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The Cresset (Vol. LXVII, No. 2, Advent/Christmas)

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THE CRESSET

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE, THE ARTS, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Advent/Christmas | 2003

THE CRESSET

Alan F. Harre, *Publisher*
Thomas D. Kennedy, *Editor*
November 2003, Advent/Christmas
Vol. LXVII, No.2 ISSN 0011-1198

Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, Indiana 46383

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Baroque Manger (detail)
Baroque era (ca. 1600-1780)
Photograph by Adam Heet

Brauer Museum of Art

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head back down the roadside, and give thanks for it all

The faces were grim, despite the lovely autumn hues surrounding us at the conference of Lutheran college faculty. The language was not that of crisis but distress. Both major Lutheran bodies in America are considering changes whose impact upon Lutheran higher education is likely to be anything but salutary. The ELCA is discussing a restructuring that would merge the current Division for Higher Education and Schools into the Division of Ministry with a reduced staff to interact with the colleges of the church. The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod is thinking about reducing the number of the church's colleges. Neither proposal is obviously good for Lutheran higher education; nor is either proposal disastrous. The more radical Missouri proposal, if passed, will inevitably result in the closure of several of the struggling Concordias, and leave several others limping along for some time, I suspect. The ELCA proposal will send the message to colleges (in many cases already pretty distant from the church) that the church is unwilling or unable to work hard at making the relationship between college and church much more than of historical interest. Currently the church may provide little more than a denominational representative to sit on college boards, but the value of that symbol ought not to be underestimated.

The problem driving both of these proposed reforms, of course, is money, specifically, the lack of money flowing to denominational headquarters. Lutherans have money, but if we give it, we don't give enough of it, or at least enough of it to support the work of the denominational headquarters. Whatever the dominant character traits of Lutherans, we aren't big spenders. Nor, apparently, are we big givers. Studies indicate that of all Protestant churches, Lutherans give the lowest percent of their income to the church. All agree this problem is a theological one, though there is some disagreement about exactly what the problem is. Smells like cheap grace to me.

To hear some pastors approach the question of money and stewardship, you would think that most of today's Lutherans have been deeply traumatized at some point in their lives by someone asking them for money or suggesting that it might be fitting for them to share their wealth. I don't deny the good intentions of these pastors; I'm certain that they are trying to be compassionate, trying not to give offense. But to refuse to talk about the responsible use of wealth, to refuse to discuss how our wealth may be spiritually deadening, is not compassionate, is not to preach the good news; indeed, it is to abandon us to the possibility of losing our souls.

It is no easy thing to talk about the virtues of generosity in contemporary acquisitive America, apparently. I might, in a moment of unusual generosity of spirit, be willing to entertain the possibility that President Bush's generosity to the wealthiest of Americans might have been morally justified (even if not strictly just). Had he argued that his proposed tax reform was a morally risky business, that with the additional breaks the wealthiest among us are in even greater danger of soul-deadening greed, yet he was willing to run the risk of collaboration with their evil because the wealthiest are also more able than most to do great and good things with their money and, furthermore, that he hoped and prayed and expected them to do good things with the money the federal government was returning to them, then maybe the tax bill could be justified. Had he argued that he was attempting to make more possible and more visible the Aristotelian virtue of magnanimity, of, roughly, spending large amounts of money on worthy projects because it is honorable to do so, then perhaps he could have justified the reform. But, of course, he didn't.

I do not doubt that President Bush is a generous man, but he seems no better than our Lutheran pastors at teaching us to be generous. His promise of aid to Africa to fight the plague of AIDS was a generous gesture, although to this point it has been little more than gesture. And at no point has he

said to the American people: "I think what we are doing in Iraq is right, but we have wreaked havoc upon their land and their lives. And it is just wrong for us to leave them for even a short while in the shape they are in. So I'm asking every American to fast every Friday noon for the next year and asking you to give generously and sacrificially to aid organizations that can help with the rebuilding of Iraq. We are a wealthy people. We ought to be a generous people, too." (He might add, of course, that officers of his administration and the businesses with which they have been affiliated—more than a few of whom will significantly gain from the rebuilding of Iraq—would set examples of generous giving.) That would be good talk; it might even be good politics, although the Washington spin-masters would hear in such talk echoes of Jimmy Carter's "malaise in America." So we hear no reminders from Washington that we are the world's wealthiest people and that from those to whom much is given, much is required.

If our pastors won't teach us generosity and our nation's leaders won't lead us into generosity, how do we become a more generous people? Some of us, perhaps, will have the good luck to find ourselves in generous communities, communities of givers and those mindful of the gifts of others. First as book review editor, and now as editor, I have been struck by the ample generosity of those who write for *The Cresset*. The material comes, and it usually comes in more or less on time and requiring very little work from this editor's hand. We pay little, and our essayists and columnists and poets could write for larger although, I suspect, less discriminating, audiences. But this journal is the result of the generosity of these writers, and the generosity of this institution that thinks our work important enough to fund it, and the gifts over the years of the student workers who have committed themselves to this good work.

And the generosity of the book reviewers. Here are two laws of book reviewing: Everyone who writes a book wants her book reviewed. No one who is writing a book (or, in her mind, close to writing a book) wants to review a book. But, of course, these pages over the years have provided more than a few counter-examples to the second law as some authors of the very first rank have written reviews almost as perceptive and helpful as those who have reviewed more frequently, their somewhat less familiar colleagues. For almost seventy years, *The Cresset* has been abundant with book reviews, this abundance the gift of reviewers who receive little more than a free book and a thank you. It is good to be a part of this generous community.

And that, perhaps, is a large part of an account of why the church needs its colleges and why colleges need the church, and why our nation needs both. Wealthy people ought to be generous people and in our culture it is oh so hard to be both. One good reason to attend a church-related college is that typically these are, in my experience, generous communities. I can name professor after professor who somehow found the time for me—in independent studies, in conversations outside of class, in encouraging me. Such generosity was the expectation of even important scholars in the church-related colleges I attended. Those were generous communities. But the generosity of the church-related college is dependent upon a church that values generosity and is itself generous enough to support the college with students and with prayer and, of course, with money. And the nation's soul, as much as the church's body, needs such generous folk.

"All is gift," the great theologian Karl Barth insisted. And so it is. We know nothing if not the generosity of One whose nature is Giver. The great feast of creation of which we partake. Loved ones and their stories. The gifts of teachers and friends. The gift, above all, of the Child. ♰

TDK

going inside

Gary Fincke

My grandfather, nearly every night, drank at the DOH. The "social hall," according to my mother, his youngest daughter. The "Hory-Gory," according to my grandmother, a name even as a child I was sure was a euphemism, something like "gee-whiz" or "heck" or "dang." There was a time when my grade school friends and I tried to guess what hory-gory stood for. What kind of whore? What sort of gore? And then I put it aside because my grandmother died, my grandfather was discreetly in a charity home, and I was capable, at 15, of saying "Jesus Christ" and "hell" and "damn."

All along, though, I was in love with his oldest daughter's name for the DOH. "The Doors of Hell," Aunt Margaret repeated, and each time I walked past the yellow-brick building that housed the DOH, I wanted to sneak in and see how damnation was earned. Nobody my parents knew well belonged to the DOH, and none of my friends, after we moved two miles from Etna, had ever heard of it.

I'm thinking about the DOH this afternoon, because I've come to take pictures of my grandmother's house at 21 Prospect Street, to walk the neighborhood and give my wife a sense of where my stories about my grandfather are grounded. Liz carries a camera; she's patient as I follow the sidewalk.

The block seems unchanged except that the house next door has been torn down and large sheets of plywood have been nailed over what used to be lattice-work under the front porch of my grandmother's old house.

I tug at a loose piece of cement and it lifts out of the wall that runs the length of the property. I calculate the steepness of the cement stairs that lead up to the front yard of red bricks; by spreading the fingers of one hand, I measure the width of the wall running down each side where I walked as a child, daring disaster, and I know I wouldn't have the nerve to try it now.

It's one way of gauging my grandfather's coordination when he came home. "The Prince," my Aunt Margaret called him, "because everybody took care of him," but there are so many steps up to the porch, I think his drinking was exaggerated. A man doesn't avoid falling on stairs like these if he chances them drunk too many times. There are fourteen cement stairs, then two, then seven wooden ones, no matter if he turned to the kitchen or the living room porch. If he tried to come down the back way, there were six narrow cement stairs, then four more, and after that, the same trip up the wooden ones to the two outside doors. If a man is staggering drunk, he takes a serious fall or spends the night where something less challenging leads to a door.

I pose for a picture, looking back over my wife's shoulder as she snaps a shot of me at the base of the fourteen stairs. I almost wave as I suddenly spot the landmark. "Look," I tell my wife, "the DOH."

She turns and takes a picture so I can see, later, what the building looks like from my grandmother's sidewalk. She's heard me mention it so many times, she doesn't ask me questions. "We'll go inside when we get done here," she says.

"It's private. It'll be locked."

"How do you know?"

I don't have an answer, but I'm surprised to discover I can see the DOH from where I'm standing. My grandmother could have seen her husband enter and leave from her kitchen window or her front porch. She could have, if she raised her voice, called to him.

We turn up the alley that follows one side of the property and leads to Vine Street. It has, I'm certain, the same brick, the same cracks and creases and folds as it had when I was a child. When I

look back, half way up the hill, I see the storm drain where all my rubber balls that bounced over the hedges disappeared. Across from me, Mrs. Bondula's side porch looks the same as well—shabby and rotten, as if she'd put one foot through it, yanked it back, and then never used it again.

A pathetic, caved-in doghouse sits next to it, half of BEWARE gone above a faded OF DOG. I can't remember the name of the dog I was afraid of. The sign wasn't there when I was a child, so it's likely Mrs. Bondula owned more after I grew up and moved away from here. Or perhaps the next resident moved in thirty-nine years ago, bought a vicious dog, put up a sign and began to allow the property to go to hell. Mrs. Bondula, if she were alive now, would be over 100, not likely to answer the door and my questions. As far as I can tell, nobody at all would answer that door if I chanced completely falling through the porch to knock.

My grandmother's house, at least, is in better repair. When we reach Vine Street, which runs exactly even with the bottom of the first-floor rear windows, everything looks exactly the same in the house where I slept every Friday night until I was twelve, except for a new door.

I LOOK UP AT THE BEDROOM WINDOW WHERE I would have stared down at the men who drank and sang along to concertinas on the Kordesich's porch. One of those men fell down the cement steps when he tried to use my grandmother's yard as a short cut. Old Man Kordesich himself was carted away in an ambulance, dead from pneumonia "with a snoot full in him," according to my Aunt Margaret. As I check that porch for details, a man lurches out the front door and plunges heavily down the steps to confront us. "You need help with something?" he says, and I smile like a tourist hearing a foreign language.

"There never was a door here," I say, suddenly annoyed.

He follows my look. "If you go back two years or more," he says, slurring his words as if he's been swilling beer since lunch. "My ex-wife moved there—she uses that door." He lifts a cigarette to his mouth and takes a long drag. "She comes and goes like she don't know me," he adds. I nod. "What's your story?" he suddenly asks.

"Nostalgia," I say, lying.

"The good old days," he snorts. "Sure."

He seems satisfied, but he doesn't go back inside. As we walk away, I half expect him to throw rocks. When we get back to the steep alley, he shouts, "Don't bother talking to that bitch. She don't know nothing about nothing."

The alley is so steep it demands the hitch step I use, going downhill, to protect my ruined knee. The cement steps would be safer than trying these bricks when they were wet or snow-covered. The neighborhood seems designed to discourage excessive drinking outside the home.

MY WIFE PULLS AHEAD OF MY MINCING steps. She turns left at the bottom, walks to the second building. "Ok," Liz declares, "let's at least try the DOH."

"Why would it be unlocked?" I say again, but she's already tugged the door open, keeping her answer, I'm thankful, to herself.

Inside, there's a sign directing us downstairs for bowling and a set of smoked glass doors that, to my perverse satisfaction, is locked. Squinting, I can make out a hazy bar, some figures moving. "That's that," I say, but a buzzer sounds and Liz pulls the handle.

After fifty years, after all the legends and stories, after passing it thousands of times, I walk inside the DOH Club, buzzed in by the bartender, a woman, who seems surprised she doesn't recognize us. Seeing Liz and me in the foyer, the bartender must have thought we were members who'd forgotten our keyed entry cards. Now she has two strangers walking among empty tables to a bar crowded, just past 2:30 in the afternoon, with men, nearly all of them over 60 years old.

Every one of them has a draft beer in front of him. A few are using the beer to chase shots of whiskey. Nobody has a mixed drink. The only choices here seem to be different shades of amber, and each of the eleven men at the bar give us the same look of distrust.

I QUICKLY CHOOSE A SPOT BETWEEN TWO MEN who look a generation older than I am. If I'm going to hear anything, I need storytellers who were drinking before 1950. When the bartender sets herself across from me, a commercial ends on the televisions set above both ends of the bar, and the men turn right or left to watch Andy Sipowicz

and Bobby Simone grill a suspect on *NYPD Blue*. It's twenty minutes to three o'clock. I saw this episode three years ago. The suspect is about to confess to kidnapping and imprisoning a child to molest her. While Sipowicz looks as if he'll spit on the suspect, I explain to the bartender I'm researching the life my grandfather lived when I was born.

"This place was built in the early 1950s, is that right?" I ask the bartender, who is the only one besides me not watching the screen. She draws an Iron City and slides it to a man younger than I who has materialized to my left, replacing my wife.

"You'll have to ask one of the old-timers," she says. The old-timer beside me holds his beer and watches Sipowicz grimace with disgust.

"Give him a sheet of that stationery from out back," the younger man says, not looking away from Sipowicz clenching his fist and casting a knowing look past the suspect at Bobby Simone.

The bartender steps through a door and returns in less than five seconds, handing me one sheet of yellowed, lined paper with a heading inscribed in elaborate script. "*Freundschaft, lieve und humanitat!*" it begins. I keep my pronunciation to myself, but I guess at its meaning aloud: "Friendship, Life and Humanity."

"Something like that," the man agrees, looking down at the stationery, then back to the television.

Vereinigte Bruder Loge No. 608, D.O.H. is more difficult. I fail on the first word, but the bartender and the man beside me shake their heads.

Every one of them has a draft beer in front of him. A few are using the beer to chase shots of whiskey. Nobody has a mixed drink. The only choices here seem to be different shades of amber, and each of the eleven men at the bar give us the same look of distrust.

The last line, Von Etna, Pennsylvania, seems self-explanatory. The address was printed so long ago it doesn't have a zip code.

"Thanks," I say, beginning to fold it.

"Don't be folding that," the man murmurs. "It'll disintegrate."

I run my fingers over it, but it stays intact. "You think anybody here knows German?" I say.

"This got nothing to do with Germany any more," he says.

"The neighborhood?" I suggest. "Friends?"

"Yes," he says.

Sipowicz storms out of the interrogation room, leaving Bobby Simone to face the child-molester. "Before my time," the bartender says, "this club was all at the candy store."

"Pollack's?" I say, remembering the name from selling candy at Easter for the Boy Scouts.

"Sure—two doors down."

I've been inside that candy store. Husband and wife, the Pollacks made their own crème and caramel-filled chocolates in the back room where fifty years ago men had drunk beer and eaten, I guessed, the same fried fish sandwiches and hot sausage and brautwurst listed on the chalkboard menu this afternoon.

Steven Bochco and David Milch flash on the screen the way their names always do at the end of *NYPD Blue*. I've missed the last two minutes where Sipowicz greets his wife and Simone slips into bed with the beautiful detective Russell.

My wife is talking to a man at the end of the bar. I show him the stationery, point to the second line. "United brothers," he translates. He is old enough to have gone to high school with my father and my mother's brother, who graduated together in 1936. "Gottlob Lang," he says, "a long time for that."

"Yes," I say.

"He lived right here," he says, nodding toward the door.

"Yes," I say again.

He shakes his head. "There was the war to go off to, and then things were different."

I wait for him to say something I want to know, but he returns to "A long time for that," sipping his beer, "the DOH," looking up then and saying "Deutsch of the Hory- Gory," my grandmother's words repeated to me for the first time in nearly forty years. The name, repeated now, is as unlikely as Rumpelstiltskin. I think some secret code has been revealed, that these men will declare, "Now that you know, you'll join us or die."

"Really?" I blurt.

The bartender reaches for the old man's empty glass. "Hory-Gory's in Germany some place," she says.

"Is that right?" I say, modifying my disbelief.

She pours the old man a fresh draft and looks at me. "Look it up," she says, setting the glass exactly on the circle-stain left by the previous beer.

"Gottlob Lang," the old man finally says, "I almost forgot I knew him," and then he turns away.

A minute later, as Liz and I approach the candy store, an old couple closes the door, passes us, and walks into the DOH. The Pollacks, I am certain. They close at three o'clock, I decide. They walk to the DOH and settle in for a sandwich and a couple of drafts.

My mother had loved their candy; my Aunt Margaret wouldn't have it in her house. Of course, I think, suddenly knowing another difference eleven years in age between them meant, and then the wind catches the paper I am carrying, and I pinch my thumb and finger to keep it from blowing away, gouging a hole in the stationery as if it were made of delicate chocolate.

If I want to see where my grandfather drank as a member of the DOH, I'll have to walk inside a candy store. By the time the new DOH was built in 1950, he was a farm hand for room and board, hitching rides, once a week, on the produce truck and spending an allowance on an hour's worth of boilermakers until he practiced thrift, bought a bottle to carry back to the farm where, one afternoon, he tumbled from near the top of a silo and survived to enter a charity home.

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I drive the car three blocks and turn up High Street to the cemetery where I think my grandfather's buried. The cemetery is in bad repair—tombstones on precarious slants, the driveway cracked so badly we can't miss brushing against large clumps of last year's weeds. At least now, in mid-March, the thistle and milkweed and small sumac are pressed down from months of snow, and we can read the tombstones and even a few of the small markers pressed into the earth. "What kind of name is Hory-Gory?" Liz asks.

"It's not any place in Germany," I say at once.

"But you'll check on it," my wife says. "Just to make sure?"

I stop, after we've toured nearly all of the cemetery, because one grave, incredibly, is new. It reads, January, 1999. Beside it is a date from the 1980s. So far, the next most recent death date we've seen is in the 1970s, and we take note of the Horning sisters, Maude and Anna, the names of old women who attended, I remember, my father's church. Maude, the older one, is in the new grave; she made it to 100 years old. There's no sign of Gottlob Lang.

"Good," I say. "This place has gone to hell."

"This is the kind of place they'd bury people without markers," Liz says. "Your grandfather could be anywhere."

Before we leave Etna we drive past the fire station because my father had told me The Prince "paid for half a fire truck with all the beer he drank there and the raffle tickets he bought."

"I'll look it up," I had promised.

My father had snorted. "All he ever won after I knew your mother was a couple of live chickens and a ship-in-a-bottle."

"A huge one," I had said at once, brightening. I remembered seeing it on the mantle as a small child. "Don't you touch that," I'd been told, but it was too high to reach without climbing onto a chair, and by the time I had the nerve to try, the ship-in-a-bottle had disappeared.

An hour later, my father tells me The Prince is buried on the south side of Pittsburgh. "Why did you think he was up there?" my father says, and then he tells me Maude Horning owned the only unused plot in that cemetery, that nobody kept track for years, and they had to scrape off snow to search for the marker with her sister's name on it.

I nod. "But what cemetery is he in?"

"Oh, I don't know the name," my father says. "Over across the river somewhere. I think he had

people out that way."

He leans forward from his chair. "It was some weather that day Maude Horning was laid to rest," he says. "The hearse got stuck and they had to take her out and put her in the back of a pick-up truck."

I imagine the hearse skidding up the steep slope. I imagine it slipping sideways and spinning its wheels, but I can't conjure a pick-up truck in the funeral party.

It strikes me that Maude Horning was so old and the weather so bad that the line of cars behind that hearse would have been short and without trucks.

"We went into the DOH," I say, and he frowns.

"Then you're the first for that."

"It's just a private club. A bar and some tables, a kitchen and a pool table and a bowling alley downstairs."

"Now you know."

"It used to be in Pollack's Candy Store."

"Yes."

"They belong," I say. "They went in just after we left."

"Some people like their drink."

I THINK OF WHO I MIGHT CALL TO FIND OUT WHERE my grandfather is buried. I think of coming back to the cemetery of the Horning sisters in mid-summer to see how high and thick the weed growth becomes. I think of stopping, before I travel back across Pennsylvania to where I live, at each of Etna's bars. I want to order pitchers of Iron City and Fort Pitt and Duquesne, though only the first of them is still brewed. I want to drop a shot of Imperial whiskey into my draft and watch that depth charge plummet to the bottom before I drink. Somebody at the bar will remember Gottlob Lang. The man who remembers will be as old as my father. He will tell me he drank in these bars before the war and after it. That he came home to rant about the Goddamn Krauts and the rotten Nazis, and just what kind of name, he said one night to my grandfather, is Gottlob anyway?

Gary Fincke directs the Center for Creative Writing at Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, PA. His most recent book of poetry, Blood Ties: Working Class Poems, *was published by Time Being Books.*

WRAP THIS

Now the Christmas guests are gone.
At the table where they sat
a smudge of sauce, crumbs of bread.
out the window, branches of natal plum,
the drip drip of rain on shiny oval leaves,
treacherous thorns; a single pure white
bloom, five-petaled star: birth from blood.

A college choir from long ago
sings, "All is calm, all is bright."
The tiny tree lights—red, gold,
and green—curtain window panes
and in the air, where all is bare,
the lights take flight, string leafless
limbs, grey misty night.

Wrap This.

Jan Bowman

intellectual generosity

Robert C. Roberts

generosity as a virtue

Generosity is a disposition to give valuable things—material goods, time, attention, energy, concessions, credit, the benefit of a doubt—to other persons. It is associated with the idea of freedom; it is sometimes called liberality (*liberalitas*). It is a disposition to give "freely," gladly, and without calculation of repayment. But this freedom is not mere prodigality; generosity is a disposition to give for the good of the recipient—*his* well-being, *his* pleasure, the fulfillment of *his* purposes; this "altruism" is the kind of motivation characteristic of generosity. The man who sets the contents of his overstuffed garage on the street for anonymous neighborhood scavengers may have a partially generous motivation, but if he does so primarily to clear space in his garage, his act is not a paradigm of generosity.

The generous person is "free" with *valuable things because he is "free"* from *them; he is not obsessed with them, does not cleave to them desperately. Yet he does value them. A person who gives freely of things that have no value at all to him is not generous.*

The recipient of the gift may be unknown, but the giver must have a definite enough idea of the recipient to believe that she will receive some benefit from the gift; and he must have at least a vague conception of how the gift will serve her. These required bits of belief or knowledge serve a *rationality requirement* of generosity. Since the generous person wants his gift to benefit the beneficiary for her own sake, he will be interested in giving appropriate gifts to appropriate people in appropriate ways (for example, anonymously or not, at the right time, and so forth). A person who gives "freely" but is not interested in such questions of benefit and propriety is not generous but prodigal. The giver must *aim* to make his gifts into real benefits by considering appropriate beneficiaries, gifts, times of giving, and so forth. But a person whose efforts were woefully inadequate in particular cases, through no lack of his effort and calculation, would still count as generous. Of course, if human efforts to do one another good through free giving *generally* failed to benefit people, then the disposition to make such effort would not count as a virtue. In this social-dispositional sense, generosity has a "success component."

The vices opposite generosity are *stinginess* and *greed*. The stingy person inordinately holds on to her own valuable things. She is disposed to reserve them for her own use and protect them from use by others, while the generous person is "open" and sharing. The greedy person inordinately takes of the valuable things and does so without sufficient regard for the good of others, while the generous person takes ordinately, or (even more characteristically) less than ordinately, because of a concern for others. If ordinate taking is justice, then at times the generous person does herself an "injustice" out of regard for others.

Stinginess and greed are different but related kinds of unfreedom. We can think of these vices as on one extreme of a continuum with generosity on the other extreme. Ordinary people, who are a little bit generous but also a bit stingy and greedy, will fall somewhere between the extremes. The stingy person is in a kind of bondage to her "goods," subject to anxiety and distress and sorrow should they be lost, while the greedy one is in bondage to anxiety about the threat of competition and vulnerable to disappointment at not "winning" the desired good. (Greed goes with envy, stinginess with fear or anxiety.) The generous person is relatively free of this bondage, though he has his own characteristic anxieties, potential distresses, and disappointments.

The generous person is "free" *with* valuable things because he is "free" *from* them; he is not obsessed with them, does not cleave to them des-

perately. Yet he does value them. A person who gives freely of things that have no value at all to him is not generous. So the freedom of the generous person is not merely stoical detachment from valuables. His freedom from the valuables is partially a consequence of a concern for others that can override his concern for the valuables.

IN THE GREEDY AND THE STINGY THE BALANCE OF concerns tilts toward the valuables and away from others' interests, while in the generous the balance of concerns tilts the other way. One valuable that the generous person is free with is personal credit. By praise and recognition he credits others freely for the good they have done, but he is relatively insouciant about receiving credit for what he has given, achieved, or produced. Again, he is not indifferent to this good; the peculiar balance is what makes for generosity.

The Christian vocabulary for this "freedom" and this kind of motivation is "grace;" generosity is "gracious." Generosity is an important division of the great Christian virtue of love, and thus is one of the traits that are trained for in Christian sanctification. In the same way that courage is a characteristic virtue for honor moralities like that of the Homeric epics because of the prominence of battle in that way of thinking about life, so generosity is a characteristic virtue for Christianity because of its basis in the generosity of God. We worship a God who is from the human point of view above all a Giver—of life, of provisions for life, of forgiving merciful redemption in our Lord Jesus Christ. As recipients of God's gifts, our first virtue is gratitude, but its mirror image is a generosity in which we reflect back, however faintly, in our own attitudes and actions, God's extravagant altruism.

In the most generous persons, generous actions are spontaneous in the sense that the agent does not have to struggle with himself motivationally. He does not have to "force himself" to part with his valuables; he does not typically struggle against contrary selfish inclinations. Few people are generous to this degree. Those who are only approximately generous will find they need the sense of duty and the power of self-discipline as supplements to whatever generosity they have.

Christianity has affected the character of many who are not confessional Christians; this is shown in their genuine concern for the well-being of others for the others' sake, and their willingness to give freely of valuable things for the benefit of others. (I am not saying that such generosity cannot arise apart from Christianity, but only that much of the secularized generosity that we see is in fact derived historically from Christianity.) But the most distinctively Christian kind of generosity takes as its explicit point of departure the grace of God in Christ. In it the concern for others' well-being and the disposition to give freely of valuable things is connected, in the individual personality, with gratitude to God for the valuable things he has given us, and above all for our redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ. It arises, in part, from this happy acknowledgment of dependence, and the more articulate Christian will, when pressed for the reasons of his generosity, cite the generosity of God.

Generosity is not unreflectively spontaneous. As I have pointed out, because of his interest in doing recipients real good with his giving, the generous person is careful to give *appropriately* in a variety of ways, and this takes reflection, or if not always explicit deliberation, at least good judgment. But in the most generous persons, generous actions are spontaneous in the sense that the agent does not have to struggle with himself motivationally. He does not have to "force himself" to part with his valuables; he does not typically struggle against contrary selfish inclinations. Few people are generous to this degree. Those who are only approximately generous will find they need the sense of duty and the power of self-discipline as supplements to whatever generosity they have.

The sense of duty with respect to generosity is a knowledge of what the ideal requires in the way of generous actions and a desire to satisfy the ideal in one's own case. Self-discipline (or self-control) in this connection is the ability to manage one's ungenerous urges in the interest of generous actions and motivations. A person who is skilled in self-discipline may be able to bring himself, despite

ungenerous urges, to a better view and feeling about the situation that confronts him. It is true that a person who brings himself to act generously from a sense of duty does not fully exemplify the virtue of generosity; but if the sense of duty refers to a duty *to be generous* (rather than, say, conceiving the action as a requirement of justice), then it seems to me that the motivation is enough like that of generosity to warrant calling the action generous.

The kind of generosity I have expounded so far is a Christian virtue, though I have distinguished a de-theologized version of it from the properly Christian original. But I have suggested that other versions of generosity are possible.

Such traits would resemble the generosity that I have elucidated in some respect or respects that would justify calling them generosity, while differing from Christian generosity in some significant way or ways. Let me illustrate this point by considering Friedrich Nietzsche's proposed counterpart of generosity, as well as Aristotle's.

Nietzsche's Zarathustra preaches a little sermon on his special kind of generosity, *die schenkende Tugend,* in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. He distinguishes two kinds of selfishness, a "free" and healthy selfishness and a bound and sickly one. Sickly selfishness involves a needy, obsessive, and anxious acquisitiveness, a boundless desire to take goods to oneself, a unidirectional accumulating that seems to suppose that what is accumulated makes one what one is, gives one "substance." We might call this bondage "the grasping vice." By contrast, *die schenkende Tugend* (the bestowing virtue) is a disposition to give to others. But it too is selfishness, according to Zarathustra: *heil und heilig heiße ich diese Selbstsucht*.

This selfishness is healthy and holy because it is secure in itself and free. When the giver acquires what he is to give, he does so not anxiously and obsessively, but as part of the project of becoming and being a great soul. His soul's greatness is not measured by what he has accumulated, but by the attitude with which he accumulates: the accumulated goods are not his substance, but an adornment, and they adorn him most effectively when he bestows them on others. He gives out of his abundance—not so much a material abundance as an attitude of abounding—a sense of himself as a self-sufficient plenitude, an overflowing. This is the "liberality" of Zarathustran generosity.

In Nietzschean generosity, the greatness of the giver is the central and salient feature; the giving is an "expression" of this self-overflowing abundance. The recipient's need of the gift, or pleasure in it, is incidental. The concern is not to help the other, but to express one's great self. By contrast, Christian generosity is a concern with the other, with her well-being or satisfaction.

CHRISTIAN GENEROSITY DIFFERS MARKEDLY from Zarathustra's. In the Nietzschean version the greatness of the giver is the central and salient feature; the giving is an "expression" of this self-overflowing abundance. The recipient's need of the gift, or pleasure in it, is incidental. The concern is not to help the other, but to express one's great self. Thus Nietzsche calls this generosity a *Selbstsucht*. By contrast, Christian generosity is a concern with the other, with *her* well-being or satisfaction. The Christian takes the interest of the recipient to heart and thus, in successful giving, takes satisfaction in the other's satisfaction for the other's sake. Yet abundance is in the Christian picture of generosity, and Nietzsche's analysis reminds us of this. The Christian, like Zarathustra, gives out of her abundance, even if she, like the widow of Mark 12.41–44, gives all that she has in her poverty. Just as Zarathustra's abundance is spiritual, far more a sense of the fullness of his self than of his bank account, so the Christian's abundance, too, is spiritual. But it is not a sense of the fullness of her *self* exactly (or directly), but of the fullness and greatness and abundance of God. "'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'" To which the Apostle Paul comments, "when I am weak, then I am strong" (II Corinthians 12.9a,10b). The strength, the overflowing, is God's, and the disciple's by association: "For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (I Corinthians

3.22–23). "What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?" (I Corinthians 4.7). Thus, Christian generosity is connected with gratitude and humility in a way that the *schenkende Tugend* is not.

In this respect, Aristotelian generosity is closer to Nietzschean generosity. Aristotle says that liberality or generosity is a disposition to use wealth well (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk IV, 1). Since spending is more properly the "use" of wealth than acquiring is, generosity has especially to do with spending. Generous spending differs from virtuous (just) spending in commerce, in which one pays the right price for goods received. Generous spending is not buying, but giving. The generous person "will give for the sake of the noble, and rightly; for he will give to the right people, the right amounts, and at the right time, with all the other qualifications that accompany right giving; and that too with pleasure or without pain...."

THE GENEROUS PERSON TAKES PLEASURE IN GIVING because he desires wealth largely as something he can give others and is relatively indifferent to it for other purposes. Because generosity is in this way an attitude, it is not measured by amounts given: nothing prevents "the man who gives less from being the more liberal man, if he has less to give." The "freedom" of generosity differs from that of prodigality in its being shaped by rationality: this is a free giving for the sake of the noble, to the right people in the right amounts, and so forth. This kind of giving is "thoughtful" or "intelligent"—bounded by considerations—even when it is spontaneous in being done without deliberation.

At first sight, the well-being of the other seems less incidental for Aristotle than for Nietzsche. He tells us that the generous person does not "neglect his own property, since he wishes by means of this to *help others*" [italics added] and "it is the nature of a liberal man not to look to himself." But he also says "it is not characteristic of a man who confers benefits to accept them lightly." Like the magnanimous man (Book IV, 3), the generous person likes the *position* of giver and dislikes the position of receiver, which strikes him as lowering his status, as making him less "worthy." So the desire to help others is really the generous person's desire for his own characteristic means of self-promotion, and when Aristotle says that the generous man does not "look to himself," he must mean that he does not look to money as something to spend on himself; for he *does* look to money as something that will build up or maintain his status by his giving it away.

SO FOR ARISTOTLE, AS FOR NIETZSCHE, THE GENEROUS person's greatness as giver seems to be uppermost in his own mind, and in this way their conceptions are very far from the Christian concept of generosity. The Christian can second Aristotle's stress on the rationality of generosity: like the Christian's, Aristotle's kind of generosity is thoughtful and (at least virtually) deliberative, seeking to give to the right person, in the right amount, at the right time, and in the right way.

Christian generosity adds another qualification of this sort—"the right thing"—for as we have seen, the range of things that can be given generously includes far more than material wealth. Giving to another one's time, attention, credit for a job well done, the benefit of a doubt, or other valuables may be "rightly" generous in cases where it would be quite wrong to give him money or material goods.

Virtues are beneficial dispositions, ones that make life good for the virtues' possessor and for persons affected by him or her. It is not hard to think of some benefits of generosity. Sharing tends to beget sharing, with the result that generosity will often increase the number and quality of resources for everyone. In addition to resources, the friendly relations that are fostered by well-considered generosity are a very great good in themselves, a source of well-being that stands in starkest contrast with the anxieties of cut-throat competition and the envy, resentment, and frustration that are so closely associated with stinginess and greed. And it seems to me that the Christian version of generosity is more fit to yield these benefits than the Aristotelian and Nietzschean generosities, which are competitive and invidious in their own subtle ways.

generosity and intellectual pursuits

The word "intellectual" rings natural as a qualifier of some virtue-terms. Thus, intellectual humility, intellectual integrity, intellectual courage.

But intellectual temperance, intellectual self-control, intellectual justice? To my ears 'intellectual generosity' has the second, somewhat less plausible, ring. It would certainly have sounded very odd to Aristotle. And yet, generosity, like most of the virtues that have been classified traditionally as "moral" rather than intellectual, bears enormously on the life of the mind. It is possible to be generous in the conduct of intellectual practices, or stingy and greedy, just as in the handling of material and other goods. The reason is that the intellectual life has its own set of goods, and these can be shared with others and given to others, or grasped and hoarded for oneself.

We can divide intellectual goods into two kinds, using a distinction that Alasdair MacIntyre has made current, though its predecessors go back at least to Plato's *Republic*. MacIntyre distinguishes goods internal, from goods external, to a practice. Examples of goods internal to the practice of violin-playing would be a beautiful tone, an excellent performance of a piece, musical understanding of a piece from the violin repertoire, and enjoying executing a run excellently. Some goods external to this practice would be the money, honors, and other perquisites that sometimes devolve on its best practitioners.

Roughly, goods are internal to a practice if and only if they belong to a class such that, to practice the practice well, one *must* aim at them. Goods are external to a practice if they accrue to its excellent practitioners with some regularity, but one can practice the practice without aiming at them. For example, it is perfectly possible for someone to attain the very highest powers of violin-playing without ever aiming to become rich or famous; but it is not possible to attain such powers without aiming to understand the musical logic of pieces of the violin repertoire, to execute runs and trills well, to produce a beautiful sound, etc.

Intellectual practices aim intrinsically at such goods as understanding (of texts, of natural processes, of historical events, of historical human actions, of human nature and its conditions of flourishing and conditions of dysfunction, etc.), knowledge, and confirmation of beliefs (evidence, insight about coherency with well-established beliefs). Intellectual practices aim at the justification and warrant of beliefs. Other intellectual practices (those of education, broadly speaking) aim at the communication of the above goods and at nurturing the powers and skills by which people gain more of the intrinsic epistemic goods.

So communication skills and the personal powers by which epistemic agents acquire understanding, knowledge, and justification and warrant of beliefs become, themselves, goods that are intrinsically sought through intellectual practices. Also, self-directed practices by which one acquires the knowledge and skills needed to pursue intellectual activities (study, self-discipline, and techniques of skill and knowledge acquisition) are valued. These, then, are some of the goods that are internal to intellectual practices.

Intellectual practices also have external goods. People make money from their research; scientific discoveries and book sales can be financial bonanzas. Honors come to people who perform well intellectually (or seem to do so): named university chairs, Pulitzer and Nobel prizes, and on a smaller scale tenure, promotion, Teacher of the Year awards, recognition as expert by smaller or larger populations, grades, and the $10 gift certificate to McDonald's that goes to the winner of the school spelling bee. Some of the extrinsic rewards may further the intrinsic goods: money may free one for further, less fettered inquiry, and tenure and other positions may do the same. But as before, the very highest of intrinsic intellectual goods may be achieved with little or no associated extrinsic goods, and occasionally large amounts of the extrinsic goods may come to persons of modest intrinsic achievements.

A second fact bearing on the importance of generosity to the intellectual life is that the acquisition and development of the goods internal to intellectual practices always depend, in some way or other, on the *transfer* of such goods from one person to another. Philosophical dialogue, without which ideas do not emerge or deepen, depends on give and take among the interlocutors. The partners contribute and receive good things from one another—proposals, refinements, criticisms, objections—and such contributions beget yet more and better goods of the same kind.

Science, too, is an essentially communal enterprise. No single person can collect all the data necessary to a significant scientific discovery, and con-

versation about ideas is as important in science as in philosophy. So scientific work is always collaborative—usually in a direct and literal way but, at a minimum, scientists always depend on the work of their predecessors, even when they reject large amounts of that work.

And, of course, the institution of teaching, of passing intellectual goods on from the less ignorant to the more ignorant so that the more ignorant can become less so, is in the very warp and woof of human life. Without teaching our life could not be human. To some extent, virtually every even semi-mature person is both pupil and teacher, receiving intellectual goods from others and passing them on to still others, and some of us are professional teachers, our chief and special business being to convey intellectual goods to others.

THESE TWO FACTS—THAT THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE has its transferable goods and a take-and-give character—suggest that generosity can be an intellectual virtue. Following our general analysis of generosity, we could say that the intellectually generous person is someone who gives the intellectual goods freely to others, for their own sake, and takes pleasure in doing so. The intellectually stingy person reserves for himself what intellectual goods he has acquired, and is disinclined to share them with others. The intellectually greedy person has an inordinate concern to acquire the intellectual goods, in disregard for others' acquisition of them. But the distinction between internal and external intellectual goods requires the analysis of intellectual generosity to diverge in some respects from the paradigm case.

exemplars of intellectual generosity

This is so because generosity applies ordinarily to *ownable goods*, goods such that, if one person has them, others do not. Paradigmatically, generosity is a disposition to give *property*. But only the extrinsic intellectual goods have the property of being potential property. Thus when James Watson and Francis Crick published their initial note on the structure of the DNA molecule, they shared the intrinsic intellectual good of that discovery and it became equally available to anyone who could understand it. Once it was published, they gave up all possibility of hoarding it *as an intrinsic intellectual good*. They put it into the public domain, where all other scientists could acquire it, appreciate it, and use it for their own scientific purposes.

In a purely performative sense (that is, disregarding the motivation), such giving-over to others may look like an act of generosity. But it is clear from Watson's own account of that discovery in *The Double Helix* (1968) that in publishing their discovery, he and Crick were staking a property-claim. This claim was not to the exclusive ownership of the knowledge of the DNA structure, for the act of publishing was relinquishment of *such* ownership; it was instead to exclusive ownership of the *position*, in history, of discoverers of the DNA structure, with all the other extrinsic intellectual goods entailed by that position: fame, prestige, the Nobel Prize, professional positions, money, and so forth.

While it is clear from Watson's account that he and Crick were very interested in intellectual problems and were interested in the structure of DNA because of its status as a key to many other biological discoveries, it is also clear that a very large part of their motivation to pursue DNA was the extraordinary set of ownable, extrinsic goods that would accrue to its discoverers including, in all likelihood, the Nobel Prize.

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The terms in which Watson describes Linus Pauling, a chemist at Cal Tech with whom he and Crick conceive themselves to be in the fiercest competition for these extrinsic goods, are terms of a violent sport, if not war. They take comfort from Pauling's being in California, far from the Cambridge-London axis of their own work, where it is unlikely that he will get to see the X-ray crystallographic photographs of DNA that Rosalind Franklin is making at King's College, University of London, which are in the end a crucial key to their own success.

Pauling writes to Maurice Wilkens, who later shares the Nobel Prize with Watson and Crick, asking for copies of the X-ray photographs, and Wilkens responds with a lame excuse for not sending them. Watson and Crick become anxious when they hear that Pauling is coming to London for a meeting, and Watson comments, "One could never be sure where [Pauling] would strike next. Particularly chilling was the prospect that he would ask to visit King's." They become anxious again when they discover that Pauling has sketched a structure for DNA, and then greatly relieved when they realize that Pauling's sketch involves a mistake in chemistry. Watson warns Crick of the possible "fatal[ity]" of "smiling too long over [Pauling's] mistake." They talk about the possibility of Pauling's finding the structure in terms of "threat" and "all was lost" and "danger" and their own success as a "defeat" for Pauling. Even after they have the solution, Watson, having described it in a letter to Max Delbrück, asks "At the bottom of the letter that broke the news of the complementary chains [of bases], ...that he not tell Linus [Pauling]. I was still slightly afraid something could go wrong and did not want Pauling to think about hydrogen-bonded base pairs until we had a few more days to digest our position."

This is a fairly extreme case of stinginess with intrinsic intellectual goods motivated by an intense desire for extrinsic intellectual goods. We can only think that the motivation was the extrinsic goods, since it seems quite clear that anyone whose overriding desire was to know the structure of DNA would have gladly shared information with somebody as able as Linus Pauling, with a view to hastening the discovery, and perhaps improving on it. Sharing the intrinsic intellectual goods is very likely to promote more goods and of higher quality, and withholding the goods one has from fellow inquirers is likely to slow up and weaken intellectual progress. Nobody would fail to notice this unless blinded by ambition. I draw a tentative conclusion here, namely that intellectual generosity is likely to be found in a personality in which concern for the intrinsic intellectual goods is strong relative to the interest in extrinsic intellectual goods.

Sharing the intrinsic intellectual goods is very likely to promote more goods and of higher quality, and withholding the goods one has from fellow inquirers is likely to slow up and weaken intellectual progress. Nobody would fail to notice this unless blinded by ambition.

Since stinginess and greed apply much more to the ownable intellectual goods, it would seem that stinginess and greed about the intrinsic intellectual goods (such as information relevant to discovering the structure of DNA) must derive from a concern for the ownable ones. Thus, someone who cared very little about fame and money but a great deal about knowing important truths would be much more likely to be intellectually generous than somebody who cared equally about both kinds of goods, or more about the external rewards than about the truths.

One might think that the kind of competitiveness we see in Watson and Crick, with the greed and stinginess that attend a passion for the goods external to intellectual practices, are just a fact of the intellectual life, perhaps a necessary evil, but still necessary, as the motivation that drives *wissenschaft*. Is ambition for extrinsic rewards the indispensable fuel of inquiry? If so, then what looks to the Christian very much like moral vice is an intellectual virtue.

We can't deny that selfish ambition sometimes propels intellectual excellence. Watson and Crick did good work, and Watson attributes not just his secrecy, but his care and precision to his ambition. Still, I do not think that vicious ambition is the necessary fuel of inquiry. When Aristotle writes (*Metaphysics* I.1-2) about the human disposition to "wonder," he seems to identify a natural intellectual faculty that carries its own motivation.

Children are naturally exploratory, interested in explanations and in understanding the shape

and character and workings of their world. And some adults listen to PBS science shows because explanations of the natural world interest them intrinsically.

Human beings have a natural appetite for resolving puzzles and explaining mysteries. That is, human beings have a natural appetite for the goods internal to intellectual practices: we *like* to know things, we *like* to resolve doubts and get support for our beliefs, we *like* to understand. (It is true that we sometimes do *not* like to have our beliefs corrected, but this discomfort itself often stems from our love of settled explanation.)

So there is no reason to think that scientists couldn't get their work done if they were not given money and honors as rewards. I am not saying that some scientists are completely indifferent to money and honors, but rather that in some scientists—and these will tend to be the intellectually generous ones—the love of the goods external to intellectual practices is minimal, incidental, and these goods are something they can do without. Not all scientists are like the Watson and Crick of the early 1950s.

TAKE LINUS PAULING. IF PAULING HAD construed the possible success of Watson and Crick as a "danger" and a "threat" which, if it eventuated, would be a "defeat" in which "all was lost," then we would expect that, upon finding out that they had solved DNA, Pauling would be devastated with disappointment. But Watson reports that when Pauling saw the solution "[his] reaction was one of genuine thrill." In other words, the concern that operated in his spontaneous emotional response to the solution was a concern for the chief good internal to the practices of searching for the structure of DNA—namely, the understanding of that structure. If he was also concerned to have the position of the discoverer of that structure (I have no doubt that he would have liked to have that position), it was relegated to a quiet background in the spontaneity of his response.

Another scientist who was close to figuring out the structure of DNA, but whom Watson and Crick didn't regard as a serious "threat" since they didn't realize that she was onto its helical structure, was Rosalind Franklin, who was making X-ray photographs of the molecules. It was Franklin who first distinguished the A from the B form of DNA, and her data suggested a two-chain model and the diameter of the helix; it was rather late in the game when Watson saw that she had been right about the bases being in the center and the backbone on the outside. About the place of competition for goods external to scientific practice, Franklin's biographer, Anne Sayre, comments,

> To know that other people are scrambling after the same prize can be something of a spur, but only within limits. Rosalind, for example, was so much in the habit of pushing herself to the full extent of her energy and application that competition could not have elicited a great deal more than was already forthcoming.

FURTHERMORE, ACCORDING TO SAYRE, THE intrinsic intellectual goods were far more important to Franklin than the extrinsic:

> ...a lack of prospects of rising in terms of the organization [in the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* in Paris] would not have troubled Rosalind in the least—her ambitions were never for status or power, and on later occasions she voluntarily avoided the sort of promotion that gratified only with power or status and otherwise distracted from what she had in mind to do.

What was her reaction to the discovery by Watson and Crick?

> Whether she was disappointed when news of the Crick-Watson triumph at Cambridge finally filtered through to King's no one knows. If she was, she gave no indication of it, and her disappointment cannot have been very acute. She sat down to redraft her paper for *Nature* in the new form of a supporting document for the Watson-Crick structure with every sign of pleasure, none of bitterness or chagrin. To begin with, the structure they proposed genuinely delighted her, as it did everyone capable of grasping its simple beauty....That their smashing success converted much of what was in Rosalind's draft paper into secondary material, that her discoveries were abruptly swallowed up by their larger discovery, seems not to

> have troubled her at all; or if it did, nothing she wrote or said testified to it. The paper which had represented, while she and Gosling were working on it in the first weeks of March, a new high-water mark in research into the structure of DNA, was promptly redrafted into a supporting paper. It reads serenely in the second version, as one might expect; there is no hint in it of 'yes, but I saw that first'.

THIS IS A PICTURE OF AN INTELLECTUALLY GENERous person, and all the more impressive when we consider that at the time Franklin did not like Watson and Crick. It seems to me that the gladness and freedom with which she lets the credit go to them, and the lack of insistence on even the credit that was minimally owed to herself, is due in large part to Franklin's consuming focus on the goods internal to her intellectual practice.

This generosity differs significantly from the "moral" generosity that I expounded in the first part of this paper. There, the well-being of the recipient is a primary and necessary concern of the generous person, while here the well-being of Watson and Crick is at most a side-line consideration. There, concern for the well-being of the recipient tends to override the giver's personal attachment to the goods he gives, while here it is interest in the goods internal to intellectual practice that overrides attachment to its external goods. We might call this "impersonal" generosity.

THE GENEROUS PERSON DOES NOT CHARACTERIStically insist minutely on his own rights, but this does not exclude his caring about his rights when the issue is momentous or the violation of them gross. Anne Sayre highlights the way Watson and Crick used Rosalind Franklin's data, acquired without her knowledge, without crediting her. To the end of her life Franklin did not know the extent to which their triumph depended on her work. Sayre, who knew Franklin personally, speculates about how she would have reacted had she discovered their reliance on her:

> She seems to have taken the Cambridge structure as it was presented, as a work of perception, insight, and inspiration, and though she was pleased that it confirmed her work precisely as her work confirmed it, she did not know that, indeed, it incorporated her work. Whether she would have been pleased by the use to which her findings had been put, or resentful at both the way in which they were obtained and the way in which they were left unacknowledged, is a nice question to speculate about. My own guess—freely disputable—is that Rosalind might well have risen like a goddess in her wrath, and that the thunderbolts might have been memorable.

Such a reaction is compatible with remarkable generosity. The generous person is indifferent neither to the goods with which he is free, nor to his rights with respect to them.

Another outstanding geneticist with a remarkable intellectual character is Barbara McClintock. As a research scientist at Cornell University, the young McClintock was exploring the morphology of corn chromosomes, correlating features of the chromosomes with genetic features. In her late twenties, around 1930, she saw her way clear to provide, for the first time, conclusive evidence of the chromosomal basis of genetics, and she produced some corn seed with properties that would allow the correlation of cytological markers on their chromosomes with genetic markers. In 1929, Harriet Creighton, a promising twenty-year-old, came to Cornell as a graduate student. McClintock took the younger woman under her wing and gave Creighton this important research as a project. McClintock's biographer reports:

> Harriet Creighton describes Barbara McClintock's generosity in giving the seeds for this important project to such a novice as herself as fitting a tradition established by [Rollins] Emerson [a senior geneticist at Cornell with whom McClintock worked]. It was his policy, she recalls, to give a new student 'the best and most promising problem you have.' Young Creighton herself hardly realized its significance and, by [Marcus] Rhoades's recollection, required constant prodding from McClintock to get it done.

Eventually it dawned on Creighton what she had been handed, and in 1931 she gained worldwide recognition as co-author with McClintock of the article resulting from her research.

Behind the Emersonian policy is a concern for

the well-being of one's students and a willingness to give them some of the best things the profession has to offer, both internal and external to its practices.

Such "altruism" is a mark of generosity generally, but we have seen that another mark, which is perhaps even more salient in intellectual generosity, is a kind of "detachment" from the goods external to intellectual practices. It is not a complete indifference to them, but a higher valuing of the internal goods. When Barbara McClintock spoke of her work and the plants whose cells she investigated, she often used words like 'joy' and 'affection.' Evelyn Fox Keller reports McClintock's reflection upon the years 1931-33:

> 'I was just so interested in what I was doing I could hardly wait to get up in the morning and get at it. One of my friends, a geneticist, said I was a child, because only children can't wait to get up in the morning to get at what they want to do.' She tells a story about driving back from Cal Tech to Missouri. It was a time when news of a number of automobile accidents was fresh in people's minds, and she had been cautioned about driving. 'My only concern was that if I were killed I'd never get the answer to that problem!' she remembers. Foremost in her mind was 'purely the subject matter. I don't remember having any [professional] aspirations.' Later, when she was in her mid-thirties, she remembers waking up and saying 'Oh, my goodness, this is what they call a career for women!'

Keller records her comments about her relationship with the chromosomes she was studying, after an experience of breakthrough:

> 'I found that the more I worked with them the bigger and bigger [they] got, and when I was really working with them I wasn't outside, I was down there. I was part of the system. I was right down there with them, and everything got big. I even was able to see the internal parts of the chromosomes—actually everything was there. It surprised me because I actually felt as if I were right down there and these were my friends.'
>
> In telling this story McClintock sat poised on the edge of her chair, eager to explain her experience, to make herself understood; equally eager to avoid being misunderstood. She was talking about the deepest and most personal dimension of her experience as a scientist. A little later she spoke of the 'real affection;' one gets for the pieces that 'go together': 'As you look at these things, they become part of you. And you forget yourself. The main thing about it is you forget yourself.'
>
> And later she commented,
>
> 'No two plants are exactly alike. They're all different, and as a consequence, you have to know that difference,' she explains. 'I start with the seedling, and I don't want to leave it. I don't feel I really know the story if I don't watch the plant all the way along. So I know every plant in the field. I know them intimately, and I find it a great pleasure to know them.'

Evelyn Witkin once asked McClintock how she had managed to persevere in her research during a period when its outcome was uncertain. She said,

> 'It never occurred to me that there was going to be any stumbling block. Not that I had the answer, but [I had] the joy of going at it. When you have that joy, you do the right experiments. You let the material tell you where to go, and it tells you at every step what the next has to be because you're integrating with an overall brand new pattern in mind.'

STARTING IN THE EARLY 1950S, MCCLINTOCK experienced a period of professional isolation. Because her work was at odds with some broadly shared assumptions, because it was very complicated, and because genetics had taken a molecular turn away from McClintock's organism-oriented kind of research, she found that her colleagues were not much interested in what she had to say. In her characteristic alignment and tilt, concerned with the intrinsic goods and unconcerned with the extrinsic, she took the situation not as a crisis but as an opportunity.

> 'It was fortunate, because people love to talk about themselves and their work, and I had an opportunity to listen. And I listened very carefully.' One reason she found it worthwhile was that so much was

> going on in genetics during those years. 'I was being educated, and it was an opportunity for me I do not regret; in fact, I think it was a great opportunity not to be listened to, but to listen. Difficult as it may seem.'

When, later in life, McClintock's work came to be understood and appreciated, she was showered with honors and other goods external to her intellectual practices, including a Nobel Prize. Clearly, the appreciation gratified her, though not as an unmixed blessing, because it often distracted her from her work.

intellectual generosity and the academy

Several pages ago we voiced the concern that the kind of stinginess and greed begotten of a consuming passion for goods external to intellectual practices might be a necessary fuel of scientific and other intellectual activity. But the examples of Franklin and McClintock should lay this fear to rest. The motivation of their work appears to have included a relatively small concern for the goods external to their practices, though they were not indifferent to such goods, and the quality of their scientific work was certainly in the same league as that of Watson and Crick, if not superior in some respects.

It is a mark of virtues that they are advantageous in some way or other. They are fulfilling in themselves, or the episodic attitudes and behaviors in which they issue yield good things for their possessor and/or her associates. We can expect that some of the advantages of intellectual generosity will be intellectual advantages, in particular a yield of intrinsic intellectual goods.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ADVANTAGES OF GENerosity? In the stories of Franklin and McClintock we see that their focus on the intrinsic goods of their intellectual practices gave them perseverance in the face of the indifference of their colleagues that someone who was less intrinsically motivated would not have. The result of such perseverance, in both cases, was a yield of new scientific knowledge of a very high caliber. The kind of generosity that McClintock showed to Harriet Creighton enabled the particular project she gave to Creighton to move ahead (if she had kept it for herself alone it might have been slower coming to fruition) and freed McClintock for other activities that were also, no doubt, intellectually productive. It also had the educational advantage of initiating a bright young woman into creative scientific endeavor, thus promoting biological knowledge.

It is important to have colleagues who will give one deep and detailed critical readings of one's work. Sometimes such "gifts" take considerable time and energy, and the exercise may or may not advance the giver's own work. The more sacrificial of the giver's "private" interests the exercise is, the more likely it is to exemplify real generosity; but joy in the giving is also a mark of generosity, so 'sacrifice' need not entail pain.

Something *like* generosity is an important condition for the transfer of intellectual competence from one generation to another. Intellectual practices would develop more slowly and less well if senior practitioners did not invest time and energy and encouragement in younger ones and share projects with them. Such "generous" behavior may be encouraged by teaching loads, compulsory office hours, and the like; and sometimes senior inquirers selfishly exploit their juniors, even unjustly. But where the generosity is genuine, a significant portion of the motivation is a concern for the well-being of the younger person and for the goods internal to intellectual practices.

Intellectual generosity can also be exemplified in collegial relations, where the colleague gives freely of his time and expertise to the criticism of a colleague's work. In philosophy it is important to have colleagues who will give one deep and detailed critical readings of one's work. Sometimes such "gifts" take considerable time and energy, and the exercise may or may not advance the giver's own work. The more sacrificial of the giver's "private" interests the exercise is, the more likely it is to exemplify real generosity; but joy in the giving is also a mark of generosity, so 'sacrifice' need not entail pain.

Generosity also comes out in the tone and character of the criticisms. Criticisms can be

meanly competitive in spirit, or they can be generous. Generous criticisms are no less critical, but they are marked by a charitable interpretation of the work, one whose tone credits the philosopher with intelligence and, wherever possible, with having something to say even if it is not said clearly or precisely. The generous interpreter, when confused by the discourse, looks for plausibilities and intelligent intentions. He does so by keeping in mind that the author is a human being with something like parental affection for what he has come up with, and which therefore ought to be treated with respect.

THIS HUMANE KIND OF INTELLECTUAL INTERACTION tends to bear the fruit of good collegial relations, which in turn tend to beget fruitful cooperation and mutual helpfulness. And these, in turn, are likely to result in an increased harvest of intrinsic intellectual goods. Such generosity must of course be tempered with intellectual rigor; a misguided generosity runs the risk of being insufficiently helpful because insufficiently critical.

I noted earlier that the behavior of Watson and Crick resembled that of people playing a competitive game. The goal of such a game is to win, and all players assume that the other players are aiming to win and trying to prevent the other team from winning. As it turned out, not all the "players" in the DNA "game" regarded what they were doing as a competitive game. Some of them were oriented by a more intrinsically scientific kind of goal.

In the context of a competitive game, generous behavior is out of place—for example, teaming up with the other team to help them make a goal. Such "generous" behavior would be out of place, inconsistent with the spirit of the game, which is frankly competitive and "egoistic."

Because virtues are context-specific (for any virtue, not every context calls for the exemplification of that virtue) it is possible both to play such a game and to be a generous person. So, if Watson and Crick indeed thought of the search for DNA's structure as a game, it is not an automatic indictment of their character that they were not generous in the context of the search.

In that case their mistake was a sort of category confusion in which they treated scientific work as a game. But it seems that if one were really serious about science *as science*, one would not confuse it with a competitive game. To do so is to impede *wissenschaft*, precisely because in *wissenschaft* generosity is advantageous.

ROBERT ADAMS HAS POINTED OUT HOW VIRTUES are supported by social-environmental factors. It is easier for a person to exemplify generosity if his environment is generous; it is easier for a person to remain chaste if he is not in close social contact with people he likes who ridicule chastity and live licentiously. It is easier to be honest if we live in an open and truthful community that prizes honesty and would be disappointed in us if we shaved the truth.

I think we see this phenomenon at work in the contrast between Watson and Crick, on the one side, and Franklin and McClintock on the other. It appears that the social milieu in the laboratories at Cambridge and King's College, London was pretty competitive. It would have taken a very mature and well-formed personality to resist the influence of this social atmosphere. Furthermore, Watson and Crick were young men, really little more than graduate students, in a field in which it was expected that bright young men would advance professionally and the failure to do so would be something of a disgrace.

By contrast, in virtue of their being women in the first half of the twentieth century, both McClintock and Franklin were in a significant sense outsiders to their profession. Both of their biographers point out that professionally, they didn't have much to aspire to. Such "hopelessness" is arguably a psychological advantage in the promotion of intellectual virtues like generosity. A person who *can* have little by way of professional aspirations will tend to have fewer of them, and will less readily enter into the spirit of the game. And if she already has intrinsic scientific interest (and any young scientist surely has *some* such), it will be easier for that kind of interest to dominate in her character. We have seen that an important aspect of intellectual generosity is the dominance of interest in goods internal to intellectual practices over interest in goods external to them.

In this section I have said little about Christianity as the source of intellectual generosity. None of the historical characters who have served as my examples were Christians, so any

influence of Christianity on them must have been from cultural osmosis. But it is not hard to see how Christian character, in a scientist or other intellectual, would constitute intellectual generosity.

We have seen that this virtue is a glad willingness to give intellectual goods, both intrinsic and extrinsic, to others, and that this willingness is based on a dominance of two kinds of concerns: an interest in the intrinsic intellectual goods of knowledge, information, confirmation (or disconfirmation) of hypotheses, understanding, and other such goods; and an interest in the intellectual well-being of other people. In particular, these two kinds of concerns dominate over the concern to have, for oneself, such extrinsic intellectual goods as position, honors, and wealth.

I have said that generosity *belongs*, stylistically, to Christianity, and it does so obviously because of the centrality of the Christian virtue of love (*agape*). The centrality of love is a consequence of God's generous love as revealed and embodied in Jesus Christ. But I think the other concern that is an ingredient in intellectual generosity is also encouraged by Christian nurture, namely an intrinsic interest in important truths about history, nature, and human beings. Nature, including human beings, is God's creation and reflects his intelligence and beauty; and he is the Lord of history. It is a natural extension of the worship of God to have reverence for and interest in the things he has made and rules. ✝

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SEEKING

Hold your breath—
A red leaf falling.
Hold your breath—
A wild goose calling.
Hold your breath—
A cricket creaking.
Lonely, lonely—
Seeking, seeking.

Edith E. Cutting

the feast of creation

Norman Wirzba

EVERY WEEKEND DURING THE SUMMER AND FALL months, tens of thousands of people head to their local farmers markets. As they go, they gradually shed the harried, stressful, tired expressions that otherwise accompany a good amount of grocery shopping. This is because a lot more than shopping is at stake here. In fact, many people go to farmers markets for something other than the shopping. They simply want to be there and to take in the sights of luscious strawberries and vine-ripened tomatoes, the sounds of a local band and convivial conversation, and the smells of fragrant flowers and sweet honey. They want to shake hands and participate in a communal atmosphere in which the relationships that bind us to each other and to the land are real and palpable.

In the last decade the number of farmers markets across the country has nearly doubled. Why this dramatic growth when we could more conveniently and more cheaply buy our food at the superstore, convenience and cheapness being the twin mantras of our consumer ways? Part of the reason is that people want better tasting and more nutritious food. Carrots fresh out of the ground or apples straight from the orchard are clearly superior to their superstore counterparts, produce that has been harvested prematurely, "processed," and then shipped on average 1500 miles. The fact of the matter is that agribusiness and our contemporary food industry have market efficiency and profitability, rather than quality, as their primary concerns. Those who regularly attend farmers markets know this, and so choose to give their money to local producers who grow food inefficiently but with a special delight and pleasure in their product.

Food quality, however, is not the only reason for the growth of farmers markets. The attractive power of farmers markets runs deeper, touching our humanity at its innermost core. Put simply, the experience of the local farmers market represents one of the most available and practical sites in terms of which we can experience ourselves as members of God's creation. To be sure, many who attend these markets are not aware that this is what they are doing. But the sheer visibility and aroma of the multifarious gifts of soil and sunlight, as well as the physical reminder of gardeners and farmers who have worked with God's own creative purposes to bring these gifts to us, demonstrates that we are all recipients of the divine hospitality, guests at the sacred feast of creation. Here we see on grand display the art and drama of creation.

The eighth century Greek theologian John of Damascus once described God's creative work as "making room" for creaturely life within the divine life that God is. In sounding this hospitable note he affirmed God's continuing care and involvement in the processes of birth, growth, death, and regeneration into new life. In stark contrast to later deistic portrayals of a "creator" who jump-starts the universe and then leaves it to run according to its own mechanical laws, this view suggests that the love of God could not abide such abandonment of creation. God wants to be engaged with us. Echoing the sentiment of Psalm 104, the Creator cares intimately and everlastingly about the created order, perpetually sending forth a creating spirit that renews the face of the ground and fills creatures with good things. We, in turn, are always dependent on the Creator for our own life, lest God look away and we return to dust (vv. 27-30).

OUR TROUBLE IN HEARING THESE WORDS IS that we have been trained to think of the doctrine of creation primarily as a teaching about the origins of the world. Creation, on this view, is a relatively static event, completed long ago. While origins are theologically and philosophically important, a more nuanced interpretation of scripture suggests that creation is a dynamic reality in which the Creator and created beings participate in each other's lives. The whole creation, both its form and its dynamic processes, is the visible sign of a

covenanting, befriending God who wants to be with us and share in our suffering and joy. And lest we think it is only humans that God is concerned about, we have the testimony of Job who encountered the God who cares for both the expansive reaches of the heavens and the miniscule hunger of the raven (38:31–33, 41). When Christians say "God is love" we should be fully aware of the radical nature of this claim that binds God to every inch of creation in the very intimacy of its breathing and eating, its living and dying.

FOR GOOD REASON, THEN, THOMAS AQUINAS interpreted the caritas of God as God's abiding, nurturing friendship shown practically in the showering of gift upon gift. God gives so much not simply because God cares for us, but because what God has to give is so delightful and good. God's generosity, in other words, is linked to God's exuberance and over-brimming joy in a world wonderfully made.

"The whole work of creation was performed for the sake of the Sabbath." Without shabat, *creation would not genuinely or completely be creation. It would be a mechanical, purely natural, and finally absurd world without divine purpose or intent.*

Nicholas Lash once wrote that "God delights the creation into life," meaning that creation's origin is God's grand pleasure. God needn't have created, God lacked nothing. But because it is God's nature to enjoy, God creates, and, having created, God finds the creation to be so delectable that it simply must be shared. Having created something truly wonderful, God wants to invite everyone in to enjoy and participate in its goodness. And so God is our companion and friend, the one who will always share bread (from the Latin *companio*, meaning to share bread between fellows) and welcome us to the divine feast.

It is safe to say that today we find it more difficult than earlier generations to engage our world as delectable. For the most part, we do not have the time or patience to experience reality deeply enough to find it so delightful. In a global, consumer world our lives are beset by frantic schedules that leave us exhausted. We have been conditioned to treat the bonds that unite us with others as only temporary because we live in societies governed by flux and mobility. The very competitiveness of our striving keeps us forever on the move, scanning for new opportunities or some decisive advantage. Indeed, and as sociologists have observed, the overall feel of our place in the world can be summed up in one word: precarious. Not surprisingly, a massive "life-enhancing" drug industry has developed to help us function in the midst of anxiety, stress, heartburn, depression, and fatigue.

This is not how God wants it to be. We know this simply by considering God's intention as revealed in the creation of the world. As we examine the Priestly account of creation in Genesis 1–2:4a we are given a sense for this intention. We are also, however, confronted with a puzzle. Having created the universe in six days, God, seeing the goodness of all that was made, is said to have finished the creative work. Then, strangely enough, we are told that on the seventh day God again finished creating and rested. Why this need to finish the work of creation a second time?

According to a rabbinic tradition, the way out of this puzzle is to suggest that while the material creation itself was finished, what remained uncreated was *menuha*, the "rest" or *shabat* of God. The creation of this rest, far from being an optional interlude in the unfolding of creation or a divine afterthought, is the climax of God's creative life. As Abraham Heschel put it, the world would not be complete without this Sabbath, for it is such rest and delight that shows what the creation is ultimately for. Jürgen Moltmann, going one step further, even says "The whole work of creation was performed for the sake of the Sabbath." Without *shabat,* creation would not genuinely or completely be creation. It would be a mechanical, purely natural, and finally absurd world without divine purpose or intent.

Menuha does not simply mean quietude or inactivity. Rather it connotes the tranquility, serenity, peace, and joy that occur as we participate in God's own delight in a creation finely made (remembering that the Garden of Eden literally means "garden of delight"). To experience *menuha* is to enjoy a conscious sympathy and harmony with all things. With this experience there is no need for worry, no need to violently and unendingly strive for our own advancement and prestige because in

the end it is not about us. The creation does not exist solely to benefit us, as accounts that make humanity the climax of creation mistakenly presuppose. Our creation is the effect of God's good pleasure and friendship, and God desires that we learn to be responsible members of the entire creation.

Numerous scholars have noted that the Priestly account of creation is connected with and informed by the Israelite experience of oppression. Their response then, as was confirmed by the exodus out of Egypt, was that God is not only in control of the forces of history but also the forces of nature. Our temptation, as is amply borne out by our histories, is to think that we are in charge, and so to forget that we live by the grace and generosity of God (the Israelites would learn this lesson graphically in the manna sent from heaven). The effect of our attempts to seize control has most often been suffering, violence, and oppression. Indeed, we have made idols of ourselves by making the creation submit to our own desires and plans. The *menuha* and delight of God are thus denied. Rather than joining with God in friendship, we work against God by establishing our own kingdoms.

NONE OF THIS IS TO SUGGEST THAT HUMAN beings should refrain from using creation for their own good. The larger point is that our use must never be the occasion for abuse. God finds the whole creation delightful not only because of what it can do for us but simply because it is. The message of *menuha* is a liberation message that frees all of creation to maximally be, to reach its full potential, even if that means, as Job would learn (chapters 38–41), that sometimes we will fail to understand the overall course and significance of creation or that we must suffer pain for the sake of another's freedom. Divine hospitality extends to all that God has made. God does not "make room" only for us.

How do we practically participate in the *menuha* of God? Christians who proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord of the Sabbath are given a clue. Jesus' ministry and preaching of the Kingdom of God can be interpreted as the incarnation of God's delight and peace in the midst of a world of pain and violence. Jesus can be understood to have taken within himself the aspirations of Sabbath life and given them concrete expression in the ministries of feeding, healing, exorcism, companionship, and service. If we want to see what a liberated creation looks like we should consider the example of Jesus who walked among us and brought health and wholeness of relationship, who brought abundant life. As members of the body of Christ our vocations and our identities must be shaped by this healing, reconciling intent.

OF COURSE, THE REDEMPTION OF CREATION IS not without cost. As the hymn in Colossians puts it, all things on earth and in heaven will be reconciled to Christ "by the blood of his cross" (1:20). There is, therefore, a cruciform dimension to reality, which means that the way to wholeness and salvation will be through sacrifice and service. We must never forget, however, that such work is finally directed toward the celebratory experience of *menuha*. And so Nicholas Lash is entirely correct when he suggests that the Garden of Eden does not simply reside in our past. It exists ahead of us in the hope we share in the supremacy and victory of God's companionship and love.

Though it may seem preposterous to suggest, could it be that the conviviality of conversation, the responsible production of food, the acknowledgment of grace and divine generosity, and the collective witness of multiple blessings on display at farmers markets affords a concrete glimpse of this ultimate hope? Could it be that farmers markets, and all they represent, offer a foretaste of the *menuha* of God? According to another rabbinic tradition, if we ever celebrate the Sabbath fully and correctly even once, meaning that we responsibly and fully share in God's delight in the Creator/creation drama, the Messiah will come. The purpose of the Sabbath is to create the space and time in which the eternal joy of creation can become temporally concrete. When this occurs we are given a glimpse of heaven.

Those who actively garden frequently lose all sense of time because they become so immersed in the care of their plants. Actually, what they do is give up or shed their own time-frame (the scheduled time that circulates around self-importance) and submit themselves to "garden time." Garden time is a zone in which the needs of plants (or, perhaps, animals) take first priority. The gardener ceases to be lord and master, and instead becomes

the servant or student of what needs tending. She does this by becoming attentive to and responsible for the garden, making sure that the optimal conditions for growth are maintained and protected. To be sure, gardening does not always meet with success as pests, inclement weather, and disease are perennial problems. But the gardener stands as our best witness to the grace and mystery of God's continuing creative work in the germination, growth, and harvest of plants. The glory of God, first revealed in the "garden of delight," continues on in the gardens of our own day.

It is for good reason, then, that the Yahwist creation account, beginning at Genesis 2:4b, defines human identity and vocation in terms of gardening. We are called to "till and keep," or more accurately "serve," the garden (2:15), for in doing so we not only preserve the health of creation, and thereby sustain the livelihood of others and ourselves, we also come into direct contact with God's own delight in creation. We experience the joy and serenity of new life, and we literally taste the many blessings of God. We sense the costliness of creation, as well as the depravity of our own arrogant intentions, as we witness more death than we can sometimes stand. But we also experience the regeneration of new life made possible by the soil, for even as organic matter dies into soil it recomposes into new possibility. The soil teaches hospitality—life flourishes in a perpetual giving away. To garden is to be a witness to miracle upon miracle.

One of the most delectable items our family shares are raspberries. In early June as they become ripe, our young children literally dance around the raspberry patch trying, in vain, to contain their enthusiasm. We love their taste, putting them on yogurt or ice cream or, if they manage not to get eaten on the journey from the garden to the house, turning them into jelly to be enjoyed later on. The anticipation of their ripening, as well as the care we provide in seeing that the raspberry patch is well-maintained and protected during the winter months, all contribute to our delight. What is crucial, however, is the deep connection that exists between us and those raspberries. If we simply bought them at the store we could still enjoy their taste, but I doubt that we would find them quite as delectable. What is missing is a shared history of care, concern, work, picking, and eating. We have not devoted ourselves to store-bought berries, and so do not really know them. What is missing from store-bought berries is the concrete realization that these berries are gifts, gifts that exceed our comprehensive grasp and are signs of God's glory. I like to think that God enjoys the raspberries as much as we do.

Stemming from several decades of urbanization that have radically transformed our relation to creation, we now crave a close association with other living things. Many of us have lost our connection to the soil (remembering that according to Genesis *adam*, the first person, comes from *adamah*, topsoil). Instead we find ourselves taking care of things that matter less and less to us, useless stuff shoddily made and to no good purpose. In this context farmers markets represent one of the few remaining places where the connections between us and the rest of creation, between us and God, become visible and real, if not full. Could it be that this is a secret attraction of the market, the divine lure of God calling us back to be the creatures we are meant to be? Could it be that God, in the immediacy of our own taste buds, is forever inviting us to the feast of creation?

Their popularity notwithstanding, farmers markets strike a counter-cultural stance. In the midst of an often ruthless and exhausting economic world, farmers and gardeners are showing us a better, more care-ful and joyous way. Churches would do well to learn from their example and, like those at the farmers markets, to become active participants in this "slow-food" development. Better yet, churches could make a powerful statement if they would transform some of their parking or lawn space into community gardens, and thus visibly and practically contribute to the growth of good food, flowers, friendship, and faith. A whole new dimension could be added to the Lord's feast as we learn to share in the body and blood of Christ, but also to share with others the many good gifts of creation. ♦

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film

yearning for the hand of God

Fredrick Barton

"We are all bastards, but God loves us anyway."
Will Campbell, *Brother to a Dragonfly*

THE DEBATE CAN TRACE ITSELF TO MAN'S EARLIest endeavors to understand himself. What kind of creatures are we? Seventeenth-century philosopher John Locke and such eighteenth-century followers as Jean Jacques Rousseau and Thomas Jefferson believed that humans are fundamentally good and left to their own devices will settle themselves in free and politically just societies. Thomas Hobbes, Locke's great intellectual rival, had a rather more sour view, maintaining that the natural condition of man is that of the "war of everyone against everyone" and the state of ungoverned life as being "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."

The politically conservative columnist George F. Will, a writer with whom I seldom agree on matters other than baseball, generally sides with Hobbes. I am reluctant to agree, and yet largely unable to refute his evidence. A couple of years ago Will called attention to a horrifying incident that took place in Poland during World War II. The Nazis captured a small Polish town where Catholic and Jewish citizens in about equal numbers had lived peaceably side by side for centuries. With the storm troopers no doubt goading them on, the Christian Poles fell upon their Jewish neighbors and slaughtered them, men, women and children, the hale and the infirm alike, the aged and the infant.

Will acknowledged in his reflections on this incident that he presumed there were years of irritation between the two groups, aggravated inevitably by ethnic, cultural, and religious differences. But the genocidal violence, of course, was utterly out of proportion to whatever resentments may have simmered between the two groups before the Nazis arrived. So why such merciless violence, he wondered. Why did those who practiced a faith that believes Jesus is the Messiah murder those who didn't? Because, Will asserted, they could. Because it was permitted.

As I write, Congress has just approved another $87 billion dollars for America's continuing campaign in Iraq. The total number of Americans who have died in Iraq since the war was "over" now stands at more than 100. Four more died yesterday in a firefight with the armed guards of a militant Shiite cleric who opposes America's presence in his country. Meanwhile, the American news media give us little to no information about how many Iraqis have died since hostilities commenced, not even how many armed Iraqi combatants, much less the innocent bystanders caught in crossfire or slain by American bombs.

Weapons of mass destruction, our excuse for invading a country that otherwise posed us no immediate threat, have yet to be found; nor has Saddam Hussein. But we are now confronted with a guerilla campaign by Islamicists of various kinds, Saddam loyalists and those who were his victims, native Iraqis and an increasing number of foreigners who have snuck across Iraq's long desert borders from Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and elsewhere in the Muslim world. A recent poll shows that Iraqi citizens are glad to be rid of Saddam but that they admire the French, who opposed invasion, far more than they do Americans. We might resent this attitude for its inconsistency and seeming ingratitude, but we should also recognize it as a remonstrance against our arrogance.

So why are we in Iraq? One's answer will perhaps depend on one's politics. Noble motives like freeing an enslaved people. Base motives like oil. More complicated motives like the official "pre-

emptive defense." However you react to any of these explanations, they all have a common quality. We are there, "the coalition of the willing," because we can be, because no one has the power to stop us from doing whatever we choose to do. Like every other American, I am glad we possess such power. But unlike those in the Bush administration, I worry immensely about the way we are using our power. The events of September 11, 2001, certainly made clear a vulnerability we had not previously appreciated. But our self-interested goal should be to reduce the hatred of those who would do us harm. And current evidence suggests that we are moving away from our goal rather than toward it; we are creating more enemies than we are eliminating.

Two recent films, one celebrated with Oscars and other awards, the other barely known, speak to the issues of human nature as we ponder what kind of creatures we are and what kind of strategies we should undertake in relating to our fellows who call God by a different name. The first film is affecting and true and tells us things we dare not forget. The second film takes us places we have not gone and forces us to face things we have not seen.

The events of September 11, 2001, certainly made clear a vulnerability we had not previously appreciated. But our self-interested goal should be to reduce the hatred of those who would do us harm. And current evidence suggests that we are moving away from our goal rather than toward it; we are creating more enemies than we are eliminating.

never again

Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* is a film that stimulates one to makes lists. Beautiful things: a play by Shakespeare, a sculpture by Rodin, a painting by Manet, an aria by Beverly Sills, a symphonic composition by Aaron Copland, a poem by Adrienne Rich, a novel by Charles Dickens, a song by the Beatles, a performance by Meryl Streep, a film by Francois Truffaut. Horrible things: the Turks' genocide against the Armenians, the cold-blooded slaughter of American Indians, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo, the massacre at My Lai, the Hutus' attempted eradication of the Tutsis, the Holocaust. People of enormous selflessness and courage: Albert Schweitzer, Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela. Monsters: Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin, Pol Pot, Slobodan Milosevic. Human beings and human creations. Beauty and blood. Who are we? What have we done?

Written by Ronald Harwood, *The Pianist* is the true story of Polish musician Wladyslaw Szpilman (Adrien Brody) as adapted for the screen from his memoirs. Born in 1912, Szpilman was a pianist known throughout Europe when Hitler's army invaded Poland in September of 1939. We meet him during a Polish radio performance as Nazi tanks roll into Warsaw. Unmarried and still living with his parents, brother, and two sisters, Szpilman is a man of mild disposition and few political interests. He loves his music, and he's got a crush on a pretty blond cellist. But he's Jewish, and, caught in the crush of psychotic race hatred, he will not be allowed to live a normal life.

First, like all the Jews in Warsaw, Szpilman is forced to wear a star of David on his sleeve and is forbidden access to most public places. Restrictions are placed on his income. Then, he and his family are evicted from their comfortable, middle-class apartment and crowded into two rooms in a Nazi-created Jewish ghetto. A scene of chilling claustrophobia shows a wall being erected around the Jewish quarter, making a huge prison of what used to be a city sector. The ghetto residents are forced to do manual labor for German companies. Later they are packed into boxcars headed for Treblinka. In a miracle of happenstance, a Jewish policeman collaborating with the Nazis saves Szpilman moments before he is shoved aboard the death train. But Szpilman will never again see any member of his family.

Polanski gives us all the horror we can handle and delivers it with a casualness that proves all the more affecting for its lack of emphasis. A young Nazi officer beats an old Jewish man for the sin of walking on the sidewalk instead of in the gutter. For the sheer thrill of humiliation, Nazi guards make Jews dance in the street. Gestapo thugs arrest a family around their dinner table and order them to march to the street. Because the grandfather is confined to a wheel chair, they throw him off a

fourth-story balcony. Once outside, they gun down the others and crush the victims under car wheels.

In a scene recalling that of the murder of a young architect in Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, a young woman is shot in the face for the affront of asking a Nazi a question. Jews may be spoken to, but they do not have the unbidden privilege to speak themselves. At random and without bothering to allege an offense, a Nazi psychopath selects a line of Jewish workers, makes them lie in the street, and shoots them one after the other. When he exhausts his ammunition and his pistol's hammer clicks on an empty chamber, we think for an instant that at least one man will be spared, a random act of fate. But we are wrong. The Nazi officer simply pauses to reload and shoots the last man as he has the others. In three and a half years, the Nazis reduce the Jewish population of Warsaw from over half a million to fewer than 60,000.

In the ghetto, Jews are starved until they steal from each other; they lick spilled food from the street like maddened animals. Some collaborate with their tormentors in hopes of saving themselves. A mother smothers her baby trying to hush his cries lest the child alert the Nazis to their hiding place. Before being forced into a boxcar, the Szpilmans are put to work sorting the belongings of other families who have been sent to the gas chambers before them. People try to bolster themselves with false hope. The Germans would never squander such a large labor force, they assure each other, even at the eleventh hour failing to appreciate the cosmic irrationality of Nazi hatred.

But Polanski gives us the other side of Szpilman's story too. In the ghetto, Jews exploit the black market to gather weapons at the risk of torture and death for every man or woman who hides a pistol in a potato sack. Eventually, they rise up against their persecutors with the force of arms. But resistance proves as fruitless as collaboration and self-deception. The powerful obliterate the weak whatever posture the weak adopt.

Still, though the numbers are statistically insignificant, surviving Jews sometimes encounter a humane face. Several Polish gentiles risk hanging by hiding Jews in their attics and cellars. And, perhaps miraculously, even some in Nazi uniform risk themselves to extend the hand of mercy to those they have been taught to despise. The film's climax comes when Szpilman, seemingly days, perhaps hours, away from freedom, is suddenly confronted by Nazi Captain Wilm Hosenfeld (Thomas Kretschmann). Hosenfeld's decision to spare Szpilman is as random and deeply complicated as anything in the movie. But in the end, is it enough to tug us from the abyss of despair?

Though *The Pianist* presumably lies closer to the historical truth, it doesn't pack quite the emotional wallop of *Schindler's List*. Neither is it as sophisticated nor as daring in its radical call for forgiveness as Jan Hrebejk's *Divided We Fall*. In that regard, despite its protagonist's survival, *The Pianist* is a film of stoic resignation rather than determined optimism. Its detachment is carefully chosen and central to its core theme. *The Pianist* stands the evil beside the good and offers little reason to hope that those who live to express beauty, like Szpilman, will ever prevail, save through the random accident of survival.

summoning the hand of God

Dealing with another oppressed people forced into such ghettos as the Gaza Strip and the curfewed towns of the West Bank, Palestinian writer/director Elia Suleiman's resolutely metaphorical *Divine Intervention* mixes bizarre comedy with cartoonish action and hard-edged realism to deliver a consciously provocative and deliberately elusive picture that produces only the barest of a narrative. It begins as if in a dream sequence that will barely be revisited save as an emblem of what is to come. A red-suited Santa Claus runs through a sun-lit landscape outside the town of Nazareth. He huffs through tall brown grass amid the gnarled trees of an olive orchard and up a rocky, terraced slope. He is chased by modern Palestinian teens in T-shirts and jeans, their hair close-cropped as if barbered on the cheap, their eyes full of hate. Santa pauses in desperation and throws wrapped packages from his toy bag. The boys kick them aside in contempt and continue their pursuit. At the top of the hill Santa is surrounded. Though he neither screams nor bleeds, he is stabbed in the heart with a butcher knife. We don't see who does it.

I interpret the opening scene in this way: Santa stands at once for the collapse of Christianity into materialistic excess and the failure of the West to address the true needs of the vast, impoverished, and angry Third World. Santa's baubles cannot begin to appease the fury of

Middle-Eastern, in this case Palestinian, youth who have not tasted the fruit of the very freedom that has made the West so rich. These Palestinian youngsters are chasing Santa because, even as they yearn for what he represents, they also despise it. So maybe they kill him. But maybe in his panic and his blindness to the Palestinian boys' humanity, he kills himself, as the West may destroy itself by not engaging the rest of the world.

The film is largely a series of such scenes. Many are comic. A tourist in Jerusalem stops a policeman to ask for directions to an ancient site. The policeman doesn't know the way, so he gets his blindfolded prisoner to help the tourist. Throughout the picture, almost everyone smokes, all the time and everywhere. In a hospital, the doctors and nurses smoke. Men in neck braces smoke. A man with an amputated leg and another man in a wheelchair smoke. Other things are conspiring to kill us, but we can't wait to participate in the process of killing ourselves.

Some scenes are designed to illustrate our propensity for hatred and our reliance on violence. A man stores bottles on a roof so that he can hurl them at people passing in the street. At night, he destroys road construction so that cars are needlessly damaged. When a gifted young soccer player accidentally kicks his ball onto the man's roof, the man destroys it rather than simply toss it back. Why is this man so maddened and mean? We never find out. All that matters is that he is. In another scene a man drives through an Israeli city and comments on his neighbors with sneers and curses. They don't seem to do anything to provoke his contempt; he seems to hate them just for being there. Elsewhere, a man asks a neighbor to move a car that is blocking the first man's garage. Rather than responding quickly and politely, the second man delays and becomes legalistic. The first man reacts to his neighbor's lack of cooperation by attacking the second man's car. No doubt he feels justified in this act of retributive violence, but if the car ever gets moved, we don't see it.

In still another recurring sequence, a man rises each morning and takes his day's plastic bag of trash and throws it over a fence into his neighbor's yard. For a time, there is no response. Finally one day, however, a woman throws a dozen or so bags back. When she does so, the man chastises her and calls her shameful. But the garbage she's throwing into his yard is only the very garbage he's thrown into hers, she points out. She's still shameful, the man maintains. Before throwing the garbage back, she should have talked to him. "Isn't that why God gave us tongues?" he complains. This scene can be understood to address the foundation of Israel. The stateless and disorganized Palestinians voiced few objections when Jews began to settle in the area. But the final establishment of the Israeli state was accomplished through force of arms, though against little resistance and with comparably little bloodshed. A coalition of Arabs attempted to strike back in 1967's Seven Day War. The Israelis won, but their continued occupation and settlement of the West Bank has made them not more secure, but less. In more recent times, as hostilities between Israelis and Palestinians have escalated to horrific proportions, the Jews have sought the high moral ground of negotiation without ever acknowledging their own role in the roots of the dispute.

THROUGHOUT *DIVINE INTERVENTION*, SULEIMAN blurs distinctions among his characters. A number of young men hide their faces behind sunglasses. Sometimes they loiter about other scenes with an air of menace. At times they wait for a bus that no longer runs. Are they sinister? We don't know. A series of bald men includes the one who curses his neighbors, another who enters people's houses and delivers severe beatings, and a third, a beloved father who does little other than sort his mail. We can barely tell the men apart. And that's precisely the filmmaker's point.

Insofar as *Divine Intervention* has a narrative core, it centers around the story of two West Bank Palestinian lovers who live on either side of an Israeli checkpoint on the road between Jerusalem and Ramallah. The checkpoint makes their getting together difficult and sometimes impossible. Often, when they do get together, they sit holding hands and watch the routine harassment of their countrymen by frightened, but sometimes abusive Israeli soldiers. One night an officer (perhaps drunk) relieves the regular checkpoint squad and proceeds to torment a line of Palestinians needlessly. He makes them wait for no reason. While subjecting them to questionable searches, he critiques their clothes. Finally, he will allow them through the checkpoint only if they first play musical cars and drive across the arbitrary border

in vehicles belonging to someone else. The security rationale for why the Israelis have established these checkpoints is not acknowledged: to try to diminish wave after wave of Palestinian violence. But the scene makes clear that the casual humiliation the checkpoints inflict may be as much a cause of the violence as its solution.

The male lover (Suleiman) seems a gentle soul, in love and otherwise worried about the health of his aged father. But the indignity the lover suffers is wearing, and at one point he releases a balloon bearing the face of Yasser Arafat. The Israeli soldiers at the checkpoint become obsessed with the balloon. Suleiman's point is that Arafat is a distraction that has blinded the Israelis to what they are trying to do. While the soldiers consider whether to shoot at a painting on a piece of rubber, the lovers are able to slip through the checkpoint illegally.

LATE IN THE FILM, WE FEAR THAT THE LOVERS have become radicalized. The man has a violent fantasy of his lady friend (Manal Khader) turning into an Arab-Ninja Wonder Woman who defeats a corps of Israeli commandos, first by pelting them with rocks from a slingshot (think David and Goliath), and then by deflecting their own bullets back on them. They use ever bigger weapons to attack her, finally even a helicopter gunship, but she is more than equal to their assault. At the film's end we see the male lover wearing sunglasses like the sinister figures we've met before. At a stoplight, he contemplates a man in the car next to him wearing a yarmulke. We can sense an act of violence about to burst out.

Instead we hear the infectious lyrics of a song: "I put a spell on you/ 'Cause you're mine/ You better stop the things you do/ I ain't lyin'/ I can't stand it: your runnin' around/ I can't stand it, when you put me down/ I ain't lyin' and I love you anyhow." With that bit of rock wisdom the film ends, and we are reminded of Will Campbell's observation in *Brother to a Dragonfly*, that "we are all bastards, but God loves us anyway." There are good among us. But in the long term, what little can be said in the defense of most of us? Yet God loves us anyway.

The Holocaust taught Jews that they must have a homeland where they can protect themselves from those who would slaughter them simply because they have the power to do so. A perfectly understandable sentiment. From World War II, Americans learned that evil men like Adolf Hitler can only be toppled with the force of arms. No doubt, sadly true. But in building a state and exercising our power, both Israel and the United States need to walk about in the shoes of people whose lands we share and have chosen to occupy. We must surrender our self-righteousness and our moral certainty so that our enemies might surrender their arms. Can we and they do what is necessary? In *The Pianist* Roman Polanski offers us little reason for optimism. Will is largely reduced to the tool of luck. Hope is foolishness, though the alternative is no better. Like Polanski, Elia Suleiman seems to share Thomas Hobbes' ancient sentiment about the corrupted nature of our species. So *Divine Intervention* summons the hand of God to resolve what humans seemingly cannot. Since so much blood has been shed in the name of the Almighty, however identified and understood, I am little heartened by Suleiman's solution.

But what other chance do we have? ✦

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music

sorrow songs

J.D. Buhl

One of the most enduring jazz albums so far this century is not by an artist featured on Ken Burn's *Jazz*, nor does it come from the bevy of babes stretching their legs across a myriad of CD booklets. Instead, its cover features a calm, beatific black man dressed in shining religious garb and holding a tenor saxophone. On the front of *Surrendered*, his fifteenth album, free jazz titan David S. Ware is presented in bronze light, palms together and eyes closed. The image is not only perfect for the album's title, evoking the religious surrender implied in Ware's open, devoted playing, but also to the intent of the David S. Ware Quartet to bring the listener to a state of blissful surrender to the music, and awareness of that submission and obedience.

The improvisational furor that rises from the Quartet's meeting with powerful spiritual forces sends *Surrendered* through passage after passage of turbulent yet tranquil music. The album pulls us, not with seductive, attractive attributes (though it is quite lovely), but like a tug on the arm, a long, slow, unceasing tug on the arm, even as it attempts to fold in prayer.

So why is the second track so doggoned catchy? Why does it swing with such old-time abandon? Out of all these inner space excursions, why does this one sound so familiar? Because it's Charles Lloyd's "Sweet Georgia Bright." Charles Lloyd? Yeah, man.

"He had something," Ware tells David Fricke. "I recognized in his sound and concept something that was apart from Trane, Archie Shepp, Pharoah Sanders and those cats." One thing Charles Lloyd had apart from those cats was success—wild, fan-drenching success. His fabulous band of the 1960s—which gave us Keith Jarrett, Jack DeJohnette and Cecil McBee—was known for its exuberant, exhausting concerts for the white rock crowd. With their afros, shades, and black leather jackets, Charles Lloyd and company spearheaded jazz's first real post-Beatles crossover, without electric guitars or the Fender Rhodes.

Aside from a desire to see his band in the same popularizing position, there's a charming surrender in someone of David S. Ware's avant-garde stature paying tribute to a now "elder, somewhat forgotten" workhorse like Charles Lloyd. In the same calm cacophony through which he blows his devotion, Ware recalls the achievements of his forebears and suggests where they might meet.

* * *

Charles Lloyd is a tall man. Not only does his grinning, grimacing moon-face resemble Pete Townshend's, but when he plays his tenor on stage, elbows and knees fly in the lights, flashing and windmilling as surely as any performance of "Won't Get Fooled Again." Lloyd and Townsend share a gentleness, too, one that makes for sweet, direct melodies that rise out of the most stormy improvisations. Townshend is keen on throwing little love letters into his tortured guitar eruptions; Charles Lloyd makes a whole set of them.

My ten-year-old daughter, Maurie, and I have come to one of Yoshi's famous Sunday matinees—"$10 per adult with one kid"—and landed our favorite table. I'd told her all about Lloyd after seeing him at a benefit concert here for master drummer Billy Higgins, a big favorite of us both. She was anxious to see this loving, strange man with the tone like toasted cornhusks.

He's up there blowing with recent collaborator Geri Allen on piano, a gifted recording artist on her own, and two young sidekicks: Robert Hurst on bass and Eric Harland on drums. The sound is huge, part church, part carnival. Those

familiar peals of melody are not far from the musical mass out of which he's shaped the four recordings that have reinvented his career.

Charles Lloyd started releasing albums on ECM in 1989. The first five all received two and a half stars from *Rolling Stone* which concluded, "His playing is still engaging, but its post-John Coltrane stylings no longer seem quite as riveting." Then he assembled a quartet for *Voice in the Night* (1999) that changed everything. Billy Higgins, guitarist John Abercrombie, and bassist Dave Holland lent such incredible strength to Lloyd's compositions—and inspired soloing—that it sounded like an entirely new music. Even a return to his peak, 1967's "Forest Flower," yielded none of the "still engaging" comforts of an old staple but, instead, heartfelt, indeed riveting, interplay and melodic contours, physical in their impact.

HIGGINS AND ABERCROMBIE STAYED ON FOR *The Water is Wide* (2000) and its companion album *Hyperion With Higgins* (2001), joined by Brad Mehldau (piano) and Larry Grenadier (bass) who regularly play together. Smiling Billy Higgins died between the CDs' releases, leaving a bright hole the jazz world will never fill. When Lloyd returned to the studio for the two-disc *Lift Every Voice* (2002) Abercrombie and Grenadier were still there (when the latter was not replaced by Marc Johnson), but Geri Allen had come in on piano and the ever-subtle Billy Hart now plucked the drums.

In director Mark Steven Johnson's recent revisioning of *Daredevil*, the blind hero is able to "see" when the sound created by rain hitting a surface gives form to what is nearby. This radar is particularly important to his alter ego, Matt Murdock, who is falling in love. In *Daredevil*'s only really breathtaking scene, Matt reaches out to touch a face he's longed to experience when, high on a rooftop under boulders of cloud, raindrops begin to fall and the splendidly beautiful Elektra comes shimmering into view. Charles Lloyd's playing can have this same effect.

If his compositions were named "Portrait of Tracy" or "Love Sculpture" they couldn't be any more pictorial. His delicately dropped notes cover the surface of what is before him and bring it to a new level of perception. First outline, then depth, features, and sparkling details, you can almost see the subject take shape. It's there on "A Flower is a Lovesome Thing" (*Voice in the Night*)—what is before him is not only Billy Strayhorn's melody or the changes, or even the whole of the group's creation, but a flower; a particular flower. And it is a lovesome thing.

IN THIS QUALITY—EXHIBITED THROUGHOUT THE albums and even live—Lloyd works most like Higgins and Abercrombie, casting a shower of sound against something real; it's texture on texture, rain on a pretty face. Here, for all the "post-John Coltrane" elements in his playing, Lloyd most resembles the sublime Lester Young in that he uses a warm narrative style to bring something to light. It may be an emotion ("You Are So Beautiful" on *Lift Every Voice*), or a place (his version of "Georgia" on *The Water is Wide* is one of the few that feels like a musical relief map), or a person—this new recording of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," with Allen's simple, schoolteacherish accompaniment, presents a noble portrait of James Weldon Johnson. Like Lester, Lloyd brings others into the room, evokes the spirit, if not the sound, of friends, inspirations, and far away dreams that suddenly draw near.

And this tingling, rain-like sound comes directly from Billy Higgins' use of the ride cymbal. As signature an element of style as his tendency to focus a solo on the snare drum, Higgins' insistent pitter-patter could have been the soundtrack for Elektra's emergence. And as Charles Lloyd matured into a new realization of his style in this series of recordings, so did Higgins. From his hitting the scene with Ornette Coleman in the late '50s, through his house work with Blue Note, and years in groups with pianist Cedar Walton, one of the music's most respected artists did his best work at the changing of the century.

WHEN SPEAKING OF BILLY HIGGINS ON STAGE, Charles Lloyd—who rambles with a hilarious stream of non sequiturs and bright thought balloons: half stoned DJ, half madcap guru—always refers to him as "Master Higgins." Introducing the calypso-tinged "Dorotea's Studio" (*Voice in the Night*), he recalls the two of them as young men in Los Angeles being welcomed backstage by the dancers at a certain music hall, and catches himself. "Well, they didn't call him 'Master Higgins' back

then...but they may as well have." And with face beaming, finger in the air, "He had that smile, you see!" Yes, he had that smile, and one can just imagine it working on the ladies when he was underage.

At this point Maurie leans over and asks if she can use my notebook—"I've just had a Billy Higgins poem come into my head." Well! So I pass it over and this is what she writes:

Billy Higgins
His smile was always oh so bright
like a bright bright star
in an inky black sky
The master of the drums
always eager to help someone
old or young
Yet he himself
faded away
into a world of jazz
where he and all musicians
play the song of life
that twists to and fro

Just like that. Lloyd had been stressing that we need to get the kids into these people—Prez and Bird and Lady Day and Master Higgins himself—if we're going to keep the music as full of love as it always has been. And these recordings by Lloyd and friends are quite full of love, a love more focused than his onstage raps.

It is a love of Duke Ellington and all he represents by way of that other *Great American Songbook,* the *Negro Spiritual*. This collection of declarations, sighs, and cries has provided jazz with its spiritual backbone since New Orleans street bands started improvising on "When the Saints Go Marching In." The art form wouldn't exist without the Spiritual, and over these many turbulent years artists as different as Grover Washington, Jr. and Archie Shepp have returned to its pages for inspiration and grounding.

The latter, in fact, cooling from years of "New Sound" outsideness, produced with pianist Horace Parlan one of the most moving meditations upon this source of identity and succor, *Goin' Home,* in 1977. Companion volume to *Trouble in Mind*, a collection of blues songs, this intensely intimate recording indeed sounds like a man comin' home—tired, angry, and yet well aware of that flicker of faith that brought him this far. On both tenor and soprano saxophone Shepp plays—and plays with—such familiar melodies as "Deep River" and "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen" as though they are being reinvented in his soul; they flutter in a strange and beautiful way, like heavenly messengers are feeding him the notes as he nears home. Tellingly, after ten traditional titles the album ends with an elegiac rendering of Duke Ellington's "Come Sunday."

Many of these spirituals were recorded seventeen years later by another duo, Charlie Haden on bass and Hank Jones on piano. *Steal Away*, released in 1995, is a bold conductor along the underground railroad to *The Water is Wide* and *Lift Every Voice*. The venerable Jones had produced a mostly-spirituals solo album in 1978, *Tiptoe Tapdance*, but with Haden's emphatic, empathetic voice joining in—and often taking off on flights of gospel-singer melodicism—these sad and supple traditionals shed their historicity as Jones infuses them with swing and sweetness. Here can be found the hope and joy only remembered in Shepp's more personal lamentations.

Another precursor of Lloyd's current work has been back in print a few years, drummer Max Roach's *Lift Every Voice and Sing*. This 1971 album, essentially a collaboration with the J.C. White Singers, presents five spirituals and one new gospel song dedicated to prominent figures in black history, Marcus Garvey, Paul Robeson (a huge influence on Charlie Haden), and "Malcolm, Martin, Medgar and Many More" among them. While the vocal-heavy arrangements stress their origins in the church, these hymns provide for much excitement between an understated Roach and his great band; Cecil Bridgewater on trumpet and Billy Harper on tenor deliver particularly righteous solos. The liner notes feature verse by James Weldon Johnson.

Even closer to home is John Coltrane's recording of "Greensleeves" (a.k.a. "What Child is This"), made with a large band in 1961. While hardly a Negro spiritual, this English ballad had been part of the African American Christian experience for decades when Coltrane would have joined in singing it at the African Methodist

Episcopal Zion Church of High Point, North Carolina, where his maternal grandfather was pastor. The orchestral arrangement is upbeat and light, Coltane's soprano sax lilting and lovely. But the darker accents of the horns and strong bass opening by Reggie Workman give testimony to the hymn's origins in hard work and even harder praise.

A 3/4 modal meditation along the lines of "My Favorite Things," this track on Africa/Brass was followed later that year by "Spiritual," the title meant as a noun, not an adjective. Included on *Live at the Village Vanguard*, it is reputedly based on a spiritual Coltrane heard and remembered.

Just as spiritual became a central word in understanding Coltrane's music of the 1960s, it is important here. Charles Lloyd seems to practice some form of Sufism, himself a saxophone dervish whirling on stage. But he clearly wants to have church, exploring the softest, most "moist with tears" aspects of many familiar songs. While *Voice in the Night* contains the Strayhorn piece previously mentioned and an Elvis Cost-ello/Burt Bacharach composition ("God Give Me Strength"), the rest are Lloyd originals. His trajectory into gospel and traditional tunes begins with *The Water is Wide*. There the title cut and "There is a Balm in Gilead" (a duet with Billy Higgins) root the many Lloyd and Ellington/ Strayhorn numbers. *Lift Every Voice* of course is more explicit; among its nineteen selections (and a mood-busting extra track), four are traditional. And three of these are spirituals that appear on Shepp's *Goin' Home* and Haden/Jones' *Steal Away*.

In the liner notes to Steal Away, *Georgetown historian Maurice Jackson reminds us that W.E.B. DuBois called the Negro spirituals the "Sorrow Songs." He did so because "they tell of death, suffering and unvoiced longing toward a truer world, of misty wanderings and hidden ways." Jazz has been giving voice to this longing for so long now that it's easy to miss it.*

CHARLES LLOYD, GERI ALLEN, AND THEIR cohorts are waist high in "Deep River" (*Lift Every Voice*) when I realize this has been the most generous Sunday matinee we've ever attended. Nearly two hours have passed. Older eyes glisten as hands pat children of all sizes; memories of struggle, echoes of marches and speeches and sing-alongs settle on the room. Lloyd would take the band through a stately "Prayer" (*The Water is Wide*), now a hymn for Billy Higgins, before leading us all in singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing." He was even thoughtful enough to pass out the words.

* * *

In the liner notes to *Steal Away*, Georgetown historian Maurice Jackson reminds us that W.E.B. DuBois called the Negro spirituals the "Sorrow Songs." He did so because "they tell of death, suffering and unvoiced longing toward a truer world, of misty wanderings and hidden ways." Jazz has been giving voice to this longing for so long now that it's easy to miss it. From *Voice in the Night* to *Lift Every Voice,* Charles Lloyd has made it harder to ignore this fact, more costly to take for granted jazz's role as the voice of another America, singing from another *Great American Songbook*.

"Sorrow Songs" would also be a great title for an album of spirituals by the David S. Ware Quartet. But until that happens, another theme found in these Lloyd recordings suggests where these two musicians—and their listeners—may meet. It would be a corner, a specific corner, in a neglected section of Detroit or Los Angeles or Birming-ham, a corner where not many hang any longer, at least not with any sense of pride. Instead, a pall of shame covers this place, one in need of being reminded of God's grace.

This is a feel, a sense of cultural and civic particularity, that runs through "Pocket Full of Blues" (*Voice in the Night*), "East Virginia, West Memphis" (*Lift Every Voice*), and richly throughout *Hyperion With Higgins*, an album of places, real and imagined, from "Secret Life of the Forbidden City" to "Robert Johnson on the Banks of the Ganges." Ware's music is of the same sensibility: one of quiet car rides through old neighborhoods, past boarded-up storefronts, aban-

doned playgrounds, and old churches, their steeples in disrepair. In this deep appreciation of surroundings, shadows on sunny sidewalks, and a desire to revitalize what will always be home, this music takes us to the places where the spirituals took root—and where new spirituals are being written.

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DECEMBER DIALECTIC

On days like today when you realize
There is no certain slant of light to blame,
No buzzing fly or hour of lead; there are
No faithless husbands, thankless children,

Howling storms to pin this on; no dark
Diagnosis, crisis, or criminal
Coup to account for this winter's discontent;
When you have not in a dream seen yourself

As a child, molested or neglected
In the least; your friends are loyal as dawn;
Sales are up, and the home team is winning;
Today even your skittish dog will *stay*;

On days like this when, plainly, God is in
His heaven, you wonder where misfortune
Has gone. Dire occasion. Where's affliction
When you need it to clarify despair?

Mary M. Brown

spot: light on the environment

windows and worldviews: buildings that teach

Jon Jensen

The typical academic building seems to have the architectural elegance and performance standards common to shopping malls, motels, and drive-through funeral parlors: places where considerations of "throughput" are uppermost in the minds of designers.
David Orr

GOOD BUILDINGS, LIKE GOOD TEACHERS, challenge the way we think. Simultaneously they make us feel at home and push us to understand things far beyond our experience. Smart buildings and master teachers both lead by example, embodying some of the most important lessons.

We don't think of buildings as teachers, but their lessons—both good and bad—are pervasive. David Orr, the chair of environmental studies at Oberlin College and a leader in ecological design, describes architecture as "crystallized pedagogy" and argues that buildings have "their own hidden curriculum that teaches as effectively as any course taught in them."

My old high school provides a familiar glimpse of the hidden curriculum in most school buildings. Built in the late sixties, it displays austere functionality and impeccably straight lines. The concrete block hallways were long and windowless and lined with metal lockers. Many of those hallways ended in retractable, barred gates and even now, nearly twenty years after my graduation, I can still hear the echo of those gates closing, I can still feel the cold of the concrete walls. On beautiful fall days school seemed like a prison, not least because the building was built like one. All who spent four years in that building were branded with indelible lessons: that beauty is of no great import; that conformity and control are essential for success; that the world is linear and orderly; that hierarchy is the norm; that nature is unimportant.

My high school was frighteningly typical, and a similar curriculum is embedded in nearly every building on any college campus. Rest assured that the students are learning these lessons even if they are failing math, history, or science.

Some of the clearest lessons buildings teach relate to the environment and the use of resources, as David Orr argues in his recent book, *The Nature of Design*.

Students learn that locality is not important since most structures are like chain stores: they could be anywhere, on any campus, in any part of the country. Through thoughtless and inefficient use of energy, academic buildings teach that waste is not only acceptable but the norm and that energy—always from some fossilized, unseen source—may be consumed with no thought for the future or the effects on others. Finally, since they require nothing of the users, most buildings teach mindlessness and passivity.

THE WORLDVIEW OF THIS HIDDEN CURRICULUM IS inherently hubristic, touting our knowledge and control, our role as the center of the universe. It's what biologist David Ehrenfeld calls the "arrogance of humanism" and what Christians bemoan as an absence of proper humility. It's the mechanistic worldview of our materialistic culture with its tendency to see humans as consumers and nothing more. Our buildings convey a near worship of human cleverness and a belief that humans can solve any problem and can rearrange the world to meet our every desire and whim. This hubris is an implicit denial that any greater power exists, that anything can challenge the reign of humans.

* * *

Buildings can, of course, be used to send very different messages. Often it's little things such as adequate daylighting, renewable energy sources, and creative design that make a big difference. The key is simply to be conscious of the hidden curriculum and to design with ecological and pedagogical principles front and center.

Luther College's new Center for the Arts provides one example of a small step in the right direction. It's obvious when you walk in the door: a feeling of openness with lots of windows providing a real connection to the world beyond the walls. Curving hallways and constant visual relief overwhelm the linear and speak of creativity rather than control. A central gathering area is generally alive with conversation, embodying the sense of community that is often empty rhetoric on campuses. In addition to the passive solar warmth provided by south-facing windows, exposed pipes hint at the geothermal heating and cooling system that takes a small step toward a future of renewable energy.

FORTUNATELY, WE HAVE MANY POSITIVE EXAMPLES of buildings that go much further in the messages they send. Oberlin's Center for Environmental Studies, for example, is a model of ecological design that discharges no wastewater, generates nearly as much electricity as it uses, contains no materials known to be harmful, and preserves biodiversity in its landscaping. More importantly, it teaches students about connection and possibility, not just in its classrooms, but in its very design.

Creating buildings that are good teaching tools ought to be our highest priority in designing the campus of the future. The current academic building boom is a great, but largely missed, opportunity. It's a chance to consciously plan our spaces rather than let architects simply reinforce the waste, disconnection, and thoughtlessness that characterize our society. Some will object, of course, that these are great ideas, but totally unfeasible in these times of economic downturn. We can't even raise the money for a basic building, they'll say, let alone one of these fancy "green" buildings.

But we can't afford not to start constructing smarter buildings. Attractive "green" buildings can be designed at little difference in price than conventional structures. But even if construction is more expensive, we should measure the true cost of the alternatives over the life of the building. On average, only twelve percent of a building's total cost comes from the construction phase. The other 88 percent of costs accrue in operation and maintenance with the bulk coming from fossil fuel energy. Only full life-cycle analysis—counting the projected costs over the expected lifetime—allows for a true comparison of cost. It's foolish to spend less now only to have those savings literally go up in coal smoke within a few years.

We should also remember that the true bottom line is not economics but education, not dollars but diplomas and the students who carry them into the world. If we hope to educate people with the knowledge, skills, and commitment to make the world a better place, we ought to do it in buildings that say to our students what we want our students to say to the world.

Jon Jensen teaches environmental studies and philosophy at Luther College.

THE NAZI ICE

My sister, the ethics expert,
explains the pressures of medicine.
When she says "harvest," she means
bringing in the sheaves of organs
from the bounty of accidents
or the substantive bull market
in the defective newly-born.
"The terminal," she says, "the brain-dead,
and the anencephalic infants,"
listing the donors, bringing up
the slippery slope of choosing
while we avoid the ice on our walk
among the state-constructed housing
for the profoundly flawed. Here, a mile
from my house, is a body-part
holding pen. The politicians
of what's-possible spin a truth
from the straw of lucrative thought.
At the dormitory's shadow line,
the slush returns, and I am afraid,
suddenly, to examine
its windows, my sister stalking
the painted feet on the sidewalks.
She fits her shoes to the trails
of yellow, blue, and red while
I tell her my winter story,
how the universe, according to
Hans Horbiger, is full of icebergs
so large and eratically spiraling,
they inevitably collide with stars.
Thus solar systems began, the stars
spewing off debris. Thus Earth and
its four moons began, all of them
but one tumbling into the oceans.
My sister gathers her skirt where
the bright footprints leave the curb.
"Yes?" she asks, pausing in the street's
red shoes, and I say the huge splash
of one moon drowned Atlantis,
the lost holy land of the Aryans.
That Horbiger, the German, seeded space
with ice enough for a million
collisions, thousands of Nazis
waiting for the telescopes to find
another island for perfection.
Some solar systems are older
than ours; some moons have never fallen;
"Look," Hitler commanded, "study, believe."

Gary Fincke

living with the living and the dead

L. DeAne Lagerquist

half the people you see these days are talking on cell-phones
driving off the road & bumping into doors
people used to spend quite a bit of time alone
i guess nobody's lonely anymore
'cept you & me babe 'cept you & me
Greg Brown

When I sneer at cell phone users in the grocery store or roll my eyes at the cheerful tune of a cell phone ringing during a meeting there is little sympathy in my complaint. I mean to distinguish myself from those people. I'm disdainful of their seeming inability (or at least unwillingness) to admit the limits of time and space, to fully live in their now and here. I let myself suspect that they are unable to make even so simple a decision as which loaf of bread to buy without consultation. I'm certain that they lack what it takes to be alone.

But, when the musician Greg Brown makes my complaint in his unpolished voice I hear something else. Between the edges of his words, in the ragged breathing spaces, vulnerability creeps in. The longing and memory deep in the human condition are palpable; Brown lures me into thinking again about living in my own time and space. I don't live just in the where and when my body occupies, indeed, I have to admit some empathy with those on the phone.

I also treat time and space as permeable. While talkers on cell phones transcend time and space by means of technology I don't quite understand, I transcend them as a matter of theological praxis. I live always with the living and with the dead, even when I seem to be alone. This is not only because I am a historian whose work is with people long dead or because I am now reaching an age when many people I have known are no longer alive. My living outside the here and now is faith's response to longing and memory. To live outside the here and now is to act on the hope that the powerful, animating divine breath unites all of God's people.

This is not to say that loneliness and vulnerability are removed. Far from it. When someone once living joins the company of the dead, we long for them and grieve in their absence. The litany of names we recall on All Saints Day grows longer each year. In Boe chapel at St. Olaf, not long before you read this, we will have walked forward at the conclusion of the All Saints Day service to set out lighted candles remembering those who died in this past cycle of the seasons. As we do so, those who were already dead a year ago still break into our memories, as at other times a sight or smell reminds us of them. That remembering brings them closer to us and intensifies our aloneness.

Once, in the philosophy section of the library, I was ambushed by the photograph of a former colleague. When he crossed over the previous spring, Bill Narum had been ill for a long time, slowing failing, and so his death was not unexpected. Since I knew that he was dead, perhaps I should not have been surprised to confront his face on the wall in the stacks. (This is a thing we do at this college: hang photos of dead colleagues in the library according to the proper Library of Congress call numbers.) But to come upon his

image there among the books he read and the ideas he loved startled me. Honestly, the encounter knocked the breath out of me and I had to sit down.

Even without a photograph to provoke me, I have been similarly overcome in recent months by the fact that Tim Lull is too soon dead. For the decade and a half that I knew him, this scholar, theologian, and churchman—the president of Pacific Lutheran Theological Semi-nary—seemed ubiquitous, likely to turn up at any gathering of Lutherans, whether brought together for academic or ecclesial purposes. As Jonathan Strandjord observed at his funeral, when Tim was at such a meeting one knew it would not be boring and that something new might happen. Now the something new is that Tim won't turn up. We'll notice. We'll wish that a cell phone would play a cheerful tune and then work like something from Star Trek to "beam him up" to us.

This, of course, is the limit of a cell phone. Even the most up-to-date technology and the best calling plan cannot make a connection between the living and the dead. Even now, several years after her death, I still have my friend Carol's phone number listed on my palm pilot. The number reminds me that using it will not overcome my longing for one more of the lively conversations that began when we were checking out graduate schools; it makes me aware how quickly a career can be over and a friendship changed by bumping into the limits of time and space.

Every year on All Saints Day we sing: "Oh, blessed communion, fellowship divine, We feebly struggle, they in glory shine; Yet all are one within your grand design." The cycle of the seasons connects us to "the saints who from their labors rest" by giving us a day to notice that they are gone; but the revolving year is not the basis of our being reunited. Here is the oddity of Christian time and place. Even as we feebly struggle to live well with the neighbors we have in this place on this day, we know the loneliness of longing for the culmination of all time. We hope for "a yet more glorious day."

Every year on All Saints Day we sing: "Oh, blessed communion, fellowship divine, We feebly struggle, they in glory shine; Yet all are one within your grand design." The cycle of the seasons connects us to "the saints who from their labors rest" by giving us a day to notice that they are gone; but the revolving year is not the basis of our being reunited. Here is the oddity of Christian time and place. Even as we feebly struggle to live well with the neighbors we have in this place on this day, we know the loneliness of longing for the culmination of all time.

Both the memory of those who have gone before us and the longing to be reunited with them evoke a sort of loneliness. And yet the same memory and the hope of "blessed communion" console us when this time and place are filled with loneliness. So, too, memory and longing recall the promises and persistent presence of the one whose breath gives us life. When we are faced with difficult decisions about how to live, we Christians are guided by the divine spirit and we consult the saints—both living and dead.

Even though Tim Lull is dead, he will turn up at meetings and remind us to be playful and brave in our witness to the gospel. Even though Bill Narum is dead, his love of wisdom urges us to think deeply and well with hearts and minds. Even though Carol will not answer her phone or share with me Chicago deep-dish pizza and a bottle of robust red wine, her enthusiasm for learning and her passion for scholarship encourage me to delight in my work. Every week I meet these saints most vividly and powerfully at the table where all the saints gather to share a drop of wine and a bite of bread. Then, and at that place, the limits of time and space dissolve and we are all made one by the Holy Spirit, rather than by human memory.

Perhaps the next time I see someone talking on a cell-phone in the grocery store, rather than lament with Greg Brown, I shall hum "But, lo! There breaks a yet more glorious day...."

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RITUALS

The evening settles in, like prayer
For those who mix their hope with something dim
And cool. The everyday is this for you:
The longing lingering in the air
With the spill of each geranium,
The pretty jump rope girls, the town
Of hoses, catch, and all the lazy dogs
That greet a whistling man home from downtown.

You used to think that destiny
Shaped everything: an outline of your life
Like pictures made in drawing books, the color
Left for you; the brevity
You thought not once about. Finally, the grief
Of candles makes the clearest sense,
Along with twilight, a book-end to the dark
If only there is some deliverance.

The man next door puts on his music,
And you pause. You don't even know his name,
But rhythms are a voice that lips can know
In other ways than just to speak.
The other side brings different sounds: the claim
Of love. A woman mourns the dirt
That took her husband in its heavy arms,
While hers feel useless and indefinite.

Quite soon it will be time to go
Make tea, and let the water in the kettle
Bring to boil the past; at night it's hard,
Lost within the ebb and flow
Of loneliness, watching disappointment settle
Like the last tossed things. The secret
Is knowing how to keep love long enough,
Or is a secret restlessness the culprit?

Those girls across the street sing rhymes
Your memory mimics, like a lilting chord.
What's brought you from their laughter in the dust
To silence? You always thought your dreams,
Their beauty in their momentary gold,
Could save you. You don't know them now,
Just all the yearning tangled up with them,
The notes that meet you at time's rendezvous.

The music stops; then there's the breath
That makes you turn. It's dark. A flick of light
Brings keepsakes into focus. What made them
Anything but things? The death
Of moments lost before, the truth despite
The pleasure in the souvenir.
Your mother's smile is dead within a frame
With trinkets you can't think of reasons for.

But now you're haunted by a face
You see sometimes when passing by a room,
Like an abandoned cherub in the dark.
You close your eyes; yet still you trace
The ache that's present in your distant womb.
It was right then. You know it was.
You gave your baby up, but still you see
The lamp-light falling on the crevices.

Kim Bridgford

lessons from Middle Eastern churches

Gary M. Burge

"EXPOSURE TO ANOTHER CULTURE CHANGES one," may be a commonplace in the contemporary academy, but it is no less true for that. My research, my teaching, and my life have changed through the encounters I've had with Arab Christians in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Palestine over the last twenty years, contacts that began with a handful of classes at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut in the 1970s. Many Middle Easterners have opened their world to me and now my world is different.

Falling in love with this culture is no great challenge. Something draws you, and suddenly Midwesterners like the desert. We develop a fancy for new musical rhythms and foods. We buy our first Hamza el Din CD at Borders and start putting cinnamon and pine nuts in our rice. We eat pomegranates and hoummus. And drink dangerously strong coffee. But above all, we fall in love with a church whose rich history bears no resemblance to our own. That is what happened to me.

My own experiences have been richest in Palestine, not because this particular church offered more than, say, the churches of Cairo or Beirut, but because my own career has brought me back to the Holy Land again and again, sometimes working at archaeological digs in Galilee, sometimes doing research about the Palestinian political world.

Each time I enter this world, I make new friends. Like the late Audeh Rantisi, former Anglican pastor in Ramallah. In 1989 during the Intifada, Audeh and his wife Pat invited me to stay at their home and experience military occupation. Or like Suhail Ramadan, the Baptist pastor of Tur'an, a village just north of Nazareth, who recently hosted me, providing me with a glimpse of what it means to be a Christian in a predominantly Muslim place—and still remain faithful. Or Mitri Rahib, who five years ago welcomed me and 45 Wheaton students one Friday evening at his church. His youth group taught us Arab dances, and later sat with us on the darkened rooftops of Bethlehem, discussing American Christian identity and how it compared with the Arab experience.

I've learned much from these communities from Gaza to Galilee, from Beit Jala to Bir Zeit. Four things come immediately to mind.

(1) *The Palestinian church is genuinely a church under the cross.* The early church described itself as a "church of apostles and martyrs." Indeed, St. Paul wrote that "all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." This was the experience of the earliest Christians in the Holy Land; today it seems to be the same, for both messianic Jews and Arab Christians. This past summer, soon after I finished interviewing the staff of a messianic synagogue in West Jerusalem, its building was firebombed by angry Orthodox Jews.

Recently a pastor in Galilee described the Palestinian Church to me as a "church under the cross." He meant that dislocation and persecution has been so much a part of his church's experience over the centuries that it is now a key part of its life and identity. William Dalrymple's wonderful book, *From the Holy Mountain: A Journey Among the Christians of the Middle East*, bears eloquent testimony to the harsh realities of Middle Eastern history and the struggle of Christians there to hold on. The once flourishing Christian communities of Turkey and Syria are evident only in the ruins of their great monasteries and churches. Lebanon's Christian communities suffered the same violence as did the entire country in a twenty-year civil war.

And today in Palestine the increasing struggle for justice and the unending tension of conflict daily drives Christians out of the country. Father Majdi al-Siryani of Beit Sahour told me this summer, "We understand suffering, but don't feel sorry for us. We are hibernating."

Since the seventh century and the advent of Islam, this church has understood how to survive when political and religious powers struggle for dominion; they have learned how to hibernate when hibernating is the appropriate response to the weather—when the dangers and challenges of life in the world are life-threatening. Four years ago I spent a day at the heavily fortified Mar Saba Monastery in the desert east of Jerusalem. A password was required to enter the front gate. A bell alerted the community to the arrival of outsiders. And there were walls, strong high walls. Strong walls and strong faith have kept this place—and many like it—alive for more centuries than most can count.

Middle Eastern Christianity has learned to build its own walls and to remain alert to outsiders. Take Beit Jala. Eighty percent of its residents are Christian. Today in the crossfire of land politics and nationalism, they face the cannon-fire of Israeli tanks and the missiles of Apache attack helicopters. If they resist the rifle-fire directed toward the Israeli settlement of Gilo, will they be perceived as traitors to the Palestinian resistance? What discernment it takes to be a Christian in Beit Jala today! Abuna Maroun of Beit Jala's Latin Seminary would remind us that this church has seldom been free. As Christians they have learned "to absorb suffering."

The Middle Eastern Christian Church has offered a continuous witness to its faith even in those centuries of greatest danger and even now, as political tension has reached toxic levels. "Don't think of the church of Jerusalem as if it were in ruins. We are alive! We simply need a little help."

Despite this, the church is not cowed. It has offered a continuous witness to its faith even in those centuries of greatest danger and even now, as political tension has reached toxic levels. Spend a morning with Attalah Hannah, leader of the Arab Orthodox in Palestine, as I did recently, and at once you'll see courageous faith that is willing to confront evil. Echoing the words of Abuna Majdi, he told me, "Don't think of the church of Jerusalem as if it were in ruins. We are alive! We simply need a little help."

So what have I learned? I have learned to stop complaining. Rarely do I hear my Arab Christian friends complain about their circumstances, whether they are in Bethlehem being attacked by Israeli tanks or in Southern Egypt facing hostile Muslim fundamentalists. Father Emile in Bir Zeit once reminded me that in America a crisis is a fifty cents per gallon increase in the price of gas. Not so in the Middle East.

(2) *Strength comes through tradition.* The living knowledge of its old stories and the mandate this history provides makes this church strong. Mitri Rahib, for example, writes eloquently in his book, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, that his Christian roots go back far in this land and that his life and his ministry, indeed his commitment to working within the Palestinian church, are gestures of faithfulness to that heritage.

When I bring students to Israel and Palestine, they arrive knowing little of the history of the Christian church prior to the Reformation. Even if they know something of the earliest ecumenical councils, they do not have a deep appreciation for the value of these centuries. For many, Christian history jumps from Paul to Augustine to the Crusades and from there to Luther. I forbid my students to enter Jerusalem's ancient Church of the Holy Sepulchre when the tourists fill it from wall to wall. Otherwise it becomes a Disneyesque experience of cameras and entertainment. So, first they must suffer my long and passionate explanation of the history of the church and its antiquity; likewise, before we enter Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity. What am I trying to do? I want them to get some sense of the great history of Christianity in this land, to realize that, for instance, from the second till the seventh century some of the greatest minds in the most formative period of the church lived between Antioch and Alexandria. And then, even after the coming of Islam, this

ancient church survived despite disadvantages and massive conversions to the new faith. I want my students to honor the richness of spiritual expressions, birthed from an utterly different cultural world, and discover in them meanings lost to most Protestants.

It is a great thing to hold old books. In a cabinet at home I have my grandfather's Lutheran confirmation Bible from 1920s Germany. In some inexplicable way, holding it, knowing his hands held it, anchors me. I want my students to hold the ancient traditions—the creeds, the liturgies, the churches—in the same way.

SO WHAT HAVE I LEARNED? I HAVE LEARNED TO respect the "ancient churches." I find myself increasingly intolerant of evangelicals and other Protestants in my own world who discredit or disrespect Christians whose Antiochene or Coptic or Melkite traditions are so different than ours. Their tradition—from their creeds to their hymnody—has given these ancient churches strength to persevere for more than 1500 years.

(3) *The Power of the Priesthood and the Meaning of Ministry*. The Middle Eastern Church has taught me to respect faithful suffering, and has taught me to respect the ancient traditions which my own evangelical heritage does not adequately recognize. But there is something else I have learned.

In 1986 when the young Father Majdi joined the parish in Bir Zeit he found that his church council was filled with Palestinian intellectuals committed to numerous resistance organizations. Most parishioners had been imprisoned; many had been tortured. Indeed, this church's mission had been shaped by the Intifada.

Once when there was a strike, soldiers entered the parish grounds of the church to arrest Father Majdi.

When a young Israeli struck him with the butt of his rifle, Majdi stood shocked; he had never been hit before. Without thinking, he took out his passport and slapped the soldier across the face. In response to the two soldiers who then approached him, Majdi said, "Kill me if that is why you are here." Because he was a priest, they backed away and left him alone.

This episode was a turning point for Majdi's ministry. Through it he learned that as a priest, as a visible spiritual leader in the community, he has the power to challenge "the oppressor" in a way no one else can. At a parish in Beit Sahour more than once he intervened at the Bethlehem military checkpoint, stopping abuse by using his "clerical collar" as leverage against evil.

"The altar was not made for politics," Majdi will tell you, but it seems that the cassock and the cross can become an amazing uniform that still has a protected voice in this region. In 1974 Father Maroun of Beit Jala was riding a bus near Tripoli, Lebanon. He had just been ordained. A Muslim militia stopped the bus and pulled out thirteen Christians whom they planned to shoot in revenge for an atrocity the day before. Maroun quickly offered his group absolution as they were lined up for the kill. Surprisingly, following his intercessions, the militia lowered their automatic rifles and released their captives.

So what have I learned? This community has asked me to re-think ministry as the "care of souls." What is the meaning of ministry when evil runs amuck, when the wolf is at the door? My evangelical heritage has consistently disengaged me from social or political involvement—just as many Palestinian evangelicals struggle with disengagement today. But priests like those in the Middle East, in Nazareth, Bir Zeit, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Beit Jalla hear a different call.

(4) *Compassion and Care-Giving*. Not only have I learned that the priesthood enjoys a remarkable power to effect change, I have learned that Christian leadership means living with the struggles of your people and defending them, no matter where the struggle leads.

Rev. Mitri Rahib of Bethlehem is a model and inspiration for me. Mitri tells the story of one church family, the Daher family, whose vineyard seven miles south of Bethlehem recently has been under threat of confiscation by the Israelis because it is "uncultivated." The Daher family purchased the land 100 years ago when they migrated from Lebanon. It had been a famously rich vineyard, but for many years the Israelis have restricted water distribution in Bethlehem (Israelis settlers there have an allotment nine times that of Arabs) and the Daher vineyard has been in trouble. But the real reason for the threatened confiscation is that the Daher vineyard occupies a lovely hilltop now surrounded by three Israeli settlements. It is a

thorn in the side of large Jewish organizations (the Amana Movement of Gush Emunim, the Ha'oved HaLeumi Party) who want to consolidate Israeli control over this area.

When the Daher family approached Mitri with the military confiscation order, he was scarcely surprised. It was a perfect repeat of the Biblical story of Ahab and Naboth's vineyard in 1 Kings chapter 21. Corrupt Israeli leaders were twisting justice in order to steal land. Mitri's church decided to fight back and committees were set up to prevent the loss of land. One committee, headed by an attorney, worked on an appeal. Another committee obtained tractors to immediately re-plow the land. A third committee quickly obtained plants to renew the fields: they collected 1700 young cabbage plants, 200 olive trees, and more than 1000 almond and plum trees. A fourth committee worked on media relations and when word got out, Christians, Muslims, Americans, and Europeans could be seen in the Daher family vineyard planting trees!

TODAY THE DAHER FAMILY FARM STILL STANDS, but it experiences regular threats. Incredibly it has now been adopted by international legal communities based in Geneva, Switzerland, which are viewing this as a test-case of Israeli justice. Physical threats and acts of violence have also come against the Dahers, but they have stood firm. Settlers tried to bulldoze a road through the middle of these vineyards claiming the need for safe transit, but this ploy failed as well. In 1999 I stood with the young men of this family on the highest point of their lands. The cave where their grandfather lived when he first tilled the land stood behind us. But there, looming to the west, was an incredible sight. A settlement, pristine and modern, with every sign of rapid growth, a new suburb for Jerusalem, hovered on the edge of the Dahers's land. One son pointed to the edge of his land in a nearby valley, and as we squinted we saw in the distance bulldozers scraping away at the perimeter of his farm, crossing the valley, defiantly eroding the boundary this family defends. These are the incredible "cutting edge" issues of Mitri's pastorate.

So what have I learned? The needs of church people include social issues and justice concerns and as a church we need to stand for them. I want to be a Christian for whom the good news of God's kingdom goes beyond business as usual. I want to be a Christian whose acknowledgment of the Kingdom of God means advancing its truth and values in our world. And if I must be an outrageous advocate, if I have to be as strident as Abuna Majdi, or as raucous as Atalla Hanna, so be it.

Pope John Paul VI gave evangelical World Vision/Jerusalem its motto: "If you want peace, work for justice." Middle Eastern churches have learned as much, a lesson we too must learn. ♱

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life together

gung-ho to shave Ray's hair

Russell Jeung

NORMALLY, THE POUNDING ON THE DOOR sounded about three feet from the ground. That's as high as the little kids could reach, but they would hammer furiously with their fists until I answered their demands.

"Whatcha' doin'?" flatly intoned a bored four year old.

"Can we see the rat?" The girls hoped to pet my sleeping hamster.

And on and on they would pester me. I lived at Oak Park Apartments in Oakland, California, a run-down, fifty-six unit complex filled with Latino and Cambodian families. After school, dozens of children would herd into our central, concrete courtyard. Located on the ground level, our apartment was the kids' convenience station, good for pit stops and fill-ups. Kids even ran a cooperative bakery from our place, where they sold fresh cookies and brownies to each other and kept the profits. They cheerfully tithed and put change into a pot that we called "God's money" and later gave to refugee relief programs.

A knock on the door was hardly surprising, but this knock was different. It came from above. At least five feet above the ground. I curiously looked out and saw that it was Ray, one of the three white persons living in our complex. This afternoon Ray didn't have his usual Budweiser in hand. Instead, he had an electric hair razor.

"Russell, can you shave my head?" Ray drawled.

I was instantly repulsed by the thought of touching Ray, let alone running my fingers through his hair. Ray was a grizzled, unkempt alcoholic who lived in our building and constantly regaled us with his dream that someday, his "check would come in the mail." Then he would marry a Cambodian bride and help his neighbors buy more beer. Because he wore military fatigues, I assumed he was a spaced-out Vietnam War veteran, but I later found out that he was only in his late twenties. The drinking, smoking, and diet of bagel dogs certainly had worn on him.

"Uh, why me? Can't you get someone else to do it? I'm busy right now," I claimed. This last statement was extremely ironic, because I was a graduate student and rarely busy; I would do anything to procrastinate. I even cleaned a neighbor's apartment, including the area behind the stove and refrigerator, to put off writing. But I didn't want to touch Ray's head.

"C'mon, you can do it. I even have the razor!" He proudly lifted it up for my viewing.

"I don't think so. I can't cut hair," and so I excused myself and returned to my hypothetical work. However, the popular evangelical acronym, as seen fashionably on wristbands, kept nagging at me: "WWJD?—What would Jesus do?"

After all, I had come to Oak Park to seek God by living among the poor. I had moved in with my roommate, Dan, and soon recent college graduates were joining us in our multi-ethnic, low-income neighborhood. Like me, they were attracted to living simply so that we could focus on our relationships with God. We lived "in community" in order to support one another's ministries and to bear witness as the body of Christ. Besides living near each other and praying together, we took turns cooking to ensure that we would have one serving of fruits or vegetables daily.

And we loved the unintentional community of Oak Park. Oak Park became known as "Cambodian Village" in the mid-1980s as refugees relocated following the Killing Fields. Over time, Latinos also took advantage of the cheap housing at Oak Park, which had some of the lowest rents in the region. Household size in the one-bedroom apartments averaged seven (a mother, father, four children, and a community organizer hoping to mobilize the grassroots) so that daily activities spilled out into the courtyard. Dona Carmen would sell sopas to day laborers while Grandmother Ry hung her freshly washed sarongs overhead. In the mornings, Van Kim would give his chickens, normally penned in his bathroom,

free-range outside our apartment. Thrown together by war and globalization, Southeast Asian and Latino families warmly welcomed my friends and me to their homes.

Another knock came at my door, this time at the usual three-foot height. "Are you going to cut Ray's hair?" Dana squeaked. "He's waiting now." I had been wrestling with what to do, but the hopeful request from my little neighbor won me over. Together, we marched three doors over to Ray's apartment.

Ray was in the kitchen, smiling serenely like the Buddhist monks who came yearly to Oak Park for offerings. His cupboards were bare except for the roaches brazenly scouring the walls for bits of food. I tried to breathe through my mouth because the place smelled of stale cigarette smoke which Dana seemed not to notice, intent as she was to witness the landmark shearing.

I turned on the razor, pressed it against Ray's pasty white scalp, and mowed the first swatch of hair. "This isn't too bad," I thought, as I avoided making skin contact with his head. I proceeded with gusto, and within minutes I had cropped all his hair. Ray ran his hand over his head from front to back and side to side.

"Thanks, Russell. Wanna' beer?" he asked.

"No thanks. I'm good."

Ten years since I shaved Ray's head, I've grown even more gung ho about our community. "Gung ho" is a Chinese expression that literally means "to work together." During the Sino-Japanese War, Chinese laborers formed industrial cooperatives to raise war funds and materials. A U.S. marine colonel noted the enthusiasm with which they cooperated and worked, and borrowed the term to describe meetings where group problems were worked out.

Jesus commanded us to love our neighbor and the body of Christ with gung ho spirit, but that's often hard to do when our neighbors are living self-sufficiently, spaced evenly apart in suburban tract homes. It's even difficult in our postmodern churches, where congregations primarily must cater to the needs of individuals. But at Oak Park, loving my random neighbors has been easy because they come knocking all the time. Whether they are children or adults, they are not ashamed to seek help. Although I treated Ray as an untouchable, he enlisted himself in my community. Fortunately, our community has also included kids like Dana, who can prod me with their own enthusiasm. Through my Oak Park community, I have begun to learn the gung ho spirit of self-sacrifice for others and the group. I have become less self-obsessed as the concerns of others have become more apparent to me. Ray was one of my first teachers.

Over time, our Christian community has become more intentional as well. With forty-four of the Oak Park families, we successfully sued to improve our housing conditions and we have just opened a neighborhood preschool. We still eat together, with twenty-six people representing eight different ethnicities sharing their culinary talents on a monthly rotating basis. I like to think that some of us still bring a group loyalty exemplified by our Chinese forebears. Through New Hope Covenant Church, we hope our partnership in the work of the gospel will reflect God's kingdom of salvation, peace, and justice.

Unintentionally, Ray helped us build an intentional community. Finally, he did receive his big check from the government and he bought furniture for a few families. Other stories of his antics belong to our community of memory, where our shared struggles and joys keep us bound together. Although he has passed away, I still think about Ray and how gung ho he was to get his head shaved. Given the choice, cutting the hair of a Ray would still not be at the top of my list of fun things to do. But sometimes, in community with a Dana and a Ray, you have no real choice. And for that I am grateful. ✠

A Chinese American, Russell Jeung teaches Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University and continues to live in the Oak Park neighborhood. He and his fellow tenants did win a legal settlement so that they will soon have new, permanent affordable housing.

words

Gilbert Meilaender

"IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, . . . AND the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." In the life of the church catholic, and in the history of our culture, the formative influence of these opening affirmations of John's Gospel can scarcely be overestimated. Of all the titles by which Christians came to speak of Jesus, none, Jaroslav Pelikan writes, "was to have more momentous consequences than the title Logos, consequences as momentous for the history of thought as were those of the title King for the history of politics."

Words—first of all, God's words—have the power of what philosophers have called "performative utterances." They effect what they speak. As does the divine "let there be" in Genesis. As does the song by which the great Lion Aslan sings Narnia into existence. As does Jesus' "take up your bed, and walk." As does our own covenantal promise, "I take you as my husband . . . I take you as my wife." Words have the power to draw us into the mystery of how the universe hangs together in the Word, who is from eternity the Son of the Father.

In the long sweep of Christian history, words have perhaps been the special treasure of Protestants. Thus Luther asserted that while he only urged, preached, and declared God's Word—while he did nothing more than utter words which had the power to be God's own Word—and for the rest slept or drank his Wittenberg beer with Melanchthon and Amsdorf, the Word did the rest. And if that assertion has a bit of the exaggeration sometimes present in Luther's rhetoric, we would, nonetheless, miss something crucial if we took it less than seriously.

Whether Lutherans—or Protestants more generally—remain well positioned to offer this special emphasis to the larger church catholic, one may sometimes doubt. The low estate to which preaching has fallen among us is one sign of our failure. Liturgical renewal movements of the late twentieth century sought to overcome what they—often rightly—took to be a one-sided emphasis on the preached word, architecturally embodied in a pulpit that dominated the eye of the worshiper. Reclaiming the centrality of the Lord's Supper by means of an altar—or, more problematically, table—which became the center of attention and action, this renewal often left us without an equally arresting structural embodiment of the centrality of the preached word. And when we do not seem to expect or want our preachers to speak God's word to us, they are more likely to give us their own advice, insight, and therapy.

Likewise, perhaps the most important and life-transforming performative utterance spoken by most Christians—the marriage vow—has come to be understood more as an aspiration than a vow. That "I will" is no longer thought actually to alter our world, to create a new world, but simply to signal choices that may be quite transient in their effects. If the promise must one day be broken, we simply go on to make another, as if these utterances had no lasting effect in our world.

FOR THOSE WHOSE VOCATION DRAWS THEM INTO colleges or universities as teachers and students, words ought to demand special attention; yet, here too we may often have lost the sense—so deeply embedded in the church catholic—of their power and importance. It was, after all, the Christian confidence that all things hold together in the Christ who is the Word of the Father that was largely responsible for teaching us to think of the world as simultaneously knowable and mysterious. Knowable—because its inner meaning and

constitution was the product of God's creative Word. Mysterious—because to probe that inner meaning and constitution was, finally, to probe the meaning of God's own Word. The point was beautifully made by the Roman Catholic Josef Pieper (in words with which, I like to think, the Lutheran catholic, Franz Pieper, would have concurred):

> Because things come forth from the eye of God, they partake wholly of the nature of the Logos, that is, they are lucid and limpid to their very depths. It is their origin in the Logos which makes them knowable to men. But because of this very origin in the Logos, they mirror an *infinite* light and can therefore not be wholly comprehended. It is not darkness or chaos which makes them unfathomable. If a man, therefore, in his philosophical inquiry, gropes after the essence of things, he finds himself, by the very act of approaching his object, in an unfathomable abyss, but it is an abyss of *light*.

All too often, alas, our academic institutions—even Lutheran ones which might be expected to know better—abandon this birthright for a mess of pottage. Rather than really believing in the worth of the arts and sciences, in the worth of exploring a world constituted as knowable by the Logos of the Father, we make the liberal arts simply an adjunct to other goals. We aim to produce good professionals and good citizens—and we think a tincture of the liberal arts will serve that aim well.

It is the task of the various academic disciplines to help us explore a world simultaneously knowable and mysterious. Because it is knowable, each of the disciplines draws us into a particular angle of vision from which to peer into that unfathomable abyss, to see a part of the truth. Because it is mysterious, because it is a hard struggle just to come to know what is knowable in one discipline, none of us can ever truly integrate all these angles of vision without superficiality. Because it is knowable, we do not have to suppose that a part of the truth (genuinely known) is only partly true. Because it is mysterious, we cannot program or manipulate integrative vision of the whole; most often, in fact, we can simply marvel and give thanks when it happens in our lives or the lives of others.

No doubt it will always be the case that words finally fail us when we stare into that unfathomable abyss of light. Fortunate for us, therefore, that the abyss speaks to us.

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WINTER LIGHT

Its hard diamond brilliance is all over
this strange foreign city, where peddlars
and street sweepers shuffle through the cold
and charcoal burning on the pavement
spends its acrid heart. Soon we'll be warm
in the sheath of winter light, walking like ghosts
in a glittering sea, rare as summer peaches.
In the old quarter the curving rooflines
with their upended tile in imperial yellow,
their winter-white splendor, turn on us
an ancient, staring face. Brassy as bells,
they climb the cloudless sky.
There is clarity here in the morning's
winter light, its daunting shower of stars,
its hope and oblivion.

Diane G. Scholl

the jungle

A. P.

THIS IS A WORLD WHERE THREE-YEAR-OLDS RUN across streets with no adult in sight and neighbors scream obscenities at each other, day and night. This is a world where guys chug down a six-pack of malt liquor and then stumble in front of passing cars. This is a world where if a police officer takes out her gun while searching yards for a suspect, a neighborhood kid will gleefully shout, "Hell yeah, 5-0's got out her nine!"

In the jungle, it is not uncommon to be drunk at seven in the morning.

"Fuck the police" is the neighborhood mantra. In winter, mayonnaise is kept on the outer windowsill to stay cold, because there is no refrigerator. In the jungle, the air of hopelessness and defeat stoops the shoulders of the young and old. Children here have dirty faces and only one roller-skate and a relative passed out in a drug-fueled stupor on a bare mattress in some corner where they live. Here, some victims of violent crimes don't call the police because they themselves are wanted on felony warrants. Here, someone may assault you with a baseball bat just because they're bored, because they can, because you're there. As my father might say, this is a world that does not treat its tourists well.

In the jungle, suburban white guys prowl in their SUVs, hoping to score some dope or pick up the hooker with the fewest diseases. Teenage thugs walk the streets in a practiced saunter, looking to teach someone a lesson or to respond to a perceived slight by firing off rounds at somebody, anybody, everybody. In this place, today's victim is tomorrow's suspect. In the jungle, a woman will tell you that her boyfriend beat her up, but there's not a mark on her, her breath reeks of cheap booze, and she has three warrants for her arrest. Little Debbie snack cakes smear the sidewalks and Funyun wrappers, the universal sign of urban blight, blow around front lawns. Suggest to some one that they clean up after their dog and they'll look at you as if you suggested flying off to Pluto in search of alternative fuels. The drug war has been lost in the jungle; it isn't even close. Crack houses dot the streets. Gunfire serves as an alarm clock. The sound of children playing is more feral than festive.

As a police officer, I battle daily with the unforgivable temptation to believe that many of these people deserve the jungle. One cop said that if he won the lottery, he would buy up the worst section of the city, demolish all the homes, pave the entire area in blacktop, surround it with barbed wire, and ring the whole perimeter with No Trespassing signs. That would be progress, he said.

BUT THERE IS BEAUTY HERE, IF YOU LOOK CAREfully enough, and there is courage and resolve. Take my former next-door neighbor, an improbably cheerful Frenchman straight out of a Victor Hugo novel, who has lived in the same drug- and gang-infested neighborhood for the last ten years. He still keeps his yard immaculate, and his hedges carefully trimmed. He picks up trash from the sidewalk and fixes the widow's front porch for free even though he is undergoing painful treatment for prostate cancer.

There is hope here, in small pockets: food pantries, programs that buy up cars and then sell them to low-income workers at half-cost, and youth pastors working with gang-bangers trying to get them to see that there is another way. Good people live here. They work two jobs. They raise families. And they despair that their children cannot play outside without the risk of catching a stray bullet.

I write about the jungle in part because after eight years of living in different parts of the inner

city—if not always quite in the jungle then never far from it—I am moving, relocating to a tonier part of town. My original decision to live in the central city was based on a number of factors, including economy (the prospect of paying $375 a month in rent for a three bedroom apartment is, indeed, the Sirens' call), and a desire, spurred on by my time in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, to live among the poor. I also felt I was well-equipped for the jungle. After all, I was young and single with no children. I didn't scare easily. I had a long fuse. I wasn't big on accoutrements.

But I am moving. I got tired, I suppose. And I am no longer single. My new home is safe and quiet. It overlooks a marina. People tend to be civil. Dogs are on leashes. I don't have to walk home after midnight with my hand on my gun. People jog here. It is a little disorienting at first.

As I pack, I think back over the places I have lived in the jungle. I recall being prevented from going into my apartment because some armed robbers with shotguns were holed up in my neighbor's flat. I remember being woken by the sounds of a gun-related homicide on my street. I have been robbed, had an extension to a socket wrench winged at me by a disgruntled neighbor, lived across from a flourishing crack house, and watched the sweat drip off my chin on 95 degree summer days with my windows painted shut to ward off burglars.

I am reminded of the single mother of three on my block who has no front teeth and a debilitating weakness for crack cocaine, a damaged woman who delighted in giving me a lewd whistle when I left for work. And I think of my own mother, a beautiful and graceful woman who reads and bikes and gardens (she calls the latter 'redeeming a space') and I realize that though I have lived in this neighborhood and neighborhoods like it, I remain a stranger in this place. Although in my most self-aggrandizing moments I might think otherwise, my time in the jungle has not made me some sort of urban expert. I experienced only a taste of it. I was always in a different lot than my neighbors. They had to live here; I chose to. I had a savings account to fall back on, support from friends and family, good health, a college education. I was on the outside looking in.

After eight years, it is time for me to go. I don't know exactly what I thought my role would be here. Organizing a block watch. Handing out sack lunches. Patrolling alleys off-duty. My feelings about the move are decidedly mixed. I can't shake the feeling that I am turning my back on something, or reneging on a promise. Has the jungle beaten me? I wonder if I have a responsibility to stay. I thought I could live and work here. Maybe I'll have to settle for one out of two. One out of two isn't so bad. I don't have a lot of answers. All I know for sure is that I'm leaving.

In the last few weeks, my downstairs neighbor has been burglarized, gang members have shot up a house a half a block away, and a drunk man on a bicycle crashed into a parked car at three in the morning and then looked on in wonder as the paramedics treated the gash in his skull. I wonder if I will return to this place. I know that if I do, it will be not as a guide, but as a guest. So I pack my things, say my good-byes, and I step back through the looking glass.

A.P. is relocating to a neighborhood where people don't shoot at each other when they get mad.

the land of the free

Jeanne Heffernan

IN THE AFTERMATH OF 9/11, AND MORE RECENTLY during the war in Iraq, we've heard frequent invocations of America's freedom. President Bush has insisted that America, unlike her enemies, is a country dedicated to freedom; indeed, as the Administration sees it, we are waging a war in defense of liberty against tyranny. Such stirring speech intends to arouse patriotic sentiment, but it does little to indicate the nature of this liberty we're dying to defend. Is it, in Isaiah Berlin's famous phrase, positive or negative liberty, that is, the freedom to be left alone and not interfered with, or the liberty to be 'master of one's soul'? Or is it some combination of the two?

As Michael Sandel notes in *Democracy's Discontent*, identifying what American freedom is can be a difficult business, because freedom has never had a univocal meaning for Americans. From the early republic to the present, rival political theories have invested the concept with vastly different meanings. Not surprisingly, advocates of these theories have had opposing views of citizenship and the purpose of politics.

In Sandel's estimation, the two main competitors for the title of America's public philosophy have been civic republicanism and liberalism. The former understands freedom in essentially civic and communal ways; freedom means the capacity for self-government and economic independence, and public authority has the positive duty, in turn, to encourage the virtues needed for each task. Liberalism, by contrast, weakens the connection between freedom and self-government and minimizes the pedagogical function of law. Liberalism views freedom in individualistic terms; it emphasizes the self as a rights-bearing individual, and seeks to protect these rights against the encroachments of other individuals or the state. Freedom is the power of the individual to make his own choices—so long as he doesn't harm someone else.

According to Sandel, the weightiest matters of political economy and social policy in the US have been determined by liberalism. It has come to dominate the way in which citizens, legislators, and judges think about what America stands for and, especially, what freedom means. To my mind, the most telling examples of liberalism's dominance come from federal jurisprudence on privacy, and none is more telling than the 1992 *Planned Parenthood vs. Casey* decision. "At the heart of liberty," the Court insists, "is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life."

If the Casey decision is any indication, Sandel is right: liberalism has won. Freedom effectively means the right to think and do what you want without interference. This victory has troubling implications. For one, liberalism is not an adequate public philosophy or story of what holds us together as a people. Specifically, as Sandel argues, liberalism on its own terms can repair neither the loss of our self-government nor the erosion of our communities, since it has too individualistic an understanding of the human person and his freedom.

If liberalism is inadequate, what about the civic republicanism favored by Sandel? This approach has its appeal; it rightly affirms our deeply social nature, as well as the civic and communal dimension of freedom. It has its limitations, however. The heart of the matter is this: civic republicanism does not provide a rich enough account of the human person and, in turn, of what freedom truly is. It relies too much, in the end, upon a purely political conception of freedom. Recall that for the civic republicans freedom means self-government and material independence. Yet without a richer conception of freedom—based upon a deeper and broader notion of what human life is about—the civic republican

view of freedom provides no standard by which to judge the results of a democratic process or the character of an economic initiative.

Consider the following scenario. What if a group of citizens, after intense debate and active civic participation, decided by majority vote to prohibit the immigration of any person with a dark complexion? The decision would have been democratically achieved, but would it have been just? Would it have been a genuine exercise of freedom? Civic republicanism cannot answer on its own terms. Asking such questions about justice and freedom leads us beyond politics, since in order to determine what is free and just, one must know what a human being is and what is due to him. This is precisely where Christian moral and social thought is more helpful than the more narrowly political philosophies, such as those described by Sandel. There are questions that need to be answered before politics and the answers to those questions will shed light upon what it means, or should mean, to say that America is a political community dedicated to freedom.

A CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF THE HUMAN PERSON recognizes the best of what liberalism and civic republicanism promise. The Christian conviction that every individual bears the *imago Dei* provides the strongest foundation for human dignity and the protection of the individual. Likewise, the Christian conviction that human beings are intrinsically social—made for relationships—dignifies the community. So, in the Christian social vision, the individual may not be instrumentalized by another person or group—not even for the sake of a political programme; nor should he assert his rights in such a way as to undermine the community upon which he depends. What is needed, then, is a dignifying balance between rights and duties, a balance that promotes human personhood and protects its relational context.

Effecting this balance is the work of prudence; no abstract calculus will do. Yet this much can be said: a healthy relationship between the individual and the community hinges upon a proper conception of freedom. But freedom cannot mean what the Court supposes it to mean in the *Casey* decision; it cannot be a radically subjective capacity to define reality and to choose X, Y, or Z according to one's preferences. Nor can it simply mean the ability to participate in politics and enjoy material independence. Neither view points us to an independent ground of reality and value to which the majority no less than the individual is accountable.

A CHRISTIAN SOCIAL VISION FILLS THIS GAP. IT recognizes freedom's essential connection to truth. As Christ testified, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." Connecting with that truth, serving and celebrating it, sets one free. Once set free from sin and illusion, the human being can exercise authentic freedom: the capacity to choose the goods that lead to happiness and which by their very nature build up the individual and the community alike. To use an alternative language, the free person is one who can give himself as a gift to others; the free community makes such a gift possible.

What do Americans mean when we tout freedom as our defining value? We would do well to reflect upon this question in light of the Gospel, which offers a demanding but richly rewarding understanding of freedom found in Christ. ♱

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ELEGY FOR A BULL TERRIER

(after Christopher Smart's "Rejoice in the Lamb: A song from Bedlam")

For I will consider my dog Maddie.
For she meditated at the back door waiting for the crunch of tires on leaves,
Watching the play of shadows and branches.
For she worshipped on the living room carpet's patch of sun.
For she stretched out in cool prayer on the wooden floor of the porch in hot weather.
For in her muscled youth she chased the demon possum from the hedge.
For she loved the spirit of wind in her face when she put her head into it.
For she ate the occasional ant that strayed close to her bed.
For she curled into a fetus of fur when she slept.
For she sneezed on command.

Thou Maddie of the slack lips, the smooth flank, the vicious appeal of the serrated gums.
Of the great jaws dripping water lapped or locking around the bone
Or holding the toy cat gently in the cradle of thy mouth.
Thou Maddie of ears pricked as if dipped in starch.
Thou Maddie with paws thick as turf.
Thou, my dog, forever and aye,
Baptized by my daughter in the waters of the bathroom sink,
In thy bath thy most primitive self on display in pink skin under thin fur.

Thou, the beast in my kitchen,
Thy great sides heaving with sleep as thou lay in front of the roast-filled oven.

Thou dog, cur, bitch
Thou canine, tyke.
Thou puppy.
Thou only and ever after.
Thou rich dogness mingled with devotion.

Thou then in your life's fast, last moments
Smiled thy teeth on the pleasures of thy bowl,
And gave a benediction to thy favorite snack of crusts.

We raise our glasses to thee, noble beast, and say, "Good dog,"
Thou godly inversion, thou sheer hound.

Jill Peláez Baumgaertner

Qiu, Xiaolong. *Death of a Red Heroine*. New York: Soho Press, 2000. *A Loyal Character Dancer*. New York: Soho Press, 2002.

Most reviewers of Qiu Xiaolong's first two crime novels find it remarkable that neither reads as typical police fiction. Both *Death of a Red Heroine*, which was nominated for an Edgar and won an Anthony Award for Best First Novel, and *A Loyal Character Dancer* feature Chief Inspector Chen Cao of the Shanghai Police Bureau solving crimes in contemporary China. There is plenty of intrigue involved in the cases Inspector Chen Cao investigates—illicit sexual liaisons, abuse of political power, gangs, triads, and the international trafficking of women and drugs. But it soon becomes clear that China is not merely the setting, but the major character of the novels. While the whodunit of the mysteries keeps the reader turning pages, these novels are enriched by Qiu's realistic and detailed portrayal of the effects of China's disorienting transition from a socialist to a market economy, and of the subtle yet pervasive influence of political power on everyday life.

Qiu Xiaolong was born in Shanghai in 1953, studied classical Chinese poetry, and wrote and published modernist poetry before coming to Washington University in 1989 as an exchange scholar to study English modernist poetry. The June 4, 1989 Tiananmen Incident prevented his return to China, so he pursued an M.A. and Ph.D. in comparative literature and he now teaches Chinese at Washington University, residing in St. Louis with his wife and daughter. Writing in English from the U.S., Qiu's novels suffer neither from the restrictions of censorship nor of translation, providing him more license in presenting the complexity of China's less desirable political and social realities. Because his own coming of age coincided with China's devastating Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the fallout from China's revolutionary past features prominently in Qiu's depictions of its money-making present. Further, Qiu's interest in personal identity (his Ph.D. dissertation was on identity in modernist poetry) emerges as a compelling theme in his novels.

Glowing reviews of Qiu's debut in crime fiction often delight in his exceptional descriptions of China's culinary delights. More interesting, and more idiosyncratic, is Chief Inspector Chen's penchant for quoting poetry, both as a philosophical tool to interpret and make sense of his confused reality and as a method of relaxation. Qiu's protagonist, it turns out, is a reluctant police officer initially assigned to the force due to his excellent English skills. A poet in his spare time, and an eligible bachelor seeking romance, Chief Inspector Chen's poetic and philosophical bent works to his benefit in solving crime. To any avatar of literature, it is gratifying to find that esoteric skills in poetry can actually achieve practical results in enacting justice. Chief Inspector Chen's colleagues are equally bemused by his unconventional approach to solving crime, and he slowly gains their grudging admiration. Yet with respect comes promotion, and the higher one rises in the Chinese bureaucracy, the more networks one must learn to negotiate.

Political maneuvering in China has always been an art, and the 1990s prove no exception, despite the relative social liberalization ushered in by the Deng era of economic reforms started in 1979 and accelerated in 1992. Because the 1990s were a less ideological decade than the previous decades in China, techniques for staying in power became more subtle than ever before. This is the political world in which Chief Inspector Chen must make his way. He is not ultimately motivated by prestige; like many a Chinese scholar-official in earlier dynasties he would much prefer to retreat to the countryside to enjoy quiet domestic comforts. However, he remains influenced by the upbringing of his neo-Confucian father, who instilled in him a sense of duty to the state, personal yearnings notwithstanding.

Chief Inspector Chen's desire for autonomy becomes subject to further compromise as his ethical ideals are challenged. Because he is assigned the task of crime fighter,

he feels obliged to seek justice on behalf of those wronged in society. Repeatedly, when his desire for justice runs counter to the interests of the State, he is forced to navigate a fateful path riddled with potential pitfalls. In such situations poetry serves as a source of guidance and solace. At the close of *A Loyal Character Dancer*, Chief Inspector Chen pens a poem by the eleventh century Song Dynasty statesman Su Dongpo on a Chinese fan, presenting it as a parting gift to the attractive young U.S. Marshal with whom he had collaborated in solving the crime:

Long, long I lament
there is not a self for me to claim,
oh, when can I forget
all the cares of the world?
The night deep, the wind still, no ripples on the river.

While Chief Inspector Chen and the American Marshal (who is fluent in Mandarin and has, like Chen, studied Chinese poetry) have much in common, she is puzzled by Chen's dissembling, both about the case and about their increasingly intimate relationship. As the novels make clear, the dissembling is not deception, but a matter of presentation. By unmasking the multiple layers of relationships and obligations to which this Chinese "self" is beholden, Qui's novels provide English readers entertaining and accessible insights into the "inscrutable" Chinese manner of relating to others.

In addition to the theme of the rapidly shifting relationship of individual to society, a motif that dominates much of 1990s Chinese fiction, Qiu's novels represent another recent trend in Chinese fiction, namely, the reemergence of Chinese crime fiction in the post-Mao era. In Jeffrey Kinkley's account of this phenomenon in *Chinese Justice, the Fiction: Law and Literature in Modern China* (Stanford University Press, 2000), he points out that "Things were different under Mao. Perhaps no work of fiction published in the People's Republic of China (PRC) between 1949 and 1977 told of common, apolitical crimes committed by ordinary PRC citizens. The press did not report on crime; socialism was not supposed to produce it" (2). Kinkley indicates that in 1980 the press began to report on common crimes, as officials fostered a new legal culture that emphasized legal consciousness, equality before the law, and more trials for criminals (23-26).

The reality of contemporary Chinese culture today is that multiple forces are at work, threatening the stability of the State and the legitimacy of the Communist Party. Further, as negative capitalist influences are unleashed in society without the corresponding legal measures, crimes that had been successfully eradicated under a more ideologically socialist regime are now occurring in activities such as prostitution, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and child labor.

Interestingly, in the post-Mao era, the Party hailed the rise of crime fiction (dubbed "new police fiction") as an effective tool for inculcating in the citizenry confidence in the continuing effectiveness of Chinese justice in an increasingly liberal and capitalistic (and thus potentially more corrupt) system. In fact, crime and police journals edited by the central police and justice ministries in Beijing initiated the explosion of crime fiction. These were followed by journals issued by literary associations in the provinces. As it soon become clear, these sensational stories were profitable, so multiple pulp fiction journals sprung up, attracting readers with unabashedly trashy front cover art (crude collages of guns, cops, and semi-clad women). In the 1990s and beyond the trend continued, spilling over into the extremely popular television "crime dramas," most of which are about drug trafficking and organized crime, and "anti-corruption dramas," where many crimes are connected with the corruption of officials. The government carefully oversees such productions both as a lucrative enterprise and a way to assure the public that corruption by State officials will not be countenanced.

Thus it is important not to overstate the degree to which Qiu's crime fiction in English conveys a reality about contemporary China that is censored in the Chinese press and media. Nonetheless, his work accurately demonstrates the complexity of not only Chinese social but political life to a degree not allowed in PRC publications. As Professor Robert Hegel of Washington University states in his review of *Death of a Red Heroine*, "Qiu deftly leads the reader to the creepy

realization that...the Party's attempts to recoup political legitimacy form the real setting for this mystery and cast a dark shadow over every step in its resolution." Indeed, the reality of contemporary Chinese culture today is that multiple forces are at work, threatening the stability of the State and the legitimacy of the Communist Party. Further, as negative capitalist influences are unleashed in society without the corresponding legal measures, crimes that had been successfully eradicated under a more ideologically socialist regime are now occurring in activities such as prostitution, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and child labor.

In such a milieu the persona of Chief Inspector Chen, a man who attempts to reconcile the various ethical demands in China's traditional and modern culture, retains a certain appeal. Qiu's narrative tone is especially effective because it avoids the trap of nostalgia for a simpler or more ideologically pure bygone era. While Qiu's novels include a number of historical asides to provide sufficient cultural context, the narratives are primarily driven by dialogue, facts, and most importantly, character development. The multiple perspectives provided by characters from a variety of generations and classes who remain slightly at odds with Chen allow the reader to view events more objectively. After Chief Inspector Chen presents an excerpt of a Song dynasty poem to his American counterpart in crime fighting, she asks him to recite the rest of it. "No, I cannot remember the rest of the poem," he defers, "These few lines alone came to me." *A Loyal Character Dancer* ends anticlimactically. The American Marshal is hustled through customs by the Party Secretary and boards her plane to the U.S. without a backward glance. Lyrical moments are ephemeral in literature as in life.

Robin Visser

Thomas Alan Harvey. *Acquainted with Grief: Wang Mingdao's Stand for the Persecuted Church in China*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2002.

Scott W. Sunquist, David Wu Chu Sing, and John Chew Hiang Chea. *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001.

In the second chapter of his first epistle, the Apostle Peter calls on the Christian disciple to follow the example of Christ by bearing up under unjust persecution and suffering. In *Acquainted with Grief*, Thomas Harvey tells the story of a man who understood better than most in his generation the poignancy of Peter's admonition; in his telling the life of Wang Mingdao becomes a metaphor for the experience of the Chinese Church in the twentieth century.

The book opens with standard hagiographical fare: jejune anecdotes from Wang's early life demonstrate the circumstances of his childhood, his idealism, and his uncompromising piety, portending his later achievement and sainthood. In the account of and accounting for Wang's contentious relationship with the Chinese state, however, Harvey's narrative finds its legs. Wang became a church leader in the 1920s and made a name for himself with his rousing preaching, his condemnation of the social gospel movement, his scrupulousness with respect to personal and ecclesiastical purity, and his insistence on independence from the Western church. He was an early advocate of the three-self ideal, maintaining that the church should be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. In the early days of the People's Republic, the *Three Self Protestant Movement* (TSPM) was founded to serve as the officially sanctioned church in China, to be kept under close Party scrutiny. Wang refused to align his church with the TSPM and was imprisoned for his stand in 1955.

In his written work, Wang often reflected on the importance of suffering for the church, noting both from the Bible and from history the role of suffering as an agent of redemption, purification, and even growth. Having answered those who believed it could not survive under persecution, the Chinese church may soon face, from the standpoint of church history, the more vexing question: Can it remain faithful when it is released from its captivity?

Under the pressure of incarceration and persistent torment, he eventually confessed to being a counter-revolutionary and thereby secured his release. He came to regret his confession and subsequently refused to join the TSPM. In 1956 he was rearrested, lan-

guishing in prison for the next twenty-three years, but never again capitulating.

Harvey convincingly demonstrates that Wang was not the perfervid anti-Communist that his detractors portrayed him to be, showing that Wang's refusal to join the TSPM related to more generic, biblically-reasoned misgivings about rendering to Caesar that which was not rightfully his. Harvey adroitly challenges the meretricious arguments of Wang's enemies then and now, who see in him not a man who suffered righteously, but a man who bore the fruits of his own intransigence and dogmatism. Throughout the book he cudgels TSPM apologists, Chinese and Western, for their readiness to accept Caesar's purple and to see the Chinese state as a realization on earth of God's redemptive purposes. However, he also cautions Western, conservative evangelicals against a facile view of the "divided nature of Christianity in China according to the axis of socialism versus democracy."

The overall effect of the book as history is partially compromised by carelessness with regard to certain details, particularly dates. Harvey misidentifies 1901 as both the year of Wang's birth and the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion (actually 1900), gives 1837-54 as the years of the Taiping Rebellion (c. 1847-1864) and makes note of the upcoming 2006 Beijing Summer Olympics (2008). However, to dwell on these quibbles would be to miss the larger import of Harvey's work.

After his release from prison, Wang told the visiting American evangelist Billy Graham that the only thing he lived for was to be faithful unto death. In his written work, Wang often reflected on the importance of suffering for the church, noting both from the Bible and from history the role of suffering as an agent of redemption, purification, and even growth. Having answered those who believed it could not survive under persecution, the Chinese church may soon face, from the standpoint of church history, the more vexing question: Can it remain faithful when it is released from its captivity?

The remarkable growth of the Chinese church over the last half-century and the overall shift of the Christian demographic center of gravity to the East highlight the need for more scholarly efforts to record and account for this phenomenon. One such step in the right direction is the recent publication of *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity*. This ambitious volume is an encyclopedia of important personalities and institutions in the history of Christianity from "Pakistan to Japan and from Mongolia to Indonesia." The succinct and insightful articles penned by both Asian and Western scholars of the Asian church are a valuable resource for researchers and a solid reference for those with a more casual interest in the subjects.

The dictionary does, however, suffer from several deficiencies which subsequent editions must address. The volume has no index, which makes it nearly impossible, for example, to find information on a lesser-known church leader unless you already know her church or denominational affiliation. The transliteration of Chinese and Korean names is inconsistent and thus confusing. There are some unaccountable omissions. Cho Yonggi, the Korean pastor of the world's largest church, is not the subject of an article, nor is the influential Japanese Mukyokai (No Church) movement. Valuable space in this 937-page book is taken up with broad discussions of political, philosophical, and social movements and problems. Does anyone turn to a dictionary of Asian Christianity for insight on nationalism, racism, or colonialism? The space would be better filled by articles on important missionary entities such as the Christian Literature Society or the China Inland Mission. Given the relatively short history of Christianity in many Asian countries and the ongoing commitment of missionary resources in the region, the editor's decision to omit discussion of missionary societies should be reconsidered.

Nevertheless, the editors are to be commended for making a successful start to what promises to be an ongoing project of cataloguing and presenting to the world the expanding Asian contribution to the global church.

Brent Whitefield

Betty Smart Carter. *Home is Always the Place You Have Just Left: A Memoir of Restless Longing and Persistent Grace*. Brewster, Mass. Paraclete Press, 2003.

If you've ever longed to be cured of inordinate romantic longing, *Home is Always the Place You Just Left* may be the book for you. The word brutal comes to mind, so long as it's understood, somehow, as an adjective of praise. By the time Carter gets to the last third of this book the waves of painful, probing self-revelation crash with a force likely to send the reader running for higher ground. Carter's memoir is a rewarding

read, but it is not for the spiritually faint of heart.

The daughter of an energetic, nationally active Presbyterian minister, Carter takes us on a memorable tour of Gen X America, evangelical wing. We watch her being catechized in the sixties, taking karate lessons in the seventies, and in the early eighties starring in her Christian high school's production of *The Robe* and getting drunk with the cast after the show.

Carter's history of adoring obsession has ended up revealing not just her own corruption but, providentially, the true object of her longing: God himself. "God," she states, "wastes no loves, not even foolish and idolatrous affections."

In her case the usual coming-of-age struggles seem as much compounded as aided by her family's ministerial vocation.

As her knowledge of herself, her family, and other church folk deepens, the sense of comfort she had derived from her childhood faith gives way to confusion and cynicism. She comes to see, for instance, that while her father "was good in so many ways," it was the denomination he helped to found that was "his child as much as anything or anybody was his child;" he became for her "the man who was usually gone," out doing the work of the Lord. The elevated ideals and standards her church community had fostered within her gradually erode, washed out by a historical reality all too familiar, and all too grim.

But Carter is not just another memoirist playing the blame-game; she stays insistently focused on the peculiar nature of her own warped condition. Describing herself as a "natural worshipper," Carter tracks a long line of friends who became her obsessions, to such a degree that one of them, in a moment of dramatic confrontation, likens her to a stalker. The central theme of Carter's narrative, though, is that her history of adoring obsession has ended up revealing not just her own corruption but, providentially, the true object of her longing: God himself. "God," she states, "wastes no loves, not even foolish and idolatrous affections."

This confession recalls Augustine's, as it is meant to. With an intense and unrelenting gaze, Carter follows the great autobiographer's lead in searching out God's enveloping grace and her own slowly enlarging embrace of it. Cynical and bitter as a freshman in the mid-eighties at evangelical bulwark Wheaton College (she calls it "the unambiguous capital of victorious Christianity"), she decides that it's no place for her, and soon finds a few other disaffected students to party with. To her own shock, she ends her Wheaton years discovering, through the guidance of a professor as well as through a nascent romance, the Author of her longing, he whose pursuit she could not finally resist.

But this story has no happy ending—unless we're judging by Augustinian standards. Her spiritual restlessness, and her desperate, ugly battle with obsession, follow her into marriage and motherhood, and in the midst of enervating anger and humiliation she continues to cry out to the only One who can save her. In the end, she can convincingly testify of a deepening experience of grace. "For most of my life the gospel had hung in the air like rain that would not fall," she poignantly writes after a particularly painful period. "Now it came rushing down." The corruption remains, but the cure has been effected, and with it the beginning of a long, long rest. But just the beginning.

Eric Miller

the attic

THE PILGRIM

by O. P. Kretzmann
(December 1955)

Dear Son:

This is probably the strangest Christmas letter you will ever receive. . . . I have been writing little parts of it now for many months—one sentence in the mountains of North Carolina—another under great pines in a quiet cemetery in Wisconsin where some little children have been waiting for the eternal Christmas many years—still another on a rainy day in November with a touch of snow in the air and the sound of the first winter winds in the air. . . . Each year, I must confess, I find it a little harder to write about Christmas—and I am not sure of the reason. . . . Surely the few thousand words I have devoted to the Baby, the Mother, the angels and the shepherds over the years are small before so great a mystery and so good a story. . . . Perhaps (I have sometimes felt) one grows closer to Christmas as the years move toward the life with the angels who once were here and are now waiting, more clearly than ever, for their final task with the world and me. . . . Perhaps one likes to be more quiet, even silent, more content to watch Christmas come to your eyes. . . . Whatever it may be, the writing of a few words about Christmas, this letter to you, finds me staring into space every few minutes trying hard, ever so hard, to imagine how it really was, trying to remember other Christmas Eves, trying to forget some things that have come between me and Christmas as it ought to be. . . .

On Christmas Eve, soon after it gets dark and the blue shadows are in the sky, I shall ask one of your brothers to read a few words which we call the Christmas Gospel. . . . If you sit quietly and listen carefully you will hear that this story does not begin like the fairy stories and legends which your mother reads to you before you go to sleep. . . . Your brother will read: "And it came to pass in those days. . . ." Tha"s the way Christmas begins. . . . It really happened. . . . When you are older you will know how important—and beautiful—it is to know that the fulness of time really *is* in time. . . . The first sentence mentions a man whom history knows, although he is important now only because he moved a mother and her baby a few miles across the surface of the earth. . . .

This is the first thing you must know about Christmas—it is true and it is real. . . . The mother was like any other young mother, a little lonely and a little afraid; and the baby was like any other baby when you looked at it. . . . What was different about them is visible only to your faith. . . . In some pictures of Christmas the Virgin Mary kneels, sunk in meditation and prayer. . . . You see, she was the first one to know that her little boy, his body from her body, was her God and Savior, the Creator of the Universe, her Master and her King. . . . This is the last reason for the mysterious joy of Christmas, also for little boys. . .that the Almighty has laid aside everything, the world has been turned upside down and is now in the hands of a new-born baby in a crib. . .and so for two thousand years Christmas has been full of the noise and laughter of children who come to the stable and find themselves at home there with the Baby. . .and they have played themselves warm and happy around the Son of God Who has become a little child for their sake. . . .

Of course, I do not expect you to understand all this when you are only three years old. . . . But you will see the reflections of it—of God coming to our world and our house—in many things we do and say and sing at Christmas. . . for this is the heart of the matter. . . . A few days ago some of us were talking about poetry—the using of words to express meaning as old and beautiful as life itself.... Someone said that the very best poetry is not always understood quickly and easily. . . . Because it is great—the work of a great mind—smaller minds must work hard to understand it. . . . Something like that, I thought, is also true of Christmas. . . . It is the expression spoken by the Maker of makers, the Poet of poets, not only in the words you will hear on Christmas Eve, but in Word which was made flesh—not in a book, or a rhyme, or parts of speech, but in a baby born into your world, living and breathing and crying as you do now so that you can always know that God loves you very much indeed. . .so much that He decided to look like you and live as you do for a little while. . . .

And so—in a way—Christmas is hard to understand. . . . Eternity is in it and we who are older come to it as to a mystery. . . You, however, know only that God came to us as you came three years ago—as a baby. . . . For us the plan of Christmas is so daring that we must finally believe that only God could have thought it through. . . . For you it is very simple and clear—God was a baby and now, even after two thousand years, there are lights and trees and candles and gifts and songs. . . all for you. . .because He came like you and for you. . . .

And all these Christmas things are only a small part of His strange power over the world. . . . As you grow older you will know that for His sake men have loved and helped one another, raised to heights of joy and depths of despair, fortified, comforted, exalted. . . . The centuries have not exhausted Him and the years have only added to His power. . . . He is not a bit of sentiment as small and fragile as the tinsel on our tree. . . . He is not a carol to be sung by one lonesome for his childhood or an escape from the world by means of a sprig of holly stuck in a Christmas package. . . . In one way, in an eternal way, the Baby is a terrible and terrifying person. . . .All who are ten and twenty times older than you should remember again this Christmas that He means death, death to sin, death to selfishness, death to meanness, death to always having your own way, death to anger and lust and envy. . . . He wants to live in all men and women, in the poor and the rich, in the weak and the strong—to live, above all, in the hearts of little children—and He can live only if you and I, by His coming, are willing to die. . . . If we are not ready to do that, if we serve Him with our lips and keep Him far, if we have Christmas only once a year, we make His swaddling clothes chains to bind Him to the manger and prevent Him from going about the world, from marching through history and time in the power and glory which the angels saw in the silence of midnight that first Christmas long ago. . . .

And this is the end of my letter to you. . . . I know that you will have a happy Christmas this year and I will try to go with you just as far as I can. . .in wonder, in joy, in peace, in forgetfulness of the faithless years and the long way from Bethlehem. . . . Many years from now, you may remember that in these grey winter days you and I often walked under the great trees at the edge of the campus while the first stars came out of the dark. . . . Perhaps we can walk again this Christmas Eve, before the lights and the carols, and perhaps God will give us a star, a very, very special wandering star to light our way in my darkness. . . . And we shall come back to the house, bright with lights and music, as the shadows lengthen, to see the Child in the manger under the tree—for you, please God, the Place of Beginning. . .and for me, the Land of Beginning Again. . . . That will be good, very good, for both of us. . . . ✠

on the cover—

Baroque Manger (detail)
Baroque era (ca. 1600-1780), Photograph by Adam Heet

The manger scene of the cover is from an exhibit of baroque manger scenes sponsored by the Brauer Museum of Art and the Kade-Dusenberg German House and Cultural Center, both at Valparaiso University, on display in the Brauer until December 28, 2003.

Ernst Heimes of Rottenburg, Germany who together with his wife Waltraud Heimes carefully arranged the display writes of them:

The Baroque Mangers

The figures in these manger scenes were created at the end of the eighteenth century. Of particular note is the magnificent clothing of the figures. Their heads—with real hair—are made of painted wax and their hands and feet are carved from wood. The torsos are made of wire.

Only wealthy churches and monasteries or noble families could afford such figures set in a vast landscape. Some "manger" scenes included hundreds of figures and depicted not only the nativity but also the wedding at Cana, the presentation in the temple, the flight to Egypt, and other scenes from Jesus' life.

Emperor Joseph II prohibited the worship of manger scenes, which subsequently disappeared into the attics of churches and monasteries. There, and in some private families, they survived. In Rottenburg am Neckar the baroque manger scenes are displayed every year. Thousands of guests annually are delighted by the beautiful scenes and figures when they visit the churches and the museum of the Sülchgauer Altertumsverein (The Sülchgau Historical Society) where the manger scenes are displayed. Josef Eberle, a celebrated poet from Rottenburg, made these manger scenes well known throughout Germany in his poem, "S'Weggetaler Kripple."
(translation by Sarah De Maris, Director of the Kade-Duesenberg German House and Cultural Center.)

on reviewers—

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on poets—

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Gary Fincke
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Kim Bridgford
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