

Creative Transformation

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Summer 2004



*In embracing Divine wonder, we discover the wonder
of our own being and the amazing surprise of all creation.*

A Publication of Process & Faith, based on a Relational Vision of Reality

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Creative Transformation...

takes its name from the belief of process theologians that God's work is always creative and always transformative; and that wherever creative transformation is occurring, God is there. This means that instead of clinging to past formulations of faith and the ways of action that used to work, we are striving to be co-workers with God by seeking new formulations and more effective ways of action. —John B. Cobb, Jr.

Creative Transformation

exploring the growing edge of religious life

Volume 13:3 Summer 2004

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Back issues and group rates available.

Process & Faith News

Jeanyne Slettom is new P&F managing director

Marjorie Suchocki is delighted to announce that the P&F staff now includes Jeanyne Slettom, currently managing editor of *Creative Transformation*, as its



full-time managing director. Jeanyne is familiar to readers through her guiding hand in all of our various publications—brochures, booklets, P&F Press, and of course *Creative Transformation*. Jeanyne is completing her dissertation with Claremont Graduate University. She is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, and has just completed a year of sabbatical-replacement teaching at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. We welcome her back to Claremont!

Whitehead International Film Festival January 12-15, 2005

Featuring the best of the festivals from around the world, the fourth annual Whitehead International Film Festival promises more films, more insightful conversations, the

company of other film lovers just like you, and in sunny Claremont, too!

Summer Insitute for Process Theology, June 13-17, 2005

This popular program returns with class from 9-12, a two-hour lunch/exercise break, afternoon film and discussion, concluding with evening vespers. Once again, there will be different tracks available:

- Introduction to Process Theology
- Process and the Church
- Process and the Problem of Evil
- Process and the Bible

New!

Special CT issue

Watch for a special issue of *Creative Transformation* in September focusing on the religious argument against American Empire. Contributors include: Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, John B. Cobb, Jr., David Ray Griffen, Jorge Pixley, and Douglas Sturm.

Hymn/Liturgy Contest

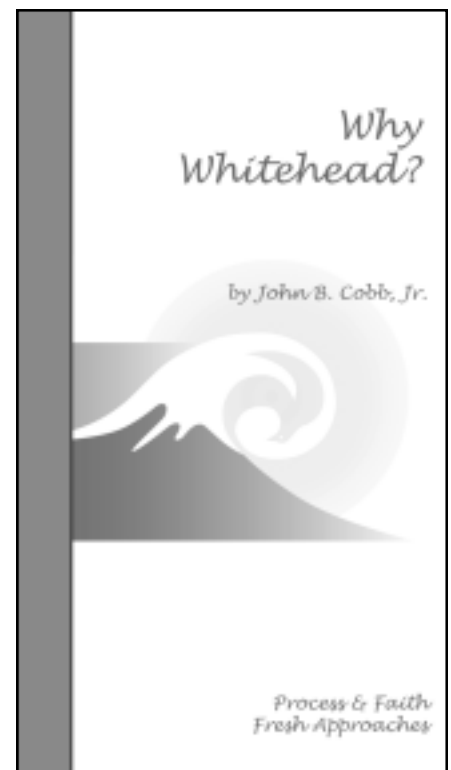
P&F is now accepting submissions for the 2005 hymn/liturgy contest. Submissions must reflect a process-relational view of the world. Winners will be chosen by

a national panel of judges. Prizes will be awarded in two categories: hymn and liturgy. The focus of this year's contest is **hymns and intercessory prayers relating to Advent and/or Christmas**.

See page 29 for more details, along with a list of the 2004 winners.

New! Fresh Approaches booklets

P&F has a new series of booklets, called Fresh Approaches. These booklets offer "big ideas in bite sizes." First in the series is *Why Whitehead?* by John B. Cobb, Jr. Available from P&F for \$5 (\$4 for P&F members).



Faithfulness and Law: Then and Now

John B. Cobb, Jr.

*John Cobb
preached this
sermon at
Claremont United
Methodist Church
in June 2004 on
Galatians 3:25.*



Among followers of Jesus in the decades after his crucifixion, there were many disagreements and divisions. But there was one issue that overshadowed all the rest. This was the relation of Gentile believers to the Jewish law.

To some Jewish followers of Jesus, it was obvious that Jesus was a Jew whose message was directed to Jews. They were open to Gentiles becoming Jews, but that meant that they would obey the Jewish law.

However, the leaders among the Jewish followers of Jesus were impressed by the response of Gentiles to their message. They saw that Jesus had a more universal character, and they did not want to make it too difficult for Gentiles to join the movement. They were prepared to simplify the law. The most impressive expression of this was at what is reported in Acts as the Council of Jerusalem. The leading apostles there agreed to reduce the requirement on Gentiles vastly. As Luke reports the event, James, the leader of the Jerusalem community, required only that Gentile converts “should abstain from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood.”

From our point of view, this is a strange list. We would have expected James to say that they should be required only to follow the Ten Commandments. But for Jews of that time, the dietary laws, though absent from the Ten Commandments, were extremely important.

In any case, the most important point in Luke’s account of the Council was that circumcision was not to be required. This opened the door for many Gentiles to become full members of the new movement.

Now we might think that this compromise should have settled the issue. But it did not. On the one hand, Jewish Christians continued to be troubled by Paul’s teaching and practice. And although Luke implies that the decision of the Council gave Paul the freedom to move ahead with his Gentile mission, Paul’s letters never mention this Council. His interest was not in how simple or difficult obedience to the law would be but in the role of law in relation to *pistis*. For him the one who has *pistis* is free from the law.

I use the Greek word here because, for those of us who speak and think in English, much of our understanding of Paul depends on how we translate it. In general it has been translated “faith.” This is certainly not wrong, since *pistis* includes most of the connotations of that word in

English. It includes belief, trust, and assurance. But it includes more than that, and the exclusion of this “more,” by the standard translation, “faith,” has led to theoretical and practical problems in the church. The narrow understanding of *pistis* led to problems already in Paul’s day.

The major problem is that “faith” seems to refer only to interior attitudes. This leads immediately to the question of behavior. How is “faith” related to “works”? Surely the latter are important. But people hear Paul as saying that they are not, because he says the one who has *pistis* is free from the law. That seems to mean that anything goes. As long as one has the right beliefs, one may act as one pleases. One will be saved if one believes rightly, however one acts. Many Jewish followers of Jesus were appalled by Paul’s rejection of obedience to the law as a requisite of the Christian life.

I have said that for Paul *pistis* involves more than what is suggested by “faith.” It is a whole way of being in the world. Many New Testament scholars today assert that it is often translated better as “faithfulness.”

In your Bibles you will find that *pistis* has always been translated that way in some cases. Paul speaks of the *pistis* of God. Translators have not wanted to attribute faith to God; so they have spoken of God’s faithfulness. But when applied to human beings, they have insisted on “faith.”

I hope you will see that there can be no human faithfulness without faith, but also that the connotations of faithfulness go beyond those of faith. To be faithful requires not only an inner disposition of belief and trust and personal commitment but also a life that expresses these. Whereas we have often contrasted faith and works as if faith might exist without behavioral expressions, we can hardly treat faithfulness in that way. If one is faithful to the Republican party, this has as much to do with how one acts as with how one feels and thinks. The same is true if one is faithful to the Roman Catholic Church or to the United States of America.

Of course, Paul was calling for faithfulness to Jesus Christ and to God as God was revealed in Jesus. Everything depends on that to which or to whom one is faithful. It was this faithfulness to Jesus that, in Paul’s view, overcame the need for the law.

Paul’s point was not that the requirements of the law were bad. His point was that obedience to law is a different way of living from faithfulness to God. The aim of the law was to spell out the elements that make for righteousness. Faithfulness to God fulfills the purpose of the law without attending to the particular formulations or individual laws.

Paul thought that efforts to attain righteousness by obeying rules were counterproductive. That does not mean that the rules are bad rules. They may well spell out

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Making a Difference

truly good practices. But the effort to obey them does not work. His example is taken from the Ten Commandments: “You shall not covet.” Paul in no way disagrees that coveting is a bad thing or that it is far better not to covet. But he says that trying to live by this rule does not work. It does not prevent us from coveting. It only adds guilt to the coveting. We can escape this vicious circle only by *pistis* directed to God.

Although Paul won his battle, so that the vast majority of Christians have not felt themselves bound by the Jewish law, still, at a deeper level the question of *pistis* and law recurs generation after generation. People look to their religious leaders for guidance as to how to live, and in the West this always seems to mean that they expect rules of some kind. They have great difficulty hearing the Pauline message that *pistis* fulfills the law and overcomes any need for it, that the lifestyle of obedience to rules neglects the revelation of God’s righteousness in Jesus.

The church has been all too ready to respond to this desire for rules of behavior. Indeed, in generation after generation children have grown up thinking of the church as the place where rules are taught and pressure is brought on them for obedience. Sometimes the pressure is subtle, simply generating feelings of guilt when the rules are broken. Sometimes it includes the threat of excommunication or of hellfire.

For those who understand the Christian life as involving obedience to God’s laws, there is always the question of what those laws are. A few call for obedience to the whole Jewish law, but that is rare. Still fewer take the Council of Jerusalem as decisive. More identify the Ten Commandments as their law. Some understand Jesus to have taught a new, and much more demanding law, and

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they seek to obey that. Others proclaim that there is a natural law to which we are led by reason. Practically speaking the “law” to which obedience is required is usually whatever the church to which one belongs teaches at the time.

Through most of Christian history, much of the law has dealt with sexual matters. This is strikingly different from the Bible. Of course, there are laws about sexual behavior in the Bible. In the Ten Commandments we are

told not to commit adultery. Jesus tells us men not to look at a woman with lustful feelings. In the simplification of the Jewish law at the Council of Jerusalem, we are told to avoid fornication. But the great majority of Jewish laws, and the great majority of Jesus’ teachings, deal with other matters, whereas today, for many people, “morality,” and especially “Christian morality,” immediately connote sexual morality. Our relation to money is far more important in the Bible than our sexual actions, but most of our churches offer no rules about this.

I am preaching on this subject this morning because so many of our Protestant denominations, including our beloved United Methodist Church, are being torn apart today. I think at the deepest level the issue is whether Christianity inherently includes the demand for obedience to moral rules or whether it is a matter of faithfulness to God, as we know God in Jesus. I have suggested that in Paul’s day many believers could not imagine any way of relating rightly to God, other than obeying God’s law. I have suggested that despite Paul’s relative success in proposing another way, the same must be said about many Christians in every generation. Many want to be told what rules to follow and what the allowable limits may be. Many want to impose the rules they adopt for themselves on others as well.

Today many are drawing a line in the sand over the issue of same-sex relations. I have tried to

understand why this is so. Most of these people have been flexible on many other issues dealing with sexual morality. Most of them now recognize that the church was wrong in treating sex as something unclean and sexual enjoyment as something to be avoided. Most of them now accept divorce as preferable to the continuation of some marriages. Many, at least de facto, accept some heterosexual experimentation before marriage and recognize that few couples now come to marriage as virgins.

I believe these changes express the faithfulness to which we are called. Of course, we who emphasize faithfulness are always in danger of being antinomian, that is, of implying that anything goes. The shift from opposing sexual enjoyment to affirming it as a great gift of God seems to underlie these deep changes in the practical sexual teaching of the church. That is surely an expression of faithfulness. Faithfulness in the new situation expresses itself by faithfulness to partners, recognized and treated as equals, and the subordination of one's quest for personal enjoyment to the needs of the community and of the world. But for those who are trying to live by rules, the abandonment of old rules with no clear new ones to replace them, seems to entail that anything goes.

The new understanding would seem to support the idea that those who are attracted to members of the same sex would also be affirmed in finding socially

responsible ways to express this attraction. And, of course, many thoughtful Christians support this further development of the implications of the recognition of sexuality as God's good gift. But many, indeed more, now appeal on this one point to rigid law. Homosexual acts, they say, violate God's law. Like the Council of Jerusalem, they are willing to simplify the law, modifying many traditional rules. But among the few that they regard as incorrigible, this one stands out. Why, when so many patterns of heterosexual activity are now accepted that were once legalistically forbidden, does the legalistic prohibition remain so strong here? I suggest that there may be three reasons.

First, those who take this position often claim that it is simply their commitment to biblical teaching that leads them to do so. Certainly they are correct that the attitudes of the biblical writers toward homosexuality, although peripheral to their thought, are consistently unfavorable. But the same people ignore other biblical teachings that are at least equally clear. They do not advocate, for example, that we refuse to ordain people because they are rich. Most of them do not now advocate that we refuse to ordain them, or remarry them, because they are divorced.

Paul's negative reference to homosexuality in Romans has been used many times to justify the church's rejection of all same-sex acts. Paul thought that homo-

Why, when so many patterns of heterosexual activity are now accepted that were once legalistically forbidden, does the legalistic prohibition remain so strong here?

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sexuality was a social consequence of idolatry, that is, of directing collective allegiance to something less than God. In his account, he did not, therefore, morally blame individual homosexuals, or establish rules against such practice. Instead, he went on to issue severe condemnation against those who judge others.

Those who believe that his theory about the cause of homosexuality was erroneous will certainly not participate in the judging that Paul condemned. If we followed Paul closely, we would be more likely to refuse ordination to those who condemn homosexuals than to homosexuals themselves. It is hard to believe that biblical teaching alone explains the hard line on this point.

Second, precisely the long history of modification of sexual rules has greatly reduced the difference between church teaching and social practice. This worries those who believe that the lives of Christians should be different from others, and that this difference should be specifiable in terms of the rules that are followed. They feel that if we yield to progressive secular thinking on this rule also, we will have given up our claim to higher standards. Hence, the line in the sand.

There is, I think, a third factor. Much of the Jewish law was based on the idea that some things are unclean. One effect of reflection on Jesus' revelation and the experience of the Jesus movement was to counter this idea in many respects. However,

the simplified law proposed by the Council of Jerusalem still assumed that meat sacrificed to idols was thereby made unclean. Blood was also felt to be unclean. Unlike Jews, Christians ceased associating uncleanness with particular foods, but they felt strongly that sexuality is inherently unclean. We still talk about

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dirty jokes. Even though, in the last few generations, we have largely overcome this feeling about heterosexual activity in general, to many people same-sex sex continues to seem unclean. In the whole biblical corpus, only Paul clearly taught us that nothing is unclean in itself.

This is a lesson that Christians have still not digested. Paul still calls us on to more radical thought. Only as we dare to let go of our legalistic crutches and of our sense of uncleanness, can we discover the full meaning of what Paul called *pistis*, and what we can name as faithfulness. This is not an easy or relaxed life of self-enjoyment. Paul calls us to participate in the faithfulness of Jesus. That faithfulness led Jesus to the cross. For most of us, faithfulness has no such dire consequences, but it often requires that we stand against popular opinion and popular morality. Nothing is forbidden, but the faithful judge all possible courses of action by whether they are means of working with God toward the fulfillment of God's purposes. In the area of sexuality, as in every other area, whether one is heterosexual or homosexual, that may require great sacrifices. To be faithful, as Jesus was faithful, frees us from the law because it fulfills the deeper purpose of the law and goes beyond that in the fullness of giving ourselves lovingly to others.

May more and more of those who follow Jesus come to share in Jesus' faithfulness and know the joy and love of that kind of life.

The Loneliest Highway in America: A Relection

by Rick Marshall

I'm turning onto Nevada State Highway 305, heading north. The only unnatural feature on the landscape is a sign: THE LONELIEST HIGHWAY IN AMERICA. Beyond the sign is a thin ribbon of asphalt scratched through sage brush, sandy hills, dry gullies—a brilliant blue dome of light seems to cup the geography, holding it all together from above. The horizon fades into haze and distant purple mountains majesty.

I'm cruising down this lonely highway in my pickup, going forty-five miles an hour with the windows open. I sit behind the wheel, head back on the headrest, letting the yellow stripes come at me slowly. Something in me wants to slow down. The speedometer drops to forty, then thirty-five, slowing until the moments seem to flicker, discreet. I come to a stop in the middle of the road and shut off the engine. I haven't seen another car on this highway. It's quiet; no, there are sounds: wind whistling through sage brush and insects whirling and clicking and, behind that, the deafening sound of silence. I have the strange sensation of being fully present in the moment.

Oddly, I don't feel alone.

Going again. Thirty-five miles an hour. Smooth. I'm one with this place, one with this moment,

gliding. I feel like my pickup is an extension of my body, feeling the road as we go, sniffing the air. Barbed wire fence runs parallel to the road, scrub brush sloping up hills and down dry washes, a long flood-plane ending in a smoky, distant range of peaks. My pickup is more like a magic carpet,



moving silently through a geometrical plane, all points moving with me, constantly rearranging and adjusting to my point in this space. I'm streamlining the moment, moving with the crest of time, surfing the unfolding.

My body becomes a vehicle, a time machine, flowing from one moment to the next. Time feels elastic, stretching out to fluid geographical points. The road grows smaller in my rearview mirror; the road ahead comes at

me as if passing through me, the horizons shifting perspective as I move, a geometry of constantly changing vectors and angles. The present moment is the only fixed position in this ever-changing web of lines and planes, one moment disappearing into the next as smoothly as rubber tires rolling out the distance of highway. The odometer clicks off the ground covered, a mere abstraction of distance, when all there is this moment.

The past is constantly receding. Even though my present experience is fresh in this old terrain, I'm reminded of how much is lost, the jumbled heaps of stones left long ago by flash floods, so many things lying low to the ground, so low they merge with the sand, disappearing. I become a ghost ship, this fleeting moment, moving from the previous moment into the next. Heraclitus was right, time is a river, life a flow of moments.

Each fresh "now" recedes into the past, moving toward a distant horizon, fading into purple mountains. All around me is wreckage of so many pasts and now mine; I leave hardly a trace. I will be forgotten. Yet, a brilliant blue dome of light continues to cup me, holding everything together from beyond. I look ahead, open wide to what's coming. Oddly, I don't feel alone.

Process from My Perspective: God in Rhetoric

Andrew Rogness

On the eve of the United States Senate vote on a proposed amendment to the constitution limiting the definition of “marriage” to one man and one woman, I attended an open forum sponsored by my representative and my senator to our state legislature. Predictably, the same issue entered that evening’s discussion. What had been a rather ho-hum question-and-answer session quickly turned intense. Voices were raised, the tempo increased, and civility took a nose-dive.

Every generation, every culture, every relationship, has difficult conversations. What is the point of them? That one idea prevail and that someone is shown to be right and another wrong? That we move to ever greater levels of collective enlightenment? Or are there deeper purposes served? God might have made humans of one mind, thus avoiding differing opinions with ensuing arguments. Might God have made each human distinct, fully knowing the consequences and opportunities that would result?

I have a distinct memory of an interchange with my oldest son when he was an early adolescent. He had done something wrong, but was reluctant to yield to an admission of guilt, let alone come

forth with words of contrition. I demanded that he say that he was sorry. “Sorry!” was his angry response—yielding to the letter of my law, but not giving in to my perspective. There was no joy in it for me. I had won the difficult conversation, but felt the relationship had suffered.

When I step back and ponder God’s intent for human discourse (something nigh impossible in the midst of a difficult conversation), I can imagine God being endlessly hopeful and often rewarded with each encounter that might be framed in this way: “Will these humans be able to butt heads, respectfully listen, intelligently express, be open for new insight, and emerge from their encounter with a sense of dignity for having exercised godly love for each other?”

I came away from the session with my representative and senator impressed by their ability to listen well, yet respectfully and intelligently disagree. Their rhetoric served a deeper purpose. Whether aware of it or not, they were acting with godly love and modeling it for those gathered.

It is not behavior that comes easily.

Jesus could have made it easier for us. He might have made the

centrality of our faith look like this: Obey God. Teach your neighbor to do the same (according to your interpretations of what that means, of course). Feel guilty because you’re not managing rules #1 and #2. And have a proper belief system that you try to get everyone else to agree to. Instead, Jesus made it much more open-ended, more difficult, and much more life-giving: Love God. Love neighbor. Love self. Follow me.

Following Jesus’ lead is easy when with people one loves and with whom one is in agreement. The greater the differences between us may indeed be the greater opportunities to show greater love. It is the choices one makes under difficult circumstances that often bear the greatest witness to a person’s commitment to Jesus’ principle of love. Difficult conversations test our commitment to that principle in a spontaneous way.

There seem to be few courses that help us in training for difficult conversations. On a recent canoe trip with seven high school students, my wife asked two sophomores who are involved in extra-curricular debate about the issues addressed in their debates, and what current issues they talk about in their civics and history classes. The response was that while they addressed current issues in debate,

their teacher did not allow the class to engage in current issues because the discussions became too heated and therefore counter-productive. This was discouraging information, especially remembering that the schools of the ancient Greeks had as a primary goal to teach the skills of rhetoric—fruitful discourse. One hopes those students are learning some skills at home—but if not there, where?

Communities of faith also are known to shy away from difficult conversations—fearing divisions and loss of membership. Yet avoidance does not seem to eliminate the inevitability of such issues arising in faith communities. Through openness to the issues, we have an opportunity for instruction. Furthermore, communities of faith bring significant perspectives, deeply faith-based, that can be tools for difficult conversations. Such tools grow out of devotion to God and the principles of love that Jesus taught by word and example.

There are three important faith perspectives that are helpful in shaping our rhetoric:

- 1) God, who is intimately present with us, is our center. It is our loving relationship with God that informs us and leads us.
- 2) We affirm God's presence not only in ourselves, but in those with whom we are having a difficult conversation—even if they don't acknowledge this reality.
- 3) While "love does not insist on its own way," love does insist that

we listen so carefully to our adversaries that they know we have heard their perspective, even though we disagree. These three points correlate to Jesus' great commandment on loving God, neighbor and self.

God at the Center

My Madison, Wisconsin, parish was fortunate to have Parker Palmer with us for a couple adult education sessions when he was new to the Benedictine community nearby. In one of those sessions, speaking about the Quaker notion of consensus-building versus voting as a form of violence, he referred to a difficult conversation at his previous community—one in which two people wished to live together outside the bonds of marriage. When their Quaker community gathered to discuss this issue and attempt to reach consensus, the moderator began by saying, "Since this issue has generated strong feelings and may prove to be a lengthy discussion, I suggest that instead of our usual 15 minutes of silent meditation . . ." and Parker said that he assumed she would complete the sentence with "I suggest we dispense with our meditation and move right into the business at hand." Instead, she said, "I believe we should extend our meditation to a full half hour, to be sure that it is God who is at the center of our discussion, and not we ourselves." It was faith put into action—attempting to frame life's issues within the greater reality of a relationship with a loving God,

and listening for God's leading on those issues.

The Christ in Thee

At one of the synodical retreats where Matthew Fox was present, Matt led us in a fun exercise. We divided our large group into two equal groups, then formed two concentric circles facing in opposite directions. Then Fox instructed the two circles to move in opposite directions, weaving the two lines, alternating the hand we were shaking as we wove around. With each person we'd face, we were to say to each other as we were shaking their hand, "The Christ in me," then move to the next person as we took the opposite hand and saying to each other the remaining part of the phrase, "greet the Christ in thee." Once we got the hang of it, we moved smoothly, creating a mantra of faith statement and body movement.

Love of neighbor in the body of Christian faith includes an awareness of Christ's presence in everyone—from the "least of these," to an adversary, and including ourselves. Our conversations tap into this mystical reality, drawing us to a deeper level of respect and practice through respectful rhetoric.

Love Listens

One of the basic skills in communication—taught to those who are becoming counselors, taught to those in pre-marriage instruction

Continued on page 23

Process in Practice

The Offense of Grace: Reflections on Matthew 20:1-15

Ronald L. Farmer

Who can forget the scene in *The Wizard of Oz* when Dorothy, having landed in Oz, looks around her and says to her dog, Toto, “We’re not in Kansas anymore?” And indeed she isn’t. In the Land of Oz, she finds herself surrounded by munchkins, witches both good and bad, a scarecrow who wants a brain, a tin man who longs for a heart, and a cowardly lion who needs courage. No, she is definitely not in Kansas.

The people who listened to the parables of Jesus frequently had an experience similar to Dorothy’s. The eminent British New Testament scholar C. H. Dodd defined a parable as “a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.”¹ Let’s examine that definition more closely.

First, a parable is “a metaphor or simile.” The function of a metaphor or simile is to compare one thing with another. When a love-struck poet writes, “Her eyes are like stars,” he wants us to compare his beloved’s eyes with twinkling stars on a clear night.

Likewise, when Jesus told a parable, he wanted his hearers to compare the activity of God with the *action* in the story. Many of Jesus’ parables make this point very clear when they begin, “the Kingdom of heaven is like . . .” But whether a parable begins with that expression or not, Jesus always wanted his hearers to draw a point of comparison between the parable and God’s activity or character.

Second, the details of a parable are “drawn from nature or common life.” That certainly describes Jesus’ parables. His stories were drawn from daily life in ancient Palestine. He filled them with scenes ordinary people would recognize: sowing seed, harvesting grain, tending vineyards, catching fish, children at play, weddings, crooked officials, lost sheep, and the dynamics of family life in the ancient Near East.

Third, a parable “arrests the hearer by its vividness or strangeness.” Jesus’ vivid, verbal snapshots of daily life immediately arrest the hearer’s attention. They draw the hearer into a story world that, at first, seems like a slice of daily life. A little way into the story, however, the hearer fre-

quently confronts something strange. The story takes an unexpected twist as the familiar is replaced by the foreign; things are turned upside down and inside out. Without warning, the parable shatters the hearer’s expectations and beliefs. Like Dorothy, the hearer of Jesus’ parable suddenly realizes she’s “not in Kansas anymore.”

And fourth, a parable “leaves the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.” Jesus told parables to engage his listeners. His audiences were never allowed to be passive onlookers; rather, Jesus forced them to become active participants in the story. He deliberately provoked them into thought: “What am *I* to make of this parable?” He required them to make personal decisions and take action: “What am *I* to do in light of this parable?” Jesus’ parables were anything but innocuous little stories.

Matthew 20:1-15 is a marvelous example of Jesus’ brilliance as a master parable-teller. The story begins as a slice of daily life in ancient Palestine. It was late September. The grapes had just reached their peak and were ready for harvest. The landowner began

a frantic race against time, for the grapes must be gathered before the onset of the rainy season that commenced in early October.

Although the landowner had servants who worked for him year-round, at harvest time he hired additional laborers to bring in the crop. As was the custom, the landowner went to the village marketplace where, at 6:00 a.m., day laborers would gather hoping to be hired. These were landless peasants, the poorest of the poor. Because servants and slaves were regarded as members of a landowner's extended household, they never went hungry. Day laborers, however, had no patron. Life for them was precarious. If they were not hired, they and their families would not eat. To be unemployed for even one day created hardship.

The landowner hired what he thought would be enough laborers to insure that the harvest could be completed that day. He agreed to pay them one denarius, the standard day's wage. As the day wore on, he worried that the harvest would not be completed in time—perhaps he saw storm clouds on the horizon—so he returned to the marketplace to hire additional laborers at 9:00 a.m., at noon, and again at 3:00 p.m. He promised to pay them what was right. The laborers would, no doubt, have understood that he would pay them the proper portion of a denarius for the number of hours they worked.

About 5:00 p.m. he returned to the marketplace. There were still

men standing around who had not been hired that day. Imagine how discouraged they must have been, knowing the hardship this day of unemployment would bring to their families. When the landowner sent them into his vineyard, they were more than happy to go. An hour's pay is better than no pay at all.

At 6:00 p.m., the end of the Jewish day, the landowner told his manager to pay the laborers he

*When we enter
the strange, new
world of Jesus'
parables we find
ourselves
gradually
transformed.*

had hired that day, beginning with those he had hired last. To everyone's surprise, those who had worked only one hour were paid one denarius, a full-day's wage! Can't you just see those who had worked all day as they began rubbing their hands gleefully? "Think how much *we'll* be paid! *We* worked all day." But to their surprise, they, too, were paid one denarius. They felt cheated and gave expression to their outrage: "These others worked only one hour in the cool of the evening, and you have made them

equal to us who have worked all day in the scorching heat!"

The landowner replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree to work for one denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to these others the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Is your eye evil² because I am good?"

The parable had taken an unexpected turn. Jesus listeners suddenly found themselves in a strange, new world. Their expectations were shattered. Their beliefs and values were turned upside down and inside out. The hearers of this parable suddenly felt what Dorothy felt when she said to Toto, "We're not in Kansas any more."

By means of this parable, Jesus transported his listeners from the everyday world of human expectation—the world of merit where people get what they deserve—to the amazing world of grace where people receive unmerited favor. The landowner graciously provided a full day's wage to all the workers—including those who had worked only one hour. Because of his kindness, no one would go hungry. Here is a striking picture of divine generosity which gives without regard to the measures of strict justice."³ God's grace is a gift. At the heart of Jesus' message is the good news that we do not have to earn God's love and acceptance; on

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Clashing Civilizations: Two Postures

Douglas Sturm

*Who is a hero?
One who turns an enemy
into a friend.¹*

In the minds of many these days, 9/11 symbolizes a dramatic turning point in human history, particularly in global politics. Some would claim it is indicative of a shift in attention from the ideological struggles of the Cold War to a new kind of confrontation happening across the world. In some sense, the future of human civilization is at stake.

In this confrontation, the primary point of contention is focussed on worldviews—fundamental beliefs and values, traditional practices and ways of life. Even before the tragic 9/11 event, Samuel P. Huntington, a highly reputed political analyst, depicted this shift in attention in his oft-cited phrase, the “clash of civilizations.” He predicted that, in the near future, the most volatile flash points in this clash among differing civilizations would occur between the West, on the one hand, and both Islam and Asia, on the other. The event of 9/11 seems a compelling case in point on the supposition that it manifests a direct attack by Islamic extremism on key indicators of Western modernism—the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

However, assuming for the moment that Huntington’s thesis has merit—that we are experienc-

ing a clash of civilizations which will consume our energies and will continue into the foreseeable future—what are we to make of it? What should be our response? What sort of public policies should we favor? What does it mean to assert that the future of human civilization is at stake?

In exploring these questions, I suggest contrasting two radically different postures, each representing its own distinct way of responding to the world of nations at the present time—a defensive posture and a dialogic posture. According to the former, we should do all we can to protect, if not to advance, our own way of life over our enemies. According to the latter, we should instead seek to create new lines of relationship across the boundaries that separate us toward the end of broadening the circle of friendship among peoples. While the former is promoted as a necessary response if a people would sustain its civilization as inherited, the latter, I propose, is a requisite of a more mature kind of civilization, giving expression to our connectedness with each other whatever our differences.

I. A Defensive Posture: Confronting Enmity²

From the perspective of a defensive posture, we are, in this era,

living in a multi-polar, multi-civilizational world. Civilizations are comprehensive cultural systems, ways of life customarily rooted in religious traditions. Each of the dominant civilizations in our time—Asian, Western, Islamic, Latin American, African—has evolved over a long history. While susceptible to change in some respects, its fundamental characteristics tend to endure and to infuse the everyday lives of its members. It constitutes a people’s identity, giving them a sense of belonging and setting them apart from all others.

Differences in civilizational identity are not inherently conflictual, however they often become so. This is more likely to occur when intermixed with variations in economic and military power, discordant political and territorial claims, suspicions of antagonistic objectives, imperialist actions, and pretensions of superiority. These are, in fact, pervasive features of the contemporary world. Current conflicts reflecting these features all too frequently break out in deadly violence, which remind us of a lesson we should have learned from history—we are at all times surrounded by enemies, potential or actual.

An enemy is someone who views us—our civilization—as a threat. Enemies are so committed to their own way of life, their civilization,

that they are willing to sacrifice their lives to do whatever they can to subdue us, if not annihilate us. Once confronted with an “other” as enemy, we, in turn, must construct ways of defending ourselves; we must organize our entire community to react effectively if we would sustain our way of life; we are forced therefore, to adopt the very characteristics of an enemy. We must annihilate our enemy before our enemy annihilates us.

Therein lies a paradox of civilization. Emerging from a condition of savagery, a civilization tends through various means to minimize the propensity for violence among its own members. A civilization may be measured by how effectively it has accomplished this delicate and difficult task. But on the larger scene of events, when confronted with the ruthlessness of an enemy, it is required to respond in kind, lest it be devastated. Internally it is, by intent, peaceable; externally it is, when needful, bellicose.

From the angle of this defensive posture, the prospect of war is accepted as a normal expectation of humankind. Peace among peoples and civilizations may be desired, but peace—which, at best, means merely the absence of violence—is always temporary and tentative. Patriots are cherished and warriors are celebrated as those who are most intensely loyal to the values and practices of their civilization and most willing therefore to do whatever is required to preserve its integrity.

II. A Dialogic Posture: Generating Amity³

From the alternative perspective of a dialogic posture, it is granted that civilizations in the contemporary world stand in tension with each other, and those tensions often break out in violent conflict. In contrast to the defensive posture, those tensions and conflicts are not understood as a signal for military preparedness.

*A dialogic posture
rests on the assumption
that people are
participants in an
ever evolving and
inclusive community
of existence.*

They are perceived rather as an occasion to explore the causes of conflict and to seek out opportunities for conciliation and constructive interaction.

A dialogic posture rests on the assumption that, in and through our differences, people are participants in an ever evolving and inclusive community of existence. Differences are not to be ignored. Indeed, they are to be cherished as contributing to the overall vibrancy of life. Moreover, each contemporary civilization is discerned as more polyphonic and permeable, fluid and contentious than the defensive posture supposes. We are, in and through our variations, caught up in each

other's lives across the globe. We belong to each other. The destructive frenzy of warfare, however sophisticated, violates the normative implications of that proposition. War is and should be rejected as an abnormality.

The flaw in the defensive posture is its separatist supposition. In truth, the violent subjugation of any “other” as enemy, while it may seem to be a gain, is really a loss. In the face of those who would be our enemies, we must avoid the strong temptation to respond in kind. We must not demonize them. We must instead devote ourselves to the art of peacemaking, working carefully and deliberately to construct ways of bringing all parties into a forum for discourse and negotiation.

However, for that forum to be fair and effective, we must take into account the desperate need we have of overcoming structures of political hegemony, economic inequality, and cultural suppression. We must be governed in our approach to the “other” by a principle of justice that honors the fundamental needs of all—even those who consider us as enemy. That's the genius of the concept of human rights as a measure of civilization—a concept that incorporates respect for difference but within a framework that provides for the possibility of creative collaboration and the emergence of new, more mutually enhancing ways of living together.

That a dialogic posture is risky given the current clash of civiliza-

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Empowering

Robert Brizee

Pastoral care has often been separated from social concerns, one of the many dualisms in our faith. Empowering another has been portrayed in the models of a pastor or counselor with an individual, couple, or family. This Spring, however, the two were blended in a class on *Global Community* in which a group of people from the Wenatchee valley spent six weeks dealing with world issues.

Given our distressing, heart-breaking, and swiftly changing world situation, it seemed that no greater gift of pastoral care could be given than to offer a setting in which the deep concerns of people were voiced and addressed.

We engaged with several important global issues. At the same time we learned about the process of making political decisions. Ultimately the way we make decisions is probably more important than the particular decisions we make on any given day. Times will change, issues will vary, and new problems will arise, but the manner in which we approach both the issues and the people who struggle with decisions will remain more consistent. Here I will share more of the process than the product.

The design of the class was self-consciously drawn from process theology. Thirteen global issues were presented, each in the form

of a question, such as: Will we protect our threatened environment? How can we be safe from terrorism and war? Is it possible to provide health care for all? Who will grow and distribute our food? Will there be jobs that provide what we need? What will we do for energy when the oil is gone? Will there be quality of life as the world population expands rapidly?

Wide participation was encouraged. An issue was chosen for each of the first two sessions by using the Hare Method, that is, each person voting in rank order for the three most important to them. In our third session, the opportunity to suggest issues beyond the original thirteen was offered. The list grew to twenty-one. The class then voted its three preferences with the newly expanded list.

Each evening my colleague, Dr. Robert Anderson, a family physician devoted to holistic medicine, led the group in a meditation focused upon becoming open to illumination and creativity as we entered into our deliberations. We were invited to set aside our personal concerns of the day, relax our bodies, and encourage our minds to become peaceful. We actively engaged in setting aside our negative, helpless, and angry feelings and invited our creative center to open to the

issue at hand and be keenly sensitive to the people with whom we were creating.

Small groups of five to six persons were formed. People were given the freedom to share with others whom they knew or to enter a group of persons with whom they were not acquainted. After initial introductions, each group focused upon an information sheet provided for the chosen issue. The task then became one of creating positive proposals regarding that issue. Persons were not expected to be experts but rather to contribute from whatever knowledge, information, and conviction they brought to the group. Listening to others was highly valued. An affirmation was offered to everyone: "You can think."

The challenge was to make proposals for a better world. All proposals were to be positive. Negatives were transformed. Anyone differing from a proposal already made was invited to make his or her own proposal rather than criticize the proposal before us. We considered this a good way to deal with authentic differences.

Groups deliberated about forty-five minutes to create three-to-five proposals on the issue for that evening. Proposals were written on poster boards and displayed before the entire group, then were read aloud by one of

the small group members. This sequence emphasized the importance of both seeing and hearing, especially hearing the voice of one who helped to frame the proposals. Then the plenary group was invited to create more comprehensive proposals synthesizing those which were similar, overlapping or duplications. New proposals which more clearly and completely addressed the issue were entertained. During this summary, none of the original proposals from small groups were lost. Both summaries and the originals were recorded.

The discussion then shifted to identifying those values which were present within each proposal. We found the good, the true, the beautiful, the just, the harmonious, the caring, the complexity, and the completeness embedded in the proposals. "Every person has the right to accessibility to basic health care"; and "All persons have the right to freedom of speech." As I listened I could hear dimly in the background the World Council of Churches trilogy of values: just, participatory, and sustainable.

Finally, we opened up the subject of how the proposals were created and modified. Here we focused upon the *how* rather than the *what*, the process of making rather than what was made. In this manner, we increased our awareness of how we dealt with differing ideas, honored those with varying visions, and creatively built upon ideas first shared by others.

Dr. Anderson closed each evening with a visualization of how these

proposals, which surrounded us on poster boards, may be given wings and become reality in our world. We called upon our imagination to see ourselves acting out these proposals and inviting others to join us. Possibilities were seen as becoming actualities. We were aware that the very thought itself had already changed the world. During the final session we developed means to put the proposals into action.

The challenge was to make proposals for a better world.

The final step of each evening was to congratulate one another in each small group and affirm oneself for engaging positively in a difficult task.

Of course, the content of the proposals is important. We developed possibilities which addressed cooperating with our environment, producing and distributing our food, guaranteeing human rights for all, providing basic health care for everyone, and facing our rapidly expanding world population. Those proposals are being shared now with decision makers in our state and nation.

So how does this class reflect pastoral care informed by process thinking? I believe that the following steps were drawn directly from theology and were at the same time compatible with

pastoral care: Giving a voice to people to speak the unspeakable; allowing people to choose what is important to talk about; providing small group experiences to increase the opportunity for everyone to speak, cooperate, create, and propose; affirming the proposals in the original words of the maker or group of makers; opening our imagination to the creative possibilities; disciplining ourselves to create only positive proposals; setting the stage for a wider group to enrich the proposals created by a smaller group; visualizing the possibilities becoming actual in our lives; and sharing the possibilities with others.

Reflecting on theology, that which I enjoyed the most was being in the classroom with the poster boards taped on all four walls. I was encircled by proposals. It seemed to present a metaphor for God's primordial life and our own moments of becoming. I was reminded of the beautiful poster on my study wall inscribed with the words of Emily Dickinson, "I dwell in possibility."

Group life can be empowering and the structure and function of an empowering group can be drawn from process theology. Content is important. Process is important. Today it is the process which I commend for addressing critical and timely issues in the church today.

Copies of the design of the class and the complete list of proposals created are available at brizeab@aol.com.

Celebrating Co-Creation on the Church Grounds

Paul S. Nancarrow

The following is a Rogation Procession celebrated at my home parish, St George's Episcopal Church in St Louis Park, Minnesota, this past spring. The Rogation Procession is an old English custom, observed in the sixth week of the Easter season, when the congregation would "beat the bounds" of the parish, walking around the perimeter of the farm fields and praying for a good growing season. Today, the Rogation custom has grown to include prayer for all forms of human creative work, and is increasingly being recognized as a time to celebrate and pray for all Creation, human and non-human.

St George's sits on an intersection of two busy streets in a first-ring suburb of Minneapolis. Our grounds include a courtyard garden, a parking lot, a main entrance on the boulevard, and frontage along a limited-access highway. The prayers for the procession are designed to recognize these details

of our actual world, and to discern within them the potentials for creativity and environmental ministry.

This liturgy is highly specific to St George's situation, and in many respects is not "portable" to other churches and locales. I offer it here as an illustration of how a traditional practice can be adapted to a contemporary setting and theme. What sort of Rogation Procession might you design for a church, a park, a backyard? Using this rite as a jumping-off point, how might you envision praying at the corners of your spiritual homeplace?

The versicles and responses in this order are adapted from Bible verses; most of the prayers are adapted from the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer*; the reflections for each site are original compositions.

A Rogation Procession

The First Station: The Garden

V. The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east;

R. And there he put the human he had formed.

God calls us to be co-creators with God in the world. This garden is a place where our human creativity and God's gift of growth come together to make great beauty. May this garden be for us a reminder that we care for all creation.

Let us pray.

O gracious God, you have filled the world with beauty: Open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works; that, rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn to serve you with gladness;

for the sake of him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

The People may sing as move from station to station; the hymn "Many and great, O God, are thy works" (Lacquiparle) is especially appropriate.

The Second Station: The Parking Lot

V. The gates of the city are made of pearl,

R. And the streets of the city are paved in gold.

Pavement changes the ground. When we cover the ground with a hard, impervious surface—whether that surface is gold, or stone, or asphalt—we change the ground underneath. We change the chemistry of the soil; we change the way the water soaks into the

ground or flows away into a storm drain; we change the balance of the watershed for acres and acres around. Some of those changes may be good; some of them may be not so good. God calls us to be mindful of the way our actions change the world. May this parking lot be for us a reminder that what we build changes the earth.

Let us pray.

Creator God, in giving us dominion over things on earth, you made us fellow workers in your creation: Give us wisdom and reverence so to build with the resources of nature, that no one may suffer from our abuse of them, and that generations yet to come may continue to praise you for your bounty; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

The Third Station: The Church Doors on Minnetonka Boulevard

- V. Go out into the streets and lanes,
R. And invite everyone to the feast.

Our church stands at a busy intersection. People and cars and buses and bicycles, wind and rain and snow and sun, all pass by on this street. May these doors be for us a reminder that we are called to bring Good News to a busy world, and may these doors stand open to welcome all into our Eucharistic feast.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, in your Word you have given us a vision of that holy City to which the nations of

the world bring their glory: Behold and visit, we pray, the cities of the earth. Renew the ties of mutual regard which form our civic life. Send us honest and able leaders. Enable us to eliminate poverty, prejudice, and oppression, that peace may prevail with righteousness, and justice with order, and that men and women from different cultures and with differing talents may find with one another the fulfillment of their humanity; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

The Fourth Station: Toledo Avenue

- V. Wisdom takes her stand at the crossroads:
R. All who wish to learn may turn in here.

If you look just down the hill by Highway 100, you will see an old stone picnic table, and a beehive oven with barbecue grills. When the highway was first built, it was designed to be a slow and leisurely road, where people would be expected to stop and have a roadside picnic. Now we either drive as fast as we can, or we spend hours tied up in frustrating traffic jams. Yet even now our church is here to be a place where people can come to slow down, to break bread together, to pay attention to life, to enjoy nature and fellowship and creation. May this highway be for us a reminder of the haven we offer in a too-busy world.

Let us pray.

Slow us down, O God, for we know that we live too fast: With

all of eternity before us, make us take time to live, time to get acquainted with you, time to enjoy the blessings of your creation, time to know each other; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who was never in a hurry, and who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Fifth Station: The Garden

- V. The earth is God's and all that is in it,
R. The world, and those who live in it.

We come back to where we begin. This piece of land is committed to our charge as a parish. This place in creation is committed to our care as God's people. May our own church grounds be for us a reminder that we are called to be partners in creation, and signs of New Life in God's world.

Let us pray.

All-relating and everlasting God, you made the universe with all its marvelous order, its atoms, worlds, and galaxies, and the infinite complexity of living creatures: Grant that, as we probe the mysteries of your creation, we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose; in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

- V. Alleluia, alleluia. Let us bless the Lord in all creation.
R. Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Transforming Praise

Bruce G. Epperly

*Praise God! Praise God from the heavens, praise God in the heights!
Praise God, all God's angels, praise God, all God's host!
Praise God, sun and moon; Praise God, all you shining stars!
Praise God, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens . . .
Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!
Young men and women alike, old and young together . . .
Let everything that breathes praise God! Praise God!"*

I see in the hymn [Psalm 150], however, more than a straight line between divine act and human response. The situation is more circular, more dialogical. The relative silence of Psalm 150 regarding the motive of praise points to the circular situation. When God is praised, and praised properly, God is the better for it. God's power becomes more focused; God's power is magnified because God allows and equips the entire universe to sing the divine praises. We praise, not just for the sake of spreading God's name among the world and among ourselves, but for God's sake as well. If our praise makes a difference for the world, then it also makes a difference for God.²

Praise is a forgotten element in process theology, worship, and spiritual formation.

Process theology has rightly focused on the divine-human partnership in transforming the world. Accordingly, the heart of worship is the alignment with God's aim at shalom and beauty that calls us toward the creative transformation of ourselves and the world. By comparison, the praise of God, as it is understood by many Christians, appears gratuitous and self-absorbed, contributing nothing of significance to God or the world. The God who needs constant adulation seems narcissistic and egocentric, and implicitly threatening to those who do not heap flowery epitaphs on "the Almighty."

Although process thinkers have appropriately identified certain acts of praise with hierarchical, paternalistic, and dualistic understandings of the God-world relationship, I believe that praise is an essential aspect of the spiritual life. Rather than promoting hierarchical images of God, authentic acts of praise emphasize our essential relationship with the Divine and all creation.

Psalm 150 concludes with the affirmation, "let everything that breathes praise God." The Psalmist asserts that God's holy breath flows through all things, giving them life, health, and beauty. With each breath, we inhale the Divine energy. As we exhale, we release that same Divine energy to the ambient universe. This breath of praise is not restricted to humankind, or to persons of wealth and power—the stars twinkle in praise, infants hum melodies of wonder, marginalized women and men discover a beauty in the color purple and the glowing sunset that transforms fear to hope, and passivity to action.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel spoke of "radical amazement" as the primary religious virtue. In that spirit, praise acknowledges both the wonder of the universe and our radical interdependence with God and our partners in creation. Hymns of praise affirm that we live, move, and have our being in the context of God's ubiquitous aim at beauty and shalom. We joyfully proclaim that God is present in all things as their ultimate source, creative partner, and everlasting companion. In the context of praise, Friedrich Schleiermacher's "feeling of absolute (or sheer) dependence" and Paul Tillich's "ontological shock of non-being" reflect the reality that God's intimate energy grounds, centers, and inspires every moment of life.

Yet, as Denise Dombrowski Hopkins affirms, praise takes us beyond ourselves and compels us to claim our role as God's healing partners in the destiny of

the universe. On the one hand, praise is an essential antidote to the idolatry and self-preoccupation that often ensnares persons, institutions, and nations. Praise reminds us of our radical dependence on—and interdependence with—the Holy One. When we breathe in synch with the breath of God, we recognize that although we are God’s beloved children, we are not God’s *only* children. We are not, nor is our nation or religious tradition, the center of the universe. Rather, the One who gives purpose and direction to our lives and institutions is the creative energy in every person and institution. Our greatest joy and well-being comes from identifying with God’s ultimate aim for the healing of all creation, and not merely our own individual or national success. On the other hand, praise creates an environment in which God can more actively transform the world. Our praise promotes God’s aim at shalom and wholeness. The contagious joy we feel in moments of praise radiates across the universe and becomes a factor in the healing of creation. In this way, God “needs” our praise, along with our prayers and actions, to bring forth new and surprising possibilities of justice and creativity for the world.

Praise takes us beyond ourselves and centers our lives in the ongoing adventure of the universe and its Creator. Grounded in wonder and gratitude, praise enables us to face sickness and death with confidence that even our dying breath shares in the one

great breath of God. When I think of the deepest meaning of praise, I remember the Service of Installation for Sue Zabel as full professor at Wesley Theological Seminary. Recently diagnosed with the cancer that would eventually lead to her death, Sue led the seminary community in singing the final hymn that day, “for the Giver and the Gift, praise, praise, praise!” Awakened to the wonder of life, Sue could praise God, despite the challenging path that lay before her. Her life embodied the Holy Adventure that inspired her trust and gratitude.

*God of change and glory, God of
time and space,*

*When we fear the future, give to us
your grace.*

*In the midst of changing ways, give
us still the grace to praise.³*

When we sing praises to God, we enable God to become the center of our lives and God’s aim to become the constellating factor of each moment’s experience. In embracing Divine wonder, we discover the wonder of our own being and the amazing surprise of all creation. Truly this is “transforming praise.” Awakened by praise, every day becomes a “beauty break” and an opportunity to see and to promote the wonder of life.⁴ Let every thing that breathes praise God! Let every moment be a moment of praise! Let every encounter be a holy adventure in loving interdependence with the one who creates the Cosmos and brings

beauty to every encounter.

An exercise in praise. Throughout the day, take time to chant your praises. You may choose to join this prayer of praise with movement, such as simply opening your arms to embrace the universe, as you say or sing one of the following affirmations:

“I praise you God for the wonder of *my* being.”

“I praise you God for the wonder of *all* being.”

“I praise you God for the wonder of this sunset.”

“I thank you God for the wonder of *my* being.”

“I thank you God for the wonder of *all* being.”⁵

¹ Psalm 148:1-4,11-12; 150:6. (adapted)

² Denise Dombrowski Hopkins, *Journey Through the Psalms* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2002), 47-48.

³ Al Carmines, “God of Change and Glory.”

⁴ The term “beauty break” comes from Patricia Adams Farmer, *Embracing a Beautiful God* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2002).

⁵ I learned the chant, “I thank you God for the wonder of my being,” at the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Bethesda, Maryland. For information contact www.shalom.org

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Process Resources

Critic's Corner: Film *The 25th Hour* and the Wages of Sin

Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki

Director: Spike Lee
Starring: Edward Norton, Brian Cox, Rosario Dawson, Philip Seymour Hoffman
Touchstone, 2002

This 2002 film by director Spike Lee poses serious questions to traditional Christian understandings of vicarious punishment, and resonates with process alternatives. The plot revolves around Ed Norton's character, Monty, in the 24 hours before he must leave New York City to carry out his seven-year prison sentence for drug trafficking.

The film opens with two pertinent scenes that reveal the ambiguity in Monty's character. Before the opening credits begin to roll, we are shown Monty and his cohort in crime on their way to an important meeting, but Monty sees a severely abused dog that has just been beaten and tossed to the roadside. Monty stops the car, first to put the dog out of his misery, but then—impressed with the spunkiness of the wounded animal—decides to take him to a vet and keep him. The credits then roll, and the movie proper begins with Monty sitting despondently by the East River, the now

healthy dog lying by his feet. A derelict druggie approaches Monty, begging him for a fix. But Monty angrily turns him away, telling him he's been "touched"—that is, caught, tried, and convicted. The wounded man parallels the wounded dog, but Monty is impervious to the man's plight. And in fact, as a drug dealer, he has contributed to his plight. So we begin with the two sides of Monty—compassionate and merciless both.

If we put this in dialogue with Christian notions of sin, the film gives a distinctively pelagian view—we are not all bad; we are not all good; rather, human existence is a mixture of both, and the drama of human existence is the unfolding of these intertwined qualities. As we trace this unfolding in the story of Monty, the film next introduces us to the significant others in Monty's life: his two oldest friends, Frank and Jake; his live-in girlfriend, Naturelle; and his

father, an Irish saloon keeper. In each we see the same entwining of good and bad, albeit now within the thin borders of living within the law.

His friends accompany Monty to a party on his last night of freedom. Frank, in a tense discussion with Naturelle, points out that each of them has benefited in one way or another from Monty's illegal activities, and that not a one of them seriously attempted to turn him aside. Further, since Monty's wealth has been gained through the misery of others, they are each complicit in that misery. This theme continues to play out in a scene between Monty and his father.

Process theology, in congruence with the Christian tradition, confirms the theme. Sin is individual and corporate at the same time; it is a weblike thing, reverberating beyond the point of impact to its distant edges. In this web, guilt is less a binary system of guilt/innocence, and more a



matter of degrees. To participate in the system of ill-being is to share the guilt of that system, whether or not one is legally indictable. The Christian parallel is the ancient but long dysfunctional doctrine of original sin. Like the film, this doctrine suggests that sin is social as well as individual, and that insofar as we are born into systems that perpetuate ill-being, and do little or nothing to challenge or change such systems, then we participate to some degree in the guilt entailed by those systems.

The film's challenge to Christianity lies primarily in its ultimate climax and resolution. Spike Lee gives an artistic nod to *The Last Temptation of Christ* in the closing scenes, as Monty's father drives him in the 25th hour to prison. As they drive, the father suggests an alternative—instead of driving to prison, they will drive across the George Washington Bridge and head west. His narrative of what can happen is illustrated on the screen—we drive across the bridge, across New Jersey and Pennsylvania—passing a broken-down bus by the side of the road that reads, Christ is the Answer. We drive through middle America, into the west, with crosses shown here and there in the passing scenery. The final destination is a town in a far western desert state. There Monty says good bye to his father, and begins a new life. In a year or so Naturelle comes to join him; they marry, have a family, and eventually Monty gathers his children

and grandchildren around him and reveals to them his secret past. But they are together, and exist as family precisely because Monty took that alternative, rejecting prison, beginning a new life in the West. And then we are abruptly returned to the car still on this side of the George Washington

Salvation lies not in escaping the consequences of one's wrong-doing, but in accepting responsibility and looking for creative ways to deal with those consequences that still might contribute to the common good.

Bridge, just as in *Last Temptation* we are returned once again to the cross. Monty chooses to pass the bridge—he chooses prison. And the film ends.

This is no mirror of Christian doctrines of escape from the punishment we deserve. To the contrary, the film insists that the way of redemption is not ducking the consequences of our crime, but dealing with those consequences. Frank, Jake, and Naturelle must face their own complicity in Monty's guilt, and Monty himself must accept responsibility and its conse-

quences. What is gained? Monty gains a continuity with his past that is denied him should he take the temptation to begin life anew. He is a New Yorker in his bones; he belongs to and with the people of that city, and by accepting prison, he accepts the right to return to his city following his sentence, even with all the risks entailed. Salvation lies not in escaping the consequences of one's wrong-doing, but in accepting responsibility and looking for creative ways to deal with those consequences that still might contribute to the common good.

The broken-down bus in the escape fantasy scene suggests that vicarious punishment as an answer to the problem of sin no longer gets us anywhere. Does process, too, reject this interpretation of the purpose of Christ? Certainly process will uncover alternatives within the Christian tradition, such as that posed by Abelard in the 13th century, who argued that the purpose of Christ was not vicarious sacrifice, but representation of ideal humanity, teaching us and praying for us. Process theologians tend to emphasize this representative element in Christ, and they either implicitly or explicitly reject the notion of vicarious sacrifice. However, many forms of contemporary Christianity neglect the wider tradition and make vicarious sacrifice synonymous with Christianity itself. Like Spike Lee in *The 25th Hour*, process thinkers call this doctrine into question, looking for faithful alternatives.

Critic's Corner: Books

The Female Face of God in Auschwitz: A Jewish Feminist Theology of the Holocaust, by Melissa Raphael (London and New York: Routledge, 2003)

Reviewed by Arlette Poland

Human dignity lay in the preservation of the capacity to love, not in the freedom to love (44).

It was the capacity to love that allowed the female face of God to be present in the camps in Germany during WWII. Certainly, the freedom to love was denied. And if we, as process theologians, wish to say that God is everywhere and always present as a lure towards the best and highest good in that moment, then we must accept what Melissa Raphael claims eloquently, cogently and persuasively: God, as Shekhinah, was present in even the nominal touching, reaching out and seeing by women of and for each other in those death camps. In spite of and even in the midst of the extreme filth, the unimaginable profanity, and the inconceivable terror, when the women reached out to each other in some way, there was the touch and experience of God, as Shekhinah, immanent and real.

No other post-Shoah theologian to date has managed to express this tender, almost invisible presence. Now Melissa Raphael has given us the necessary language. This work shows how God is present, suffers with us, and

still offers us the best and highest expression for life in all times and in the midst of all experiences—even nominally.

This is Melissa Raphael's fourth book and her scholarship, writing ability, and heart shine through every page. In her, process thinkers can find yet another innovative, astute theologian who, although not identified as a process thinker, successfully applies process themes.

Melissa Raphael's book challenges the prevailing representation of the Shoah by addressing head-on some common theological responses to the Shoah by predominantly male theologians. These responses include such themes as searching for a way to excuse God, or for ways to justify God's wrath at or disappearance from the Jews in the camps, or even to the claim that God is dead. Raphael declares that every one of these responses is inadequate and based on the mistaken belief in God's omnipotence. As Charles Hartshorne so eloquently bemoans in *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes*, if God is omnipotent, then God must be perfect and "whatever happens is divinely made to happen" (3).

Raphael disputes this belief, taking on such luminaries as Wiesel, Fackenheim and Blumenthal (38). The reader is taken through each theologian's argument only to come out with Raphael to question whether omnipotence is a necessary or even appropriate attribute of the one we call God.

Probably the most moving aspect of Raphael's intense post-Shoah theology is her use of women's stories (and some men's) to draw out historical and present-day patriarchal attitudes that have limited the perspective of Shoah theologians. For example, she uses one storyteller's reference to a group of women crying out in anguish at the losses they were being forced to witness and experience. But the storyteller refers to these cries as merely a "terrible noise" (22). At the same time, the storyteller, lifts up the prayer spoken by a young boy, the son of a rabbi. Raphael then points out that historically and in a present patriarchal context, "speech belongs to the male line" (22). Women are seen as mere objects of terror, whereas men are the subjects of the story. Men's voices could utter words of prophecy and prayer because

before the Shoah, they were the only gender allowed to do so. The women's cries were just as valid an expression of Jewish experience as the boy's prayer, argues Raphael. To that end, Raphael bravely recounts many stories without romanticizing or idealizing the women or the men. She maintains a respect that is evident in every sentence and a tenderness that allows the reader to read and learn with an open heart despite the raw content of the stories.

Process theologians, such as myself, will resonate especially with how Raphael allows God as Shekhinah to feel with the women in the death camps, without diminishing the activity of God. "In sum the recursive relation between God and humanity is such that the degradation that befell the Jews also befell God immanent as Shekhinah. But God is also too holy to be profaned so that as God overcame God's own profanation, Jewry also bore at least

the shadow of the divine face passing over its own" (84). Throughout her exposition, Raphael makes it clear that part of God's presence in Auschwitz is through God's suffering with the camp inmates. The other part is in the face of the inmates, when they reached for, touched or even looked at each other in compassion and a desire to help one another. In essence, in this incredible work, we find out how it was truly possible that God could be in the death camps, not just with the men, but also and just as validly with the women. This book is highly recommended for a close read.

Arlette Poland is a consumer advocate attorney and a recent graduate from the MAR program at CST. She is currently working toward a PhD in Women's Studies in Religion at CGU. She is also an ordained minister with the Emerson New Thought Center and active in her synagogue.

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—is being able to give a "mirror" statement. This is the ability to repeat back to another person nearly word-for-word, what they just said to you. It is a simple skill that goes a long way in letting the other person sense that you respectfully listened to them. There is not agreement or argumentation in a mirror statement. It is simply articulating a position. As I am able to state both my angle on an issue as well as another's angle in a way that the other person agrees to, it demonstrates a respect and love of self and the other.

With any conversation, and certainly with a difficult conversation, as we dialogue, dissect, and explore an issue, we may find that something is in process that might unfold. It may or may not include movement by one or both on a given issue, but it will likely include a sense that godly love has been advanced, and that a deeper purpose has been well-served.

The Rev. Andrew D. Rogness is the senior pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Roseville, MN.

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tions cannot be denied, yet reaching out toward global peace centered on justice is a risk worth taking. It bends our energies and resources toward the transformation of enemies into friends in a way—a nonviolent way—through which all parties benefit. A genuinely humane civilization requires no less.

¹ Avot deRabbi Nathan, quoted in Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference* (London: Continuum, 2003), 177.

² The "defensive posture" is a composite of themes from these three texts, though the depiction is my own: Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996); Villio Harle, *The Enemy with a Thousand Faces: The Tradition of the Other in Western Political Thought and History* (Westport: Praeger, 2000); Lee Harris, *Civilization and Its Enemies: The Next Stage of History* (NY: Free Press, 2004).

³ The "dialogic posture" is a composite of motifs drawn from the following texts, though the delineation is my own: Roman Herzog (with others), *Preventing the Clash of Civilizations: A Peace Strategy for the Twenty-First Century* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1999), Fred Dallmayr, *Dialogue Among Civilizations* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* (London: Continuum, 2003).

P&F Connections

We call them “Connections” because that’s what process-oriented people want . . . connections with other like-minded folk. We encourage readers to check out a nearby Connection—or start one, if there isn’t one near you. With the Internet—the ultimate technological connector—we offer even more. **Online discussion boards** are up and running on the Center for Process Studies website, with a whole section for P&F and an entire forum devoted to P&F Connections. Navigate from either the P&F or CPS websites, or go directly to: www.ctr4process.org/relationality/.

Many of our Connections are “on vacation” during the summer months. Locations and contact numbers are listed below, as well as a few reports . . .

Wenatchee, Washington

Our Sunday class began its spring session with the study of Marcus Borg, *The Heart of Christianity*. In February and March a six-session class on Global Community was offered to the community. Our Lay School is in the midst of a pilot study of a new class on prayer: “Enhancing Life through New Experiences in Prayer.” On the lighter side, several persons “ripped, cross-cut, and dadoed” with Bob’s radial arm saw to build themselves a rose trellis for their garden. For more information, contact Adrienne and Bob Brizee at brizeeab@aol.com

Minneapolis-St. Paul

Our Connection has been very busy this summer—just finished team teaching a week-long course in process theology for Kairos, the continuing education program of Luther Seminary. Participants from around the country heard presentations by Marjorie Suchocki, Paul Sponheim, Kirsten Mebust, Andrew Rogness,

Jeanyne Slettom, and Glen Strand. Bible study and daily chapel services were beautifully prepared by Paul Nancarrow. Next up, a planning meeting in August to choose programs for the upcoming year. For more information, contact Kirsten Mebust at: kmebust@twincitizen.net.

Greater Los Angeles

Our first event will take place at the Brea Congregational Church October 3, beginning with a potluck, followed by John Cobb as our featured speaker. The working title for the event, aimed at the upcoming election, is: “God, Bless America: How to Pray for Our Country. A Perspective from Process Theology.” The comma after God is intentional. The aim of the event is to show how process thought casts a different light on an important issue.

Upcoming events include Marjorie Suchocki on prayer, on January 9, and a spring 2005 event with Ron Farmer and

another guest on the Bible and the Jesus Seminar. Our goal is to schedule events far enough in advance so that churches can have study groups in preparation for the event. Books relating to the topic will be suggested in our promotional materials. For more information, contact Rick Marshall at bccrick50@msn.com.

Atlanta

The Atlanta Connection is taking a break for the summer. Monica Coleman has relocated, and the new person leading the process theology reading group is Elonda Clay. Elonda is a student at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, and passionate about process theology. For more information, email Elonda Clay at elonda@cybersity.net.

Bluegrass/KY

It’s “summertime, and the livin’ is easy” here in the Bluegrass, where there’s always time for good conversation—especially if it’s about process theology! Nothing

new to report, but the welcome mat is always out! Contact Charles Arterburn: crart02@yahoo.com

Omaha

Vernon Goff just finished a two-day "Seminar at the Ranch" in NW Nebraska. Participants came from AZ, CO, IL and NE. Process thought as digested and presented in Goff's *Making God-Talk Make Sense* was the basis of the seminar. The level of enthusiasm and growth in fellowship was high. Vernon reports: "I have been offering these seminars for the past three years and this was the best ever. We will continue with study groups in Fountain Hills, AZ (Mary Ann and Jack McBride) and Omaha, NE in the Fall. Dates have not yet been set for the Seminar at the ranch for 2005. Contact Alice and Vernon Goff at 44vg@cox.net

Fountain Hills, AZ

Moderators are Mary Ann and Jack McBride. Contact: jjama@prodigy.net.

San Diego

Our next meeting will be held Wednesday, September 8, 2004, at 6:30 p.m., at the San Diego First United Methodist Church (Linder Hall), 2111 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, CA 92108, www.fumcsd.org. We will begin discussions of *The Process Perspec-*

tive: Frequently Asked Questions about Process Theology by John B. Cobb, Jr. You may also want to add *Process Theology—A Basic Introduction* by C. Robert Mesle, to your summer reading list. Contact Michael Lodahl at mlodahl@ptloma.edu

Tennessee-Virginia-NC

Contact John Martin at: jcmartin@charter.net

Drew University, NJ

Contact Antonia Gorman at antoniag@ptd.net.

Phoenix/Tempe

Contact Linda Miller at revlindamiller@cox.net

Seattle-Tacoma

Contact Paul Ingram at ingrampo@plu.edu

Arkansas

Contact Jay McDaniel: mcdaniel@hendrix.edu.

Indianapolis

Contact Helene Russell at brussell@cts.edu

Belgium-France

Contact: freddy.moreau@skynet.be and visit his website at www.protestantismeliberal.be

Ottawa

Contact George Hermanson at tsauc@bellnet.ca

Affiliated Groups:

Credo Group, Tyler, TX

Contact Jim Koukl at koukl@tyler.net.

Rochester, MN

Our process affiliate in Rochester is looking forward to a visit from Marcus Borg, who will present a series of lectures there November 5 and 6. For more information about times, places, and lecture topics, go to <http://www.cumethodist.org/marcusborg.htm>. Or contact Carol Wallace at: CAW4805@aol.com

Your Town?

No P&F Connections in your neck of the woods? Consider starting your own Connection! The P&F office has starter kits and tools to help you. Your fellow Connections are willing to share their ideas and the online discussion boards are a way to stay in touch with each other.

Farmer, continued from page 11

the contrary, God's favor is poured out on us freely. God loves us unconditionally. Like the laborers who worked only one hour but received a full day's wage, we are the recipients of God's amazing grace.

Yet, if we are honest, I think we would have to admit that we can, at times, also see ourselves in the outraged laborers who toiled all day. *Grace can offend.* Indeed, most scholars think that Jesus told this parable to shock self-righteous people into the realization that God is gracious to everyone—even

Self-righteous people tend to begrudge God's generosity to those whom they deem unworthy.

to the despicable tax collectors and sinners with whom Jesus scandalously associated. Self-righteous people tend to begrudge God's generosity to those whom they deem unworthy. "It's not fair that those who have lived wicked lives should receive the same grace as those of us whose lives are more righteous," they complain.

"The offense of grace is not in the treatment we receive but in the observation that others are getting more than they deserve."⁴ God forgave the people of Nineveh. That offended Jonah. God makes the sun rise on the good and the bad, and sends the rain on the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:45). That offends some people. God is kind to the grateful and to the evil (Luke 6:35). That offends some people. "The generosity of God quite often cuts across our calculations of who deserves what. For all our talk of grace, the church still has trouble with it."⁵

The reason we have trouble with the notion of grace is that we find ourselves living in two worlds simultaneously: the world of merit and the world of grace. Day in and day out, much of our lives are lived in the world of merit that tells us that we get what we deserve—or at least we should. In school, we receive

various grades depending on how well we measure up to the teacher's standard. In the workplace, we receive diverse salaries depending upon how well we perform on our jobs and how much society values our occupations. At times we feel we are treated unfairly or that others are getting more than they deserve.

We spend so much of our lives in the everyday world of merit, is it any wonder that we are deceived into believing that the doctrine of merit is the way things *really* are or at least *should* be? Is it any wonder that, at times, we find the notion of grace offensive? To be sure, we're glad that God is gracious to *us*, but sometimes we feel that God is *too* gracious to *others*.

We need parables such as this one to shatter the tight grip the world of merit has on us. We need such stories to expand our vision and open our minds to God's gracious activity. When we enter the strange, new world of Jesus' parables we find ourselves gradually transformed. And in the course of this creative transformation, we discover that we deal with other people less and less according to the world of merit and more and more according to the world of grace. May we let the offense of grace do its transforming work in us.

¹ C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, rev. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961) 5. Dodd's definition has become the standard definition used by New Testament scholars.

² "The evil eye is a serious matter in Mediterranean societies. It is the eye of envy, and one must be on constant guard against the damage it can cause. Amulets and gestures of various kinds, widely used even today in the eastern Mediterranean, are intended to provide protection" (Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992] 125).

³ Dodd 94-95.

⁴ Fred B. Craddock, "Matthew 20:1-16" in Fred B. Craddock, John H. Hayes, Carl R. Holladay, and Gene M. Tucker, eds., *Preaching through the Christian Year: Year A* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1992) 449.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Ronald L. Farmer is Dean of the Wallace All Faiths Chapel and associate professor of religious studies at Chapman University in Orange, CA. He may be reached at rfarmer@chapman.edu.

2004 Winners— P&F Hymn Liturgy Contest

Congratulations to the 2004 winners, and a sincere thank you to all who submitted their work for consideration. Entries were submitted anonymously to a panel of judges, who made the following awards:

Liturgy

First place:

Gianluigi Gugliermetto
Vespers of Hope

2nd place:

Beth Johnson
God of Land and Sea

Honorable mention:

Hojin Kim
Liturgy of Han and Jeong

Hymn

First place:

Pat Patterson
Maker of Earth and Ocean

Honorable mention:

Richard Lapo
O God of All the Nations

1st Place: Hymn

Pat Patterson

Maker of Earth and Ocean

Maker of earth and ocean
Filling world with harmonies
God our dwellin in all ages
Giver of our families.

Draw us near you, lure us to you,
Granting us a life that frees.

God our home and destination
On the wayu we walk with Thee
Giving visions, new creation
Sense of hope, community.
Draw us near you, lure us to you,
Growing in a life that frees.

Jesus, comrade and our brother,
living, dying, breaking free
You call us to be disciples
Sharing bread and liberty.
Draw us near you, lure us to you,
Giving us a life that's free.

Spirit, open wide the doors now
Liberation is our plea
Hover o'er the face of peoples
Fiery blessing may we be.
Draw us near you, lure us to you,
Gaining all a life that frees.

Tune: SICILIAN MARINERS

1st Place: Liturgy

Gianluigi Gugliermetto

VESPERS OF HOPE

Note: What follows are excerpts from a longer service created in remembrance of Dorothy Soelle. The full version can be found on the P&F web site.

OPENING PRAYER

We are gathered here to celebrate life.

We come alive and prosper spiritually
only in shared resistance to all that thwarts life's
promise.

We are here to remember the root of our resistance
and the source of our celebration.

We remember that in the beginning is the relation.

We remember our brother Jesus
and the community of prophets and poets,
covenant and lament,
in which he was born.

With him, we believe that radical love
is a dangerous and serious business.

**All: With him and with all the passionate women
and men of all ages and faiths, we share hope.**

[From Carter Heyward, *Saving Jesus* 212ff. Adapted.]

BIBLICAL READING: Proverbs 8: 1-5, 13, 19

RESPONSORY:

Reader: Looking for wisdom in this difficult hour;

All: Is first of all not to fall into despair.

Reader: Looking for solutions in this hour;

**All: Is first of all about opening to a wider
horizon.**

Reader: Looking for hope today;

All: Is listening to the deep voice within.

FINAL PRAYER: UNISON

*Gracious God, we thank you
for the opportunity you have given us
to join in co-creating the world.
Bless us all as we seek to go forth from this place,
refreshed and alive in your liberating power.
May we be strengthened through wisdom and faith
to live boldly and kindly in this world at this time
knowing that we are here on this earth to voice your passion
for justice,
embody your loving presence,
drink deeply from your living waters,
and sing your praises with our lives.
Amen.*

[From Carter Heyward, *Saving Jesus*, 214. Adapted.]

2nd Place: Liturgy

Beth Johnson

PRAYER

God of land and sea, of moon and sun—we are
never without your presence. You move in and
through us always and everywhere. You are as near
as our breath, as close as our heartbeat. We see you
in the eyes of all we meet. We hear you in the coo of
a dove. We taste you in our tears. We open ourselves
to Your presence within and around us. Open our
hearts, we pray, that we may hear Your Divine call
and respond well—to co-create with you ever greater
possibilities of beauty, truth, and love.

Announcing the 2005 P&F Hymn/Liturgy Contest

Process & Faith is now accepting submissions for its 2005 hymn/liturgy contest.

Submissions must reflect a process-relational view of the world. Winners will be chosen by a national panel of judges. Prizes will be awarded in two categories: hymn and liturgy. The focus of this year's contest is **hymns and intercessory prayers relating to Advent and/or Christmas**.

This contest is part of a larger plan to publish a P&F Press book of process-themed worship resources. All prizewinning submissions and honorable mentions will be included in the book. Process & Faith reserves publishing rights for this purpose.

First Prize: \$250
1st and 2nd runner-up: \$75
Honorable Mention

Send four (4) copies of your submission, along with a \$3 submission fee, to:
Process & Faith Hymn/Liturgy Contest
Claremont School of Theology
1325 North College Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711-3199

Submissions due: January 15, 2005
Winners announced: July 2005

Inquiries: faith@ctr4process.org or 909.447.2559

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www.processandfaith.org**



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