, we will do. And Moshe reported the words of the people to YHWH.

Crassly stated, the purpose of the Exodus is to get Israel to Mt. Sinai, where Israel can enter into covenant with its rightful Master or Lord. Israel is free from Pharaoh, but Israel is most definitely not free from YHWH. Quite the contrary, Israel willingly acknowledges its submission to YHWH and its willing acceptance of the yoke his commandments: "All that YHWH has spoken, we will do." Israel the "unwilling servant/slave of Pharaoh" has become Israel the "willing servant/slave of YHWH." That, I would suggest, is the center of gravity of the book of Exodus. And it is to this that the Exodus itself is prolegomenon.

So, what we are dealing with in the text of Exodus is not a point of view that regards servitude and submission as unredeemable evils that must be eradicated at all costs. Rather, the text represents a contest between two competing Masters or Lords. Stated differently, the problem to be rectified in Exodus is not servitude as such but rather the proper nature of Lordship. All of this has been elegantly stated by Jon Levenson:

The movement represented by the exodus is not one from slavery to freedom in the sense of individual autonomy or even national self-determination. Instead, it is movement from one form of servitude to another, from the service of a brutal, self-interested tyrant to the service of a kind, loving, and generous monarch, YHWH, God of Israel To speak of this subtle and paradoxical theology as one of “liberation” is to miss the paradox that lies at the heart of the exodus: Israel’s *liberation* from degrading bondage is a function of their *subjugation* to YHWH their God. The exodus is not only a road out of Egypt; it is also a road to Mount Sinai. To speak of exodus/liberation apart from Sinai/subjugation is to miss the profound interconnection of the two that lies at the foundation of the Jewish religious vision.⁹

This entire dynamic of lordship and subjugation which is at the center of the book of Exodus is also nicely illustrated by a midrash:

Why were the Ten Commandments not said at the beginning of the Torah? They give a parable. To what may this be compared? To the following: A king who entered a province said to the people: “May I be your king?” But the people said to him: “Have you done anything good for us that you should rule over us?” What did he do then? He built the city wall for them, he brought in the water supply for them, and he fought their battles. Then when he said to them: “May I be your king?” They said to him: “Yes, yes.” Likewise, God. He brought the Israelites out of Egypt, divided the sea for them, sent down the manna for them, brought up the well for them, brought the quails for them, he fought for them the battle with Amalek. Then He said to them: “I am to be your king.” And they said to Him: “Yes, yes.”¹⁰

The dynamic movement of the Exodus narrative, from servitude to servitude, from lordship to lordship, had a profound impact on the writers of the New Testament as well; in particular, on the one who referred to himself as Παῦλος δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (“Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ”). But that is a subject for another day.

Notes

- 1 The oral character of the presentation has been preserved.
- 2 This outline is that of Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Schocken, 1995) 244.

- 3 Ibid., 242.
- 4 Ibid., xvi.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Martin Buber, “Abraham the Seer,” in *On the Bible: Eighteen Studies* (ed. Nahum N. Glatzer; New York: Schocken, 1982) 42 [22-43].
- 7 WA Br 2:372,84-5: “Esto peccator et pecca fortiter, sed fortius fide et gaude in Christo, qui victor est peccati, mortis et mundi.”
- 8 Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press) 182.
- 9 Jon D. Levenson, “Liberation Theology and the Exodus,” in *Jews, Christians, and the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures* (ed. Alice Ogden Bellis and Joel S. Kaminsky; SBL Symposium Series 8; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2000) 226-227 [215-230].
- 10 Midrash on Exodus, *Mekhilta Bahodesh* 5.

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Lincoln and Liberty, Too

Lecture from Spring Academy 2013

Allen Carl Guelzo

“The world has never had a good definition of the word *liberty*,” Abraham Lincoln said in 1864.¹ And surely, from Lincoln of all people, that statement must come as a surprise, and for two reasons. In the first place, no one in American history might be said to have been a more shining example of liberty than Abraham Lincoln. Not only had he exercised liberty to its fullest extent, rising from poverty and obscurity to become the 16th president of the United States, but in the process he became the Great Emancipator of over three million slaves, and if anyone should have been in a position to know what *liberty* meant, it was Lincoln. The campaign song which accompanied him to his election as president in 1860 cried:

*Hurrah for the choice of the nation!
Our chieftain so brave and so true;
We'll go for the great Reformation –
For Lincoln and Liberty too!*²

Why, then, would he complain that no “good definition” of liberty has ever been on offer? And in the second place, by Lincoln’s day, great minds had been offering definitions of liberty for quite a long time, and the idea that a politician could so breezily announce, in the *anno domini* 1864, that nothing worthwhile had as yet been accomplished in the way of a “good definition” seems, at the very least, cheeky on Lincoln’s part.

But Lincoln had his reasons, and it is not wise to underestimate them. Backwoods-born though he was, Lincoln had more than the usual share of intellectual curiosity, and he spent a lifetime schooling himself in abstruse

questions about political economy, science, philosophy – even the theorems of Euclid. “Anyone,” warned Lincoln’s long-time legal associate Leonard Swett, “who took Abe Lincoln for a simple-minded man would soon wake up with his back in a ditch.”³ And his backwoods birth had been to a family of hard-shell Calvinistic Baptists for whom deep contemplation of the mysteries of predestination and free will came as second nature. Above all, as he explained in 1864, there was a certain slipperiness in the concept of liberty which eluded easy grasp, and nowhere was that more apparent than in the political problem which loomed over all others in his day, that of slavery. “We all declare for liberty,” Lincoln observed, “but in using the same word we do not all mean the same thing.” The slaveowner believes that his liberty consists in the freedom to own slave property without the interference of others; the abolitionist believes that liberty consists in freeing the slave from the slaveowner’s control. This reminded Lincoln of something out of the Gospels: “The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep’s throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as a liberator; while the wolf denounces him, for the same act, as the destroyer of liberty, especially as the sheep was a black one.” As much as he was a believer that “the word *liberty* may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself, and the product of his labor,” there was quite a dispute still going on in 1864 between *that* definition of liberty and one which said that liberty was the freedom “to do as they please with other men, and the product of other men’s labor.”⁴ And, in 1864, that dispute about the meaning of *liberty* was anything but a merely philosophical one. Nor, for that matter, has it become any less urgent – or slippery – in our own day.

It was not that Lincoln’s world actually lacked for definitions of liberty, though, or even what we might call *good* definitions of liberty, since people had been offering pretty respectable ones for almost as long as human thinking had been going on. Some of the earliest uses of the term *liberty* appear on cuneiform tablets in Babylonian libraries; Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon make the struggle of the Greek city-states into epics about liberty, whether from the Persians or from each other; and from Plato through Augustine, liberty becomes internalized as a question over whether individuals possess a freely-acting will.

But along with this increasing sophistication in talking about liberty came an increasing puzzlement over liberty’s ambiguities. Plato agonized over the peculiar way in which the human mind understood one thing, but then did another. “Most people are unwilling to do what is best,” Plato complained, “even though they know what it is and are able to do it.”⁵ Augustine had no doubt that he had a capacity for choosing – a will, or *voluntas* – “as surely as I knew I had life within me.” But he also was con-

scious that he had surprisingly little power over this will: the mind could opt to move in one direction, yet the will “does not carry out its command.” In fact, it turned out that the *will* directed the mind, based on the force of love, rather than the other way round, as Augustine discovered when he contemplated making a public profession of Christianity, but found that his will blocked the path: “I was held fast, not in fetters clamped upon me by another, but by my own will, which had the strength of iron chains.”⁶ This will might be free, in the sense of being loose from the dictate of the mind, but only to *sin* – which did not, in the most ultimate sense, mean much in the way of liberty.

So, in what direction did liberty lie? In a will that complied with the dictates of reason? If so, was the human will actually free to choose? Or was it in a will that controlled the mind and led it to choose what the mind imagined was reasonable but which was actually the direction of the will’s passions? If so, was the will then free, or merely anarchic? And was anarchy, in fact, more of an enemy to liberty than reason?

The medieval scholastics struggled to place the bit of reason firmly in the mouth of the will, but with something less than perfect success. And scholastic theology itself came under severe Augustinian challenge from the most famous Augustinian of them all, Martin Luther. Two things impressed themselves on Luther: “the immutable will of God on the one hand, and the impotence of our corrupt will on the other.” In fact, without “the necessary foreknowledge of God and the necessity of events, Christian faith is utterly destroyed, and the promises of God and the whole Gospel, fall to the ground completely; for the Christian’s chief and only comfort in every adversity lies in knowing that God does not lie, but brings all things to pass immutably, and that his will cannot be resisted, altered, or impeded.”⁷ It was divine grace which gave a corrupted will the power to choose rightly.

Yet even Luther recognized how many-faced the question of liberty could turn out to be, because as soon as he turned his attention to the authority of the Church and the Papacy, it was liberty that Luther wanted to bring to front-stage. “A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none,” Luther announced in his last appeal for reconciliation to Pope Leo X. Yet that intrinsic freedom, while it might be enough to nerve Luther to defy papal authority, should not be understood as a license to anarchy: the Christian is also “a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.” Luther was aware that “these two theses seem to contradict each other.” But in practice, Luther intended for the Pope to embrace the latter, and be the servant rather than the tyrant, while Luther would embrace the first and blow the trumpet of revolt against Roman authority. And the Christian should consider him/herself “free from all works” for *justification*, yet be willing to take upon

him/herself the yoke of works for *sanctification*, in order to “empty himself ... and to serve, help, and in every way deal with his neighbor as he sees that God through Christ has dealt and still deals with him.”⁸

There is no evidence that Abraham Lincoln ever came into direct contact with Luther’s writings. It was, rather, the starkest form of Calvinist predestination that Lincoln absorbed from birth. The Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church to which his parents belonged affirmed that “we believe in election by grace, given in Jesus Christ before the world began, and that God calls, regenerates and sanctifies all who are made meet for glory by his special grace.”⁹ Lincoln himself was never inclined to embrace this forbidding creed personally – he was never baptized, and never actually joined any church as a professing member. But Calvinism left its imprint on him all the same, even if its substance was filled-in by secular determinism. Judge David Davis, who presided over the circuit court where Lincoln practiced for most of his life, recalled that Lincoln “had no faith in the Christian sense of that term,” but he did have an abiding confidence “in laws, principles – causes & Effects.” His long-time ally in Illinois politics, Joseph Gillespie, said that “in religious matters, Mr. Lincoln was theoretically a predestinarian,” and told Gillespie (with perhaps a double *entendre* in the back of his mind) “that he could not avoid believing in predestination.”¹⁰

Lincoln did not mind telling people, “I am a fatalist,” and have been “all my life a fatalist.”¹¹ In 1847, he described himself as believing in a “Doctrine of Necessity,” in which “the human mind is impelled to action, or held in rest by some power, over which the mind itself has no control.”¹² He confessed in 1864 – in fact, just two weeks before his comments on the definition of liberty – that he had never “controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me.” Herndon captured this nearly as well as anyone when he recalled that Lincoln believed there was “no freedom of the will”: “Things were to be, and they came, doomed to come; men were made as they are made by superior conditions over which they had no control; the fates settled things” and an individual “is simply a *simple tool*, a mere cog in the wheel, a part, a small part, of this vast iron machine, that strikes and cuts, grinds and mashes, all things, including man, that resist it.” Even his wife acknowledged that Lincoln believed that “what is to be will be, and no cares of ours can arrest or reverse the decree.”¹³

What explained human action then? Lincoln’s answer was, the influence of *motive*. “The great leading law of human nature is motive,” Lincoln explained to Herndon. “Motives moved the man to every voluntary act of his life.” And the power motives exerted was their appeal to human self-interest. “His idea,” Herndon wrote, “was that all human actions were caused by motives, and at the bottom of these motives was self.” Motives

appeal to self-interest; self-interest rises automatically to embrace the motives, and action results. Hence, there “was no freedom of the will,” because human action was little more than a response to motives. “Men are made by conditions that surround them, that have somewhat existed for a hundred thousand years or more.”¹⁴ John Calvin himself could hardly have put it more clearly.

But how do we reconcile a man who denies any belief in human free will or who rejects any notion of human autonomy, with the author of emancipation, the enemy of slavery, and the poster-boy of American self-improvement? Nor is this purely an academic question about the mental inventory of one long-dead president: as a nation, we struggle still with the conundrum of liberty and necessity, and we have not always come up with very attractive answers.

In some senses, Lincoln could avoid any sense of conflict between the imperatives of liberty and determinism by simply compartmentalizing them. He was not, after all, a systematic intellectual, much less an academic, so there was no pressing need for him to reconcile every aspect of his ideas. When Lincoln spoke of liberty as a *political* subject, he seemed never to have even heard of the ghost of Calvin, or Luther, or Augustine. The burning of the “lamp of liberty ... in your bosoms,” he said, is a natural instinct, which, when rightly attended-to, will guarantee that “there shall no longer be a doubt that all men are created free and equal.”¹⁵ Liberty is a natural right, and its presence in human nature is the greatest safeguard against its destruction by tyrants.

“What constitutes the bulwark of our own liberty and independence?” Lincoln asked during the seven great debates he staged with Stephen A. Douglas in 1858. “It is not our frowning battlements, or bristling seacoasts, our army and navy Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us ... the spirit which prized liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands everywhere.”¹⁶ And not only in us: even the humblest of creatures – the ant, for instance – possesses, and is conscious of possessing, the natural right of liberty. “The ant who has toiled and dragged a crumb to his nest will furiously defend the fruit of his labor against whatever robber assails him.”¹⁷

Politically speaking, the task of Americans in his day, Lincoln believed, was not one of *establishing* liberty – that had already been accomplished in the most signal fashion by the American Founders. They created “a political edifice of liberty and equal rights; ‘tis ours only to transmit these – the former unprofaned by the foot of an invader, the latter undecayed by the lapse of time and untorn by usurpation.” But that was not necessarily an easier task than that of the Founders. In his first great political speech, in 1838, Lincoln

warned that the real danger to American liberty came, not externally, but internally. “All the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth ... in their military chest; with a Buonaparte for a commander, could not by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years.” No: “if destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher.”¹⁸

And that, of course, was something that Lincoln believed was actually underway, in the spread of slavery. Lincoln regarded the Founders with such worshipful awe that he could not quite bring himself to say that they had made a mistake in turning a blind eye towards the presence of slavery in their new republic. But he did believe that the blind eye they *did* turn had been misunderstood: the Founders tolerated slavery because they were certain that it was a dying institution in America, dying from poor productivity and dying from its inconsistency with the fundamentals of liberty, and they were willing to let it die on its own rather than run the risks involved in ripping it up by the roots. “The plain, unmistakable spirit of that age toward slavery was hostility to the principle and toleration only by necessity.” But rather than attack it head-on and “lose much of what they had already gained” in creating the Union, they “restricted its spread,” banned the importation of slaves, and thus placed it “in the course of ultimate extinction.”¹⁹ But a nefarious Slave Power, nursing a desire for their own advantage and fame, had breathed new life into slavery, made it powerful and profitable, and now demanded full access of all of the Republic’s territories.

What made the Slave Power’s growth so dangerous was its unrelenting appeal to *self-interest*. Slavery, as he told Joseph Gillespie, was “the most glittering, ostentation and displaying property in the world” and so was proving “highly seductive to the thoughtless and giddy-headed young men who looked upon work as vulgar and ungentlemanly.”²⁰ And slavery’s profitability as the labor-system by which America’s most-prized commodity, cotton, was grown gave it the protection of *national* self-interest as well. “You must recollect,” Lincoln warned in 1856, “that the slave property is worth a billion dollars,” and giving up slavery would mean both personal and national economic ruin, while “free-state men” have nothing to hold out as a reward but “sentiment alone.”²¹ He told the story in 1860 of “the dissenting minister who argued with one of the established church” and

was always met by the reply, “I can’t see it so.” He opened the Bible and pointed to a passage, but the orthodox minister replied, “I can’t see it so.” Then he showed him a single word – “Can you see that?” “Yes, I see it,” was the reply. The dissenter laid a guinea over the word,

and asked, “Do you see it now?” So here. Whether the owners of this species of property [slavery] do really see it as it is, it is not for me to say; but if they do, they see it as it is through two billions of dollars, and that is a pretty thick coating.²²

It was not the dollars that Lincoln objected to. He had not worked his way up to a successful law practice merely so that, like Caesar, he could spurn the base rungs by which he ascended. To the contrary, financial self-transformation was, in Lincoln’s eye, the principal blessing of liberty. “We do not propose any war upon capital,” he announced in 1860; if anything, he wanted to “allow the humblest man an equal chance to get rich with everybody else.” Liberty and equality he distilled into the single concept of “Advancement – improvement in condition.” That “is the order of things in a society of equals.” A truly republican society is one in which “the prudent penniless beginner in the world labors for wages a while, saves a surplus with which to buy tools or land for himself, then labors on his own account another while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him. This is the just and generous system and prosperous system which opens the way to all, gives hope to all, and consequent energy and progress and improvement of condition to all.”²³ The entire purpose of “the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty” was “to elevate the condition of men – to lift artificial weights from all shoulders; to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all; to afford all an unfettered start and a fair chance in the race of life.”²⁴

This, of course, was exactly what slavery did *not* do. A slave was born a slave, continued a slave, and had only the dimmest hope of ever being other than a slave. “The most dumb and stupid slave that ever toiled for a master does constantly know that he is wronged,” Lincoln argued, and the very helplessness he feels in the face of that wrong debases both the slave and his work.²⁵ But slavery spread its wrong beyond the slave. “We think slavery impairs and endangers the general welfare,” Lincoln declared.²⁶ It has fostered “a durable element of discord” within the nation, and will foster “a tendency to subvert the first principle of free government,” and as such, “to prevent the spread and nationalization of slavery is a national concern, and must be attended to by the nation.”²⁷

Very subtly, it is worth noticing, Lincoln had begun to slip the argument from *self-interest* in through the back door of liberty. Enslaving others was an exercise of self-interest, “founded” (as Lincoln said in 1854) “in the selfishness of man’s nature.” He would have liked to rest “opposition to it in his love of justice,” but in fact Lincoln did not trust very much to such nobler instincts.²⁸ He preferred to turn the weapon of self-interest back on the slaveholder, and ask, if slavery was so desirable, why the slaveowner’s self-interest

mysteriously forbade him to embrace it himself. “Although volume upon volume is written to prove slavery a very good thing,” he said in 1854, “we never hear of a man who wishes to take the good of it by being a slave himself Consider if you know any good thing, that no man desires for himself.”²⁹ And in 1863, he asked hostile whites to support the guarantee of freedom to black soldiers in the Union Army because only by keeping the promise that enlistment would lead to freedom could black soldiers, and victory in the Civil War, be secured. “Negroes, like other people, act upon motives,” Lincoln wrote, “Why should they do anything for us, if we will do nothing for them? If they stake their lives for us they must be prompted by the strongest motive, even the promise of freedom. And the promise being made, must be kept.”³⁰ Lincoln began by fearing that self-interest was at war with liberty; it was a measure of his own intellectual agility that, like so many before him, he found a way to re-make self-interest into liberty’s guarantee.

“Whenever this question shall be settled, it must be settled on some philosophical basis,” Lincoln said in 1860.³¹ What Lincoln meant by *some philosophical basis* is not clear; it was certainly not an invitation to regard political questions like slavery as occasions for ethical or metaphysical musings. But he did believe that Americans wanted a “good definition” of liberty, and he was prepared to give it to them. It was not a definition friendly to the interests of the wolf, but it was also one that expected more than we usually do from the sheep, because so much of it assumed that the liberty the Founders had in mind was predominately an *economic* liberty, the freedom of open-ended opportunity. It was, in other words, a very characteristically bourgeois liberty, and there is no mistaking the resemblances and overlaps between Lincoln and the major figures of nineteenth-century liberal economics: Alexis de Tocqueville, Richard Cobden, John Stuart Mill. Lincoln’s liberty belonged to the family of what Isaiah Berlin called “negative liberty” – the freedom to be left alone and unfettered in the pursuit of something desirable, “the area within which a man can act unobstructed by others.”³² Lincoln could barely have noticed, if at all, that the shape of liberty was already being turned on its head in the nineteenth century, to the point where the entrance to a concentration camp (a mere eighty years after Lincoln’s death) could be emblazoned with the hideous motto, *Arbeit macht frei*, and the most popular portrayal of totalitarianism could take as one of its mottos, “Freedom is slavery.”

One of the deadlier by-products of what Eric Hobsbawm called “The Age of Extremes” (from 1914 to 1991) was a desperate effort to claw away from the totalitarians of the recent past (and present) into a new zone of absolute autonomy, governed by neither rule nor religion nor self-interest, but by an absolute annihilation of restraint. We tend to identify this efface-

ment of restraint most readily in its *material* forms, in the increasingly unalloyed and unashamed pursuit of gain and profit at any cost, in the trampling of the “one-percent” over every decency, because decency is itself a restraint. But for all that we lament the unruled power of the *material* “one-percenters,” we are not nearly so attentive to the trampling of *moral* “one-percenters,” with their feckless pursuit of hedonism, entertainment, and the castration of nature, over every *moral* law – because *morality* is resented by the autonomous Masters of the Universe fully as much as *regulation*, for both come in the form of *restraint*. Instead of using self-interest to assist liberty, we have made the pursuit of self-interest the *essence* of liberty.

But self-interest, powerful though it may be, is an unforgiving master – it corrupts, eats up, and destroys whatever we poor fools expose to it, material, moral or spiritual. The individual who cannot abide moral or material restraint as an impeachment of freedom will never be able to develop self-restraint, either, and lacking that, becomes more than ever a slave. Autonomy thus promises liberty, but ends in bondage. Perhaps Lincoln was a more profound philosopher than we think, or than he thought. If self-interest cannot be allowed to roam over the land without reducing us all to slaves, perhaps it can be tamed in ways that will make it *serve* liberty. For no one, as Lincoln said, who understands what constitutes real self-interest can wish slavery upon themselves. And perhaps, in the end, Luther was right, too: we can only be “the free lord of all, subject to none,” by being “a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.”

Notes

- 1 Lincoln, “Address at Sanitary Fair, Baltimore, Maryland” (April 18, 1864), in *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (ed. Roy P. Basler et al; New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953) 7:301. [Hereinafter CW].
- 2 “Lincoln and Liberty,” in *The Republican Campaign Songster for 1864* (Cincinnati, 1864) 41.
- 3 Henry C. Whitney to William H. Herndon (August 29, 1887), in *Herndon’s Informants: Letters, Interviews and Statements about Abraham Lincoln* (ed. R. O. Davis and D. L. Wilson; Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998) 636.
- 4 Lincoln, “Address at Sanitary Fair, Baltimore, Maryland,” 302.
- 5 Plato, *Protagoras* (trans. S. Lombardo and K. Bell; Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1992) 49.
- 6 Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 8, sec. 5.
- 7 Martin Luther, *On the Bondage of the Will: A New Translation of De Servo Arbitrio* (1525), *Martin Luther’s Reply to Erasmus of Rotterdam* (ed. J. I. Packer; London: Clark, 1957) 81.
- 8 Martin Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian,” in *Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings* (ed. Timothy F. Lull; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005) 393.

- 9 Ida M. Tarbell, *In the Footsteps of the Lincolns* (New York, NY: Harper, 1924) 144.
- 10 Davis interview with William H. Herndon (1866), and Joseph Gillespie to William H. Herndon (January 31, 1866 and December 8, 1866), in *Herndon’s Informants*, 181, 506, 529.
- 11 Lincoln, in Isaac N. Arnold, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (Chicago, IL: Jansen, McClurg, 1885) 81.
- 12 Lincoln, “Handbill Replying to Charges of Infidelity” (July 31, 1846), in CW 1:382.
- 13 Herndon (February 18, 1886) and “Lincoln’s Philosophy and Religion” (August 21, 1887), in *The Hidden Lincoln: From The Letters & Papers of William H. Herndon* (ed. Emanuel Hertz; New York, NY: Viking, 1938) 142, 406.
- 14 Herndon (February 18, 1886), Herndon to Jesse K. Weik (February 25, 1887), and “Lincoln’s Philosophy and Religion” (August 21, 1887), in *The Hidden Lincoln*, 142, 179, 408.
- 15 Lincoln, “Speech at Chicago, Illinois” (July 10, 1858), in CW 2:502.
- 16 Lincoln, “Speech at Edwardsville, Illinois” (September 11, 1858), in CW 3:95.
- 17 Lincoln, “Fragment on Government” (July 1, 1854), in CW 2:222.
- 18 Lincoln, “Address Before the Young Men’s Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois” (January 27, 1838), in CW 1:109.
- 19 Lincoln, “Speech at Peoria, Illinois” (October 16, 1854), in CW 2:274.
- 20 Gillespie to William H. Herndon (January 31, 1866), in *Herndon’s Informants*, 183.
- 21 Lord Charnwood, *Abraham Lincoln* (New York, NY: Garden City, 1917) 128.
- 22 Lincoln, “Speech at New Haven, Connecticut” (March 6, 1860), in CW 4:16.
- 23 Lincoln, “Fragment on Free Labor” and “Speech at New Haven, Connecticut” (March 6, 1860), in CW 3:462, 4:24.
- 24 Lincoln, “Message to Congress in Special Session” (July 4, 1861), in CW 4:438.
- 25 Lincoln, “Fragment on Government” (July 1, 1854), in CW 2:222.
- 26 Lincoln, “Notes for Speeches at Columbus and Cincinnati, Ohio” (September 16-17, 1859), in CW 3:434.
- 27 Lincoln, “To Schuyler Colfax” (July 6, 1859), and “Speech at Columbus, Ohio” (September 16, 1859), in CW 3:391, 406.
- 28 Lincoln, “Speech at Peoria, Illinois” (October 16, 1854), in CW 2:271.
- 29 Lincoln, “Fragment on Government” (July 1, 1854), in CW 2:222.
- 30 Lincoln, “To James C. Conkling” (August 26, 1863), in CW 6:409.
- 31 Lincoln, “Speech at New Haven, Connecticut” (March 6, 1860), in CW 4:17.
- 32 Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty” (1958), in *Four Essays on Liberty* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1969) 122-123.

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American Lutherans and Slavery

Lecture from Spring Academy 2013

Maria Erling

Americans north and south endured a long encounter with slavery. Lutherans also wrestled with the institution, some promoting, others reforming, still more hoping to avoid the issue. We do not know as much as we should about the many Lutheran debates over the issue, because at the time of the Civil War the quickly growing American Lutheran population consisted largely of immigrants who spoke, wrote, and debated in German, Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish. Still later, and still debating, Finnish and Slovak Lutherans arrived. American scholars who study the religious debates over slavery have not investigated many of the journals and newspapers where the several groups argued their way towards an American form of Lutheranism.¹ Throughout their experience in America, however, from the colonial era through the nineteenth century, Lutherans – pastors and lay people – actively wrestled with the moral implications of slavery. At the seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, a border town, students from the southern states mingled with northern classmates. In the dormitory, out in the churches, and in the classroom, they could not escape the tensions that surfaced over a violent system of bondage that had pushed the United States into a civil war.

In this account, I survey Lutheran voices to show that Lutherans in America, even those lately arrived from Scandinavia and living in the northern free states, were well aware of the system of slavery. They observed or participated in it with mixed thoughts, realizing that slavery could be seen as inevitable, since it existed from the time of the Bible. Direct experience with the American form of slavery also brought questions. The whole issue invited them into a moral quagmire. Lutherans, however and whenever

they arrived in the Americas, settled into the system surrounding them and adapted their moral compass so that it pointed towards freedom, at least spiritually, and certainly for themselves. Slaves became Lutheran, too, but that did not give them every freedom.

In the Danish Virgin Islands – St. Thomas, St. John, St. Croix – slave dependent economies created by Danish and Swedish trading firms took root from the start. Even after England took over the colonies, the Danish West Indies company operated forts and ships and slave markets in four towns in West Africa in what is now Ghana, bringing slaves to the sugar plantations that made the company prosperous. In 1665 Danish pastors begin a long period of ministry to the small population of Danes in the Caribbean, but these pastors did not trouble themselves to extend ministry to the slave population. The more significant effort for recognizing the importance of the Christian gospel for all people came from Moravians who came from their spiritual colony in Christiansborg, Denmark. They maintained a close relationship to Lutheran pietism, but honed their devotion into effective mission work among Africans working in the plantations. Pastor Kjeld Jensen Slagelse, the first Lutheran pastor in the Caribbean, founded a congregation in 1666. It took, however, until 1713 until the first Lutheran baptism of a slave is recorded – this lagged far behind Moravian work. Moravians outpaced orthodox Lutherans in ministering to Africans because they spoke the Dutch Creole of the slaves, rather than the Danish language of their congregations.

Baptizing slaves was controversial, because slave owners who countenanced the enslavement of heathens might need to give Christians their freedom, according to a strict reading of Paul's letter to the Galatians. The passage they stumbled over in Gal 3:28 noted how in Christ there is neither slave nor free but all are one. Similar scruples kept slaveholders in Georgia from baptizing their servants until the colonial legislature in 1706 assured them that henceforth baptism gave only spiritual freedom, and that slaves could therefore be baptized.

Arriving in Georgia in the early 1700's, the famous Salzburgers, fleeing the Roman Catholic persecutions in Austria, were at first opposed to but later resorted to owning slaves because otherwise they could not find other sources of labor to maintain their communities. A form of forced labor affected poor Lutherans from areas of Germany. These "redemptioners" signed a contract for a master, an indenture, and many experienced corruption that left long memories and deep scars.

The experience of ordinary German, many of them Lutheran, settlers in America during the colonial period can be glimpsed in the records preserved in Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's journals, the faithful and extensive reports

to the mission organizers in Halle. Muhlenberg's own raw impressions of slavery occurred when he arrived in Charleston, SC, on Sept. 23, 1742. It is important to gain these first impressions, because they indicate that the American system of slavery was something totally new, something beyond existing moral categories that an educated European would have formed. Muhlenberg's first impressions show that he struggled to find some rationalization, some criterion, for judging the situation:

A pair of the black heathen, who are sold as slaves to the white Christian people, came on board our ship. I questioned them concerning various matters, but they knew nothing of the true God, nor of Him whom He sent. The heathen slaves are so numerous here that it is estimated that there are fifteen for every white man. They occasionally rebel against their masters in the country, a thing which occurred just two years previous, when they gathered together as a mob and mercilessly killed a number of English people and their children. One also finds here many slaves who are only half black, the offspring of those white Sodomites who commit fornication with their black slave women. This goes on dreadfully and no one dares to say anything to the blacks concerning the true religion, because the so-called Christians object that the blacks would kill them all, and make themselves masters of Carolina, if they accepted the Christian religion... A short time before [I arrived in Charleston] several Englishmen had made an effort with the heathen and instilled some knowledge of Christ in them but they were persecuted and punished by the authorities.²

This long selection from the journal shows how Muhlenberg sought to find out whether the slaves were getting any type of Christian instruction from their supposedly Christian masters. His shock in recording the sexual encounters between slave women and their white masters surfaces again in later critiques of the system.

Muhlenberg's later writing about encounters with slaves occurs here and there in his journals. He does not use the word heathen, but instead has a racial description, by the translators rendered as Negro. During Muhlenberg's ministry slavery had not yet been outlawed in Pennsylvania, and in his journal record for Dec. 16, 1763, the matter of fact acceptance of this social system can be seen. Muhlenberg revealed a changed perspective on slavery while staying at a German Anabaptist's inn, where his Dutch wife along with their English neighbor, who had been converted by [George] Whitefield, requested an intense evening of Christian conversation. After conversing for some time, and hushing the other guests in the inn,

Muhlenberg met the innkeeper's recently purchased Negro. The innkeeper could not understand him and asked Muhlenberg to speak to him. His speech was, according to Muhlenberg "a mixture of African, French, Spanish, and English words." The Negro "had been seized and carried away by the French from Gambia, in Africa, two years ago, and thence brought to a French island in the West Indies. From there he had served at sea on French ships, was taken prisoner by the English, brought to Philadelphia, and sold to this master." When Muhlenberg established some basis for a conversation he turned at once to a religious question. "I asked him whether he knew anything of a Supreme Being, or particularly of a Redeemer of mankind." Among the French, apparently, this slave had received some instruction and could pray a little and make the sign of the Cross. Then, satisfied that the slave had been taken care of spiritually, Muhlenberg asked whether he was "satisfied with his present condition. He replied, yes, if only his master would give him warm clothing, as he had always been in a warm climate and suffered much from the cold, etc. The honest innkeeper was delighted to learn so much concerning his circumstances and promised to provide him with sufficient clothing, etc."³

As matter of fact as he seems, Muhlenberg does not seem to carry forward his initial shock at the system of slavery. Perhaps his assurance that the owner was a Christian somehow made this arrangement alright. Looking back, it is shocking to learn the injustice that this man endured. Perhaps the unnamed Negro eventually did gain his freedom, for Pennsylvania took the first steps to declare an end to slavery when it endorsed a gradual abolition of the system in 1780. Lutherans were not in the forefront of the fight to end slavery, but they were law abiding. Efforts towards social reform came from individuals and groups critical of the social and religious establishment.

Early American Lutheran clergy of course had their hands full training pastors and taking care of congregations. Most histories of American Lutheranism give scant attention to Lutheran involvement in broader social issues, and this is understandable not only on linguistic grounds, but also because Lutherans were theologically wary of radical measures advocating social reform on the part of churches, which should instead devote themselves to preaching the gospel. Samuel Simon Schmucker, the founder of Gettysburg Seminary, was perhaps the most assimilated Lutheran leader in the country, but in his move towards other American religious patterns of thought and action he sought a moderate posture. Writing to the abolitionist Gerrett Smith in 1838, when the seminary was twelve years old and hardly an established institution, Schmucker wrote about his caution when engaging in efforts to address the problem of slavery:

I was for years an active member of the Colonization Society, repeatedly contributed to the funds. But since that association and the Anti-slavery Society have become antagonistic institutions, I have retired from connection to it, not from want of attachment to colonization itself, but because its measures were advocated on principles unfavorable, in my judgment to extensive efforts for the moral and intellectual elevation of that portion of the colored race which must unavoidably remain among us.... On the other hand I have not felt it a duty to attach myself to the Anti-Slavery Society, because I could not approve of the indiscriminate denunciation, and occasionally exaggerated statements, which though not contained in its constitution, and disapproved by some of its prominent members, have been adopted by so many leading speakers and writers, as to have become in some measure characteristic of the society...⁴

Schmucker's middle of the road course maintained for him and the fledgling General Synod a reasonable chance to retain ties to important sections of the Lutheran Church in the south. Therefore his associations with Anti-Slavery sympathies had to be kept private. He also had reason in his own household to be careful of feelings in the South. His wife came from a slaveholding family in Virginia, and had taken servants with her into their home in Pennsylvania. When they in 1826 planned their move to Pennsylvania, moreover, from New Market, Virginia, Schmucker, wrote to his wife Katherine at her home in Virginia counseling her to make sure to indenture her slaves as servants in that state before coming north, because if she took them directly to Pennsylvania, they would automatically be free. At least she could keep the value of their labor a little longer if she made those provisions.⁵

Twelve years later Schmucker appeared to believe that a graduated approach to eliminating slavery would also work in the South. In the letter to Gerrett Smith quoted above, joining with the Anti-Slavery societies did not appeal to him because "such a course appears to me injustice to a large portion of Southern Christians, who are now, in regard to slavery where at the rise of the temperance reformation we at the North all were in reference to the use of ardent spirits, and who if approached in the spirit of Christian kindness would more readily receive admonition than when overwhelmed with denunciation and abuse."⁶ Temperance and anti-slavery reform movements rose out of the same evangelical soil with their appeal to voluntary activism and moral zeal. Remaking society through moral reform fit in with a larger program of evangelical and Reformed ideas about the Christian's role in society. Schmucker's enthusiasm for reform movements and his promotion of them through gradual means created a distinctive

brand of American Lutheranism that defined the Eastern Lutheran churches over against more conservative, less moralistic, and more yielding types of Lutheranism in the South, and farther West.

In private correspondence the nuanced opinions, speculations, reservations and modest hopes about slavery's eventual elimination could be expressed. Public statements, for the reasons that Schmucker detailed, did not appear in the minutes of church conventions, or on the pages of journals or newspapers. Lutheran church leaders worried that taking a strong position would alienate large portions of their membership. While it may seem that churches could depend on a common core of beliefs to help unite them, North and South, the fact is that denominations splintered before the nation did on the issue of owning slaves. These tensions were far enough advanced that Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians had already split into Northern and Southern oriented portions by the end of the 1830's.⁷ The House of Representatives had a solution: Just don't talk about slavery, because it would offend the honor of the South. The Gag Rule was passed in 1838. It stipulated that no petitions regarding slavery would be heard, debated, sent to committee, or otherwise acted upon. If they could have been burned, the House would have done so. Given the 3/5 rule for counting the slave population and thereby boosting the population, but not the voters, and creating more legislators, the balance of power in Congress was with the South. Their feelings about the issue prevailed. The churches also followed suit, and did not talk about slavery in their sessions.

Occasionally the churches did face the issue of social and religious relationships within their own membership that touched on the vexing issue of slavery, if only indirectly. From the records at Evangelical Lutheran Church in Frederick, Maryland, a controversy in 1838 that occurred during the Rev. Simeon Harkey's ministry there related to colored membership in the congregation, and showed how revivals and conversions promoted by this new pastor stirred the pot also on racial relationships. A biography penned much later by his brother Sidney Harkey explained that Simeon "never permitted the excitements occasioned thereby to run into wild excess, to the neglect or denial of the doctrines and usages of the Lutheran church, but plied the catechism and confirmation all the more."⁸ Moderation was coupled with diligence for the Harkey brothers.

A later biographer, Abdel Ross Wentz, also found that Harkey's ministry in Frederick had been a flashpoint for more than one issue. "The course of a revivalist rarely runs smooth," he noted, for that was the theological issue of the day. But it was coupled with something else. Soon Harkey's revival created an upheaval, because 'persons of color' began to respond to his preaching. He had only been in Frederick for six months when a decision

was made to segregate the blacks in the church by assigning special pews. Then formal resolutions seeking to end Harkey's special ministry with blacks, especially taking them into the church as regular members, were read to the council. The resolutions made clear that this is "contrary to the practice for many years past in said church. And it is unnecessary and inexpedient because there are already in Frederick several churches for the exclusive worship of said population."⁹ Harkey opposed this action and a divided vote resulted, fending off the restriction of black members for a short time. But then the instigator resigned from the council, agitating the remaining members of that board, and when they tried to talk him out of it, they by compromise decided that no colored person would be admitted as a member of the congregation, resulting in a sharp rebuff of Harkey's evangelical program. There were certainly other issues at play in Frederick, for Harkey had not been shy in denouncing the ministry of his predecessor, much beloved by the congregation, even though he had been forced to retire. The strife in the congregation became visible when an overheard comment by Harkey was broadcast by an unfriendly critic in one of the Lutheran newspapers: "6 years ago when I took charge of this congregation there were not six persons in it who professed to know anything about a change of heart," typical language for Samuel Simon Schmucker's revivalist oriented Lutherans. This second hand report was read by Dr. Emanuel Greenwald at New Philadelphia, Ohio, who was no friend of "new measures."¹⁰

Shortly after Harkey's conflict with his congregation over the reception of colored members, his theological professor in Gettysburg, Samuel Simon Schmucker, composed propositions on the subject of slavery that recorded the arguments against slavery that he used with his students. They were designed for discussion and debate, and are dated from 1840. At one point they were prepared for presentation to the Western Pennsylvania Synod, in 1845, but apparently they did not survive this debut. They were never adopted by any official body or published by the Lutheran press. The most widely distributed Lutheran newspaper, *Lutheran Observer*, was published in nearby Baltimore and edited by Schmucker's friend, Benjamin Kurtz. The editor maintained a careful position that neither endorsed slavery, nor abolition.¹¹

Difficulties increased for Pastor Harkey, including further alienation from prominent members, and even formal charges against him by the summer of 1840. Harkey's ministry continued when the "unconverted" men who dogged him eventually gave up and withdrew their memberships in the congregation. Finally Harkey was called to the theological professorship of Illinois State University, Springfield, Illinois, and he moved west, where he embarked on another career as an educator and newspaper editor. His paper was named *The Olive Branch*, and it lasted only a few years,

from 1856-1861. The name tells us something about the turmoil in the Lutheran churches of Illinois that is important for our story. In Illinois, Harkey worked with Lars Esbjörn, the Swedish immigrant pastor who with Tufve Nilsson Hasselquist, founded the Augustana Synod. The relationship between Scandinavians and American Lutherans did not last, but Harkey's role in communicating how American evangelicals thought about reform movements, and especially slavery, influenced the Swedish immigrants in Illinois in a decidedly Republican direction.

During the few years of productive engagement between American Lutherans and Scandinavians in the Midwest, the March 1856 issue of *The Olive Branch* contained an interesting advertisement for the Lutheran Mission in Africa. The short notice reveals that English speaking Lutheran churches in the Midwest maintained connections with Lutheran churches in the South and also how their foreign mission interests overlapped with modest anti-slavery efforts in the United States. The notice reported that the Rev. Morris Officer, who was in the country to raise funds to support an African Mission School in Liberia, was visiting churches. As an example to encourage donations, the advertisement reported that a member of "our Church in the South" wished to make a donation because "I have a slave girl about 14 years old, whom I am desirous to set free, if I can get her educated, and attached to an African Mission. I am willing to donate to the mission \$100 on her reception, and to provide her clothing, etc, until she is qualified to be of use."¹² It was universally assumed among American Lutheran clergy that slaves, as they were, could not be thrust into freedom without considerable training. The letter from the Southern benefactor included information and references. The owner would donate a hundred dollars for her training, and the congregation an additional fifty dollars.¹³ The mission effort that Morris Officer worked hard to advance was conceived as an effort that would enlist donations from churches in the North and the South and would perhaps as a united effort counteract the growing tensions that were emerging within Lutheran church circles. The positive example given in the newspaper notice was not typical, however, of the responses Morris Officer was otherwise receiving. From his diary we know that he experienced great difficulty on this visitation tour in getting pastors to schedule visits and to help him raise the needed funds.¹⁴ In large part this was because the idea of a colony for freed slaves had quite literally passed out of favor, even in the South.

Abandoning the Moderate, Middle Road

In New York the inner conflicts within the Ministerium over the use of revival methods, debates over rationalism, and disagreements over the role

of churches in reform movements led to the formation of separate synods. One of them, the Franckean Synod, was known primarily for its promotion of abolition. It was founded in 1836, and in its constitution it made its abolitionist principles foundational. No member could own slaves. Letters requesting other synods to declare themselves on the topic of slavery were sent out in the late 1830's to all other synods. On this basis the Franckean Synod would determine whether it would have Christian fellowship with other Lutheran synods. They did not get many official responses, but they did discover that the synod of South Carolina was unwilling to consider their request for a statement.¹⁵ In general the American Lutheran synods did not want to discuss the question of slavery because they both deemed it a political rather than religious question and because it was controversial. The Franckean Synod was also radical in another sense: it did not subscribe to the Lutheran Augsburg Confession.

In South Carolina, the leading light and revered leader, the Rev. John Bachman, continued his successful ministry at St. Johns in Charleston, where he enjoyed a reputation not only as a clergyman but also as a scientist. His friendship with John James Audubon was well known in scientific and literary circles. Audubon stayed in the Bachman home on his several trips to South Carolina, and named a warbler after his friend. In 1850 Bachman published an important scientific study, entitled *Unity of the Races*. In it he argued on scientific grounds that there is only one human race. Bachman provided as evidence the observable fact that the progeny of intercourse between black and white persons was also fertile. Mulattos were not like mules, unable to bear young. This scientific defense also served to provide evidence of the Bible's authority, since the biblical account assumes that there is only one race, descended from Adam and Eve. Other Southern apologists for slavery had argued on scientific grounds that Africans were a separate race. George Fitzhugh, in one of his vehement tracts entitled *Cannibals All*, argued that a slave system was necessary to protect the Africans from themselves. Copies of these arguments circulated widely, and John Bachman is remembered for providing one of the saner entries in the debate over the nature of racial differences.

Bachman's views on African and Caucasian unity, however, did not mean that he argued or thought there was a scientific basis for freeing slaves from their bondage. Environmental influences on Africans had inhibited their development. They could not be brought to the level of their white masters any time soon. In 1857 Bachman brought his views to the attention of Northern Lutherans in an open letter to *The Missionary*, a newspaper published in Pittsburgh by William Passavant, who was an opponent of slavery and vocal about it. Bachman protested the inclusion of an article

in the previous issue that contained statements from a conference within the Pittsburgh Synod that were sharply critical of slavery as it existed in the South. Bachman made clear that "whilst we implicitly receive the Scriptural doctrine of the unity of the human race, we are not blind to the fact of the wide difference in some of the varieties of men, the physical form, the color, and the inferiority in intellect of the African tribes now in a state of mild servitude in our Southern county, were marked in them by their Creator."¹⁶

John Bachman maintained his strong views about the deficiency of the African variety of the human race even though he knew a man who was an excellent refutation of his views, Daniel Alexander Payne, a free black man who lived in Charleston, taught a school for free black children, and who was an active member of the Methodist church in the city. When the South Carolina legislature in the wake of Nat Turner's rebellion outlawed schools for any black children, or adults, Daniel Alexander Payne was left without any means of livelihood. As he felt called to continue his teaching work, or to study for the ministry, Payne looked to the Methodists, who told him they would educate him only as long as he promised to become a missionary in Liberia. Payne sought further, and John Bachman advised him to go north, to study with the Lutherans in Gettysburg. There, recommended by Bachman, he met Samuel Simon Schmucker, who accepted him into the seminary class. Payne entered the Lutheran ministry through the Franckean Synod in 1838, just as it agitated for abolition. At that meeting Payne made an impassioned speech that declared his opposition to slavery in principle, and that he would willingly fight against slavery of white as well as black people. Payne served on the committee that investigated slavery and circulated requests to all the other Lutheran synods to make their positions known.¹⁷

Midwestern Immigrants Arrive

The General Synod, formed by Schmucker along with other Eastern Lutherans in 1820, was created in order to help the Lutheran church expand and meet the needs of newly arriving immigrants on the frontier. As ministers from the eastern states moved into Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and even further west, they found a new diversity of Lutheran practice and teaching, since immigrant groups often came accompanied by their own pastors and preachers. In some places there were provisional arrangements that brought new immigrants into association with Eastern Lutherans. The Franckean Synod, for instance, ordained several Norwegian and Danish preachers during the 1840's and 50's to serve congregations in Wisconsin and Illinois. The General Synod founded regional synods, also,

in the region. Their Northern Illinois Synod, split off from the Illinois Synod, formed in 1850 to relate to the many Scandinavian immigrants in the area. Swedish and Norwegian congregations (some having moved away from the Franckean Synod) created a Scandinavian conference that met separately. In Iowa and Wisconsin, the Norwegian Synod accepted the offer of the Missouri Synod and sent their ministerial candidates to St. Louis to be trained. Because the immigrant congregations struggled just to provide for house and home, these associations with other Lutheran groups gave the new arrivals necessary support, but it also resulted in conflict. The various backgrounds and theological tendencies within the immigrant churches signaled differences not only on peripheral issues but also on fundamental points.

One of these issues that became a point of contention within the Scandinavian circles in the Midwest was slavery. The Norwegian Synod lay members were fiercely opposed to slavery, but the pastors, having been trained under Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther in St. Louis, learned to see the issue of slavery in the context of the ordering of God's creation, and therefore came to a reluctant, but decided opinion that slavery in itself, could not be seen as a sin, but only as an evil that was a result of the sin in humanity. This evil should be addressed, and slavery itself was not welcomed. It was hoped that in the end the church's means to combat this, the gospel, would have a gradual effect to ameliorate the conditions of the slaves.¹⁸

In Galesburg, Illinois, a railroad junction and center for Republican politics, the Swedish minister Tufve Nilsson Hasselquist began a newspaper in 1855, *Hemlandet det Gamla och Nya* (The Homeland, the old and new). In the first issue June 2, 1855, Hasselquist revealed his strong Republican leanings. "Slavery is ungodly in its very foundation and cannot stand the test of Christianity or be defended by a clean conscience, which has been cleansed in the blood that was shed for the people regardless of race."¹⁹ Debates in the Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish newspapers increased in their fervency as young immigrant men began, after secession, to join the Union army. These newspaper exchanges of course were in the Scandinavian, or German, languages, and most English Lutherans were and still are unaware of the intensity of these debates.

Conservative Lutherans

In order to defend slavery, Southern Protestant apologists had an easier argument to make, because the Bible seems to speak clearly on the issue. Mark Noll, in his study of the debates, delineates three positions: 1] The

Bible sanctioned slavery and by implication the society in which it existed; 2] The Bible allowed for slavery but also pronounced judgment on societies where the slave-master relation was abused; 3] the spirit of the Bible condemned slavery and so demonstrated the moral inferiority of any society where slavery existed.²⁰ Conservatives settled in on positions one and two, while Lutheran conservatives for the most part aligned themselves with position two. Biblical arguments, however, were not the only theological frameworks Lutherans used to inform themselves about a proper position on slavery. Confessional writings, and one text in particular that Luther wrote in the wake of the peasant's war, provided Lutheran conservatives with their theological foundation for supporting the social order, as it existed, as God's will.²¹

The secession legislature was held from December 17-20. It first met in Columbia, South Carolina, but fear of small pox sent the legislators to Charleston, where on the 20th of December they ratified the move to secede. John Bachman, senior among the pastors in the city and still serving at St. John's in Charleston, offered the prayer at the ratification of secession.

[...] We thank thee for the blessings which thou hast poured on our land through several generations of men; and now when fanaticism, injustice & oppression have estranged us from those who by the ties of nature & the laws of justice were bound to us as brethren – now when we are about to sever the bonds by which we have hitherto been united & to form a government more in accordance with our rights & our duties, we beseech thee to give us that wisdom from on high which will render the acts of this convention a blessing to our own dear southern land, through unborn generations.... In thine almighty wisdom enable us to protect & bless the humble race, that has been confided to our care, so that we may save them from corruption & ruin. So that whilst we teach them their duty to those who are their protectors, we may also train them up under all the hallowed influences of the religion of thy dear Son, our Saviour.²²

Bachman's comfort with a role endorsing a political act would have been strictly contested by conservative Lutherans in the Midwest, and perhaps denounced by C. F. W. Walther, in St. Louis.

When secession leading to the formation of the Confederacy became a fact, Walther experienced the chaos of the unsettled situation in St. Louis, where a federal arsenal near the seminary, Fort Jackson, now seemed up for grabs. Was this a state [Missouri] depot, or should the weapons be handed over to the Federal command? During the skirmish over this property,

Walther wrote to J. C. W. Lindemann in Cleveland, Ohio, on April 27, 1861. The letter gives us a rare glimpse into the way that this conservative theologian drew a lesson from slavery and political turmoil.

The immediate vicinity of our college threatens to become the arena of conflict between the might of the administration and our state government. For this reason we had to close the institution. To this precipice the Abolitionistic-Republican party has succeeded in bringing us.

What to me is most horrible is that even our Lutherans – yes, our pastors – have brought this to pass. This is coming home to us fearfully now and can lead to the destruction of our entire church. Let us cry to the Lord day and night that he may have mercy on us and turn aside the great evil which we have deserved. Pray also for us here. We are in grave danger because we do not go along with the Republican mob, this revolutionary party which has now hoisted the banner of loyalty with unspeakable hypocrisy. We simply rely on the Word: Be subject to the government which has *power* over you – not the *right*, for where would we be then?²³

Walther's concern, that the Word commands Lutherans to be subject to the actual power over the land rather than to a theoretical claim, of course would have resulted in the preservation of slavery. It was God's job to get rid of that, not the political process! German immigrants were opposed to slavery and supported the Union, but Walther was a notable exception. He was led, Lewis Spitz says, to a states' rights position on the analogy of the virtually sovereign territorial estates in the German federation. His biblical interpretation – the scriptures were not opposed to slavery as an institution. The abolitionists and 'Republican Rabble' were supported by the political liberals and social radicals from the German revolution of 1848, who also wrote fervently in St. Louis, especially the famous Carl Schurz, editor of *Anzeiger des Westens*, who happened also to hold anti-clerical views. Republicans opposed immigration, and German beer gardens, too. It is possible that Walther, having left Prussia because the state had imposed its will on the church, was unwilling to tell the state what to do. More investigation into Walther's views, and those of his primary spokesman on the issue of the church and politics, Wilhelm Sihler, pastor in Fort Wayne, who emigrated from Prussia in 1843 when he was 42 years old, are necessary to uncover the Lutheran confessional sources for these positions, and the possible influence of these views on other Lutheran groups.

The influence of C. F. W. Walther on the theological development of other Lutheran groups in the context of this important social and political

debate is important to investigate because the usual framework for inter-Lutheran relationships and debates has until now been entirely constructed in relation to theological and dogmatic questions. The long contention over the doctrine of predestination that split Ohio and Missouri Lutherans, for instance, is certainly related to the issue of slavery, for the way that a spiritual freedom is understood would no doubt have a material dimension to it, and our understanding of the reasons for the vehement disagreements between these Lutherans will be enhanced by attention to the way that the argument would have been heard and understood by the participants in their own idiom and social context. Because we know that C. F. W. Walther attended the ministerial meetings of the Norwegian Synod, invited by their leaders to explain their very unpopular positions on slavery, and did this several times, it is clear that the dogmatic arguments were not clear enough to the participants. Translations into Norwegian of the Missouri theological position on slavery were published during the 1860's. These have not yet been translated into English.

Conclusion

At the new museum where we are exploring the churches' debate and division over slavery, and over the way that the Bible should be interpreted, Lutheran views are present, but they are incomplete. We lack voices from newly arrived Lutherans who did volunteer in significant numbers to fight, mostly for the Union, or who spoke with their lives, but not in English. Their letters and their newspaper debates will give us more information about the theological reasoning on slavery that circulated even in areas far from the actual fighting. These debates were important enough to have created fissures that contributed to the breakdown of relationships among Lutherans in the Midwest. We live with the consequences today as Lutherans who have very divergent views about the interplay between faith and politics, and who differ over whether preaching the gospel or applying the law is the path to social reform. Maybe God works through Law and through the Gospel, and maybe we can learn something new that can aid us in seeing that our history as Lutherans in this nation has not been a story on the sidelines but belongs in the thick of the action.

Notes

- 1 A few surveys of the debates over slavery in the churches have been published. These have been summarized helpfully by Mark Noll, "The Bible and Slavery," in *Religion*

- and the American Civil War* (ed. Randall Miller, Harry Stout, and Charles Regan Wilson; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998) 43-73. In discussing Lutheran debates, Noll notes that the immigrant voice was insignificant in public debates because of language. For the purposes of understanding Lutheran development, however, these voices must be recovered.
- 2 *The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg* (trans. Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Doberstein; Philadelphia, PA: Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States, 1942-58) 1:58.
 - 3 *Ibid.*, 1:721. Muhlenberg's German word that has been translated Negro in this 1942 edition could be Neger, or Schwarzer, either of which is a primarily racial rather than religious designation.
 - 4 Abdel Ross Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity: Samuel Simon Schmucker* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1967; reissued 1999) 322.
 - 5 Samuel Schmucker to Catherine Gettysburg, Sept. 12, 1826 – "My dearest love, [...] With regard to servants, I am agreed to any arrangement you may make, only bring Easter along and if you can Matilda or a substitute for her. I have consulted a lawyer who says that The Indenture must be executed in Va. before two magistrates, & must specify the consideration (viz manumission for which, the individual binds herself to serve[]). I wish Easter to be indentured for 6 years. If you bring any other servant that is a minor, the indenture must be executed by her master or some other individual as her guardian till the age of 28 years. The phraseology of the indenture must be as prescribed by the laws of Va. which Your Father can find in Hennings justice or the Revised Code. Unless this formality is observed they will be free." This letter is in the Gettysburg Seminary archives, Schmucker collection, Wentz Library, Gettysburg, PA.
 - 6 Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, 322.
 - 7 C. C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil War* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985).
 - 8 J. C. Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies* (Milwaukee, WI: Press of A. Houtkamp & Son, 1890) 287.
 - 9 Abdel Ross Wentz, *History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Frederick, Md, 1738-1938* (Harrisburg, PA: Evangelical Press, Harrisburg PA, 1938) 217.
 - 10 *Ibid.*, 218.
 - 11 Robert Fortenbaugh, "The Representative Lutheran Periodical Press and Slavery, 1831-1860," *Lutheran Church Quarterly* 8 (1935) 153.
 - 12 *The Olive Branch* 1/3 (March 1856) 1.
 - 13 *Ibid.*
 - 14 Morris Officer's diary is in the Wentz Library, Gettysburg, PA.
 - 15 Robert Fortenbaugh, "American Lutheran Synods and Slavery, 1830-1860," *Journal of Religion* 13 (January 1933) 77.
 - 16 John Bachman, Charleston, SC, November 24, 1857, published in *The Missionary*, December 10, 1857, quoted from Robert Fortenbaugh, "The Representative Lutheran Periodical Press," 167.
 - 17 Nelson Strobert, *Daniel Alexander Payne: The Venerable Preceptor of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2012) chapter 2.
 - 18 Brynjar Haraldsø, *Slaveridebatten i den Norske Synode: En undersøkelse av slaveridebatten I Den norske synode I USA I 1860-årene med særlig vekt på debattens kirkelige-teologiske aspekter* [The Slavery Debate in the Norwegian Synod: An Investigation of the Slavery Debate in the Norwegian Synod in the USA in the 1860s with Special Attention to its Churchly and Theological Aspects] (Oslo: Solum Forlag A/S, 1988).
 - 19 *T. N. Hasselquist: The Career and Influence of a Swedish-American Clergyman, Journalist, and Educator* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1931) 152-153.
 - 20 Mark Noll, "The Bible and Slavery," 43-73.
 - 21 A section from Martin Luther's tract, *Against the Murderous Hordes of Peasants*, 1525, found its way into the Lutheran debate in the pages of *Lehre und Wehre* in 1856 after John Brown's raids in Missouri that killed white slaveowners and freed their slaves. Luther's condemnation of the peasants' "leibeigener" who stole the labor of their bodies from their masters seemed to C. F. W. Walther, the editor, to be speaking a relevant word to the American situation.
 - 22 MS in The Charleston Museum, Charleston, SC.
 - 23 C. F. W. Walther to J. C. W. Lindemann, April 27, 1861, quoted in Lewis Spitz, *The Life of Dr. C. F. W. Walther* (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia, 1961) 56.

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A Bibliography of Bonhoeffer Biography Part II: Biographical Treatment through the Creative Arts and Devotional Biographies

Guy C. Carter

Introduction: Is the Next Bonhoeffer Biography Necessary?

As scholars and clergy the world over know, to make and publish important lists is to invite the unwanted attentions of malevolent gremlins whose mischief consists mainly in sins of omission. These go unnoticed at first because what was omitted is invisible, being simply not there. A bibliography is such a list, and there is, sadly, reason to believe that those gremlins were busy in the summer of 2012. The updated chronological bibliography offered here is only in part for the benefit of those who have either not read or have no access to the first part of this essay. For the rest, let this important and ever larger list serve as an act of quiet and sincere penance by the list-maker, a help to the reader and modest reparation to the authors of those titles that were so curiously missing in the pages of *SRR* a year ago.

Identifying biographical literature on Dietrich Bonhoeffer is less and less a problem, though access to a good research library and efficient inter-library loan service is to be recommended for actually tracking down these titles. The *Bonhoeffer Bibliography: Primary and Secondary Sources in English*, with its updates in the *IBS-ELS Newsletter*, and the *International Bibliography on Dietrich Bonhoeffer (IBDB)*, as noted in Part I, *SRR* 15/1 (Fall 2012) 94, are the main finding sources for this bibliography. The *IBDB* includes most titles in Bonhoeffer studies through 1996. A new edition is being edited by Ralf Wüstenberg and others and will presumably result in either an update of the whole bibliography (*Ergänzung*) or in effect a second

volume, simply picking up where the volume edited by Ernst Feil and Barbara Fink left off. The ability to do digital searches in this and all areas of inquiry has been amplified greatly by the amazing evolution of the *OCLC* (Ohio College Library Center) online catalog. Access to this immense data base, built from a co-operative of academic research and public libraries agreeing to do all of their new and backlog cataloging online, was once limited to the participating libraries and other institutions subscribing to the *OCLC* service. *OCLC* has since made access unlimited through *WorldCat*: <http://www.worldcat.org/>. *WorldCat* includes full publication information, publisher as well as place and date of publication, and has for this reason proved invaluable in tracking down the publishers for titles listed in *IBDB*, which follows the Continental tradition of not listing them, as well as for locating multiple editions. The listings of an online book and general merchandise retail company now branching out into the field of American print journalism has also produced surprising information on the newest titles in Bonhoeffer studies and Bonhoeffer biography, in some cases unbidden, and is also an important searching tool not to be ignored.

Any bibliographer of Bonhoeffer studies in general, and of Bonhoeffer biography in particular, is immediately faced with a problem that bewildered the earliest Western philosophers. As Plato attests, Heraclitus of Ephesus taught, “One cannot step into the same river twice, for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you,” to which Parmenides is later supposed to have written, “One cannot step into the same river *once*.” The stream of the interpretation of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s life that sprang forth with a seminary doctoral dissertation project and published play is the epitome of unrelenting flux. Like the metaphor of that pre-Socratic river, the output of writings on the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the connection of that life to his thought has not ceased to flow for more than two years at a stretch since 1958. The latest offering on the American market in English, was published just a month prior to this issue of *SRR*, and the next – as far as is known or can be predicted – is scheduled for publication in April of the New Year, though there may be others. 115 titles, at present count, in 210 editions is enough to make the prudent think twice about wading into these deep waters. Simply the attempt to gather and examine the greater bulk of these texts has been a daunting task. An asterisk (*) following some entries, 79 in all, indicates which titles and editions have been physically located for this study. The work is obviously incomplete. Hindsight suggests that it could better have been accomplished as a collegial effort.

The introduction to Part I, “Five Decades at a Glance,” attempted to lay out clear criteria for inclusion and exclusion of works examined in this study. In actual practice, some of these lines of demarcation have necessarily

become blurred. The sparsity of film or audio one-off interviews located has led the bibliographer to exclude that genre from the study, apart, that is, from full-length documentary films consisting mainly of interviews, such as Bain Boehlke's 1982 *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Memories and Perspectives*. Studies or works of drama or historical novels encompassing an entire family or group were to have been excluded, yet works such as Jane Pejsa's 1991 *Matriarch of Conspiracy*, or Sigrid Grabner's and Hendrik Röder's 2004 interviews with Emmi Bonhoeffer, contain a substantial memoir of Dietrich Bonhoeffer in both retrospect and biographical documents and so have been included.

The method followed in this part will be to survey three of five general genres of Bonhoeffer biography and biographical literature, roughly as follows: (1) biographical treatment through the creative arts and (2) devotional biographies or biographical introductions to devotional anthologies. The concluding part in a future issue of *SRR* will closely examine works within the main genres: (1) commentary on primary texts with extensive biographical introduction, (2) comparative and (3) individual biographies of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

The goal throughout will be to inform those interested in deepening their knowledge of the life, witness, and theology of the subject of all these writings, to evaluate these works on the basis of their use of the best documentary sources available at the time they were written and the attitude of the biographers toward the community of Bonhoeffer scholars, to highlight any particular insight in a given work that either changed the course of Bonhoeffer studies or has perhaps gone unnoticed, to identify any lacunae common to the entire corpus of Bonhoeffer biography and biographical literature within the limits of this study, and, finally, to suggest directions for future study that might break new ground. It is naturally the case that, even within a given genre, the same standard of scholarly rigor is neither called for nor to be expected. Though many of these efforts have sought to address a specific historiographical need to fill in the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life and times, there has undoubtedly been a deeper, more existential motive behind most if not all of these biographical writings. Biography is the record of the biographer's entrance into the land of the biographical subject, the record of one who attempted to write the life of a living, breathing human being. The biography stands over time, if it is a good one, to mark the place where that journey can begin and continue for the reader as well. There is actually no question of calling a moratorium on Bonhoeffer biographies, of closing the book on further passages into that land at an increasingly wide historical remove from the land of our own time and space. But the biographer of Dietrich Bonhoeffer bears an increasing

burden of responsibility for the increasingly available and reliable sources available to the biographer through the labor of a very wide network of scholars representing a broad spectrum of the humanities and social sciences.

The cumulative achievement of over sixty years of pouring over primary sources and memoirs of every description, now combined with the sheer mass of biographical commentary of the highest quality contained in the editors' introductions and critical apparatus to both the German critical edition, *DBW*,¹ and the English scholarly edition, *DBWE*,² make the task of the Bonhoeffer biographer today at once easier and more daunting. Together with the multiple editions ranging from 1967 to 1986 of Eberhard Bethge's *Dietrich Bonhoeffer* and Victoria Barnett's magisterial collation of all of these as well as newly available documents in her unabridged 2000 translation of the Bethge biography, anyone able to work in English now has an abundance of resources for inquiry and research and little if any excuse not to use them all.

Reference here to specific works will be made to author, to year, and to short title where necessary, with the entry found in the Updated Bibliography. The bracketed number at the beginning of many pre-1996 entries is the *IBDB* accession number. For titles published in years approaching and following the final year in the *IBDB* range, 1996, as well as for a few titles published within the range of *IBDB*, a bracketed date or set of dates will be found at the end of the entry. For both *IBDB* accession numbers and for bracketed dates, reference to previous accession numbers or publication years will be made by means of a backward facing arrow, ↵, and reference to subsequent accession numbers or publication years will be made by means of a forward facing arrow, ↗.

I: Biographical Treatment in the Creative Arts

a) Stage Drama and Cinema

By 1958 the world might have begun to forget the Nazi horror culminating in the 1945 Nuremberg War Crimes Trials and the first Auschwitz Trials of 1947, but the name of Dietrich Bonhoeffer was being pronounced with reverence as one who stood up to the barbarism into which his own country was plunged and who had paid the ultimate price for so doing. The poet, W. H. Auden, honored his memory in that year with his poem to the Crucified, "Friday's Child," and Elizabeth Berryhill, a doctoral student at Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, honored that memory in her doctoral dissertation project, refereed by theologians who had both taught the very young Bonhoeffer as a post-doctoral student and who had

also tried to welcome him as a colleague to save him from the terror gripping Germany. Crafting her project into a two-act play published under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, she offered the world a counterpoint to the revisiting of Nazism's monstrous crimes in the arrest and trial of Adolf Eichmann, held from 1960 to 1962, and the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trials, held from 1963 to 1965. These were also years in which mention of the reasoned and determined opposition of Dietrich Bonhoeffer to both racism and militarism was made in connection with the American Civil Rights Movement and with the peace movement to 'Ban the Bomb' in both Europe and the United States, just as Bonhoeffer would become a watchword in the struggle for civil rights and peace through reconciliation in both South Africa and Northern Ireland. *Cup of Trembling* was a play whose time had come.

In 1962 Donald Stauffer's guide to Berryhill's play, published by the Protestant Episcopal Church, for implementing the play in the local church, youth, and collegiate settings, was based mainly on three of the four sources of Bonhoeffer in English translation available at the time. These were, Reginald Fuller's translation of both *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Letters and Papers from Prison*, and the Neville Horton translation of *Ethics*.³ Eberhard Bethge's introductions to these provided the playwright with her primary sources of biographical information on her subject. Part of Berryhill's genius is her use of Bonhoeffer's prison poem, *Stations on the Way to Freedom*, to frame action and dialog and to engage the audience, and her substitution of the name "Bonhoeffer," still hard to pronounce for most Anglophones, with "Friedhoffer" (literally, "one of or who lives in a cemetery," a clever pun that would not be lost on German-speakers. Alternatively, the character's name could be interpreted as "one who inhabits a place of peace"). Performed in churches, at church youth camps, and on college campuses well into the early 1970's, the play has earned a modest place in the canon of the American playhouse. It seems curious that it has never been adapted as a screenplay and produced cinematically.

Coming of Age (1973), by the late and enormously distinguished British playwright, director, and producer, Wilfred Harrison, was created out of an affinity Harrison felt immediately with Dietrich Bonhoeffer as witness for peace as he came to learn of him in the post-War period. Harrison's own father had died in battle in WWI. The son, absolutely opposed to war, took the difficult step of registering as a conscientious objector in 1939, doing agricultural work and volunteering as a subject for medical research. After the war, aided by a Churchill Scholarship, he entered the theater and became part of various travelling repertoire companies touring the whole of

Great Britain and many parts of Europe. Harrison's passion was to provide theater to those who would have no access to it unless the theater came to them. Along with many other works, the companies he served with brought *Coming of Age* to audiences of rural folk and those trying to live in post-War urban destruction from the Outer Hebrides to Poland.⁴

As spare as the set design and dramatis personae of Berryhill's play are, with actors taking on multiple roles, the "one actor show" form of dramatic interpretation has been explored by Alvin D. Staggs' 1992 *A View from the Underside*, both of which have been performed at, among other venues, international congresses of the International Bonhoeffer Society (IBS).

In 1971, Theodore A Gill published his *Memo for a Movie*, quite literally, a memo for a film about Dietrich Bonhoeffer that he never made, but a 'memo' that grew into a biography, one that will be treated in the next part of the study. This put the idea out in the forum of ideas about Bonhoeffer. In the 1980's, James Patrick Kelley, then professor of theology and religious studies at Lynchburg College in Virginia, actually did venture into the medium of film by creating a video archive for his college consisting of interviews he conducted with as many surviving members of the German political and military resistance to Hitler as he could find, including of course the Bethge's and students of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's at Finkenwalde. A concise update to the Bibliography in the next part will give the complete videography and accession information for that collection.

In 1982, as if building on Kelley's concept and using his approach, Bain Boehlke directed and produced *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Memories and Perspectives* through his company, Trinity Films in Minneapolis. At first available to institutions for rental in cans of 35mm film, by the 1990's it was distributed as a VHS tape and is now available on DVD. This deeply moving black and white collage of archival still shots, interviews, some with English voice-overs, scenes of the German countryside filmed with a hand-held camera from a moving car, and music, especially the playing of Beethoven piano pieces Bonhoeffer loved to play himself, direct the audience to carefully selected writings, skillfully narrated. The cinematography and sound is superb. The film has the effect for the audience of compacting Bonhoeffer's life of high activity and pathos in such a way that it is released, explosively, by his own words. Undergraduates viewing the film have been heard to express utter astonishment that anything and anyone connected with the Church or religion could be so interesting. Bonhoeffer might have been scandalized by such a reaction to his own life in his first New York period, but the prisoner of Tegel would likely have smiled at such amazement. It is difficult to imagine that *Memories and Perspectives* will have a limited shelf-life.

The same cannot be said of the next two film biographies, the first a documentary and the second a feature film. T. N. Mohan's 1996 VHS *Hanged on a Twisted Cross: The Life, Convictions and Martyrdom of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* was well written, by no less than Eberhard and Renate Bethge and enthusiastically narrated by Ed Asner. The moving and still images are of very poor quality as is also the sound.

By contrast, Eric Till's 1999 *Bonhoeffer, Agent of Grace* is technically stunning and indeed looks and sounds like the Studio Babelsberg production it was, though apparently on a limited budget with only a few high-explosive bombs and a disjointedly telescoped story line that suggests a committee hard at work. The actors, including hardworking German superstar Ulrich Tukur in the starring role, are well type-cast and bring their skills to bear on the task with obvious dedication. The portrayal of a very, very young Maria von Wedemeyer as a precocious confirmand was especially convincing. Audiences, even those with more than a passing knowledge of the historical period and of the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, have complained of feeling as though parachuted into a war zone without a maps or any orders. Anachronisms simply run riot. Bonhoeffer's Tegel nemesis, the prosecutor Manfred Roeder, is shown to be present at Bonhoeffer's execution, and dutifully receives the spectacles of the condemned after Bonhoeffer has disrobed and walks triumphantly to his death. Gallows humor? Small wonder that, suggesting what to do with such a biographical and cinematic catastrophe, some in the IBS have called for a return to the burning practices of the Inquisition and the Third Reich in just this one instance.

In 2003 Martin Doblmeier came to the rescue of Bonhoeffer in film with his outstanding *Bonhoeffer: A Documentary film on the life of the anti-Nazi German Lutheran Pastor and Theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, produced by South Carolina Educational Television. Doblmeier gets the chronology right. The cinematography and editing are good.

What Doblmeier accomplished in 75 minutes, Hellmut Sitó Schlingensiepen and Christian Bimm Coers accomplished in 23 minutes, though with German school children and their teachers in mind in their 2005 documentary, *Wer glaubt, der flieht nicht ... Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1906-1945* ["He Who Believes Does Not Flee ... Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1906-1945"].

Schlingensiepen (a son of the Bonhoeffer scholar and biographer, Ferdinand Schlingensiepen) premiered the film with English narration in 2011 at the conference, *Bonhoeffer for the Coming Generation*, held at Union Theological Seminary in NYC. The English version will be going into distribution soon.

Will Ted Gill's original dream, with his "memo's" many caveats about how difficult certain sequences will be to act and shoot, find a director and

producer up to the challenge someday? As many technical challenges to film-making have been mitigated by the digital process, and given the subject, which has inspired more than one creative obsession, it could happen.

b) The Biographical Photo-essay

In 1969 the first illustrated life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer appeared with a foreword by former WCC General Secretary, W. A. Visser 't Hooft. *The Steps of Bonhoeffer*, written and edited by J. Martin Bailey, contains some of the archival photographs that will appear in later pictorial biographies, but the majority of the pictures are originals taken by Douglas Gilbert, by then a freelance but once a staff photographer for *Look* magazine. True to its title, Gilbert documents places the subject saw and experienced, so that the reader sees through Bonhoeffer's eyes, though not quite. One sees not the world Bonhoeffer saw, but Europe still in process of reconstruction from the ashes of WWII, and many of the pictures, especially those taken in the former GDR and Peoples' Republic of Poland, are fascinating for that very reason. This is a unique achievement that merits either repetition in a new project or at the very least a new edition. There are brief photo-essays contained in parts of many biographies of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, but these images and the spare text consisting mostly of extracts from Bonhoeffer's own writings and other statements is remarkable.

Both Eberhard and Renate Bethge have been active in helping readers to visualize Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the world in which he lived. In 1976 Eberhard Bethge published his first Bonhoeffer introduction and biography as an anthology of memoirs of Dietrich Bonhoeffer with substantial photographic content. This book was published in three further editions in 1979 (English), 1989 (German) and 1992 (Japanese). Renate Bethge opened the Bonhoeffer family albums to work with Christian Gremmels on editing a more extensive successor to her husband's first book in this genre with the first German edition in 1986 of the now well-known *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Life in Pictures*, followed by subsequent ones in 1987 (English), 1989 (German), and the Dietrich Bonhoeffer centenary birthday edition in 2006 (English). In these books the reader "sees" Bonhoeffer himself, more than the world as he saw it, and "hears" him in his own words. In addition to family photographs there is also an abundance of historical documentary and photographic material.

Catalogues of historical exhibitions can be as moving in their own way as the exhibition itself. For that reason the catalogue of the 1996 exhibition hosted by the Board of the Bonhoeffer House in Berlin-Charlottenburg in honor of the 90th Dietrich Bonhoeffer jubilee is to be counted among

pictorial biographies of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. James Patrick Kelley did an admirable job of translating the commentary written and edited by Thomas Koch and Klaus P. Wagnen.

Within this genre, one would like to be able to examine some of the illustrated Dietrich Bonhoeffer biographies written for a youth audience. These include a 1991 illustrated edition of the original 1988 youth biography in French by Jean-Jacques Heitz issued by the Regional Commission for [Protestant] Catechesis in Strasbourg. An edition in German was published in 2009. A German graphic novel by Moritz Stetter titled simply *Bonhoeffer*, was written presumably for a youth audience, but perhaps for a wider readership, and was published in 2010 in Gütersloh.

c] *The Historical Novel*

The historical novel with Dietrich Bonhoeffer as protagonist is another creative means for understanding his life and death, but it has seldom been attempted except by authors of some of the Bonhoeffer biographies intended for youth and Christian laity. One pioneer in the field is Mary Glazener, whose very adult biography, *The Cup of Wrath*, first appeared in 1992, with an English paper edition in 1995 and subsequent translations into German (2001 and 2012) and Korean (2006). Glazener devoted a decade of research to her subject, work that is evident in her book. She is fondly remembered by many in the International Bonhoeffer Society because of her dauntless efforts to meet and interview as many contemporaries and intimates of her subject as possible. She claimed that her identity as an American Southerner helped her to establish empathy with Germans, a people defeated defending a hopelessly wrong cause but a people from whom figures of towering dignity emerged again and again, figures such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Glazener's grasp of the history of the period and her personal encounter with many of the real people who lived that history saved her the trouble, she wrote, of imagining situations for her characters against the backdrop of history. Every single situation depicted in the novel, she promises the reader, actually happened.

d] *Music*

Music was an integral part of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's world and of his identity. There could be no more appropriate medium for communicating the meaning of his life than the musical art form. American minimalist composer and Parisian ex-pat, Tom Johnson, a life-long reader of Bonhoeffer, was seized by the obsession that may one day result in a great film. In

Johnson's case, the result was a great choral and orchestral oratorio in which he allowed himself to step out of his normal realm of musical cubism to embrace the Lutheran chorale tradition, his *Bonhoeffer Oratorium: in vier Teilen, für vier Solisten, zwei Chöre und Orchester*. Music and Word form an antiphonal backdrop to Bonhoeffer's life and witness from his earliest sermons to the decisive year 1933/34 through the years of resistance to his last words, melded with the last words of the Crucified. The work premiered in draft form in June of 1988 in the Lutheran Church of Amsterdam, also the aula of the University of Amsterdam. The *Oratorio* was Tom Johnson's contribution to the 5th International Bonhoeffer Congress. Many members of the Amsterdam Congress sang, and the late Martin Kuske of the East German IBS Section declaimed the sermon texts, explosive with meaning. Bonhoeffer's "Gideon Sermon" against rearmament and the preparation for another World War stands out with great clarity in the bibliographer's memory. The composer went on to give full symphonic performances of the work throughout Europe, one for the Bavarian Radio which was recorded and is available to schools only.

The early Christian Father, Tertullian, taught that "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." Prior to the 2005 Catholic World Youth Day in Cologne, Father Joaquin Alliende and Mariusz Kozubek of 'Theatre A' in Warsaw conceived and wrote a script for a youth opera that would express Pope John Paul II's hope that, following the twentieth century, a century that had witnessed numbers of Christian martyrs equal to those of all previous epochs, a flowering of faith would spring forth in the church. The title of the opera is *Pelican – Into Your Hands*. It was performed at Cologne in the great cathedral there in 2005. The Lutheran pastor and theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, is included among the martyrs of the church, as are Eastern Orthodox priests and religious. The music could be considered pedestrian, compared with the *Oratorio* of Tom Johnson, if one considers Gregorian chant with a youth beat pedestrian. The performance of the opera at Cologne and the DVD of it was produced by the Papal agency "Aid for the Church in Need."

II: *Devotional Works*

Renate Bethge's 1995 *Wunderbar geboren: Dietrich Bonhoeffer* ["Wonderfully Protected"] has seen three German editions, in 1995, 1998 and 2005. Selections from her uncle's poetry, letters (especially the prison correspondence), and sermon expositions of biblical text are highlighted with the author's own gently personal narrative of his life, written as though explaining to a dear friend who Dietrich Bonhoeffer was, and was for her. Perhaps

it is that German past participle, *geborgen*, that has reduced the little book's chances of translation. Here translated as "protected," it really means more: held and upheld away from danger, yet in the midst of danger.

The first general editor of the *DBWE* series, Wayne Whitson Floyd, Jr., published a devotional commentary on Bonhoeffer's thought in 2000 with a compact introduction informative enough for any reader to have some context for the texts to be introduced. The organization of *The Wisdom and Witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* is reminiscent of Bonhoeffer's own *Life Together*, primary texts that set forth Bonhoeffer's understanding of "Church, World, Discipleship, Politics, Creation, Christ, Love, Future." Each block of Bonhoeffer text is followed by the author's meditation. This would be an excellent resource for small group prayer and reflection, or for use in place of the tract in the Divine Office, for devotional services or for pastoral use with the hospitalized and homebound.

John W. Matthews' *Anxious Souls Will Ask ... The Christ-Centered Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* published in 2005 comes out of decades of pastoral ministry mentored by Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his view of Christ, the church and the world. There is a preoccupation here with Bonhoeffer's characterization of such rudiments of Christian church life as prayer, worship, Bible study and preaching, the Sacraments, and compassionate love because there is a living and loving God as "secret discipline" (*disciplina arcani*) which the modern Western world increasingly neither understands nor cares to understand. The author's purpose is to reveal, as the title suggests, the spiritual motivation and hope of Dietrich Bonhoeffer as centered in God's promise of forgiveness and new life in Christ, not on the idea that religion is culturally good for our consumer society. He accepts Eberhard Bethge's thesis that Bonhoeffer's "non-religious" approach to interpreting the Bible and proclaiming the gospel is completely consistent with his earliest thought. It was that thought that enabled Bonhoeffer to hear God's call out of the complacency of a genteel middle-class religiosity ("false pillars") to find in Christ a Savior and in the church a living community in which the Crucified and Risen is present through the Holy Spirit in a life of active love for the neighbor, the neighbor defined by Jesus, not by a state blinded by its own power. Matthews sees Bonhoeffer's poem, "Christians and Heathens," as emblematic of Bonhoeffer's christological faith in a God who embraces the world in Jesus Christ. The author publishes his own English hymn-setting of this poem. Martin Rumscheidt has written a fine preface to the book with some reflections on the dedication of the Bonhoeffer statue among the martyrs honored at Westminster Abbey. Primary sources are mostly from *DBWE*. There is a chronology which helps, with quite a bit of biographical commentary throughout, to provide context for the text.

Designed to disturb as well as inform and inspire, Geoffrey B. Kelly's 2008 *Reading Bonhoeffer: A Guide to His Spiritual Classics and Selected Writings of Peace*, is dedicated to the memory of the author's colleague, collaborator and best friend, beloved of so many in the community of Bonhoefferians and scholar of Bonhoeffer's teaching and efforts on behalf of peace, F. Burton Nelson. Selected writings, primarily from Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship* (*DBWE* 4) continually drive home the idea of the peace of Christ as an active being-at-peace with the neighbor, overcoming racism, greed, suspicion, fear to find God's gift and presence in the man or woman or group defined as other, as alien. In case these points are lost on the reader, Kelly provides pointed study questions at the end of each chapter. The book includes a substantial biographical first chapter and many interesting asides from the author's extensive involvement in the *DBWE* translation and editing process over a quarter of a century.

Conclusion

The creative and spiritual impulse within us, an important dimension of the image of God, has resonated with the figure of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, his words, and his life, which gave content to those words. Indeed, the first published attempt to present that life and those words was not in a book, but on a stage. The medium of cinema is still exploring how to approach a retelling of that past with integrity and relevance to the present. Music has given Bonhoeffer a new voice today. His poetry has given a church he never knew hymns that lead toward the common hope of Christians of every age. One would like to hear more from hymn-writers and composers of "By Gracious Powers," now in two English hymn settings, about the spiritual force that led them to and through that work, as John Matthews reflects on that process.

It remains in the next segment to survey the straightforward biographical writing on Dietrich Bonhoeffer, from Walter Dress in 1960 down to the present, to see how they used the sources available to them, to check for any lacunae that are apparent and, in awe and humility toward those who attempt a writing of such a life as his, to suggest directions for future biography.

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Notes

- 1 *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke*, (ed. Eberhard Bethge et al. 17 vols; Munich: Chr. Kaiser; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1986–1999).
- 2 *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works* (ed. Wayne Whitson Floyd Jr., Victoria J. Barnett, Barbara Wojhoski; 16 vols; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996–2013). *DBWE* is now available in a digital edition through Logos Bible Study. Alexander Street Press is preparing a common digital edition of both *DBW* and *DBWE* with which the reader will be able to choose either German or English as a base language, but with 'hovering' capability enabling the reader to see the focus text immediately in the other language.
- 3 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (ed. Eberhard Bethge; trans. Reginald Fuller [from *Nachfolge*]; preface Reinhold Niebuhr; foreword George Kennedy Allen Bell, Bishop of Chichester; memoir G. Leibholz; New York: Macmillan; London:

SCM, 1949); *Prisoner for God: Letters and Papers from Prison* (ed., with foreword, Eberhard Bethge; trans. Reginald Fuller [from *Widerstand und Ergebung*]; New York: Macmillan; London: SCM, 1953); *Ethics* (ed., with preface, Eberhard Bethge; trans. Neville Horton Smith [from *Ethik*]; New York: Macmillan; London: SCM, 1955). With John Doberstein's translation of *Gemeinsames Leben* under the title *Life Together* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), these were the only primary texts for Bonhoeffer study available until Edwin Robertson's English anthologies began to appear. The first three listed here are the very three titles the bibliographer attempted to read in high school, assuming that, having digested them, he would have mastered all of Bonhoeffer. It came as a quite a shock to find how indigestible those three little books were, requiring never-ending probing into the Beatitudes, and the Creed, which had been learned so easily in confirmation class, investigation of church history, theology in order to make any sense out of the references, and an uncomfortable probing of conscience suggesting that the Christian life entailed a good deal more than 'being good.' The further shock of learning how much more of Bonhoeffer's written testament remained came later, and continues.

- 4 Hilary Young and David Ward, "Wilfred Harrison Obituary," *The Guardian* (Wednesday, 10 February 2010), <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2010/feb/10/wilfred-harrison-obituary>.

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Invocation for the 149th Dedication Day, November 19, 2012 at Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

John Spangler

I invite you to pray with me.

We give thanks this day for hallowed words and landscapes, especially those which aligned upon this ridge where so many struggled, died, and ultimately remained.

We give thanks in this important year for the endurance of this democracy and the nation governed by it, that opportunities to bear witness to its promise continue to this day. We pray for its leaders, for all who bear a measure of responsibility for fair governance, justice, and the common good.

May it continue to fall upon our shoulders, as residents, pilgrims, visitors and guests, as the stewards of this ground, not only to cherish the words spoken here, but to stand by them. Make us attentive to the ways in which, woven in to the fabric of the nation and its citizens, the unfinished work of freedom remains before us.

Standing by extraordinary words, on soil that was so consecrated here at Gettysburg, we seek the strength, commitment, and resolve to help a thankful nation remember what happened here, in conflict and compassion, in remembrance, redemption and renewal.

In the name of God, the Divine creator of all history, known across this land and around this earth, and from whom all grace, sacrifice and honor ultimately flows.

Amen.

John Spangler is Executive Assistant to the President for Communication and Planning and President of the Seminary Ridge Historic Preservation Foundation at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. Ordained in the ELCA, Spangler served congregations in New England and was the New England Synod communications officer before taking his current call at the Seminary. The Invocation was delivered at the annual Dedication Day Ceremony which commemorates Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in 1863. Speakers for 2012 included Stephen Spielberg and Doris Kearns Goodwin. Dedication Day events are sponsored by The Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania, Gettysburg College, the Gettysburg National Military Park, and the Gettysburg Foundation.

Sermon Delivered at the International Luther Congress August 5, 2012, Helsinki Cathedral

Kirsi Stjerna

Gen 22:1-12

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey.

He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac.

When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.

On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.

He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife.

As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham,

"Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."

*And the two of them went on together.
 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar
 there and arranged the wood on it.
 He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.
 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.
 But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven,
 "Abraham! Abraham!"
 "Here I am," he replied.
 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said.
 "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have
 not withheld from me your son, your only son."*

The binding of Isaac is a terrible, terrifying, and terrific story. We cannot relate and yet we can relate. There are some elements that echo with our basic experiences in life – that is, death.

We can probably relate more to the agony of Isaac and his reckoning with the approaching death, than to the superhero-in-faith Abraham. After all, as we all know, Abraham's trust in God's promise, in God's inscrutable wisdom, acting thus against even his basic human instincts, has been hoisted as the kind of justifying-// righteous-making faith God desires for all of us to have, the kind of faith that blesses nations and generations. Interpreters like Luther have made the most – if not too much – of Abraham's faith in support of Christological and messianic arguments and constructing with Abraham a pretty impossible model for the rest of the human travelers.

Seriously, how many of us could imagine putting a knife on our babies – unless we were simply insane; normal people don't kill their offspring. Yes, this is a contemporary woman's first gut-reaction to a particular aspect of the story, one shaped by very fundamental maternal instincts, and not necessarily in line with the traditional biblical interpretations that assume that everything we read in the story must be good and god-willed and with a deeper divine meaning. I'd actually imagine Sarah's reaction would have been ... less malleable: since God had given her a child against all the natural odds, it would have taken an other-worldly effort for anyone to hurt that child, over her dead body. Had Sarah appeared in the story, which she peculiarly does not, we would probably be reading two different perspectives on the dilemma "to sacrifice a child to God or not:" 1) a perspective of "unquestioning faith in God's will as perceived at the moment," and 2) a perspective we could call "common sense," shaped by parental and basic human instincts.

In Luther's interpretation – and all of us here, I assume, are interested in his points of view – the life and death stories of the patriarchs and matriarchs often have two sides to them: the superhuman faith and larger-than-life expectations, on the one hand, and the common sense and the ultra-human relations with parental/marital/family concerns, on the other. Luther does not elevate one over the other, but marvels at both. He sees God working through human mess and providing blessing to a wild variety of actions. Luther also accepts that, per biblical stories, people can grossly err when executing God's plans or when discerning God's will, while God's plan can also become realized regardless of people making serious misjudgments.

Might that be the lesson with this horrible text about Abraham and Isaac? Did Isaac trust that "daddy knew best?" Did he trust that Abraham was using his best judgment at the moment? All we know is that he was obedient, and that would imply that the son trusted his father. He trusts his father whom he had just heard give flat-out lies to the servants, even if he was leading him to a very dark place without too much explanation. Isaac, the son, doesn't say much in the story. Other than: we heard Isaac asking, "where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" And we heard his father answer, "God [himself] will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." Not much else was said. The two of them walked on, together, in silence.

Regardless of how we wish to interpret the quality of the biblical men's faith, we can relate particularly to Isaac's situation on a very human level: when our time is up, when so willed by God, there is not that much to say or do but to go gracefully with the holy flow and deal with the reality. When our time is up, we will probably be stunned in silence as well, like Isaac. No matter how death comes to us, it always seems offensive, unfair, and untimely – regardless of how old we are – whether we die from illness or so-called accident or other imaginable ways, or even if we should die the unimaginable death at the hands of our own parent. We can rebel, of course. Like Isaac, who was no longer a tiny tot and who could have put down his father. Or we can, like Isaac, accept what is the reality, listen and discern in our hearts, and step forward; we can find the superhuman strength to do that, like Isaac, as long as we believe God is in charge. As long as we get the holy sense that our death, just as our life, is filled with a godly meaning, we can trust the path for us to take, and we too can walk like Isaac. Regardless of the dark hole the path may seem to lead us to. That is the trust, the faith of Isaac.

When preparing these words for us this morning, I have been thinking of our dear colleague at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Susan Hedahl. Susan, like Isaac, is a person of faith who is faced with the situation where she needs to make amends with the violence

death brings along in its approach, shifting her horizons to see God's hand in what makes little sense to us mortals, with the kind of serenity and peace that can only have heavenly origins.

We can relate to and learn from Isaac, and Susan, and others who have gone before us on this path: when seeing the glimpse of our own approaching death, we too will grow silent. When we acknowledge the end of our days, we too will need to surrender to the reality of death, and we too will descend/or ascend into holy silence, shutting down to the noise of this world and listening to the echoes of eternity, even if reacting in our core against the rawness of the death. In those moments, we too will hang on a thread of faith. Faith that God is the master of our lives and our deaths. Luther wrote about his personal dark experience when holding his dead daughters in his arms. Rebelling, resisting their death, hurt to the core, while quietly accepting, and only in faith able to do so and let go and let his daughters be buried. What else could he, Isaac, or we, do? Like Luther, like Isaac, we will find ourselves in a moment when our faith is tested, regardless of who we are. Our faith will be tested at the time of death. And at that time of death, that very faith will carry us through.

In those moments, when gazing into the eternity, we too will walk in silence, with not that much to say. There is no need to fill the space with words either. God's Word is what is spoken, quietly in our souls, and that suffices. Like Isaac, we can accept the realities presented to us while resting on the faith that God fills every dimension of our personal story. That kind of faith, Isaac's faith, is not of us but of God. Amen.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Why Priests? A Failed Tradition

Garry Wills (New York: Viking Penguin, 2013)

Reviewed by Mark Oldenburg

Garry Wills begins this misleadingly titled book by saying, “I have nothing against priests,” and then spending two pages describing the priests he’s followed, read, and been befriended by. So let me begin by saying that I have nothing against Garry Wills. Indeed, I’ve enjoyed reading him since the days of and *Nixon Agonistes* (1970) and *Bare Ruined Choirs* (1972). His books on the Gettysburg Address and the Declaration of Independence are *tours de force* of intellectual history and rhetorical analysis. His heroes – Augustine of Hippo, Lord Acton, and G. K. Chesterton – are mine as well. I grab his books off the shelf as soon as they appear, and devour them like detective novels. So it is with no animus or even pique that I call his book misleadingly titled and parochially Roman Catholic. Indeed, it is with no surprise that, despite that, I call it valuable and evocative, particularly for Lutherans.

This is not really a book about the priesthood; it’s really a book about the church’s adoption (with, as Wills claims, only the support of Hebrews within the New Testament) of the notion of propitiatory blood sacrifice as central to its understanding of atonement. This adoption led to the later growth of a priestly caste within the church – something unknown in the first century – as well as its distinct hierarchy. Indeed, Wills claims that “[w]ithout the priesthood, would there have been belief in an apostolic succession, the real presence in the Eucharist, the sacrificial interpretation of the Mass, or the ransom theory of redemption?” (1f.) Of course, the answers are yes; yes; yes, but not propitiatory; and probably.

Wills does not really explain in what way priesthood has failed, or what the church might look like without priests. And by “priests” Wills means men with the power to confect the mass, to transubstantiate the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, so that it may be offered as a sac-

rifice once more. He does not explore the lives of churches which, either because of theological conviction or world-historic circumstances, are without priests of this sort. What he does do is note how tenuous the foundation of that sort of priesthood is within the New Testament and the early church, and in his usual learned, idiosyncratic way.

The first section of the book describes the understanding of the Mass as Sacrifice, requiring the real presence of Christ's body and blood, and including some of the more remarkable uses of consecrated elements during the Middle Ages and since. This section ends with two explanations of the real presence. The first is that of Thomas Aquinas, the understanding officially required within Roman Catholicism, which includes transubstantiation, with its focus on the priest and the elements. The second is that of Augustine, who shows precious little interest in the transformation of the bread into the body of Christ, but is fascinated by the identification of the assembly into the body of Christ. This focus, indeed, seems to be Wills' desideratum. He wishes to reassure his fellow parishioners that "as priests shrink in number...congregations do not have to feel that they have lost all connection with the sacred just because the role of priests in their lives is contracting." (256) It is the assembly through which God offers counsel, instruction, support and, indeed, the abiding presence of Jesus, and the assembly can exist without a priesthood.

Wills might have ended there, and had a good sized journal article. But he goes on to argue interestingly if not necessarily germanely, mostly about Hebrews. The second section revolves around the image of Melchizedek, whose eternal, extra-Abrahamic priesthood was assigned to the Davidic kings, and then to Jesus. Section three is an introduction to the book of Hebrews, noting repeatedly (if not entirely accurately) that it is the only book in the New Testament that recognizes a Christian priest, and that Jesus himself is the only member of that class. Section four explores the image of sacrifice as used for Jesus, and the ways the question, "Who killed Jesus?" has been answered over the centuries. Section five argues for other models of the atonement (Irenaeus's and Abelard's foremost among them), in which Jesus is centrally a rescuer rather than a sacrifice. By the way, in defending Abelard, he gives the best one-paragraph criticism I've read of asking "What Would Jesus Do?" (207f.) Finally, section seven describes the monopoly the priesthood has exercised on the sacred in the Roman Catholic church, and the impoverishment that has meant in understandings of the Lord's Supper.

As this summary indicates, the book is more a collection of interesting, tangentially related, scholarly but accessible essays than a single sustained argument of a thesis.

It also has two glaring omissions. First of all, it is parochially Roman Catholic; it assumes the priesthood as explained and experienced in the Church of Rome. Thus, for instance, in describing Justin Martyr's descriptions of Holy Communion from the early 2nd century, Wills summarizes, "Here there is no priest, but only a presider, ... no sacrifice, only a thanksgiving prayer." (246f.) ONLY!?! Despite his erudition, and despite the fact that his thesis in fact requires it, Wills seems amazed whenever the early church is at variance with the Council of Trent.

More critical, however, is his second omission: he ignores at least two places outside of Hebrews where New Testament authors use the imagery of priesthood and/or sacrifice. This omission is remarkable because both of them strengthen Wills' central case, while nuancing it. First, of course, is 1 Peter 2:9, in which the author identifies the newly baptized as "a royal priesthood." This is, indeed, the only time in the New Testament where anyone other than Jesus is described as a priest in the new order. It is noteworthy that this priesthood is not a caste within the church, but includes all of the baptized. And the job of a royal priesthood is not sacrifice (not even the sacrifice of praise and prayer), but rather proclamation: "...that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (NRSV). Indeed, models of priesthood - after the model of the Jewish temple, general Mediterranean religions, or Roman Catholicism - are absent from the New Testament. The one author, I Peter, who seems to have re-defined the term rather than completely avoiding it, and the new definition, with its emphasis on its general nature, would seem to be rather appealing to Wills' argument.

The image of sacrifice, and perhaps by implication priesthood, also shows up more subtly in the Passion stories. Of course, Passover, with its sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, is in the background of all the stories. The parallel between Jesus and the Paschal Lamb, however, seems especially strong in John and Paul. The paschal lamb as it is presented in the Passover story is not a propitiatory sacrifice, aiming to appease an angry God, but an apotropaic one, aiming to head off a disaster. And at a deeper historical level, it is something quite different. It seems to have originated with wandering herders, and to have been an annual ceremony at which the unity between the herders and the flock was annually reaffirmed. In this case, the unity was expressed and re-sealed by the herders eating a member of the flock in its entirety and marking entryways with its blood. This tradition, then, was adopted and historicized to connect with the Exodus. Even more at this deeper level, the sacrifice is not to avoid just retribution, but to affirm a relationship.

And yet it is a sacrifice, and one which, for Paul, seals the identification of the assembly as the Body of Christ. (For a similar sealing, see Exodus 24:1-8). This identification is the one which Wills quotes Augustine as affirming, rather than the identification of the bread as the Body of Christ, and which Wills wishes were not lost in the rush to transubstantiation and its concomitant priesthood. This sacrifice, further, is not one which requires a priesthood (Moses was not a priest, and there is no evidence of priests in Paul's Corinth), but rather a presider; and no sacrifice, but rather a thanksgiving prayer!

That being said, this book could be valuable for Protestants in general and for Lutherans in particular for at least four reasons. First and foremost, it's a refreshing example of scholarship informed by deep knowledge of the classics and much else. Wills is a good and valuable read no matter what the subject.

Second, it will help remind us how precious the "general priesthood" is and its actual meaning. That priesthood – one of the glories of the Reformation tradition – seems to be what Wills is grasping for without ever naming it. Even Protestants, however, need to be reminded that the priesthood of all the faithful has nothing whatsoever to do with presiding at Holy Communion. Nor is it a rejection of human mediators. I am a priest not because I can stand alone before God; I am a priest so that no one else has to! Every one of us carries on the ministry of reconciliation, praying to God for each other, and proclaiming God's Word to each other. That is almost precisely Wills' closing vision for a church with fewer and fewer priests, where comfort and consolation, affirmation and insight, and encouragement and challenge are offered by the members of the assembly to one another.

Third, this book will serve as a warning to Lutherans most especially of the danger of concentrating all interest in Holy Communion on the elements and the presider, and ignoring the community. Here is a word from a church which has suffered under that for centuries! I have noticed that as soon as "consecration" language is used, even by Lutherans, the assembly fades to the background. The presider is no longer leading the community at its meal, but becomes the one who has the power to make it Communion. The normal situation, of course, is that Communion is celebrated by a congregation led by its called pastor, but often when the situation becomes abnormal, it is the assembly which is treated as disposable.

Finally, this book will serve as a reminder of the danger of being understandable. Wills is, of course, understandable, but that's not what I'm referring to! Rather, Wills points out how unusual the early church was in rejecting the sacrificial system as the basis for communication between

human and divinity. Why would propitiatory sacrifice and, concomitantly, a priestly caste be introduced into a Christianity which had eliminated them? In part, no doubt, because it was expected; seekers could only understand a religion which included those elements. And so, to be more understandable to potential members, the church provided what was expected, at considerable cost to its message. To a large degree, the Reformation was all about correcting the resulting misunderstanding, by opposing the notion of the Mass as propitiatory sacrifice. This is not to say that the church should strive to be obscure or make it as difficult for seekers to approach as possible. But it is to recognize that "thinking outside the box" can sometimes put one in a box worse than the original.

How would I use this book in the parish? I probably wouldn't program an adult study series around it, although it might be interesting to read it in connection with a Bible study in October, 2015, when next the lectionary does its triennial swipe at Hebrews. I'd certainly recommend it to thoughtful members, especially those interested in ancient history and classical languages (there are more of those than you think; two of them are my godchildren). And for personal enlightenment and interest, it is highly recommended.

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A Renaissance Globemaker's Toolbox: Johannes Schöner and the Revolution of Modern Science 1475-1550

John W. Hessler (London: D. Giles Limited, 2013 in association with The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.)

Reviewed by Maria Erling

John Hessler serves as Senior Cartographic References Specialist in the Geography and Map Division at the Library of Congress. His excellent and illuminating presentation of the several important works of Johannes Schöner, a scholar, priest, geographer, globemaker, astrologer, and convert to Protestantism, provides a framework for understanding the intersection of science and religion and faith and popular culture during the launching of the modern period.

Schöner lived and worked during the eye opening years of the discovery of the New World, and he was also a scholar who spent a lifetime thinking and writing about what the learned scientist can decipher from the movement of stars. He had a complex relationship with the art of cartography, both cosmography and geography, through which he could depict the entire known world. Through study of the Greek texts of Ptolemy's mathematical principles for mapping spheres, newly available, and also because he kept up with the news of the voyages of discovery, Schöner recognized that he lived in an unprecedented time. He realized also that many thinkers were unable to accept new ideas about science, just as they had difficulty with new religious ideas.

The changing world views of the Reformation period are important for us to recognize. The early 16th century was not only a time of new religious discovery, but also of the dramatic realization that the world had a western hemisphere, with people and wealth, that had never been incorporated in the Western understanding of the known world. Of course the Bible is silent on the Americas. This made for critical questions about the ancient scriptures, but it also led to new investigations, both in theology and in observable science. Luther and Melanchthon, who made theological students study Greek texts rather than Latin translations, were doing in theology what geographers like Schöner and Durer, both in Nuremberg,

produced through their maps and charts. Recovering the ancient Greek text of Ptolemy was a start, but even more important was the incorporation of real life experience. Their renaissance movement in cartography equipped humanists with an ability to incorporate an entirely new framework for understanding the possibility of a new world.

Philip Melanchthon makes an appearance in this story, for he is always for Lutherans and other magisterial Protestants somehow in the wings whenever debates about reason and faith arise. Melanchthon provides a preface for Schöner's *The Three Books on Judgment of Nativities*, a text critiquing and improving the science of astrology, through a more scientific basis for correct astrological prediction. Melanchthon wrote: "Because the art of divination is natural and shows how these motions affect temperaments and inclinations, and also how the observation of celestial motions and causes can be used in medical predictions, it is an art that good minds can make use of." (142) Let's hope that good minds make use of this book, also, to encourage a more robust appreciation for the new discoveries that theology and science give us today about our known world.

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Grace at the Garbage Dump: Making Sense of Mission in the Twenty-First Century

Jesse A. Zink (Wipf & Stock: Eugene, 2012)

Reviewed by Julie Stecker

Like many of his fellow millennials, Jesse Zink wanted to see the world while helping people along the way. So he set out for a year of missionary work with the Episcopal Church's Young Adult Service Corps. Placed in Itipini, South Africa, about an hour outside of the larger town of Mthatha, Zink admits, "I came to South Africa because I had a modest messiah complex." (4)

He brings readers along with him as he searches for patient records and dispenses medication in the town clinic, goes shopping for uniforms and school supplies with young girls eager for an education, and teaches English through the works of Roald Dahl. We come to know the people of Itipini, joining Zink in his frustration when they spend their days at the *shebeen* (unlicensed bars) instead of working or going to school, and his joy when they realize the importance of following the strict regimen of medicine to combat tuberculosis, HIV, and AIDS. His deep care for the people there is readily apparent – as readily apparent as his burning desire to save them.

Over and over, Zink laments his inability to "save" someone from the reality of her situation. He could not go back in time and ensure that Sizeka began the antiretroviral treatments in time to save her life. He cannot force Yoliswa to continue selling clothing in town to repay the microloan he facilitated for her in order to help break the cycle of dependency on government loans. And though he was able to find housing for Nolizwi a safe walking distance from her school, he was unable to ensure that her housemates would not bully her until she had to move out. He could not save the people he had come to save.

As it appeared in story after story, this refrain became tiring and, frankly, rather worrisome. What lessons would future missionaries glean from Zink's assertion that he had failed the people of Itipini because he could not save them?

Fortunately for the reader, and for Zink himself, he is jarred by the realization that the focus of mission work cannot be on the missionary: "it puts the onus of action – and responsibility – squarely on my shoulders. And

the results of my actions, no matter how good my intentions, are beyond my control" (155). If we truly believe that God works through all things, it is impossible to believe that we can assume responsibility for all the good and the bad we encounter in the world. God's grace abounds both for those engaged in mission, and those they have come to journey alongside. While he doubts that simply telling people to rely on God would have improved their quality of life, Zink expresses regret that he "never let grace go to work." (155) With this understanding of mission, we walk with those who will likely still experience the devastating effects of disease, poverty, and injustice, while ensuring them that they are beloved children of God, and that God has not forgotten or abandoned them.

As people engaged in mission in the twenty-first century, it is not our job to enter another culture and impart our perceived knowledge and wisdom about the path to health and prosperity. Instead, we are called to accompany God's people on the journey, helping where we are able and learning as much as possible. Mission is less about saving people and more about *God's* mission of restoring "right relationship among people and between people and God." (165) The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America describes this type of ministry as "accompaniment." Rather than doing mission *to* God's people, we do mission *with* God's people. According to a female African pastor during an ELCA Global Mission Formation Event, "when we know one another, we can move forward together."¹

This flies in the face of the traditional American assumption that we always know best, and appropriately honors and respects the cultures into which we have been invited to share in God's work.

The millennial generation, or those born between the mid-1980s and mid-2000s, is a highly service-oriented and altruistic generation. They will read the first 154 pages of this book filled with the same frustration that Zink later recognizes: mission cannot be about you. But they will connect with the last 17 pages, unable to read fast enough as Zink unpacks what he discovered about what should be at the center of a missionary's work: the love and grace God gives freely to God's people.

Zink's gift to millennials, and, truthfully, to anyone engaged in mission work, is the brutal honesty he brings to his journey toward finding the delicate balance between saving and serving. For those about to embark on mission work, whether it is for ten days or ten years, whether it will be down the street or across the globe – this book is commended to you. Partly so that you are prepared for the effects of the "modest messiah complex" you will likely carry with you, and partly so that you know you are not alone when you discover both the pain and the beauty of what it can mean to walk alongside God's people.

Notes

¹ www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Global-Mission/How-We-Work/Accompaniment.aspx accessed on August 19, 2013.

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POETRY + THEOLOGY

Rules, Recommendations, Red Petticoats

Katy Giebenhain

The Center for Art in Wood in Philadelphia is the only museum in the United States dedicated to woodturning. It is a small, exquisite space with work that makes you feel like you've never seen wood before, like you were being introduced to an utterly new substance. Visiting it is a transformative experience. In the back of the gallery, near the restrooms, is a framed print by Wendell Castle called "My 10 Adopted Rules of Thumb." Two of these rules include no. 7 "If it's offbeat or surprising it's probably useful" and no. 3 "After learning the tricks of the trade, don't think you know the trade." These jumped out at me for the ways in which they both apply to writing poems and writing sermons. We need more surprise in both. Even very, very subtle surprise. Otherwise, what's the point? How are we deepening the way we see the world and God and ourselves? We consistently have the task of looking at what is familiar in new ways. What I like about rule no. 3 is that down-to-earth reminder that even when we are well-trained and have excellent tools and years of experience, we don't ever totally have it down. We are human. We are sinners and saints. I don't see this as discouraging at all. Writing does get easier with time, but this tough and wonderful task of wrestling with sacred texts and modern life is not to be navigated on autopilot. It is a reminder of the energy and possibility we have with sermons and poems, and the promise that there is always something to learn.

Recommendations From the Heartland

Speaking of things surprising and new, the denomination of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. The ELCA's anniversary slogan is "Always being made new." Another 25th anniversary is being celebrated by Eighth Day Books in Wichita, Kansas. In days

of disappearing brick-and-mortar bookstores, an expert bookseller is just as rare as the books he or she recommends and pulls from shelves, familiar as extensions of their own bodies. This kind of bookseller is a matchmaker, a scholar, a counselor, a culture-critic, a sage. For those of you who don't happen to live within driving distance of Wichita, let me virtually introduce you to one such bookseller. Warren Farha is the owner of Eighth Day Books, specializing in classics in religion, literature, history and philosophy. The store offers "an eccentric community of books based on this organizing principle: if a book – be it literary, scientific, historical, or theological – sheds light on ultimate questions in an excellent way, then it's a worthy candidate for inclusion in our catalog... Reality doesn't divide itself into 'religious' and 'literary' and 'secular' spheres, so we don't either."

Farha has kindly agreed to recommend a few poetry titles for *Seminary Ridge Review* readers. This is exactly the man you want at your elbow saying "this is what you need to read next." It's like Julia Child dropping names for ingredients while we stand next to her stove. A master is a master. Occasionally Farha takes to the road with a van full of especially selected books for an event such as the Glen West Workshop where I met him in Santa Fe, New Mexico this summer. It is truly difficult to pick a short list of suggested books when his full list could rival Santa's, but he was a good sport. Here they are, just for you guys, in no particular order.

Recovered Body: Poems New and Selected

Scott Cairns (George Braziller, 1998 and Eighth Day Press, 2003)

Eighth Day note: No dimension of real human existence is ignored in these poems: faith, doubt, sexuality, mortality. For Cairns to separate the spirit from the Body would be to ignore "the very issue which / induced the Christ to take on flesh." Thus, in *Recovered Body*, we meet Christ where he inhabits the physical, where the "mystery of spirit [is] graved / in what is commonplace and plain – / the broken brittle crust, the cup." In this way, Cairns' poems are sacramental – dramatic events that lead us to the cusp of faith's mysteries, where, for example, the import of "The Turning of Lot's Wife," can be seen anew: "In the impossible interval where she stood, Marah saw that she could not turn her back on even one doomed child of the city, but must turn her back instead upon the saved." Or where the story of Adam and Eve reveals that "The Entrance of Sin" comes not simply from an appetite for the forbidden, but also from a withdrawal from the body of creation, which God had deemed very good: "The beginning of loss was this: every time some manner of beauty was offered and declined, the subsequent isolation each conceived was irresistible." For all their

theological weight, however, Cairns' poems never feel heavy. Like W.H. Auden, Cairns possesses a keen wit and a good ear. His graceful language enables him to speak naturally from within the Incarnational paradox, toward moments when word almost becomes act, when the presence of Christian mystery is palpable: "All loves are bodily, require / that the lips part, and press their trace / of secrecy upon the one / beloved."

The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson

Edited by Thomas H. Johnson (Little, Brown, 1961)

Publisher's note: The only authoritative paperback collection of all of Emily Dickinson's poetry. The editor has assembled a reading text of the preferred forms of all 1,775 poems, and has included in his introduction an explanation of his selection of texts, plus a helpful outline of Emily Dickinson's career.

Opening King David: Poems in Conversation with the Psalms

Brad Davis (Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011)

Publisher's note: The human experience is an intimate, tough, and, at times, hilarious conversation with what is familiar and what is mystery. Poetry at its best turns this conversation into art and teaches by example how to employ language creatively and courageously – even coyly – in exploring the full range of human response to whatever life may deliver. Certainly the biblical Psalms set the highest of standards in this regard. In *Opening King David*, Davis takes aim at making contemporary poems in conversation with the Psalms; his personal, cultural, and natural surroundings; and the wonder and mess of his own soul. As a painter with all colors at his disposal, Davis writes with the full spectrum of his available vocabulary, sometimes reaching for the glorious ineffable, at other times bluntly telling it like it – darkly – is. Neither devotional nor inspirational nor religious, these human poems take God seriously and honor our common struggle toward what Saint Paul calls "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

Selected Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins

Edited by Catherine Phillips (Oxford University Press, 2008)

Publisher's note: This selection, chosen from the award-winning Oxford Authors critical edition, includes most of the larger fragments and all of his major English poems, such as "The Blessed Virgin,"

“No Worst,” “The Windhover,” “Pied Beauty” and “The Wreck of the Deutschland.” The poems are illuminated further by extensive Notes and a useful Introduction to Hopkins’s life and poetry.

A Sacrifice of Praise: An Anthology of English Poetry from Caedmon to the Mid-Twentieth Century

Edited by James H. Trott, foreword by Larry Woiwode (Cumberland House, 1999, 2006)

Publisher’s note: A collection of Christian poetry in English compiled from a spectrum of poets who span twelve centuries. Beginning with Caedmon (ca.658-680), the poetry comes from the ancient, medieval, Reformation, and modern periods and from Anglican, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox poets, as well as mainline and evangelical traditions. Because poetry is a vehicle of praise and exhortation, of meditation and understanding, these selections include every form and style of reflection and psalm, from private, personal devotion to hymns and epic forms with godly themes. In addition to the poetry, each chapter includes an introduction and time line meant to provide a background against which readers can better understand the intricacies and nuances of the poets and their work.

A Widening Light: Poems of the Incarnation

Edited by Luci Shaw (Regent College Publishing; 3rd edition, 1997)

Note from Harold Fickett: “I can think of no other anthology which celebrates with such intensity the entire drama of the Christian faith. Here we have a host of poets praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest.’ *A Widening Light* moves the reader through recognitions and meditations toward prayer.” Note from John Timmerman: “*A Widening Light* ranks as one of the very best anthologies of Christian poetry.”

The Sorrow Psalms: A Book of Twentieth-Century Elegy

Edited by Lynn Strongin (University of Iowa Press, 2006)

From the publisher’s note: Like the pilot in W. B. Yeats’s “An Irish Airman Foresees His Death,” each of us is challenged to “balance with this life, this death.” As we share a common fate, we also share loss and sorrow. At their most mournful, with praise and love and raw emotion, poets throughout time have put their grief to paper. The elegy and its inherent drama – the inevitable struggle between love and death – are showcased in *The Sorrow Psalms*, a collection of

twentieth-century elegies edited by poet Lynn Strongin. Divided into five thematic sections, the elegies convey the impact of death and its aftermath. The traditional stages of grieving – denial, anger, depression, and acceptance – are evident, either singly in the expression of one profound emotion or all at once, in these elegies. Contributors include John Berryman, Elizabeth Bishop, Lucille Clifton, Billy Collins, e. e. cummings, James Dickey, Donald Hall, Jane Kenyon, Denise Levertov, Sandra McPherson, Joyce Peseroff, Robert Peters, Stan Rice, Adrienne Rich, Carl Sandburg, Anne Sexton, Ruth Stone, Mark Strand, Dylan Thomas, William Carlos Williams, and C. D. Wright.

Invisible Light: Poems about God

Edited by Diana Culbertson (Columbia University Press, 2000)

Publisher’s note: Among the classic poets represented in this collection are Donne, Herbert, Milton, Blake, Emerson, E. B. Browning, Tennyson, Dickinson, and Hopkins; among the twentieth-century poets, Thomas Hardy, D. H. Lawrence, Countee Cullen, Jessica Powers, John Berryman, Robert Lowell, Denise Levertov, Anne Sexton, Alicia Ostriker, and Kathleen Norris.

Centuries of Meditation

Thomas Traherne, edited by John Farrar (Harper & Brothers, 1960)

Publisher’s note: For more than 200 years, Thomas Traherne’s *Centuries of Meditations* was undiscovered and unpublished. The manuscript passed through many hands before finally being compiled into a book by bookseller and scholar, Bertram Dobell (1842-1914) in 1908. *Centuries* is a collection of poems written to express the rapture of life lived in accordance with God. Readers of many ages and persuasions will be touched by Traherne’s passages on love and belonging.

St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns

Translated by Kathleen E. McVey (Paulist Press, 1989)

Publisher’s note: Ephrem was born in the Mesopotamian city of Nisibis toward the end of the third century. An outpost of the Roman Empire, Nisibis and its Christian citizens were to be formed by the reign of Constantine and by the doctrines of the Council of Nicea. There, in the context of a large and sophisticated Jewish population and numerous Gnostic sects, Ephrem sought to defend orthodox Nicene Christianity. His teaching and writing made him an influential

voice in the life of Syriac Christianity through the peaceful years of Constantine's patronage, the years of persecution after 361 under Emperor Julian, and the conflict between Persians and Romans which ultimately forced Ephrem to move to Edessa where he stayed until his death in 373. It was as a poet that Ephrem made his greatest impact. Writing in isosyllabic verses called *madrashe*, he attained a literary brilliance that won him a place of prominence not only in his own tradition, but also in the Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian, and Arabic traditions as well.

On God and Man: The Theological Poetry of St. Gregory of Nazianzus

Translated by Peter Gilbert (Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001)

Publisher's note: St. Gregory is one of the most open and self-revealing of the Fathers of the Church, and his poetry is remarkable for its personal character. In these poems, he speaks of the joys and frustrations of his own life; he reveals his inner questioning about the purpose and values of life in the face of sin and mortality, and his ultimate faith in Christ as redeeming and reconciling all things. St. Gregory's poetry has often been compared with St. Augustine's Confessions, as showing a peculiarly modern interest in the self. The translations here presented allow the reader to see that self-reflection in its theological context. While St. Gregory of Nazianzus' poetry has recently begun to appear in English translations, this is the first book to provide an affordable translation of his major doctrinal poems.

Compass of Affection

Scott Cairns (Paraclete Press, 2006)

Eighth Day note: If you could hear him read, you would understand. You see, the lilt of his voice, the natural pauses, sometimes expectant of your discernment of implied laughter, the gentle inflection upon just the right word—well, if you could hear them, then you would sense the real genius between these covers. But we only have words; which, according to Mr. Cairns, bear some weight: "Repentance, you'll observe, / glibly bears the bent / of thought revisited, / and mind's familiar stamp / — a quaint, half-hearted / doubleness that couples / all compunction with a pledge / of recurrent screw-up. / The heart's metanoia, / on the other hand, turns / without regret, turns not / so much away, as toward, / as if the slow pilgrim / has been surprised to find / that sin is not so bad / as it is a waste of time." Cairns' poems,

in this selection from all his previous collections save *Recovered Body*, in addition to new ones never published, remind and inform us of the really important things: Death: "The thing to remember is how / tentative all of this really is. / You could wake up dead." And Life: "What stillness their hearts must know; these bathers / laid out and glistening along the dissolve / of an ancient sea, / their bodies—so late from brief exercise; / so lately thrown down in exhaustion— / already marbled." And triumph over Death: "Everything we know as well as everything we don't in all / creation came to be in that brief, abysmal / vacuum The Holy One first opened in Himself. / So it's not so far a stretch from that Divine Excess / to advocate the sacred possibility / that in some final, graceful metanoia He / will mend that ancient wound completely, and for all."

Divine Eros: Hymns of St. Symeon the New Theologian

Translated by Daniel Griggs (Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011)

Publisher's note: Symeon the New Theologian was a tenth-century Greek monk and ascetic writer. Among his writings, his *Hymns* are inspiring poetry of timeless value, which challenge the reader to internalize Christian values, even to embrace the Christ event as an individual experience. The *Hymns* are well suited for devotional reading, but they are not mere devotional tracts; they include time-honored Christian doctrine, made all the more meaningful by the beauty of its expression. These hymns are spiritual reading at its best, that is, they are Symeon's interpretation of his life and his relationship with God in light of Scripture and the Fathers. With heartfelt zeal and biblical imagery, Symeon makes the doctrines of the Fathers intimately relevant for the individual.

Poetry of the Passion: Studies in Twelve Centuries of English Verse

J.A.W. Bennett (Oxford University Press, 1982)

Warren Farha's note: I know of no other study of its kind, which examines poetic treatments of Christ's passion from the Old English *Dream of the Rood* to *The Anathemata* of David Jones. Though not formally a collection of poems but a study of a theme, the excerpts alone, from the initial epigram quoted from the fourth-century church father St. Amphiloctus to the concluding *Anathemata* of David Jones provide plenty of poetry upon which to meditate.

Red Petticoats

We know different parts of people and they know different parts of us. One writer on my mind right now is the late Rev. Dr. Susan Hedahl. She was a professor of homiletics at Gettysburg Seminary, a pastor, a colleague, an author, an advocate (Operation Bootstrap is one example) and one of the first ordained Lutheran women in the U.S. (then the American Lutheran Church). The word pioneer is so over-used it has lost its sharp edges. But they were pioneers. Women in the pulpit was a BIG deal. We forget that. I'm sure some days she and her early colleagues felt like they were literally pushing wagons through the Rockies with their shoulders.

Hedahl died of brain cancer this summer. I knew her as a lover of books and a friend of poetry. I have inherited her 1966 copy of the *Ivory Tower* magazine from University of Minnesota with early poems of Garrison Keillor and her lavender, Irish wool coat. The coat hangs in my office, between shelves stuffed with poetry books and a window overlooking the lawn where seminarians compete with fierce yet genteel enthusiasm at the annual croquet tournament. I'm not quite ready to take it home. When I look at Sue's coat I think of another woman's garment associated with this historic campus, in the building right next door. 150 years ago, during the Battle of Gettysburg, the Seminary's Schmucker Hall became an instant field hospital. Mary Ziegler, the wife of the Seminary steward, hung her red flannel petticoat from the railing of the building's cupola to identify it as such. This may seem like a leap, this association of two very different garments, but the part of Sue I knew would heartily approve. The petticoat became a flag, a signal, a communication. From a distance it was not even identifiable as a piece of clothing. It did its job. Its color and placement declared "hospital" and "neutral zone." When we write poems and when we write sermons, we are open to the improvisation which may be required of us. We are open to the metaphors, similes and examples around us, from all of our senses, and we are ready to use what works to communicate. If needed, we don't hesitate to grab a petticoat.

Hedahl's wool coat is not serving such a grand purpose, but it is a garment of transition and identity. It will be made new. How? That's a surprise. I'll keep you posted.

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Visit The Center for Art in Wood at www.centerforartinwood.org/.

Visit the journal *Image: Art, Faith, Mystery*, the Seattle-based founders of the Glen West and Glen East Workshops at <http://imagejournal.org/>.

We Welcome our Poets

Poets in this issue include Gary Fincke (Pennsylvania), Joshua Warfield (Maryland), Koh Xian Tian (West Virginia), Darnell Arnoult (Tennessee), Kevin Hadduck (Montana), Laurie Ann Guerrero (Texas), Jane Blanchard (Georgia) and Jorge Aigla (New Mexico). Book recommendations are for *Incarnadine* by Mary Szybist, *Local News from Someplace Else* by Marjorie Maddox and *American War Poetry* edited by Lorrie Goldensohn.

Book recommendations

Incarnadine

The next time you are strolling in downtown Lancaster near the Pennsylvania College of Art and Design and you approach the entrance portico on the corner of Chestnut Street and Prince Street, look up. What you'll see is not just a cool piece of public art integrated into the ceiling, but a mural for and of the text of the poem "How (Not) to Speak of God" by Mary Szybist. It is included in her new collection *Incarnadine* (Graywolf Press, 2013).

Form and space are important in this book. The mural picks up on the original text layout where lines extend from the center of the page like spokes of a wheel. The wide page format allows the poems breathing room. In foundation courses for graphic design, there is an exercise where students must make 60 sketches of something – let's say, for example, a tree – and bring them to the next class. This may not sound hard, but you can easily run out of tree-ish ideas at about sketch 10. It is a warm-up, of course, to the later abstracting of a company or organization's functions into a symbol or logotype. Students are pushed to think of and draw trees in ways they had not considered before. What does a tree look like from a helicopter, the ground, a seed on a microscope slide? What about textures of acorn, bark, leaf, needle, rings when a trunk is cut? This is what Mary Szybist does with the annunciation (and other topics) in *Incarnadine*. From touching the sculpture of Joan of Arc's chain mail in the Art Institute of Chicago to the horrifying dull blade of crusaders against the Cathars, the second-by-second documentary of the movement of birds and human relationships in changing scope in Bellagio, or the actual ground in "Annunciation (from the grass beneath them)" she moves in different angles, from ocean to meadow to bridge rail to trampoline.

In "Annunciation under Erasure" she removes words and lets us hear the results. In "Girls Overheard While Assembling a Puzzle" we enter the scene via fragments of conversation. "Insertion of Meadow with Flowers" opens with

In 1371, beneath the angel's feet,

Veneziano added a meadow –
a green expanse with white
and yellow broom flowers, the kind
that – until the sun warms them –
Have no scent –

God could have chosen other means than flesh. (61)

From the middle of "Annunciation Overheard from the Kitchen" the narrator is cutting pears:

From my place at the sink, I could hear

A jet buzz hazily overhead, a vacuum
start up next door, the click,
click between shots.

"Mary, step back from the camera." (53)

In "Entrances and Exits" she unfolds the news story of a woman found at the bottom of a canyon, a friend's young daughter looking for snacks in Szybist's office and a reproduction of Duccio's Annunciation on her desk. Halfway through, the line "Duccio's subject is God's entrance into time: time meaning history, meaning a body." (17)

Szybist visits topics prone to stereotypes with genuine curiosity. All of the poems are unflinching in their refusal to turn away from uneasy questions and in their refusal to seek simply for the sake of reaction. This is a book of good grappling.

Visit Graywolf Press at www.graywolfpress.org.

Local News from Someplace Else

Though much is universal in the new collection from Marjorie Maddox, these poems taste of Pennsylvania. They are steeped in the complicated, slate-and-coal-laced ground beneath us, the dirt of suburban development, the fields. I especially recommend *Local News from Someplace Else* (Wipf & Stock, 2013) for those engaged in pastoral care. It is a useful and beautiful example of how public and private grief and transitions are juggled. The book is not as heavy as this may imply. She brings in the novelty of daily life, too. Because of her tone and focus, readers experience things alongside Maddox, in good company. Alongside the voice of the poem, I should say, since Poetry is not journalism. There's a difference between truth and facts.

Here are freak accidents, near-misses, newspaper headlines, the zigzag of a common fly, the nose of United Airlines Flight 93 turning inexplicably off course, the astronauts of 1969 on television, narration from many voices, a baby staring at the portrait of Mona Lisa, also staring "the sad joy that

lets her see / all that the world is.” (83) The sense of shared and individual observation is especially well-honed in poems like “Swimming Pregnant at the YWCA,” “Backwards Barn Raising” Nickel Mines, October 2006, and “Minersville Diner.”

Here are lines from two poem on natural disasters:

Gluttony

In the Wake of Hurricane Sandy:

Even the neighbor's uprooted trunk,
massive and Medusa-like,
passes out on their front lawn, a bad drunk
still sneering at us, the uninvited guests. (58)

And, the end of “Reoccurring Storms” (after linking two mothers in different states and storms): “into what one day even you and I – / after a particularly hard day of the ordinary – / might discuss as casually / as weather, as someone else's life. (60)

The poems in this collection offer praise and puzzlement in snow-and-asphalt snapshots. Maddox uses precise yet accessible language, like the “throaty lure” of new ice in “Conversion,” or this section about miners from “Nine Alive:”

untelevised, deeper down,
the tap-tap-tapping
of what is left of our breath
hungry for spirit –
that canary not yet dead
in our damp labyrinth – (23)

Isn't every sermon a bit of local news from someplace else, speaking to our hearts and to our minds?

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American War Poetry: An Anthology

Lines from Allen Ginsberg's “Iron Horse” are ever-pertinent: “What's the weapon, battle after battle? / What's the news, defeat after defeat? / What's the picture, decade after decade?” (296) It's easy to argue for the appropriateness of war poems on Seminary Ridge, on the heels of the new museum

opening and the 150-year commemoration of the Battle of Gettysburg, not to mention our immediate, international tensions surrounding wars and impending wars. But why *this* anthology? Editor Lorrie Goldensohn ushers us through an excellent compilation of many voices in and around war and American identity in *American War Poetry: An Anthology* (Columbia University Press, 2006). Anthologies are tricky. Even with a clear theme they sometimes feel like a wheelbarrow full of poems. I can't describe exactly why this one is cohesive and goes beyond the wheelbarrow-collecting, but it does. There is an attentive shaping of the book which is not heavy-handed. This is evident in the part-title introductions and epigraph selections. Since this quality of holding things together is a quality I think sermons should have, I recommend it for preachers.

“From the first guerilla engagements using badly fed, thinly clad, and ill-armed farmers, to the latest glittering deployments of men and machines, American warfare has both changed and stayed the same. A spread of poems over more than three centuries cannot help but show this, as well as show how the resistance to war, placed against an equally loyal support for it, has come to frame a permanent tension in the war poem.” (xxiii) Here we are dealing with wars somehow strongly identified with what is now the U.S. The book is divided into “The Colonial Wars, 1746-1763,” “The Revolutionary War, 1776-1783,” “The Alamo and the Mexican-American War, 1836 and 1846-1848,” “The Civil War, 1861-1865,” “The Indian Wars, 1620-1911,” “The Spanish-American War, 1898,” “The War of the Philippines, 1899-1902,” “World War I, 1917-1918,” “The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939,” “World War II, 1941-1945,” “The Vietnam War, 1964-1975” and “El Salvador, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf.” Some of the poets include Bruce Weigel, James Tate, Herman Melville, Julia Ward Howe, Joy Harjo, Muriel Rukeyser, Martín Espada (his “The Other Alamo” is in here), Brian Turner and Carolyn Forché.

Amy Lowell's “Patterns” shows the uncanny contrast of waiting while others are fighting, always a part of war. News arrives that the fiancé in question is killed overseas and she looks at the patterns of her garden and her upper-class clothing “I shall go / Up and down, / In my gown. / Gorgeously arrayed, / Boned and stayed.” (156)

The opening two stanzas of Mary Jo Salter's “Welcome to Hiroshima” gives us another kind of contrast:

Welcome to Hiroshima

is what you first see, stepping off the train:
a billboard brought to you in living English

by Toshiba Electric. While a channel
 silent in the TV of the brain
 projects those flickering re-runs of a cloud
 that brims its risen columnful like beer
 and, spilling over, hangs its foamy head,
 you feel a thirst for history: what year (252)

All the voices are witnesses in some way, including witnesses of aftermath. “Three Thousand Dollar Death Song” is a strong and shaming poem by Wendy Rose about the price paid by a museum for 19 American Indian skeletons from Nevada. James Tate’s World War II poem “The Lost Pilot” for his father is included, as is “Of Late” by George Starbuck about draft card burning and journalism. After describing real cranes, halfway into his “A Thousand Cranes,” Dale Ritterbusch brings us:

But today, when I listen to a woman
 say nothing is happening in Kosovo,
 the Kosovars are making it up,
 the men separated, beaten, taken away,
 this is all a lie, nothing is happening,
 no one is dying – no one ever dies –
 I note how F-16’s rise like cranes across the screen, (343)

Today, the line that stays with me for all its implications is from the poem “OK Corral East” by Horace Coleman: “We have all killed something recently.” (310)

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Lenin in Tyumen, The Saints in Florence

Gary Fincke

*During World War II, Lenin’s body was moved
 from St. Petersburg and hidden in Tyumen.*

*For years, perfectly preserved, Lenin’s
 Body implied that death could flatter
 As well as a costly, tailored suit.
 Germans were nearing St. Petersburg,*

In Florence, surrounded by icons,
 Thirty-nine of us are startled
 By a loud, recorded “Shhh.”
 From above, a single “Silencio”
 Comes after to subdue us.

*But in Siberia, anything
 Could be hidden – artwork and icons,
 Political prisoners, a tomb
 So carefully disguised, there were nights*

Our cameras shuttered by decree,
 Everyone listens through ear buds
 To the near-whisper of the guide.
 Three of us offer coins for candles
 To light and make wishes upon.

*When the guards, lonely for usefulness,
 Drank themselves into sorrowful songs.
 While Lenin waited for worshippers,
 Factories followed his body east,*

“Shhh,” we’re admonished twice more,
 “Silencio,” the voice a sort
 Of striking clock as we shuffle
 Past the sarcophagus roped off

From the faithful. This saint, the guide

*History yammering somewhere else,
The body just a body, the breath
Of the common world as comforting
As the watery revelations*

Murmurs, was so selfless her body
Is shared by holy cathedrals
In competing cities. Carefully,
One of us dips fingers into
An ornate basin and skitters

*Of dawn, smoke fluttering in half-light,
Low upon the long-winter landscape,
Pale and shallow like fog that will not
Break for days, as persistent as siege.*

Her dripping hand through the sign
Of the cross. "Shhh, Silencio,"
We hear. The guide pauses to bow
Her head, suddenly obedient
In the ancient, natural light.

Observing the Future

*Two bottled ghosts, an old man and a young girl, were sold at auction
in New Zealand – Harper's*

In the beginning, the bottle winner coddled
those spirits.
They needed time to adjust to their new home,
arriving
like the adopted flown from a foreign orphanage
where fear was
persistent as winter, someone always threatening
to shatter
those bottles, furious because they refused
to answer.
The new owner listened for voices. He watched for light
or even
the faint fog of breath, eager for the temperature
to plummet
near those bottles. He squinted for small etchings
to transcribe
as the desires of the dead, the differences age
and gender
make in the afterlife. At last, impatient
he carried
those prizes to his bedroom and lay awake
in the dark,
pressing the glass to his chest, devoted now
to dreaming
those bottles uncapped, the incredible brief breath
of escape
across his face, how that flurry would teach him what
he'd purchased,
observing the future, tracking the invisible
to discern
just where the dead disappear to when they are freed

Gary Fincke is the Charles B. Degenstein Professor of English and Creative Writing and director of The Writers Institute at Susquehanna University. His most recent book is The Proper Words for Sin, a short story collection available from West Virginia University Press <http://wvupressonline.com/>. Fincke has published twenty-four books of poetry, short fiction, and nonfiction including The History of Permanence, The Canals of Mars, The Fire Landscape, Sorry I Worried You, and Amp'd: A Father's Backstage Pass (a nonfiction account of his son's life as a rock guitarist in the band Breaking Benjamin). His work has received many prizes and has appeared in Harper's, Newsday, The Kenyon Review, The Georgia Review, Ploughshares, American Scholar, Doubletake, and elsewhere and has been read by Garrison Keillor on NPR.

Like Jesus

for Q

Laurie Ann Guerrero

We can bury the guns like gold,
under the grapevines –
in the earth, there are no fingers for triggers.
When the vines lay down their arms, bloom in grape
and tendrils, and fruit hangs big as Texas like tongues
licking clean the air, we can gather revenge there –
pile it high, ready the stomp, make wine
and peace like Jesus.

"Like Jesus" is reprinted with the permission of University of Notre Dame Press from A Tongue in the Mouth of the Dying (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2012), winner of the 2012 Andrés Montoya Poetry Prize, by Laurie Ann Guerrero. Guerrero is the author of the chapbook Babies under the Skin. Her poetry and criticism have appeared in Borderlands: The Texas Poetry Review, Feminist Studies, Bellevue Literary Review, PALABRA and elsewhere. She teaches in the M.F.A. Program at the University of Texas at El Paso, at the University of the Incarnate Word, and at Palo Alto College in San Antonio. Guerrero holds a B.A. from Smith College and an M.F.A. from Drew University. Visit <http://undpress.nd.edu/> and www.laurieguerrero.com/.

Cricket

Kevin Hadduck

Early this morning, the sun's back still turned,
 I listened for your voice. The mockingbird
 pitched only hackneyed phrases.

The bullfrog's drum dropped flat in the mud.
 Should I continue this silence,
 mute my morning prayers?

Can I, in my quiet, make you hear and speak,
 or will I be to you like a cricket
 no longer begging outside your door?

Kevin Hadduck is an avid naturalist. He directs The Academic Resource Center at Carroll College in Montana. Hadduck's poems appear in Journal of the American Medical Association, Lullwater Review, First Things, The Wisconsin Review, The Christian Century and elsewhere.

Near the Beginning

Jane Blanchard

Adam had a lot to do in Paradise.
 Once the animals were named
 and the woman was taken,
 the garden needed tending:
 weeds had to be pulled
 and branches lopped
 and vines pruned,
 so he couldn't just
 hang around
 and listen to how
 he really should be
 more sensitive
 and supportive,
 not to mention
 communicative.
 Even in Eden,
 a man needs to go to work,
 to see and taste
 the fruits of his own labor,
 to know that God is good
 at answering prayer
 with care.

Jane Blanchard studied English at Wake Forest University before earning a doctorate from Rutgers University. She currently divides her time between Augusta and St. Simon's Island, Georgia. Her criticism has appeared in Pacific Coast Philology, Renaissance, South Atlantic Review, and Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Teaching. This year her poetry appears in journals such as The Healing Muse, The Penwood Review, The Raven Chronicles, and The Seventh Quarry, as well as in several anthologies.

Winter Haikus

Joshua Warfield

i.
apocalyptic
sighs as we hop through muddy
deep snows, together

ii.
the taste of shallow
dust; dirty, earthen, deeply
heart-broken: alive

iii.
like snow, epicycles,
contrived beauty, swirling ash:
the sharpwinter stars

iv.
there are more coming,
heliocentric husks of
days; mornings like these

Joshua K. Warfield received his M.A. at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg in 2012, and is currently beginning studies at the Seminary for an S.T.M. degree. Warfield's poetry has been published in several school literary magazines and in The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling.

Work

Jorge H. Aigla

For a while as a boy
in lower grades and after school
I used to shine the shoes
of wealthier classmates
and grown-ups who passed by,
as all shoes were then leather-made
in the not-yet artificial
bustling capital of Mexico,
to grief and woe now lost.

In this way I could bring
while smiling, a few pesos
to my mother and her love.

To do this without resentment,
sadness or self-pity
– that was my task then.

Don Miguel¹ tells of a cobbler
who with love for Man and God
makes good footwear in order
to spare the wearers' souls
from thinking of their feet
so they might care for higher truths.

This humble man's work
– Work as Human Nature, what we Are,
and the only consolation
on this earth of mankind –

entailed Spiritual shoes.

To give spiritual shoe-shines
without contempt for shoes or Man
– that should be our present task.

- 1 Don Miguel: Miguel de Unamuno, *Del Sentimiento Trágico de la Vida* (1913); *The Tragic Sense of Life*, trans. A. Kerrigan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) 297.

Trabajo

De niño por un tiempo
después de la escuela en años primarios
yo solía bolear zapatos
de compañeros de clase más ricos
y de adultos que pasaban por ahí,
ya que todo zapato era entonces de cuero
en la aún no artificial
bulliciosa ciudad de México,
ahora perdida en congoja y pena.

De ésta manera podía yo traerle
sonriendo, unos cuantos pesos
a mi madre y a su amor.

Hacer ésto sin resentimiento,
tristeza o compasión por mí mismo
– ésa fue mi tarea entonces.

Don Miguel nos dice de un zapatero
que con amor para los Hombres y Dios
hace buen calzado para
ahorrarle a las almas que lo usan
el pensar en sus pies
para así preocuparse de verdades más altas.

El trabajo de este humilde hombre
– Trabajo como Naturaleza Humana, lo que Somos,
y el único consuelo
en ésta humana tierra –
consistía en zapatos Espirituales.

Dar boleadas espirituales
sin desprecio por zapatos u Hombres
– ese debe ser nuestro presente empeño.

"Work" and "Trabajo" are reprinted with the permission of Farolito Press (Grand Junction, Colorado: 2012) from Jorge H. Aigla's collection First Lie / Primera Mentira. A former medical examiner, Aigla is a longtime faculty member at St. John's College, Santa Fe where he also does microscopy research. He studied at H Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico, Mexico City, at Saint Mary's College, California and University of California San Francisco (M.D.). Other poetry books include Sublunary, The Aztec Shell, The Cycle of Learning / El ciclo de aprendizaje and Microscopía. Aigla also wrote the book-length essay Karate-Dō and Zen: An Inquiry.

Church

Darnell Arnoult

Let the bashful liturgy of loving
baffle you until you are unhinged

by want, frantic to clasp your ribs
round the elongated object

of your ardor. Leap up
and scramble to be first

to the water's edge. Be baptized
by the flush of His birds of kisses

rushed from their vault of reeds.
Let grace flutter and confound

your hunry heart and aching knees.
Let all your future ticks and licks

be tiny miracles that unlock mystery.
Let them be tied to the post of prayerful

rage. Rage over want. Rage over yearning.
Rage to taste and touch until bonds

snap. Let love's offertory hinge
always on some heroic happenstance.

Darnell Arnoult is Writer-in-Residence at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee where she co-directs the annual Mountain Heritage Literary Festival and Appalachian Young Writers Workshop. Her books include What Travels With us: Poems (named 2006 poetry book of the year by the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance) and the novel Sufficient Grace. Arnoult's M.F.A. is from University of Memphis; her M.A. is from North Carolina State University. Her work appears in many journals including Asheville Poetry Review, Southwest Review and Appalachian Heritage. She is co-editor of Drafthorse: A Lit Journal of Work and No Work. Visit www.darnellarnoult.com/.

Sea Burial

Koh Xin Tian

There is a land that was a brown dream
where my grandfather's black dog
never barked, shuffling on a chain like a thought

as we walked in a circle around his coffin –
I remember how all this had to do with me,
how his face was a sheet
not quite adhering to the muscle,

the way his bones were held by the ocean
while moving into something as big
as the chants of the monk on the water.

Koh Xin Tian is an M.F.A. candidate in poetry at West Virginia University. Before moving to Morgantown, West Virginia, Xin Tian worked as a research assistant, translator and writing mentor in Singapore.

GETTYSBURG SEMINARY FINE ARTS

Walking Into History, Paint Brush in Hand: Dale Gallon's Murals in the Seminary Ridge Museum

Gerald Christianson

*"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes,
but in having new eyes." – Marcel Proust, Remembrance of
Things Past*

Painters of religious subjects, especially icon makers, believe we can "see" another dimension through images. This thought comes to mind when I see Dale Gallon's huge murals in the new Seminary Ridge Museum in Gettysburg, a 15 million dollar, joint effort of the Gettysburg Seminary through its Seminary Ridge Historic Preservation Foundation and the Adams County Historical Society.

There are ten of these murals. They are a major factor on every floor. Every time I step off the elevator, I see – I experience – a mural, and feel I am literally walking into history, if not into another dimension.

Some years ago we invited Ewert Cousins of Fordham University to give a plenary presentation on late medieval spirituality to our Gettysburg Conference on Medieval Studies. Cousins, the editor of the Paulist Press series, Classics of Western Spirituality, and known to integrate spirituality, theology, and depth psychology in his work, agreed.

To our surprise, however, he talked about the "aura" he felt every time he visited the Gettysburg battlefield. He did not discuss Gettysburg as a place of pilgrimage and a (highly lucrative) haunt of "goulies and ghosties and things that go bump in the night," but the deep and lasting after-effects of a horrendous event that took thousands of lives – a profound personal

experience of God's searching question to Cain in Genesis 4: "What have you done? Your brother's blood cries to me from the ground."

Cousins had solid academic principles on his side. Anthropologists and geographers have defined a special sense of place – freighted with meanings and separated from the undefined space around it – that all peoples, especially all religions have associated with certain locations. Cousins went even further. Referring to Mircea Eliade's now-famous dichotomy, sacred time/sacred space, he argued that such spaces – a forest, shrine, or battlefield – can be thinly veiled manifestations of the holy.

At the same time, a specifically Christian "theology of place" would have to raise the nagging suspicion that one-to-one identifications between God and spaces can cause considerable mischief, and have to stress the other dimension, sacred time, as when the Christian community gathers around word and meal. But here on the battlefield the issue is an aura, the presence of a "sense of place" even in non-worship settings and "secular" locations.

When I recently visited Dale Gallon in his Gallery on Steinwehr Avenue in Gettysburg, it was clear that he would happily leave such speculation to his visitor, but he agrees that all his paintings are an invitation into history. By extension, then, they are a journey that begins by "walking into the past" where we are likely to experience a visual "sense of place." For this reason he gives considerable attention to detail and historical accuracy and even employs assistants to help with the research.

Similarly, he did not mind all the emails back and forth between him and the museum design team as its members examined every detail, including costumes and gestures. As an illustrator he feels obligated to work with the patron. This was especially true of the last picture he completed, entitled "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory" which portrays the initial meeting of Samuel Simon Schmucker and Daniel Alexander Payne, the first African-American student at the Seminary.

The event took place not during the Civil War but in 1835, territory unfamiliar to Gallon, but he had plenty of help from Karen and B. Bohleke who are experts on the fashion of the period. Even Schmucker's gesture of greeting came into play, not only to depict a sincere welcome but to make sure there were no signs of patronizing or condescension.

To remain faithful to accuracy and detail, he had two worries about the series as a whole. He received the commission only three years ago to produce not one, but ten paintings that would become a major element in the new Museum. Normally it would take six years. So deadlines were his first concern.

The second was the plan to turn normal-sized paintings into larger-than-life murals. He was not asked to paint these murals, but to submit his paintings to a process that he worried would throw everything out of



"Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory." June 1835 – Seminary students watch as Reverend Samuel Simon Schmucker welcomes Daniel Alexander Payne, the first black student, to the Seminary. Sources tell us that Schmucker was traveling when Payne arrived, and formality may have required a bow as the preferred gesture. But Gallon captures the spirit of the greater point and depicts Schmucker extending, as it were, the "right hand of fellowship" to the first fully matriculated African-American seminarian, one of the first anywhere in America.

perspective. But the enlargements turned out very well, thanks to Creekside Digital of Virginia that scanned the paintings in very high resolution.

Yet, the experience of "walking into the past" entails much more than just historical accuracy and detail. As I look around at the copies in his Gallery (the originals are currently in the Seminary Library), my favorites all seem to say the same things: action and characterization, color and depth.

"Action comes with the territory," he says, "but all my work reflects two kinds of depth." The obvious one we inherit from the Renaissance: figures in front are larger than those in back. Buford's Boys, for example, depicts dismounted cavalymen firing at the enemy, seen from a frontal perspective that no photographer could ever have taken, but Gallon points out how the two groups of troopers part in the middle like the Red Sea, revealing Old Dorn in the far distance.

The other dimension in Gallon's paintings is equally important: atmosphere. He points to the sky above Old Dorn in what may become the



"Buford's Boys." July 1, 1863. Gamble's Brigade of Buford's Division fighting on McPherson's Ridge. At about 10am on the morning of July 1, 1863, the dismounted troopers of Colonel William Gamble's cavalry brigade fight from behind the fences and trees along McPherson Ridge against a clearly vastly more numerous force of Confederate infantry and are beginning to fall back. A lone battery of Union artillery is firing desperately.

iconic image of the whole series, "Day's End, July 1" where the wounded are lying all around Old Dorm. The evening light appears softer, gentler, and more uniform in color.

Those trees around the building, in contrast, are not softer, gentler. They are flat, dark two-dimensional surfaces. Gallon counters that Monet and the Impressionists were interested not only in shimmering light; they also admired Japanese prints with their flat blocks of a single color. Put these two together, the sky's soft monochrome and the flat, dark trees that frame the dramatic scene of Old Dorm as hospital and we have what Gallon calls "atmospheric perspective."

Gallon describes himself as an illustrator. He has practiced this craft since his education at the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles, and on through his early employment as a commercial artist with such firms as McDonnell Douglas. Unlike the popular image of a starving artist in his garret waiting for his muse to call, he compares himself to a technician. He gets a commission, researches the project, and goes to work.

One thinks of Norman Rockwell who took pains to distinguish himself as illustrator from "artists" (presumably meaning contemporaries such as Picasso or Matisse). But we know better, as even a quick glance at the Four



"Day's End July 1st." Evening of July 1, 1863 – As the sun sets over the destruction of battle around the Seminary, wounded soldiers (mostly Union) are being gathered, and carried into the building. Others lie on the ground outside. Confederate forces are establishing a camp for the night. Nearby General Robert E. Lee confers with his officers, utilizing the vantage point of Seminary Ridge to evaluate the terrain in front of them beyond the town of Gettysburg. Lee can just discern along the clearly visible landmarks of Culp's Hill, Cemetery Hill and Cemetery Ridge, Union infantry and artillery units streaming into new lines.

Freedoms or his brilliant Triple Self-Portrait reveals. Rockwell did not want to take himself too seriously, but there are both artistic depth and breadth in his work, especially line and form, and remarkable insight into character, in addition to abundant technique.

Gallon's murals in the Seminary Ridge Museum are in this category, and one of the largest projects the 71-year-old artist has ever undertaken. What made it satisfying was that he could think through and then express a single story in ten different paintings.

Gallon is an artist with his feet on the ground but there is a striking coalescence between the sensation of "aura" and his unabashed assertion that he gets his inspiration not just from research, but from walking over historic ground. "The battlefield is my studio," he says, "I don't need much more inspiration. Only a mile or so from my home I come across the spot where General Pickett ordered his troops forward."

The Seminary Ridge Museum conveys this same sense of place. It is a living artifact that we can enter. It is also a place to pause for reflection and

possible revision of thought and attitude where with Dale Gallon's murals we can walk into history through the first day's battle, the care for the wounded, and the religious contributions to issues of war, peace, life, death, bondage and justice – perhaps most of all what it means to be American.

Mr. Gallon's murals can be seen in the Seminary Ridge Museum where they are an essential part of the experience. The original paintings are currently on display in the Pioneer Room of the Seminary Library.

Gerald Christianson is Emeritus Professor of Church History at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. The author of many books and articles including *Nicholas of Cusa: A Companion to his Life and his Times* with Morimichi Watanabe and Thomas M. Izbicki, Christianson is chair of the International Seminar on Pre-Reformation Theology. The Seminary Explores, the radio program he founded at the Seminary with colleague Nelson Strobert, will be relaunched this fall as a podcast series at www.Ltsg.edu/Programs/Seminary-Explores.

FACULTY MINUTE

Faculty Minute in Honor of Nelson Strobert

Mark Oldenburg

The faculty of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg greets the retirement of Nelson T. Strobert with sorrow for ourselves and delight for him. The retirement of the Professor of Christian Education in the Paulssen-Hale Chair of Church and Society, the Director of Multicultural Programs, and the honored and revered senior of the faculty is a loss difficult to bear, tempered by our confidence in his continuing ministry and on-going friendship.

Any listing we could make of the gifts he has brought to the Seminary would be incomplete. Most certainly among them are:

- His shaping of generations of students to value the place of educational ministry in congregations and in the church, and to carry out their own teaching with greater competence and dedication;
- His mentorship in particular of students preparing to serve as Directors of Christian Education, a relationship which lasted long after the students' graduation;
- His dedication to the multi-cultural requirements of the Seminary, and to integrating the concerns of diversity across the curriculum and across the life of the seminary;
- His transformative leadership of multi-cultural trips to Atlanta and elsewhere;
- His ground-breaking work on interpreting Daniel Alexander Payne for the twentieth and twenty-first centuries;
- His collaborative work with other Christian educators, especially on catechetics and on church-related schooling in the United States;

- His service on the ELCA Church Council, work with the National Council of Churches, and the other ways he has offered his insight and abilities to the national and global church;
- His encouragement and advising of his colleagues as we have sought to become more skillful, faithful, and imaginative teachers of adult learners;
- His impact on South Central Pennsylvania as a host of “The Seminary Explores;”
- His connections with, among many other organizations, the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, the Conference of International Black Lutherans, and the Religious Education Association; and
- His experiences in France, Brooklyn, Cleveland, the Virgin Islands, Cameroon and in many other places, which have enlivened the pulpit, the classroom, and the boardroom.

Through it all he has been a diligent and valued colleague, a faithful friend, an eager collaborator, a faithful alumnus, a repository of institutional memory, and an exemplary servant of the Gospel.

We are grateful to God for Nelson Strobert, our Venerable Preceptor, and look forward to decades of continued, if unofficial, partnership.

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"The eyes of faith are necessary to recognize not only the Divine Person, but also each human person created in the image of God." - *Vladimir Lossky*

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Join us for a Reading and Reception with

Micheal O'Siadhail

Monday, March 10, 2014

7:00 p.m.

The Aberly Room, Valentine Hall
Gettysburg Seminary

www.Ltsg.edu/Programs/Finearts

Poet Micheal O'Siadhail was educated at Clongowes Wood College, Trinity College Dublin, and the University of Oslo. His *Collected Poems* (2013) draws on thirteen previous collections, including *Our Double Time*, *The Gossamer Walk: poems in witness to the Holocaust*, *Love Life*, *Globe and Tongues*. O'Siadhail was awarded an Irish American Cultural Institute prize for poetry and the Marten Toonder Prize for Literature. He is a founder member of *Aosdána* (Academy of Distinguished Irish Artists) and the founding chairman of ILE (Ireland Literature Exchange). Visit: <http://osiadhail.com/> and www.bloodaxebooks.com/.



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