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213 The Cresset Michaelmas | 2006
# in this issue

## in luce tua
Five Years Later  
*James Paul Old*  

## essays

**Identity, Liberal Education, and Vocation**  
*Mark R. Schwehn*  

**The Lessons of 9/11**  
*Fredrick Barton*  

**Stories of Lutherans and Race**  
*James W. Albers*  

## literature and the arts

**music:** Jazz Messengers  
*J. D. Buhl*  

**film:** The Devil Wears Dostoevsky  
*Crystal Downing*  

**fiction:** The Dazzle of the Fact  
*Allison Schuette-Hoffman*  

## religion

**being lutheran:** Challenge to a Dying Church  
*Fred Niedner*  

**pulpit and pew:** Surprise!  
*Tom Willadsen*  

**ethics:** Compunction over Cluster Bombs  
*Tobias Winright*  

## public affairs

**nation:** On Being Crunchy  
*Peter Meilaender*  

**law:** Race at the Schoolhouse Gate  
*Frank Colucci*  

## books

Frank C. Senn’s *The People’s Work*  
*Michael B. Aune*  

John Perry’s *Torture*  
*David Perry*  

## the attic

The Peace That Passeth All Understanding  
*James David Fackler*  

## verse

Semblance  
*Mark Bennion*  

Gentile Midrash  
*Mary M. Brown*  

Innocence  
*Julie L. Moore*  

Make Use of It  
*Jeanne Murray Walker*  

On Raking  
*Allison Schuette-Hoffman*  

A Chinese Tallow Tree, Planted AD 2002  
*Michael Kramer*  

## on the cover, reviewers, and poets

63
Five Years Later

FIVE YEARS NOW HAVE PASSED SINCE THAT AWFUL DAY. WHEN IT HAPPENED, WE ALL KNEW IMMEDIATELY THAT EVERYTHING WOULD BE DIFFERENT. SO MUCH ABOUT THE WORLD AND HOW WE LOOKED AT IT AND OUR PLACE IN IT HAD GONE WRONG. WE WOULD HAVE TO CHANGE, FOR BETTER OR WORSE. AND WE DID, FOR AWHILE.

FOR ONE, AMERICANS FOUND NEW HEROES. FIREFIGHTERS AND POLICEMEN RUSHED INTO THE BURNING TOWERS, AND MANY NEVER CAME OUT. RESCUE CREWS—TIRED, DIRTY, AND HUNGRY—SCOURED THE RUBBLE FOR DAYS AND NIGHTS ON THE SLIM CHANCE THAT JUST ONE MORE VICTIM COULD BE PULLED OUT ALIVE. THE PASSENGERS OF UNITED FLIGHT 93—NOT POLICE OFFICERS, OR MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY, JUST EVERYDAY TRAVELERS—FUGHT TO TAKE BACK CONTROL AND KEPT THEIR PLANE FROM HITTING ITS TARGET. THESE HEROES GAVE US NEW MODELS OF COURAGE, SELF-SACRIFICE, AND DETERMINATION. THEY REMINDED US THAT SOMETIMES DUTY CALLS AND WHEN IT DOES WE MUST RISE ABOVE THE SMALLNESS OF EVERYDAY LIFE.

OUR POLITICS ALSO CHANGED, FOR A WHILE. POLITICIANS TRIED TO EMMULATE THESE HEROES’ VIRTUE. THEY ROSE ABOVE THE PETTINESS OF EVERYDAY POLITICS TO DO THEIR DUTY. BIPARTISAN COOPERATION ON CAPITOL HILL, FOR ONCE, WAS MANIFEST AND GENUINE. PRESIDENT BUSH AND REPUBLICAN CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS COOPERATED WITH LEADING DEMOCRATS TO IMPROVE DOMESTIC SECURITY, LIBERATE AFGHANISTAN FROM THE TALIBAN, AND EVEN REMOVE SADDAM HUSSEIN FROM POWER IN IRAQ. PRESIDENT BUSH’S APPROVAL RATINGS ROSE INTO THE NINETY-PERCENT RANGE, AND AMERICANS’ CONFIDENCE IN THEIR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS SOARED.

BUT EVERYDAY LIFE IS BACK, AND POLITICS IN 2006 IS AS UGLY AS EVER. WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF AN ELECTION AS BITTER AND NASTY AS ANY IN RECENT MEMORY. HOW DID WE GET BACK TO THIS POINT? SOME SUGGEST THAT THE INVASION OF IRAQ CAUSED OUR CURRENT POLITICAL DISCONTENTS BY REIGNITING THE PASSIONS OF THE VIETNAM ERA. BUT EVEN THE DECISION TO INVADE IRAQ ONCE ENJOYED FAIRLY BROAD, BIPARTISAN SUPPORT. THE VOTE IN THE SENATE WAS 77-23. TWENTY-NINE DEMOCRATIC SENATORS VOTED IN FAVOR; TWENTY-ONE AGAINST.


NOW, AS BAGHDAD DEGENERATES INTO SECTARIAN VIOLENCE, THE ADMINISTRATION DISMISSES WITH DISDAIN ANY CRITICISMS OF ITS POLICIES. WHETHER THESE CRITICISMS COME FROM REPUBLICANS OR DEMOCRATS, ALLIES OR FOES, OR CONGRESS OR THE COURTS MAKES NO DIFFERENCE. AND LEADING DEMOCRATS BEHAVE NO BETTER. INSTEAD OF OFFERING REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES THAT ADDRESS THE REALITY OF OUR ENGAGEMENT IN IRAQ, THEY THROW AROUND WILD CHARGES THAT THE PRESIDENT “LIED TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.” AND, OFTEN, THOSE WHO ATTACK THE PRESIDENT TODAY WITH THE SHRILLEST VOICES ARE THOSE WHO THEMSELVES VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE WAR IN THE FIRST PLACE.

SO, WHAT HAS HAPPENED? SOME OF WHAT WE ARE SEEING IS THE RETURN OF POLITICS AS USUAL. ELECTIONS ARE OFTEN NASTY. VOICES OF CALM, MODERATE REASON DO NOT ALWAYS POLL WELL. NEGATIVE ATTACKS ON A POLITICAL OPPONENT’S CHARACTER ARE COMMON FARE IN AN AGE WHEN CANDIDATES ARE MORE LIKELY TO ASK FOR OUR SUPPORT BECAUSE OF THEIR PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY THAN BECAUSE OF THEIR PARTY’S PLATFORM. SO, THE BITTERNESS OF TODAY’S POLITICS IS PARTLY EXPLAINED BY THE REEMERGENCE OF A TREND THAT THE SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS BRIEFLY INTERRUPTED, BUT DID NOT STOP.
But something else has changed. There is a new, much more disturbing, element to our politics. Our politicians used to question each other's personal conduct, but we do not hear as much today about who slept with whom, and where. Instead, we hear about who is responsible for putting America in danger. What we called the Politics of Personal Destruction has given way to something much worse: the Politics of Fear. After September 11, Americans were afraid. While many responded to this fear with new found heroism, the fear did not simply go away. The politicians know this, and they have chosen to exploit it.

Neither party has a monopoly on this new political weapon. One recent Sunday morning, Vice President Cheney warned that while the last attack used airplanes and killed thousands, the next attack—likely to use nuclear or radiological weapons—might kill hundreds of thousands (Meet the Press, 10 September 2006). In other words, the stakes are too high to trust the Democrats. Do not risk your loved ones lives by voting for them. It was a strange argument to make for an administration that has placed such a low priority on inspecting the container ships that likely would carry such a weapon to this country.

There also is a Democratic version of the politics of fear. The same morning, Senator John Kerry asserted, We are not as safe as we ought to be after 9/11. And the fact is, there are more terrorists in the world today who want to kill Americans (CNN Late Edition, 10 September 2006). This is the sort of empirical claim that has the dual advantage of being impossible to verify and sure to put a chill down your spine. Whatever success the President's policies might have, whatever good might be accomplished by American forces abroad, the menace of an unseen, uncontrollable army of fanatics rising against us can always be evoked.

The Vice President is right to explain the threats that most concern the administration. Hopefully, he also will explain how the Administration's current measures actually address those threats. And Senator Kerry is right to point out the damage done by the Administration's ham-handed diplomatic efforts. But the surest sign of the politics of fear is the claim that, We will make you safe along with the insinuation that They will put you in danger. In fact, They sometimes don't even care whether you are safe or not. They care more about power, or oil, or about the United Nations, or special rights for criminals and terrorists than they do about you.

The politics of personal destruction was ugly—often disgusting, but it had limits. A politician who cheated on his wife was a scoundrel, but he was also a human being. You can cut a deal with a scoundrel; maybe even work together with one on a bill. We all probably know a few scoundrels. But what can you do with someone who would put America in danger for some selfish goal? You cannot sit down at a table and cut a deal on any policy—on foreign policy, on Social Security reform, on tax rates—with such a villain.

The temptation has been too great for many politicians. They sensed our fear, and they exploited it. When they did this, they often achieved short-term political victories, but they also undermined our public life. They forgot the virtues displayed by our September 11 heroes, and instead of the call of duty, they heeded the temptations of everyday expediency. But we still have our heroes. We still recognize the virtues they showed us. Ultimately, the legacy of September 11 will depend not on words uttered by politicians, but on decisions made by us, as voters. We can vote for men and women who exemplify those who made us proud in the days after September 11. Or, we can vote for fear. The choice is ours.

***

Sadly, we must report the recent passing of another former editor of this journal. The Rev. Dr. Kenneth F. Korby (1924–2006), who edited The Cresset from 1972–1978, began and ended his career as a Lutheran pastor, with parishes in Minnesota, Oregon, and Illinois. From 1958 to 1980, he taught theology at Valparaiso University, where his service included chairing the Chapel Committee, directing the Youth Leadership Training Program, and leading the University's Study Center in Reutlingen, Germany. His students and colleagues fondly remember this thoughtful, energetic, and pastoral servant of the Lord and His Church. 

—JPO
Identity, Liberal Education, and Vocation

Mark R. Schwehn

In the course of her inquiry into the character of Odysseus in the Iliad and the Odyssey, Eva Brann makes the following arresting remark. "Learning begins when development ends, for growing into oneself absorbs all of the cognitive energies which, once 'identity' is achieved, are free to turn to the world. For how can we learn if it is not we who are there to learn? We either change or grow wiser, but not both." Though many of us would wish to question Brann's claim, we probably would not deny the fact that the achievement of identity has been more and more postponed in our time and place here in the United States. Our personality psychologists have, over the course of the last generation, in part discovered and in part invented a new phase of human development called "young adulthood," lasting roughly ten years from age twenty to age thirty, interposed between adolescence and adulthood. Settling into deep and lasting loves and into serious and productive work, two of the key markers of adulthood, have been indefinitely delayed among many in our society for a variety of reasons. This is perhaps what Eva Brann had in mind when she characterized our age, just before she made the remark I quoted above, as "infantilistic."

One fact both complicates and constrains further inquiry into the relationship between identity and liberal education. In contemporary liberal democracies, discovering, preparing for, and settling into a way of making a living is an integral part of identity formation. Many students are therefore almost as preoccupied with the question of what they should do to earn a living or of how they should prepare themselves for their livelihoods as they are with erotic longings of one kind or another. And surely both of these things, work and love, are bound up in complex ways with the process of identity formation.

Over the years, much has been written about how we should reckon with eros in liberal education, but friends of liberal education have, I think, been less successful in reckoning with their students' concern for preparing themselves for work that fits both them and their society. Instead, many educators, including myself, have been guilty of patronizing or denying or diminishing their students' concern for fitting work, arguing, not without some cogency, that our business is with knowledge for its own sake, not knowledge primarily for the sake of something else and that therefore liberal education and so-called vocational preparation are wholly distinct and sometimes antithetical pursuits.

The logic and force of these and other distinctions between liberal education and vocational training should not be altogether denied. Nevertheless, in today's educational environment, we should at least wonder about whether and how we can best take full account of students' preoccupations with finding and preparing themselves for fitting work even as we seek to offer them a genuine liberal education through, for example, thoughtful engagement with core texts and courses. There is a potential for discovering new truths or at least new questions about old ones when we attend to work as a problem for inquiry in the liberal arts. New texts are always welcome. Fresh interrogations of old ones are perhaps even more welcome for the discoveries that they can generate along the way.

Let us consider, for example, two very different texts, neither one of which is primarily about work, in an endeavor to explore this very subject. In the first case, we will discover new ways of thinking about a question that vexes many of us, our students, and our fellow citizens about the proper place of paid employment in a human life well lived. In the second case, we will be shown how we can enlarge the repertory of our moral imaginations in certain ways only through the reading of texts, enabling us to consider questions
about work, identity, and learning in a way that we could not if we were simply to attend to the realities of quotidian life.

II

RECALL FIRST THE EMBASSY TO ACHILLES IN BOOK IX of the Iliad. Three of the great warrior's closest friends, Ajax and Odysseus—comrades in arms—and Phoenix, the teacher who trained Achilles in the arts of war and speech, have been dispatched to persuade him to set aside his anger and join them in battle against the Trojans, who threaten to overwhelm the Greeks without him. They make several arguments, endeavoring to move Achilles to do what he was born to do. Or is it simply to move him to do his job? Indeed what is the relationship between who Achilles is and what Achilles does? Is this antique hero's principal activity, fighting and killing, connected to who he is in the same way as, say, a contemporary physician's principal activity, healing, is connected to who she is as a human being? Are these two situations—the relationship of Achilles's work of waging warfare to him and the relationship of the doctor's work of healing to her—utterly remote from one another or are they akin?

What about the arguments advanced in the scene? The three ambassadors appeal to Achilles's lineage, to his father's own expectations of him, to his teacher's hopes for him, to his loyalty to friends, to how he will be remembered, to the prospect of glory and eternal fame, to divine intentions, to material gain, and to elevation in power and social standing, even including a dynastic marriage, in order to move him to do his proper work or simply to be himself. If we were to listen to parents or teachers today beseeching a young person to undertake this or that line of work we would be hard pressed to find an argument or an appeal that is not included among those of the ambassadors to Achilles.

Even so, we should resist any temptation to distort this scene in the Iliad by treating it as though it were a kind of job counseling session. If we are to discover things in this scene that will help us and today's students today to think well about fitting work and the proper motivations for doing it, we must at every moment retain our sense of wonder at the difference between Achilles and ourselves.

Achilles is a hero. We are not and cannot be heroes in the same way that he was. And the world he inhabits is in many respects radically distinct from ours in all kinds of ways that we cannot review here. Moreover, his parents are certainly different from our students' parents and our own. One of them, for example, his mother Thetis, is a goddess.

Bearing these and other differences in mind, we should perhaps pay special attention, for our purposes here, to Achilles's own account of how his mother once allegedly framed the alternatives that he faces between remaining at Troy to do battle and abandoning Troy for a life at home. Here is what Achilles says to the ambassadors in the middle of his dialogue with them:

... my mother Thetis the goddess of the silver feet tells me
I carry two sorts of destiny toward the day of my death. Either,
if I stay here and fight beside the city of the Trojans,
my return home is gone, but my glory shall be everlasting;
but if I return home to the beloved land of my fathers,
the excellence of my glory is gone, but there will be a long life left for me, and my end in death will not come to me quickly (9.410-11).

Achilles reports this alleged parental discourse, which also happens to be divine discourse, in order to justify his own temporary determination to return to his homeland. And he then proceeds to counsel the three ambassadors to do the same.

Aristotle had no doubt about which of the two alternatives should be chosen by a noble human being. Here is how he put the matter in the Nicomachean Ethics:

It is quite true that, as they say, the excellent person labors for his friends and for his native country, and will die for them if he must; he will sacrifice money, honors, and contested goods in general, in achieving the fine for himself. For he will choose intense pleasure for a short time over slight pleasure for a long time; a year of
living finely over many years of undistinguished life; and a single fine and great action over many small actions (1169a).

Again, as with antique heroism itself, Thetis’s alleged discourse about two destinies and Aristotle’s counsel about how the excellent human being should choose between them both seem remote from today’s students and from their concern to prepare themselves for fitting work as a part of achieving their identities. On the contrary, however, I think there is a contemporary, democratic version of this theme that bedevils more and more of us and the young people whom we know and sometimes care for every day. Let me try the slightest variation on Aristotle here: “The excellent human being will choose a single great action, like finding a cure for muscular dystrophy, or writing a multi-volume history of the development of human liberty, or saving a great university from bankruptcy, or serving on the Supreme Court, over many small actions like working concurrently as a medical technician while being a good parent while being a good son or daughter to aging parents while visiting the sick from a local parish while guiding the local school board to approve the best curriculum for students.” So the choice today is often not so much between a short but glorious life of self-sacrifice and a long but undistinguished life of mild enjoyment as it is between a life of single-minded devotion to doing one thing well, often sacrificing or at least jeopardizing the well being of others in the process, and a life of unrecognized service to others at great cost to one’s own ambitions. The enduring popularity of the American film classic, It’s a Wonderful Life, one of the few films in American culture that is ritually shown every year, may be due in large part to its intriguing exploration of this very dilemma.

Comparing and contrasting the interplay among several terms—activity, identity, sacrifice, mortality, duty, glory, ambition, the home, and the far-flung precincts of high achievement—while foregrounding the problem of work will both bring out for special notice features of a classic text like the Iliad that we might otherwise ignore and enable our students better to think through their own aspirations more deeply, thereby connecting their liberal learning with their preoccupations about work. Many of them already will have witnessed the sometimes terrible consequences of so-called workaholism. Some of them already will have, for better or for worse, curbed their own ambitions for high and fine and glorious achievement for the sake of a life of smaller but multiple and varied proper pleasures. Moreover, students will be eager to learn how, why, and whether the ways in which human beings negotiate among these alternatives differ in our time for men and women, rich and poor, the religious and the irreligious. A focus upon their future work and upon how that work will or should relate to the whole of their lives will, in other words, generate conversations about a whole range of fundamental human questions in a way that responds to one of our students’ primary preoccupations.

III

But do we and they have adequate moral imaginations and adequate vocabularies for thinking through these issues? And do great texts, more than any other resources we might have—experience, career counselors, development tests, personality inventories—provide singular opportunities for thinking well about the proper place of work in a human life? We come now to the second text, which requires some contextual elaboration in order to demonstrate how it actually did enlarge the moral imagination of an entire community and to cast further light upon the aforementioned modern dilemma of the balanced life versus the single-minded one.

On 11 August 2004, John Strietelmeier, a former editor of this very journal The Cresset, and a man who was once an exemplary member of several overlapping communities here in Valparaiso, Indiana, died at the age of eighty-four. A few days later, he was buried after a funeral of simple and solemn beauty. During the few days leading up to the funeral and for a long time thereafter, over dinner tables, at pubs, and in the aisles of the local university library, many of us in Valparaiso did what people do everywhere after one of their own has died. We talked with one another. Mostly we shared stories about John. This story-telling was partly our work of grieving, of course. But it was also part of the work of ethical understanding and moral formation, the process by which any com-
munity reflects, often in the presence of the junior members of that community, upon its own exemplars, on their life choices, their successes and failures, their loves, their tastes, their aspirations, convictions, habits, and eccentricities, and their best and worst moments. Was there a thread of continuity among all these things? If so, what was it?

Though we in Valparaiso made and continue to make considerable progress in ethical discernment regarding John's life and work, we have often gone wrong in at least three ways that are instructive for our purposes here. The first of these errors in judgment dramatizes a dark but often humorous side of parochialism. I was present, for example, at a conversation among some of John's more learned colleagues who were recalling what a fine writer he was. Suddenly Frank, who should have known better, assured the entire group that John was indeed one of the three greatest prose stylists of the twentieth century. You could almost feel the suppressed thoughts of the others in the room during the silence that followed. That's wild, thought one, I wonder who, given this bizarre claim, Frank thinks the other two prose stylists were. Or, I thought, less charitably, it was fine to honor John by enjoying his favorite drink—the very dry martini—but the drink never impaired John's judgment in the way that it apparently has impaired Frank's.

Of course, once the silence lifted, some did challenge the hyperbole. Soon the judgment was modified to suggest that John had been very much influenced by writers he most admired, like G. K. Chesterton and C. S. Lewis, and that perhaps one or two of his essays at least belonged in their small but distinguished company. We recalled for each other John's best editorials, even unearthing some of them to read aloud, and we noted his indebtedness to his own models and mentors. Parochial discourse can be from time to time self-critical and self-corrective.

But why did Frank feel moved to utter such foolishness? A few deluded people in Valparaiso actually believe, of course, that John was a better writer than, say, John Updike or Joan Didion. But others, like Frank, who should know better than this nevertheless maintain it publicly under the mistaken impression that the measure of the quality of both John's prose and his life as a whole must be some kind of universal standard. In order to justify the esteem in which they hold the man, these folks think that they must be able to show that John was in the very top ranks of a huge population, stretched out indefinitely in space as well as in time. And the error in the claims that are made, the implausibility of the comparisons drawn, stem from an effort to avoid the very problem that gave rise to the claims in the first place. Limited knowledge allows, even encourages, superlatives which are offered up to make positive assessments of moral worth seem more than merely parochial admiration.

A second error in judgment that local discussions of lives well lived frequently evince is a kind of opposite twin to the first one. Someone remarked very quickly, Just think of the mark John might have made on the world if he had not been stuck in Valparaiso. This is a version of the elegy, made famous by Thomas Gray, in which John is cast in the role of one of the many hypothetical undiscovered geniuses, buried in the country churchyard, who was unhappily fated to waste his sweetness on the desert air. According to this analysis and others like it, no one could be truly great in Valparaiso. A larger arena is required for greatness. And indeed, many of my colleagues at
Valparaiso University actively have encouraged other colleagues to leave the community on the grounds that they should really be in a context where their talents can be properly recognized and cultivated. There is, of course, in certain cases, much to recommend this latter view, but it is seldom as true as its defenders believe.

The third error in judgment arises from sentimentality, the worst aspect of parochialism, perhaps its defining aspect. Instead of exaggerating a person's virtues and achievements, the sentimentalist exaggerates the significance of the place where he or she lived. Valparaiso quickly becomes on this reckoning a singular school of virtue, the ideal of small town life, which in turn becomes the quintessence of American life at its best. As this edenic view of the town would have it, Valparaiso (which its devotees note means "Vale of Paradise") has escaped the wickedness and complications of nearby Chicago, has remained relatively religious by comparison to its allegedly pagan surroundings, and has preserved a small town, face-to-face community that is the ideal nursery of human virtue and achievement. Such sentimental mythology can often be pernicious, but when it is retold in the context of bereavement, its intentions at least are benign. One elevates the city in order all the more to praise the citizen.

To recount these errors in judgment is already to diagnose their sources in a general confusion between the consistent display of an exceptional talent or skill and an overall nobility of character. When some Valparaiso folks praise John's prose or his teaching or his work as a geographer in an exaggerated way, they really mean to be praising John the man. Or conversely, because they so admire John the man for reasons they cannot quite articulate, they tend toward excessive and therefore inaccurate assessments of one or another of John's particular gifts.

This problem is at least as old as Socrates, who was always reminding his fellow Athenians that what makes for an excellent cobbler or flute player is not the same thing that makes for the excellent human being. On the other hand Socrates, or at least Plato after him, was in part responsible for the idea that still bewitches and sometimes misleads citizens of Valparaiso, the idea that the significance and praiseworthiness of John's life must finally be understood strictly in terms of an abstract ideal or universal standard. Oddly enough, the citizens of Valparaiso know better, but they know better not when they look about them but when they read, not when they talk or think about "real" people but when they encounter and discuss fictional characters. And so we come, at last, to our second text.

During April of 2002, Valparaiso joined many other cities and towns all over the United States in the practice of reading and then discussing a book. The first "Valpo Reads a Book" selection was To Kill a Mockingbird, and the community rallied to the prospect of civic engagement around a common text. Many townsfolk wore TKM pins. High school students dutifully read Harper Lee's novel, and several for the first time continued their class discussion about a work of literature over the dinner table at home where their parents were reading the same book. Discussion groups were held all over town—in the local library, in church basements, in university classrooms, and at various businesses and financial establishments.

In the discussion groups I witnessed, everyone without exception held Atticus Finch in very high regard. Several found him to be the most admirable figure they ever had encountered in art or in life. Yet none of the latter group felt moved to compare Atticus favorably to, say, Learned Hand as a legal mind or to Clarence Darrow as a defense attorney or to Thurgood Marshall as a champion of civil rights. Nor did any of them spend any time lamenting the fact that Atticus had been unfortunate enough to waste his considerable talents in Maycomb County, Alabama. "If only Atticus had not had to raise Scout and Jem as a single parent and had been able to move to New York and practice law there! Think of what he could have become!" Such judgments and musings, so often ventured about the real life John, were never advanced about the imaginary Atticus.

People knew better, but not because they had been instructed by professors of English about the dangers of confusing fictional characters with real life human beings or about the impropriety of speculations about incidents in the lives of fictional characters that are not represented in the text itself. Instead, To Kill a Mockingbird just worked its magic upon the citizens of Valparaiso, such that they could not imagine Atticus Finch outside of...
Maycomb County or Maycomb County without Atticus. Though Atticus was at odds with most of his fellow citizens for much of the story, the man and the community somehow defined each other. Atticus, in Harper Lee’s words, liked Maycomb, he was Maycomb County born and bred; he knew his people, they knew him, and ... Atticus was related by blood or marriage to nearly every family in the town.

Incident, character, and setting all fit together perfectly. We do not waste our time wondering what Atticus Finch would have been like if his wife had not died before the action of the novel begins, because if his wife had been a character in the novel, Atticus would not have been the same local genius that we grow to admire so much. He would have been a different father, a different neighbor, finally a different character. And conversely the entire moral ecology of the town, especially the Finches immediate neighborhood, would have been very different without Atticus Finch. The readers in Valparaiso sensed all of this without any knowledge of literary critical terms like total functionality or organic unity or formal perfection.

These untutored interpretative practices of the ordinary readers of Valparaiso indicate a possibility of great promise and importance. People do in fact learn a great deal about how to recognize and understand living and embodied human excellence by thinking about their discernment of imaginary instances of it. Harper Lee created Atticus Finch and fit him for and to Maycomb in such a way that he stood out within it. John fit himself to the contours of the many communities in Valparaiso. His standing in the whole, comprehensive community was his own doing. This work of, shall we say, local genius included John’s patient, uncomplaining care over many years for his invalid wife. It included as well his joint authorship, credentialed with only a master’s degree, of an influential geography text, his twenty-year editorship of The Cresset, his service as an academic vice president, and his authorship of the centennial history of Valparaiso University.

But these achievements are mere items in an obituary listing. John’s real life genius, like Atticus’s fictional one, was a matter of the manner in which these several accomplishments and many others besides were undertaken, woven together, and offered up in service to his community. This involved thousands of decisions about when to yield to the call of duty, when to sacrifice personal ambition and when to pursue it, when to speak and when to keep silent, when to prefer parody and comedy to plain speaking. This pliable resourcefulness, this almost unfailing ability to know when to scold and when to bless, when to conform and when to dissent, this capacity to shape a life in seamless devotion to the tasks immediately at hand: this was a life’s work.

The measure of that life cannot be a brittle yardstick of absolute standards but instead a flexible tape measure that follows carefully all of the contours of that peculiar piece of the Valparaiso puzzle that John was for so many years. Where do we find such a tape measure? We find it in and through the practice of assessing those who come to us ready-made by the Harper Lees of this world. We find it through the practice of reading characters constituted by context.

IV

ENTERING INTO THE WORLD OF HARPER LEE’S MAYCOMB COUNTY, ALABAMA, AND LIVING FOR A TIME WITH AND THROUGH ATTICUS FINCH ARE ACTIVITIES THAT ENLARGE THE REPERTORY OF OUR MORAL IMAGINATIONS, AS THE CITIZENS OF VALPARAISO DISCOVERED. IF THAT REPERTORY HAD INCLUDED ONLY ACHILLES AND OTHER HEROES LIKE HIM, THOSE READERS MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE EVEN TO SEE, MUCH LESS ASSESS, THE REAL-LIFE EXCELLENCE OF A HUMAN BEING LIKE JOHN. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, IT HAD INCLUDED ONLY THE WORLD OF MAYCOMB COUNTY, THEY MIGHT NEVER HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED BY THE ARISTOTELIAN SUMMONS TO A LIFE OF SINGLE-MINDED DEVOTION TO ONE GREAT AND NOBLE ACTION. THIS MUCH IS OBVIOUS. THE COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS THAT WE MIGHT DRAW IN CLASSROOMS BETWEEN HOMER’S WORLD AND HARPER LEE’S WILL, HOWEVER, SEEM LIKE MERE LITERARY EXERCISES FOR OUR STUDENTS UNLESS WE ALSO ENABLE THEM TO SEE HOW DIFFERENT TEXTS LIKE THESE OFFER THEM DIFFERENT VOCABULARIES FROM THEIR OWN IN WHICH TO SPEAK AND THINK ABOUT MATTERS LIKE THE WORK THEY ARE PREPARING TO DO IN THE WORLD. STUDENTS MUST, IN OTHER WORDS, LEARN TO INTERROGATE THEIR OWN LIVES AND ASPIRATIONS, INCLUDING ESPECIALLY THEIR LONGING AND PREPARATION FOR PRODUCTIVE WORK, WITH THE SAME RIGOR AND CARE THAT THEY BRING TO TEXTS LIKE THE Iliad and To Kill a Mockingbird.
Most students, if they have a first-order vocabulary for speaking about their future work, probably use the language of authenticity. They believe that in order to determine what they should do and who they should be, they must get in touch with themselves. They must, they think, look only within to discover each one of their allegedly unique ways of being human in the world. Expressions that we hear all the time—do your own thing, I know where you’re coming from—bespeak this way of thinking. And of course this so-called ethics of authenticity has been thoughtfully analyzed and critiqued by many of our best philosophers, Charles Taylor perhaps foremost among them.

Homer and Aristotle will, of course, introduce them to another vocabulary that most of them draw upon as well in a fragmented form, the vocabulary of virtue. Students do, after all, admire and trust and idealize some people more than others on the basis of their characters. And many of them still feel moved by, if not drawn to, lives of significance and substance that are marked by selfless service to the world. Even so, they need to learn to give voice to these often dim perceptions, first sharpening them through the consideration of characters whom they can only discern through reading and re-reading. As the poet Richard Wilbur has written, the reader can have a God’s-eye view of characters in reread texts, for only then, through the activity of rereading can she see their first and final selves at once.

A few students will use yet a third vocabulary, the same one that John of Valparaiso used to make sense of his own work in the world. John’s was the language of vocation or calling, borrowed from the Christian reformers of the sixteenth century. And since he was a life-long Lutheran, his primary vocabulary for understanding ethics and the good life was Luther’s own understanding of faith active in love. Over the course of the centuries since Protestant thinkers developed their idea of vocation, and especially over the course of the last decade or so, the notion of a calling has taken on a steadily wider public provenance. Along the way, it has lost some of its specific historical meaning as a divine summons from the triune God of orthodox Christianity, or, before that, a summons from the God revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. But it has nevertheless retained the capacity to describe and to appreciate a wide range of admirable characters. Through the lens of vocation, local geniuses like John, as well as the kind of life that is most fully and ideally exemplified by them, suddenly become visible.

Even under strictly Christian auspices, both the concept of vocation and other ideas associated with it were remarkably elastic. William Placher has shown how the idea of vocation for the first five centuries of the Common Era referred to a calling out from paganism to a Christian life. Then, for the entire millennium preceding the Protestant Reformation, the idea of vocation referred primarily to the religious life, to a calling to the priesthood or to the life of a monk or nun. With the Protestant Reformation’s development of the idea of the priesthood of all believers came a thoroughgoing democratization of the idea of the calling. All Christians were called by God to lives of devoted service wherever they were stationed in jobs, as parents, as siblings, as citizens, and as neighbors. All were equally close to God, and their appointed tasks, their vocations, were simply to do well in whatever legitimate pursuits had been laid upon them so that neighbors would be served and God would be glorified (Placher 2005).

A large number of great books have, since the sixteenth century, analyzed and dramatized the revolutionary implications and consequences of this Protestant insight. Ever since the sixteenth century, the domains of production (work) and reproduction (family) have become the crucial arenas for strenuous and potentially noble endeavor. No longer did the highest forms of human excellence seem any longer to depend upon restricted and
privileged theaters of activity—the battlefield, the legislative assembly, the courts, the academy, the laboratory, or the pulpit and altar—to which a select few had access. At the same time that the horizon of meaning and significance expanded to comprehend the legitimate callings of all human beings as parts of a divine plan ordained by God from all eternity for the end of human flourishing, the location for living well and faithfully contracted sharply. The proper precincts of ambition were no longer necessarily far away either geographically or socially. They were near at hand, in the family, the neighborhood, the work place, the immediate community. And the ultimate success or failure of people’s work was finally not in their own hands. Anyone’s daily work might be infinitely significant, for both its ordination and its final consequences were in the hands of God. The foundations for a distinctively modern idea of excellence had been laid: potentially everlasting significance and the prospect of great nobility married to the most temporal, finite, and ordinary locations. We could well call this the ethics of the Incarnation. Considered from such a vantage point, so-called balanced lives might well be equally as choice worthy as, even more admirable than, single-minded ones.

There is yet one more difference between the vocabulary of vocation and the vocabularies of authenticity and virtue that we should note in closing, for it will bring us back to the thought of Eva Brann that initiated this inquiry. Christians believe that their identity is sacramentally bestowed in baptism before it is actively accomplished through a process of sanctification. Many Christians, like Søren Kierkegaard, tend to speak of becoming what they already are. This view of matters complicates and to some degree challenges the idea that, to quote Eva Brann again, “we either change or grow wiser, but not both.” If Christians are right in believing that identity is more conferred or ascribed than achieved and in thinking that the changes in our lives are more worked within us than they are brought about exclusively through our own exertions, there may be a sense in which we can and do indeed change and grow wise at the same time. A part of that wisdom in and through change will come from the repeated discovery and acknowledgment that we are not self-made men and self-made women after all. One need not, of course, be a Christian to reach this latter conclusion.

This is not the place to tarry in the abstract realm of these complicated, rival philosophical and theological claims. We should note, however, that we came to this thicket of fundamental questions by first considering questions about the nature of work and its relationship to identity in a human life. If we were to continue this kind of an inquiry with students in a way that is more sustained and capable than this preliminary discourse, it would be at certain times impossible to distinguish sharply between career counseling and liberal learning, between vocational preparation and liberal education. This modest ambition of conflating two discourse formations that are more often held completely apart would be in these times a significant gain for us, for today’s students, and for their efforts and ours to find both ourselves and our proper work in the world.

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Bibliography


The Lessons of 9/11

LIKE MOST AMERICANS, I KNOW EXACTLY WHERE I was on September 11, 2001, when I first heard that a plane had crashed into New York's soaring World Trade Center. I know where I was then, and where I was not long later when television reported sequentially that a second jet had slammed into the huge silver towers and another into the Pentagon and a fourth into a Pennsylvania field. That evening, my wife Joyce and I held hands as we watched the repeated replays of people falling from the sky and then the giant skyscrapers from which they jumped collapsing in a deadly avalanche of steel and stone hurtled to earth in a shroud of poisonous white smoke. We cried uncontrollably that night, and we cried again in the days ahead, more than once, as we learned of the incredible courage of the firefighters still going up when the towers fell and of the passengers on United Flight 93 who figured out what their hijackers were up to and fought back, saving a Washington target, perhaps our nation's capitol, perhaps the White House. Because of still raw emotions, Joyce chose not to go with me to see either United 93, writer/director Paul Greengrass's dramatization of events on the fourth plane, or World Trade Center, director Oliver Stone's reenactment of the fate of two policemen trapped in the rubble at Ground Zero. So I had to see these painful movies alone, in this trying year after Hurricane Katrina changed the fate of my New Orleans hometown and made my weeping at our mass helplessness commonplace. And in the darkened theaters of both films, I cried again.

In the days shortly before I went to see Stone's film, I spoke with a New York friend who declared that she had not seen United 93 nor did she plan to see World Trade Center. Her concerns were with neither picture's artistry nor with either's accuracy, but rather with what she regarded as their untimeliness. Her husband worked in New York's financial district, and though he escaped, both spouses remain deeply affected by what he and their city endured during the attack and its horrifying aftermath. For them, and for our country as well, they believe, it is simply to soon to revisit the horrors of that infamous day. I would submit, however, that for a desperately fleeting time, 9/11 demonstrated something enduringly important to us all, something we too quickly and easily forget. For President George Bush and his two key advisers, Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, the lessons of 9/11 have been practiced in the armed exertion of national might, a failed hunt for perpetrators in Afghanistan, and the increasingly controversial invasion of Iraq. However, as emerges from the selective stories in United 93 and World Trade Center about human beings who experienced the horror first hand, the lessons of 9/11 suggest something quite different than that which has subsequently fanned the flames of religious, cultural, and ethnic enmity across the globe.

Death Struggle

Though it did not bill itself this way, United 93 is fundamentally a docudrama. Its length approximates real time, and in some instances director Greengrass employed individuals to play themselves and replicate their actions on that fateful day. Unlike World Trade Center, which sees its central characters as people in a specific, familial, and professional context, United 93 confines itself to the very kind of impersonal association airline travel produces. People are large or small, well-dressed or casual, grouchy or chatty or reserved. We are not told where they come from or where they are going. These are the people all of us encounter every time we fly; these are the people who we are to those who fly with us.

Greengrass could have screwed up this film in sundry ways. He could have sensationalized
cheapened what happened on Flight 93, but he gets everything almost exactly right. As much as possible, he sticks to what is known and reveals developments as they unfolded on the day the series of horrors took place. Much of the picture's tension arises not directly from what Greengrass depicts but from what we know is about to happen. I found myself agonized over a series of mundane events. When the gate agent closes the plane's door, I couldn't help but flinch knowing that it will never open again. When flight attendants pass out beverages, I couldn't help but wince understanding that this will be the last earthly nourishment these people will know. Because there is so much tension inherent to the material, Greengrass eschews many established film techniques. He infrequently employs musical cues, and he wisely chose to use, instead of a lineup of stars, a cast of unknowns, people with average faces who are appropriate for everyday passengers about to be summoned to act in extraordinary circumstances.

Greengrass does, however, exercise the crosscutting strategy that is standard to thrillers. Our focus is inside the cabins of Flight 93, but the director takes us to several air traffic control locations, to a military air defense base, and to the Federal Aviation Agency where National Operations Manager Ben Sliney (playing himself) tries to makes sense of the bewildering series of unprecedented events. In case we have forgotten, United 93 makes clear how extensively our reactions were ruled by confusion and how quickly our response surrendered to chaos. Planes are lost off radar. Officials suspect that planes still in the air or already safely on the ground have been hijacked when they haven't been. Information sent to pilots, such as those on Flight 93, doesn't provide a clear warning, which, if it had, might have saved this one flight at least. Fighter jets fly off in the wrong direction; others take off unarmed, giving rise to talk of having them crash into hijacked planes. Though they don't know which planes have been hijacked and which have not, the military wants permission to shoot down commercial jets, but only the President can grant them permission. And in a stroke of unclear good fortune, the President, after the painfully inactive minutes documented by Michael Moore in Fahrenheit 9/11 spent reading a story to school children, is himself fleeing aboard Air Force One and cannot be reached. But before it's too late, the passengers of United Flight 93, huddled together in the back of the plane, talking on air and cell phones, learn about the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks and figure that their only chance is to retake the plane. In a scene of heartbreaking truth, they contact their family members to speak their love and say goodbye. And then they make their rush, men and women, young and not so young together. Their end is in fire. And it is never clear that they entirely understand what their struggle saves. But the fact of their struggle, their willingness to act, is a challenge to all of us who survive them.

Resurrection

Written by Andrea Berloff, World Trade Center is the story of two New York City policemen and their families. Like the story of those aboard United Flight 93, this story also is true, and its factual faithfulness has been praised by those upon whose lives it is based. On September 11, 2001, Sergeant John McLoughlin (Nicolas Cage) and his police unit are posted as usual at the Port Authority. Their job is to
protect citizens against pickpockets and aggressive panhandlers and help tourists with directions. When the first plane slams into the North Tower, John and his men are dispatched to Ground Zero where information is scarce and responsibilities unclear. The North Tower is on fire, but beyond that the policemen don't know what is true and what is merely rumor. The sergeant decides that he needs to organize a rescue squad and secures a half dozen volunteers from among his men. Stone orchestrates this scene with care. John is not gung ho. He gives no rousing speech about duty or valor. He makes no attempt to cajole the willing or shame the reticent. He cannot know what is about to happen, in fact cannot imagine what will happen, but he is well enough aware that the danger he is facing is considerable. Danger occasionally comes with his job, and doing his job defines the man he sees himself to be. Still, he does not impose his own principles on the officers before him. In this extraordinary situation, he doesn't order men to accompany him; he lets them choose. Some elect, understandably enough, not to volunteer, while others step forward to join him.

Under John's direction, this ad hoc unit of policemen assumes the role we associate with the fire department. The officers outfit themselves with oxygen tanks, rain slickers, and other gear necessary for a successful ascent and rescue operation. They are still in the mezzanine when the South Tower comes crashing down on top of them. In the chaos, John and his men are unaware that a second plane has crashed into the Center or that the huge towers themselves have started to collapse. They presume the cave-in has affected only their own location. John is trapped beneath the rubble not far from two of his men who also survive the initial collapse. Officer Dom Pezzulo (Jay Hernandez) is killed a short time later when the North Tower falls. The story that follows develops as John and rookie Officer Will Jimeno (Michael Pena) encourage one another to endure the horror of being buried alive. They talk to stave off sleep from which they might never wake. They barely know each other, but they share in the dark what busy, impersonal time in the light might always have kept separate. They can neither see nor touch each other, but in sharing they become intimate, glad at least that if they must die, they will do so in the bond of friendship. Away from Ground Zero, the film also chronicles the helplessness of wives Donna McLoughlin (Maria Bello) and Allison Jimeno (Maggie Gyllenhaal), the two officers' children, and their extended families. Donna and Allison have lessons to learn this day as well about how often all of us let the insignificant aggravations of grinding daily routine blur our vision to what really matters.

The acting in World Trade Center is solid throughout, though one may wonder about the decision to cast such Hollywood beauties as Bello and Gyllenhaal. One might also puzzle over an actor of Cage's animation accepting a role in which, for most of the picture's running time, he cannot move or even fully show his face. Moreover, director Stone keeps so tightly focused on his immediate human stories that he fails to provide us a desired broader context. We are not quite sure how much time passes, what is going on outside, or what kind of challenges rescuers face atop the pile. In this regard, Greengrass does a better job of connecting the immediate story to the larger one. In World Trade Center, when incredibly brave men like Scott Strauss (Stephen Dorff) and Chuck Sereika (Frank Whaley) man-
age to slither down to the victims amid the shifting matchsticks of massive steel beams and unstable boulders of concrete, the film does not capture their peril in the way it probably should. Even the McLoughlin and Jimeno families have wondered whether the selfless courage of men like Strauss and Sereika, among others, has been given its due.

These are ephemeral complaints, however. For what Stone does accomplish is far more important than any minor failing. He starts the picture in the early morning at the McLoughlin and Jimeno homes. September 11, 2001, is just another day for average people going about the ordinary activities of their work and family lives. McLoughlin and Jimeno represent all the 2,749 human beings doing their jobs who died in the World Trade Center that day. At the same time, Stone lets his images register how the events of 9/11 happened to all of America. As Will drives to work, he listens to a country ballad singing of "the promised land." The Statue of Liberty is spotted through a windshield. And the stark architectural simplicity of the soaring towers themselves testifies to a nation's utilitarian self-confidence, can-do energy, and economic might.

In the main, though, World Trade Center is about America as a whole only in that it is about its everyday people, about two men doing their jobs, and the family circles from which they hail. Most Americans work hard. We benefit from that labor in our prosperity. But we pay for our prosperity in the diminished time we are able to give to our loved ones. John and Will understand this sacrifice with great clarity as they lie crushed under concrete and steel, choking on dust and soot. Their thoughts turn little to career ambitions, extensively to wives and children. Will manages to scribble a love note to his wife, a feat he knows may be his last communication with the world. And we can't help but notice how the reactions and concerns of John McLoughlin and Will Jimeno mirror those of others caught in the maelstrom that day. Cell phones let those on United 93 reach out one last time. Emergency telephone operators were swamped with pleas by those trapped high in the doomed towers to convey words of love to spouses and family members and friends.

Focus On The Lesson
As are most acts of terrorism, the attacks of September 11, 2001, were examples of violence as political expression. Terrorism most certainly is political, and because that is understood, many viewers will be struck by the absence of much that is political in either of these two films. Greengrass keeps politics outside his film, because he tries to restrict events to what people knew in the fleeting minutes between the time when Flight 93 backed away from the departure gate and when it crashed in a grassy Pennsylvania field.

Given his long history of film work from Salvador to Platoon to JFK to Nixon, it is more surprising that Stone keeps politics to a minimum. But his overall strategy is similar to Greengrass's. McLoughlin and Jimeno enter the World Trade Center with a minimum of information. When the first building falls on them, they haven't a clue that Al Qaida is responsible. And the elusive political goals of Islamic jihad are far from the concerns of the two officers' families who are worried only about their loved ones' survival and recovery.

The one political note in World Trade Center is sounded by a character named David Karnes (Michael Shannon). We meet Karnes in a church where he announces that he is going to do something to help find survivors at Ground Zero. We see him next in a marine uniform, bluffing his way past check points and wandering about on top of the smoky rubble where he is among the first to hear McLoughlin and Jimeno's cries. In the end, the billows of hell puffing past his shadowed face, he speaks the attitude the Bush administration has turned into policy: "We're going to need a lot of good men over there to avenge this."

Though Stone mostly steers his film away from the political fray, one can't help but note that we first meet Karnes while he is praying and that this man of active Christian faith is the one character in the film who fails to perceive the prevalent lesson at hand.

Interestingly, some controversy has arisen over the way Greengrass chose to begin his film, with the hijackers as they dress for their last day, pray, read the Koran, and chant over its verses. Some viewers have found this a misguided attempt at politically correct cultural and religious "balance" that proves disrespectful of the victims. I reacted differently. I presumed these scenes, like
the whole of the film, were based on careful research. And rather than making me angry, these early passages left me infuriatingly sad, these ritual preparations of presumably intelligent men to commit mass murder in the name of God. I am a Christian believer who nonetheless presumes that the vastness of a benevolent God affords many ways to be known by so limited creatures as our various human selves. But no God worth worshipping condones, much less summons, the taking of innocent life. Yet, history is so gorged with the cruel acts of men who think they have God's blessing to shed the blood of others that I find myself ever more attracted to John Lennon's summons to "Imagine there's no countries/ It isn't hard to do/ Nothing to kill or die for/ And no religion too."

The ultimate message is rendered only implicitly in both these works, but more consciously, I think, in World Trade Center than in United 93. In the former, John says something that flies into my heart like a burning arrow of wisdom, a hot reminder of what I, like others, really do know instinctively, but so easily overlook in my daily life. A few years ago, I was on a flight from Chicago to New Orleans when my plane suddenly went into a 27,000-foot nose dive from 35,000 to 8,000 feet. Flight attendants later explained that the plane had lost its pressurization and that the pilots had dived to protect themselves from blacking out, which could have happened in a matter of seconds and would have resulted in our plane's inevitable crash. They didn't have time for a warning, and along with my fellow passengers, as the jet screamed toward a rising earth, I thought I was going to die. I recall with great clarity exactly what I thought as I anticipated so swift and unexpected an end: "I hope Joyce knows how much I loved her." John McLoughlin, I think, puts its better when he says, "I just hope that I have loved my wife enough." Amidst the suffering and sadness, outrage and horror, that is the lesson of 9/11. That is what United 93 teaches and World Trade Center urges we not forget. Stone's marine speaks for the government, but his policeman speaks for the people. What is finally important to us, is those we love, not those we hate. ♠

Fredrick Barton was born and raised and has lived most of his life in New Orleans. A year after Hurricane Katrina, he and his wife Joyce are still struggling to repair their house which flooded with four feet of water. They are lucky compared to countless friends and fellow citizens whose homes are irreparably damaged and whose livelihoods have been destroyed. Barton is film critic for Gambit Weekly and author of the novels The El Cholo Feeling Passes, Courting Pandemonium, With Extreme Prejudice, and A House Divided, which won the William Faulkner Prize for fiction. He is Professor of English and Provost at the University of New Orleans.
SEMBLANCE

The last light of evening
dusts off the back deck
clear and smooth as the Pietá
while the sun lingers in its descent
like a drop of water
hanging to the end of a pine needle.
In the silence, Mary’s reflection
shimmers in the window pane—
that twisted yet knowing face,
the bowed head tied to the heart’s sword,
that piercing memory of what Simeon said
in the harsh Jerusalem twilight.
I scan the deck as if somehow
there might appear the body of Jesus,
and for a moment, through the dusk,
all I can see is the streamlined grain
of wood, the triangular patterns
following one another like a series
of arrowheads or spear tips, interrupted
by the misshaped knot
I can’t help but touch:
this inordinate projection like a swollen eye
or a back’s welt, these rough edges
stained with meaty varnish,
this bleeding crown,
this scar headed for my heart.

Mark Bennion
Stories of Lutherans and Race
A Bibliographic Retrospective

James W. Albers

If further Negro societies will be received into the league, it will eventually mean the withdrawal of all Walther Leagues below the Mason and Dixon Line. . . . As far as mission work among the Negroes is concerned, our Southern people try to do their part, but we know that it is absolutely impossible for us to sanction social equality.” So wrote a Texas pastor in 1922, in protest to the admission of a black youth group into the international youth group network affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS). Almost fifteen years later, the same pastor, but now LCMS President John Behnken, told an LCMS convention that incorporating black congregations into the geographical jurisdictions of the Synod “will never do” (Galchutt, 75).

These statements help Kathryn Galchutt frame the environment into which young Andrew Schulze entered in 1924 as the newly called pastor of a black congregation. Schulze would emerge as the pioneer advocate for racial integration within the LCMS and become instrumental in developing several organizations that advanced the cause. The culmination of these efforts was the formation of the Lutheran Human Relations Association of America (LHRAA) in 1954. With this volume, Galchutt makes a major scholarly contribution to the history of Lutherans and racial issues in the twentieth century, particularly within the LCMS. Her narrative displays an impressive knowledge of LCMS history and its historiographical resources, as well as a command of immigrant and local history.

Complementing Galchutt’s work are two recent autobiographical books by Karl E. Lutze, who, though a generation younger than Schulze, was himself a pioneer in the Lutheran integration story. Lutze became Schulze’s colleague on the LHRAA staff and eventually succeeded him as its executive secretary. Taken together, these three volumes provide valuable insights into the process of change within the LCMS, especially in the area of race relations. A fourth volume by the late Dr. Jeff Johnson provides a larger context for black Lutherans in America.

Andrew Schulze in Cincinnati

Galchutt helps us understand the circumstances that led a third-generation German American to devote his entire career to ministry in race relations. Although as a child Schulze first lived in Cincinnati’s historic German district, his perspectives on the world widened when his parents moved into a more sociologically mixed neighborhood on Cincinnati’s west end. Living at the end of the trolley line, Andrew recalls walking barefoot on warm, summer days over the hill to a place where he could enjoy the sky, clouds, and idyllic scenery of the Ohio River Valley, and where he could observe and talk casually with the friendly residents of a small community of African-Americans. Surely forma-
tive, as well, was his attendance at an integrated public school (25).

When an early impulse to become a pastor did not meet with parental enthusiasm, Schulze quit high school after his sophomore year—not altogether by his own choosing according to Lutze (Of Walls and Doors, 204). When a series of jobs proved unsatisfying, he enlisted in the United States Navy and served on a destroyer during the last year of World War I. Still lacking strong parental support, but know in his twenties Andrew applied to Concordia Theological Seminary, then located in Springfield, Illinois, and was accepted (24–29). The seminary's niche was preparing students who lacked the more traditional classical education and thus could not attend the primary LCMS seminary in St. Louis. Schluze's preparation for seminary was thus very different from that of most of his future ministerial colleagues, he also had certain life experiences which gave him perspectives they lacked.

Springfield, Illinois: Seminary and First Parish

If Cincinnati shaped Schulze in special ways, so did Springfield. Upon his arrival in Springfield, Schulze sought directions to the seminary and was offered assistance by a black gentleman who, after providing directions, casually invited Schulze to, "Come and worship with us sometime" (31). Schulze did, and, in fact, began attending with increasing regularity Holy Trinity, Springfield's black Lutheran Church.

At the seminary, Schulze voluntarily studied Greek and benefited immensely from the interest taken in him by his Greek tutor, a young faculty member named Otto Paul Kretzmann (47). His strongest supporter on the faculty, however, was Prof. Theodore Engelder, whom Schulze referred to as "the most liberal [member of the faculty] in racial matters" (49). Schulze himself notes that Engelder conducted services on alternate Sundays at Holy Trinity for several years and then became the interim pastor for a short time. (For additional information on Engelder, see Schulze 1972, 6–7).

Graduating from the seminary in 1924, Schulze's first call was to Holy Trinity. When he married that same summer, Prof. Engelder gave Schulze's new wife, Margaret (Goering), the standard advice given to all families of white pastors serving black congregations, namely, that she retain her membership at Trinity, the white congregation where she could also commune. She ignored that advice. Also atypical of other white Lutheran ministers serving black congregations, the Schulzes found housing in the black neighborhood of their congregation (Galchutt 49; see also Schulze 1972, 6–7).

An incident described by Galchutt reveals the environment within the LCMS and Schulze's attempts to change it. An early Schulze initiative at Holy Trinity was to reestablish a parochial school. When a teacher, Phyllis Jones, wished to complete her education by enrolling at an LCMS institution, she was denied admission by Concordia College in Seward. (Not noted in the narrative is that Concordia Seward had just taken the unprecedented step in the LCMS higher education system of breaking the gender barrier by admitting a limited number of women. Two concurrent integrations were evidently too much.) Schulze then contacted W.H.T. Dau, president of the new Lutheran university in Valparaiso, who was personally receptive but hesitated because of community resistance. The Ku Klux Klan was very strong in Northwest Indiana, and, in fact, almost had purchased the university itself just a few years earlier (51; for Schulze's assessment of Miss Jones see Schulze
1972, 10–11). Schulze’s pattern of writing polite but expectant letters—letters not artificially contrived but pastorally motivated—challenged the recipients to reflect on issues they might otherwise have preferred to ignore.

The St. Louis Years

In the St. Louis decades (1928–1947), Schulze emerged as a leader of the movement to integrate Lutheran institutions. After his success in Springfield, he became pastor of the newly founded St. Philip’s congregation, a black parish in St. Louis. St. Philip’s was located in the “Ville,” the affluent black section of St. Louis, which boasted its own black high school and which was home to Arthur Ashe, Tina Turner, and Dick Gregory. Under Schulze’s leadership St. Philip’s became self-supporting during the Depression, but, even as a self-sustaining congregation, St. Philip’s could not join the LCMS.

When Schulze continued to assist his young, well-educated parishioners in their attempts to gain admission to the educational institutions of the LCMS, not only were his efforts often rebuffed, but in 1938 they evoked a resolution from the LCMS Board of Directors reaffirming President Behnken’s previously stated position that the Synod’s secondary and higher educational institutions should remain segregated. The resolution noted the existence of separate black institutions in Greensboro, North Carolina, and Selma, Alabama (78).

Several months after this, Schulze presented his views at the LCMS Western District Pastoral Conference and received a mixed response from faculty members of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, who were in attendance. He then determined to write a book on the subject. When the manuscript for My Neighbor of Another Color was rejected by Concordia Publishing House, he arranged for private publication—borrowing funds from parishioners. Prof. Alfred Rehwinkel, who had offered enthusiastic support at the pastoral conference, gave his personal imprimatur by writing a supportive introduction.

Galchutt notes that the book created moderate interest. The Christian Century gave it a brief review, and H. Richard Niebuhr commented privately that the issues raised by Schulze were not unique to Lutherans but typical of Protestantism. The leading LCMS popular magazine, The Lutheran Witness, intentionally ignored it. The Mission Board of the Synodical Conference, charged with supervising Schulze and black congregations, selectively circulated an internal negative critique written by Prof. John Theodore Mueller of the St. Louis Seminary. The black pastors and educators at the black institutions in North Carolina and Alabama were not given access to the review. The underlying major premise of Mueller’s lengthy response was that society operated with clear racial boundaries and that it was not the church’s mission or obligation to change them. To do so would run the risk of becoming involved in the Social Gospel and destroying the historic, clear Lutheran focus on the pure Gospel. Schulze’s subsequent efforts to discuss the critique personally with Mueller were twice rebuffed. In fairness to Mueller, Galchutt notes that he later retracted his critique and conceded that Schulze was correct. My Neighbor of Another Color soon required a second printing and Schulze emerged as the leading LCMS voice on racial issues (80–90).

When racial riots in Detroit and Harlem in 1943 prompted the mayor of St. Louis to create a Commission on Race Relations, he asked Schulze to serve, which he did. Soon Schulze himself founded the St. Louis Lutheran Society for Better Race Relations (SLLSBRR) which became an important influence for changing Lutheran attitudes. With Prof. Rehwinkel as president, the SLLSBRR was able to meet on the campus of Concordia Seminary—though not without an initial challenge. Many students, including Martin E. Marty, the late Jaroslav Pelikan, and George Hans Liebenow, became involved (100–105). In his own quiet way, Schulze had become an activist.

Chicago, LHRAA, and Valparaiso

The year 1947 was pivotal for the LCMS in many respects. In this year, the LCMS determined that black congregations, previously governed by the Mission Board of the Synodical Conference, could now be admitted into the geographic districts of the LCMS. The Mission Board of the Northern Illinois District of the LCMS
invited Schulze to come to Chicago and develop a racial outreach strategy for the entire district. Schulze accepted and became pastor of Christ the King congregation on Chicago's South Side, near Bronzeville. Soon Schulze created the Chicago Society for Better Race Relations and attracted wider support, including from two Concordia Seminary, St. Louis professors: Martin Scharlemann and Arthur Carl Piepkorn. Both participated in summer institutes led by Schulze. In 1950, Dr. O.P. Kretzmann, now president of Valparaiso University, offered to host these summer institutes on the university's campus. Meanwhile, tension between Schulze and the Northern Illinois District had emerged because Schulze envisioned a plan in which Lutheran congregations in changing neighborhoods would become integrated, whereas the district had conceived a strategy of establishing a series of all-black congregations within black neighborhoods. Northern Illinois District leaders were relieved when after only a few years Schulze accepted the invitation of his former Rev. Andrew Schulze (right) and Rev. Karl Lutze.

The next and last professional period in Schulze's life, 1954–1968, would prove to be one of the century's most tumultuous in the United States, particularly in matters of race. Galchutt's chapter on the Valpo years provides considerable detail about Schulze, and it is in fact the longest in her book. At Valpo, Schulze's responsibilities were divided between serving as executive secretary of the LHRAA and teaching, including a course on The Church and the Race Issue. As head of the LHRAA, Schulze often traveled on extended weekends to locations where Lutherans were trying to respond to local race-related challenges. He also edited the Vanguard, which replaced the Lutheran Race Relations Bulletin, and continued arranging the summer institutes, which brought mostly black and some white lay and clergy leaders to campus. The gatherings—some of which this writer had the opportunity to observe—were invariably instructive, inspirational, emotional, and for many life-changing.

The shift in terms from "race relations" to "human relations" in the new LHRAA name permitted an enlargement of LHRAA thinking and mission, which soon included outreach to Native Americans and other minorities. It even took an international dimension.

Galchutt's narrative is especially interesting in describing the LHRAA's involvement in the LCMS at large, including in the South, during Schulze's Valparaiso period. She incorporates into her narrative the KKK abduction and beating of Vicar James Fackler, as it had been detailed by Richard Ziehr in The Struggle for Unity (1999). The Vanguard made the "Fackler Flogging" into a national event, while The Cresset

Rev. Andrew Schulze (right) and Rev. Karl Lutze. Photo: Valparaiso University Archives.

allowed Fackler to tell his own story (reprinted on pages 60–62 of this issue).

Galchutt describes at some length Schulze's involvement in the 1962 voter registration movement in Albany, Georgia. When the Martin Luther King, Jr.-led effort stalled, King called for an infusion of northern clergy to generate more attention. Schulze responded. With seventy others, he rode the bus to Albany, along the way experiencing discrimination firsthand. When Schulze was arrested in Albany for refusing to disband when ordered, President O. P. Kretzmann sent a $200 bail bond, wrote President Kennedy demanding federal intervention, asked his friend Father Hesburgh at Notre Dame to use his national network of contacts on Schulze's
behalf, and waited for the inevitable letters questioning how one of his faculty members could be involved in such an incident. Schulze confessed that in many respects the Albany experience had strong Pauline overtones for him personally, and, at age sixty-six, had been perhaps the most deeply moving experience of his career (182).

When Schulze retired six years later, dynamics within the country and the black community were changing rapidly. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had been assassinated, and leadership within the black community now focused on the convergence of power within the black community. The environment following 1968 was very different from that in which Schulze had begun his pastorate in Springfield, 44 years earlier.

Finally, Galchutt's research is especially significant because she has written one of the first contemporary scholarly works to deal with the history of Lutherans and twentieth century racial issues. Not only are Lutherans now represented in the scholarly literature of race and religion in American history, but there is also a useful platform for additional dissertations, monographs, and articles.

Karl Lutze

Karl Lutze's two volumes Of Walls and Doors (2001) and Awakening to Equality: A Young White Pastor at the Dawn of Civil Rights (2006) contribute to our understanding of Lutherans and race in the middle third of the twentieth-century. Of Walls and Doors already has been reviewed in The Cresset (Richard Lee, Michaelmas, 2002), but since it has many connections with Andrew Schulze and the issue of Lutherans and race, some additional comment is appropriate.

Of Walls and Doors ranges broadly across Lutze's past, sharing warm and engaging stories about those who enriched and shaped his life. In the first of four anecdotal clusters, he describes influential persons in his "Wisconsin Years," especially his father, a public school principal. In the second group, he shares his experiences during his seminary internship in Baltimore, where his supervisor, the Lutheran City Missionary and institutional chaplain, Rev. Leslie Weber, known simply as "Rev," assigned him to minister to patients at a black tuberculosis sanitarium.

The last two sections deal with personal encounters in Oklahoma and then Valparaiso. The Oklahoma cycle comprises vignettes of various members of his largely black congregations in Oklahoma from 1945-1959. The Valparaiso section deals with only a few of those whom he knew and admired: Andrew Schulze; Victor Hoffman—a member of the political science department, editor of the Vanguard, and later a leader in race relations in Milwaukee; O. P. Kretzmann—"The Great Man"; Clemence Sabourin—pastor in Harlem and active leader in LHRAA; Bob and Anne Springsteen, the latter was an LHRAA staff member and poet; and Oliver Harms—LCMS president and quiet, receptive friend of the LHRAA and its causes.

In this connection—and not to be missed—is the account of LCMS President Harms's trip to Alabama to help resolve disagreements among southern Lutherans in their response to issues of integration. After a long day, Harms was invited along with Lutze to the home of Mr. Chris McNair. McNair is a professional photographer, a Lutheran (thanks to Walter A. Maier and the Lutheran Hour), and the father of

Karl Lutze introduces Rev. Clemence Sabourin of New York at a meeting of the LHRAA in July 1957. Photo: Valparaiso University Archives.
Rev. Karl Lutze celebrates Holy Communion at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, North Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1959. Esther Lutze is fifth from the left. Photo used with permission of the Lutze family.

Denise McNair, (one of the Four Little Girls in the later film by Spike Lee), who had been killed in the Birmingham Church bombing of September 1963. Telling the rest of the story here would detract from its reading. Of Walls and Doors is easy to pick up—hard to put down.

Deftly avoiding essential duplication with Of Walls and Doors, Awakening to Equality is a more focused and sustained narrative. For eleven chapters, Lutze describes his seminary education and then his life as a young pastor in Oklahoma between 1945 and 1959. Only in the last chapter does Lutze deal with his years at Valparaiso University, painting only with a very broad brush.

Awakening depicts an energetic young pastor engaged in a very unconventional ministry during the early days of integration within the LCMS. Young Pastor Lutze quickly gained the trust not only of the black community that he served but also of his fellow Lutheran clergy in the Oklahoma District of the LCMS. Modestly written, the book leaves one to surmise that much of the positive response to his efforts can be attributed to Lutze himself—his congenial personality, his energy, his method of dealing with challenging situations, and his deep compassion for people.

Not to be overlooked is the credit Lutze gives to the active involvement of his wife Esther, which, like that of Margaret Schulze, made a huge difference in establishing his credibility. Richard Ziehr underscores the significance of the actions of these two women by noting that, as late as 1959, the chairman of the Synodical Conference Mission Board told the wives of white pastors going into black ministry, especially in the South, “that they could not have membership in a black church, they could eat meals with their members, but they could not have their members eat with them [in the parsonage]” (Ziehr, 25; emphasis added). The photo above—with Esther Lutze front and center—tells the story of her response to this advice.

Awakening is divided between experiences at Lutze’s first parish, Hope Lutheran Church in Muskogee, and his second, Prince of Peace in North Tulsa. One learns how Lutze converted an old house into a church, how he purchased a decommissioned military chapel and had it reconstructed on a site the purchase of which he negotiated with the help of ice cream cones, how he desegregated a public park in Muskogee, and how Oswald Hoffman, then the director of public relations for the Missouri Synod, maneuvered an
relations for the Missouri Synod, maneuvered an enlightened LCMS response to the 1954 Supreme Court school desegregation decision (Brown v. Topeka Board of Education).

Continue reading and one learns of Lutze's encounter with a Frau Richardson, his involvement in founding a local chapter of the Urban League, and his response to personal threats from members of the local White Citizens Council.

In chapter twelve, Oklahoma, My Teacher, Lutze relates how his experiences in Oklahoma prepared him for his work with LHRAA and teaching at Valparaiso University. However, over twenty years of active leadership in the LHRAA and the department of theology at the height of the American civil rights controversy can hardly be compressed into the fifteen pages the book devotes to this part of his life. That was not, of course, the intent of this book.

**Jeff Johnson and Black Christians: The Untold Lutheran Story**

If the three previous volumes focused almost exclusively on race relations within the LCMS, Jeff Johnson's *Black Christians* broadens the picture. Though Johnson's work is somewhat dated (St. Louis: Concordia, 1991), it remains valuable in several respects.

First, it should be noted that Johnson was himself part of the LCMS integration story. Johnson, who graduated first from Concordia College Oakland, California, and then Concordia Seminary in St. Louis (M.Div., 1948), was apparently the first African-American to break the color barrier at an LCMS educational institution in the twentieth century. He earned his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Southern California in 1961. After serving pastorates in Detroit, East St. Louis, and Indianapolis, he joined the faculty of Valparaiso University as the first black faculty member in 1962 teaching sociology and serving as department chair.

Though trained as a sociologist, Johnson compiled a very useful historical synthesis of Lutherans and black Christians in America from colonial times to the present. His work is strongest and most valuable in the colonial and ante-bellum periods, not only because of his details on colonial blacks and Lutherans, but also because of his inclusion of Lutherans in the Caribbean, especially the Virgin Islands, Guyana, and Suriname.

His treatment of the period between the American Revolution and the Civil War successfully demonstrates the existence of a significant Lutheran presence within the black community. A key component in this story was St. John Lutheran Church in Charleston, South Carolina, where Pastor John Bachman supportively forwarded to his church council a request for membership from a group of blacks. So it was that free blacks and slaves were accepted as members, but on a parallel or collateral basis. On the eve of the Civil War they comprised thirty-five percent of St. John's membership and had their own cemetery adjacent to the church.

Johnson's statistics demonstrate that the number of black Lutherans in the South peaked in 1859 (126). He also asserts that What is unusual about the period between 1774-1865 . . . is that Lutherans in the North, who were much better organized, more numerous, and with more resources than those in the South, exerted so little effort to reach out to the black community (129). About Lutherans and blacks during reconstruction, Johnson bluntly states that, to say that black Lutherans disappeared after the Civil War is not correct. They were either asked to leave Lutheran congregations or they were summarily put out (148).

In treating the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and its twentieth-century predecessor groups, Johnson notes the relatively modest efforts by the American Lutheran Church, which in the 1950s transferred its Alabama operations to the Synodical Conference. By way of contrast, he is more impressed with the remarkable emergence of interest and action within the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), during the 1960s. Much of this energy he attributes to the leadership of LCA President Franklin Clark Fry, who placed responsibility for implementing LCA race relations plans in his own office. Johnson calls the distinctive approach of the LCA inclusiveness, which he suggests is the active attempt to listen to minority voices and to place them in
does not carry this theme into the actual structuring of the new ELCA, which formally began functioning in 1988, and which mandated certain ethnic, gender, and lay and clerical representations within the governing structures of the new church body.

Other Stories to be Told

The history of Lutherans and blacks in America comprises a relatively small segment in the larger histories of both Lutherans and of blacks in America. Perhaps because Lutherans themselves were often isolated by their own ethnicities, especially until the mid-twentieth century, and perhaps by their theology as well, they were not well positioned to exert significant influence on the national racial scene. Yet there is a significant story that has been emerging and which deserves closer examination and telling.

The Galchutt and Lutze volumes focus on the involvement of white LCMS ministers serving in black communities. While there have been many other white pastors over a long period of time who would fall into this category, Schulze and Lutze are distinctive because of their push for integration. The push for integration is also the focus of Ziehr’s 1999 book, which refers to the efforts of the LCMS’s Southern District in the 1960s to implement the 1947 policy permitting the incorporation of black congregations into the synod’s geographic districts.

From a historiographical point of view, we now have a reasonable core of materials for understanding basic race relationships within the LCMS and the white leadership of the movement for integration of the LCMS, at least through the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. This obviously should be supplemented by additional accounts, but now there is at least a core.

The stories of the black pastors with whom white pastors like Schulze and Lutze interacted remain largely untold, at least in the volumes in this retrospective. There are some autobiographies by several black LCMS pastors. Samuel L. Hoard, a Schulze protégé from St. Philip’s in St. Louis, wrote The Truth Will Set You Free (Concordia, 2004). Though not autobiographical, Richard Dickinson’s Roses and Thorns (1977) presents another important dimension to the story by detailing the painful history of many black pastors within the LCMS, especially in the 1960s. Dickinson later told his own story in This I Remember (1995). Dr. Robert H. King, the first black to serve as a vice president of the LCMS, wrote Pastor Jenkins Said, “Hang on to Matthew 6:33”: An Autobiography of Robert H. King, Ph.D. (1999).

There surely are other black Lutheran pastors whose stories deserve telling and would help to fill out the larger picture, especially within the LCMS. Still lacking are good narratives of Marmaduke Carter, Clemonce Sabourin, and Will Herzfeld, just to name a few. Lutze pays a fine tribute to Clemonce Sabourin in Of Doors and Windows (233–250), and Sabourin told something of his family’s early experience in Let the Righteous Speak! Travel Memoirs (1957). Galchutt also took notice of the Schulze/Sabourin collaboration in closing Immanuel College in North Carolina, but Sabourin merits a fuller treatment. The late Will Herzfeld was originally in the LCMS and a prominent participant in the LCMS Alabama story. He became a bishop in the AELC, another predecessor of the ELCA, and then performed high level service in the ELCA Division of Global Mission.

Although this reviewer feels less competent to comment on the historiographic situation within the ELCA, it appears that the real story of Lutherans and blacks in the United States during the last third of the twentieth century has been occurring within the ELCA. It is, however, a story that has not yet been written. All relevant records are perhaps not yet available within the archives. This should not, however, deter some historian from piloting a history and following Galchutt in utilizing personal contacts and interviews to reconstruct some of the stories while living sources are still available.

One looks for scholars to describe the career of the late Rev. Nelson Trout, the first black district president in the American Lutheran Church and subsequently professor at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, a task which should be aided by his recollections that are part of the Oral History Collection of the Archives of Cooperative Lutheranism. Albert “Pete” Pero, a Concordia Springfield graduate who recently
retired from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) was deeply involved in the development of black theological responses and a variety of organizations embodying black Lutheran leadership. Another twentieth-century story has been emerging at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, which has undertaken programs of theological education for significant numbers of non-Lutheran, black professional church workers in the Philadelphia area.

There are probably other stories to be identified and told. In the meantime, thanks are due to Galchutt, Lutze, Johnson, as well as Ziehr, Dickinson, King, Hoard, Schulze and others for their stories are providing unique, useful, and foundational contributions to our understanding of Lutherans and race.

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For Further Reading


GENTILE MIDRASH

perhaps he puffed on a dandelion

perhaps he climbed out the window
of the temple to pick for his sister
a cluster of airy larkspur

perhaps he stooped to braid the tangled
hair of a lost child, whispered a rhyme
into her ear that willed her home through
a sheltering dusk, then stretched out
on a hillside for a breezy night of wide
open space and a quiet rearranging
of stars

he may have finished second or third
in a foot race held on the sand near
the sea of Galilee, smiled inside
and clapped as the winner—maybe
James or Andrew—held his clasped
hands high in victory

i imagine he wept more than that
once and found some gesture
or expression of Peter's so hilarious
that over and over he laughed so
hard and loud he got hiccups, pleading
with Peter to stop

perhaps he scooped up a mound
of clay one autumn afternoon
and fashioned a sculpture, a profile
of the old carpenter who sometimes
worked with his father

maybe he sat in the shade of an olive
tree, tapped out a tune that wouldn't
leave him alone or scratched slowly
into the dust the start of a sonnet
for Judas Iscariot

Mary M. Brown
When I was little, my older cousins were called into the armed forces during the Vietnam War. Extremely bright and talented young men, they were able to play out their service as musicians.

I adored Peter and Tim, but the idea of an army band always struck me as strange. Music is about feeling and feelings, while war is about their denial. Jazz in particular is about humanizing yourself and the other; becoming a soldier is about dehumanizing yourself and making the other "the enemy." In war, your best friend is your rifle; in jazz, your best friend is your horn. One is an instrument of self-expression and life; the other an instrument of death.

And yet, so many jazz greats have served in army bands: Brubeck, Coltrane, Glenn Miller, of course. They say it was the ruin of Lester Young. The penultimate tenor player rarely spoke of his hitch in the army, saying only, "It was a nightmare, man. One mad nightmare."

One mad nightmare was being perpetrated upon the people of America and Vietnam during that war, and many never awoke from it. One who did is William Walker, a. k. a. Billy Bang, the jazz violinist who recently has released a series of recordings dealing with his years as a squad leader in Vietnam. Another is Charlie Haden, the great bassist who lived the war back home and in 1969 formed the Liberation Music Orchestra (LMO) to record jazz music's first deliberate statement of protest and peace.

Haden has revived the LMO for such deliberate statements whenever America does not feel like America anymore. That is certainly the case these days, and with arranger Carla Bley, he has released the fourth LMO recording, Not in Our Name (Verve). Billy Bang worked for years after his discharge—on his instrument and in the anti-war movement, but it was not until 2001 and the recording of Vietnam: The Aftermath (Justin Time) that he addressed his past directly. Last year he followed up with Vietnam: Reflections (Justin Time), a beautiful work of release and reconciliation.

Another who awoke is Claude Anshin Thomas, a helicopter gunner in Vietnam. His book, At Hell's Gate: A Soldier's Journey from War to Peace (Shambhala 2004), now has come out in paperback. This hopeful memoir may provide more glimpses inside that nightmare than one can stand.

"Go into the military," his father had told him, "it will help make a man out of you." Not long into basic training, the eighteen-year-old Thomas was unfortunate enough to drop his gun:

[The sergeant] was six feet three inches to my five feet eight and a half. He stood in front of me, his chest jammed up against my face, stabbing me with his finger and screaming obscenities down at me. Then he pulled out his penis and urinated on me, in front of everyone.

He was not allowed to wash himself for two days. It is bad to drop a gun. Someone could get hurt. But there is more than one way to become a man. Thomas learned to deny his feelings, his judgment, his sense of decency. Soon the eighteen year old boy was gone, and in his place a lean, mean killing machine went on to win meaningless awards and medals.

Upon his release, a beautiful young woman approached him in the airport. Instead of the hero's hug he expected, she spit at him. His first impulse was to annihilate her: "Since she had committed an act of violence against me, she was the enemy . . . the enemy was everyone unlike me, everyone who was not an American soldier."

"Everyone unlike me." Jazz is creating a song for everyone unlike you. In war, everything is about enemies; in jazz, everything is about empathy. Jazz musicians give voice not only to their own joy and their own pain, but also to the joy and
pain of the listener—and of those who may never get to hear them, the imagined other, whose life is taken into consideration just as much as those joining the musician in his or her creative moment.

After many years of rehabilitation and Buddhist mindfulness training, Thomas learns to use this empathy to universalize his experience for us.

Everyone has their Vietnam . . . we have all experienced the trauma of violence in our lives directly or indirectly. Vietnam is only an expression of something that begins inside each and every one of us, male or female. We all possess the seeds of violence, the seeds of war.

Billy Bang and Charlie Haden hope to wash away such seeds with their music. There is a yearning for peace in every stroke of Bang’s bow, his harsh and soothing tone, surrounded by other veterans. As he plucks his way into Vietnamese folk tunes, the humility and maturity are palpable. Haden and Bley’s ensemble combines mournful sounds with those of courage, truthfulness, and humor. Theirs is a music that confronts the “cultural myth” identified by Thomas, one filled with “illusions and denial about . . . the profound and far-reaching impact of war—not just on those who fought, but on all of us.”

In his book To a Young Jazz Musician, Wynton Marsalis writes of an ongoing battle between a great truth and a great lie:

And the great lie is that there are people who by birth are objectively inferior to other people and who deserve to be mistreated, and that’s a belief that has nothing to do with race, man.

The waves of peace that emanate from the LMO’s “Amazing Grace”—a rendition that begins with unaccompanied brass playing in a stately, martial fashion, much as Peter and Tim’s army band might have done—are meant for all ears, not just for those of a people deemed objectively superior to some other. The rumbling, soulful groove of Billy Bang’s “Reconciliation” is meant to be experienced by all races, genders, and tribes. Here his mixing of jazz and traditional Vietnamese instruments in a prancing Western-Asian melody delivers the message of the song’s title.

Marsalis writes that, in this battle, “jazz music comes to say ‘God chooses.’ No group or hairstyle decides who delivers the message.” Many once and future musicians, however, were trained to repress their emotions for the sake of destruction. Like Thomas, they had been conditioned to believe “that the path to peace passed through killing.” Now as one of these messengers, Bang’s surprising music reminds us that we instead wish our children to be trained in expressing their emotions, to use them to shape meaningful lives and support the lives of others. Jazz does this—ask any music teacher. That is, if you can find one. Haden stressed in January’s Down Beat that jazz is a language. And while “people have the potential to cultivate their ears to appreciate deeper music,” kids are not receiving the musical training they once were. “You cannot speak to someone who doesn’t understand the language.” Thomas will tell you that is good news for the military. From the view that everything that threatens our beliefs is our enemy, “that the only objective in life [is] victory; and that victory [is] accomplished through the defeat and destruction of the enemy,” jazz can bring us to realize a different kind of victory, one that does not pass through killing—or the language of humiliation.

Rock ‘n’ roll, on the other hand, always has been more amenable to violence, and none come more violently than The Who. But the band’s surviving members have grown to confront the cultural myth that bore them. Guitarist Pete Townshend told Mojo recently that after World War II, “Britain and all of its allies went into . . . a collective denial that there was anything to discuss . . . that what had actually happened was tragic, and would lead to tragedy.” Equating this “parental silence” with child abuse, vocalist Roger Daltrey concurs: “[Those who served] will talk about the days off. The night they had a girl or went to a pub. [But] my parents never talked about the real things that happened in the war. It’s very rare people do.”

Music is the anti-silence. Jazz in particular requires active listening. Thomas believes that “non-veterans” are as responsible for war as veterans. And vets need and want and should be listened to. Before we can get to a place of peace, he writes, “we have to touch our suffering—embrace
it and hold it.” Nonveterans are included in that “our.” These releases from Billy Bang and Charlie Haden are a means to that embrace, part of the “language of feelings” Thomas says we need “to break the silence that is so necessary to protect and sustain cycles of aggression.”

As the current cycle continues, as we make way for more homeless, broken veterans on our streets, we can begin listening for peace in this music, preparing our ears to hear the vets’ stories, preparing our hearts to share their suffering, and preparing our voices to break the silence.

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INNOCENCE

_Innocence sees that this it is, and finds it world enough . . . Annie Dillard_

At some point you make peace with it
Your life as it is, with all it offers you

Like an early evening walk, half moon
Hung on the tiger lily sky

Black cows heading to the barn
Bemoaning the end of day

Hundreds of blackbirds screeching
Live as the wire they perch upon

My long-time friend zipping by in her van
Waving. It’s after all the whining

And stomping of feet, of course. After dreams
Blur with life. After the pin-pricked

Pop of the inflated ego. A joy
Mysterious. A humble innocence.

Julie L. Moore
Dostoevsky’s famous 1880 novel, *The Brothers Karamozov*, contains a story so evocative that it often stands alone in literary anthologies. Called “The Grand Inquisitor” and recounted by Ivan Karamozov, the story focuses on a leader of the Spanish Inquisition, the Grand Inquisitor, who informs Jesus that the way of the cross, with its death to self, is inappropriate for the masses. Instead, the Inquisitor argues, what people want from religion—and need—is precisely what institutional Christianity can provide: “miracle, mystery, and authority.” Ivan’s story, based on a dream, helps illuminate the dream-work of two radically different films that competed for box office dominance this summer: *Superman Returns* and *The Devil Wears Prada*.

Like *The Brothers Karamozov*, *Superman Returns* is filled with explicit Christian imagery. Unlike *The Brothers Karamozov*, however, *Superman Returns* is exceedingly heavy-handed. The film begins with a womb-like container crashing to earth from the heavens. The incarnate Superman inside is welcomed by Mrs. Kent, who raised him as her own son. His god-like powers disguised in Clark Kent attire, Superman falls subject to the attacks of an earthly Devil, whose name, Lex Luther, should give Protestants pause. After submitting to a Luther-led buffeting and scourging, Superman saves humanity by risking death, willingly lifting a kryptonite-laced landmass—like our sins—to heaven, sending the mass into orbit around the earth. Weakened, however, by its oozing kryptonite—a stand-in for the debilities that all flesh is heir to—Superman falls back to earth in a cruciform pose. And, of course, he eventually rises again to continue the work established by his father from the heavens, who tells him “I have sent them you, my only son.”

In a book titled *The Gospel According to the World’s Greatest Superhero*, Steve Skelton asserts that parallels between Superman and Jesus date back almost as far as the comic book character’s beginnings in 1938. However, as others have noted, the originators of Superman, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, were Jewish, as is Bryan Singer, the director of the current movie. The film’s heavy-handed Christ imagery, it would seem, aims for the wallet, not the soul. In fact, the film even throws in a little taste of the best-selling *DaVinci Code*, Superman having sired a son who will carry his incarnated powers on to future generations. The Christianity in *Superman Returns*, then, harmonizes with that proffered by Dostoevsky’s Grand Inquisitor. Dazzling crowds with miracle, mystery, and authority, the film’s eponymous hero saves people from evil without expecting anything in return.

Released almost simultaneously with *Superman Returns*, *The Devil Wears Prada*, also set in New York City, gives us superwoman. Based on a semi-autobiographical novel by someone who worked for the head of *Vogue* magazine, the film stars a marvelously supercilious Meryl Streep as the outrageously autocratic head of *Runway* magazine. Named Miranda Priestly, which roughly translates to “priest-like wonderment,” the *Runway* superwoman embodies miracle, mystery, and authority—dressed in Prada, Channel, and Dior. Like a Grand Inquisitor, Priestly keeps her minions at the magazine scurrying to fulfill her most outlandish and disdainfully-delivered requests. And the minions, though quite aware of Priestly’s dehumanizing contempt, gladly deny their humanity in order to feel connected to the transformative miracles of stylish clothes, the mystery of fashion’s cultural power, and the authority of Priestly, who with a single nod of the head can make or break a designer’s career.

Entering this devilish scenario is recent college graduate Andrea, called Andy, played by the
wide-eyed ingénue of *The Princess Diaries*, Anne Hathaway. Though hoping to make her way as a serious journalist, Andy accepts the job as Priestly's menial Girl-Friday—not to mention all other days and nights of the week—because she needs the money and also hopes the job might lead to contacts in the publishing industry. As she enters Runway's corporate headquarters the first time, however, Andy is buffeted with disdainful glances and scathing comments from Priestly and her subordinate clones. Repeatedly commenting on Andy's off-the-rack frumpy clothes and the unbearably "fat" size-six body underneath them, these fashion inquisitors slowly begin to style Andy's sense of self.

As Andy starts dressing in high-end haute couture, we get more than generic capitulation to peer-pressure. We get, instead, a film that illustrates the theory of Michel Foucault. Asserting that knowledge is molded by "discourse," Foucault sees the "self" as fashioned by powers embedded in and disseminated through language. Even choices that feel entirely autonomous and authentically independent are constructed by discourse, leading to what Foucault calls "the death of the self." One could say that, for Foucault, the devil—like Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor—wears discourse.

*The Devil Wears Prada* gestures toward Foucault's "death of the self" in several ways. Not deigning to learn Andy's name, Priestly simply calls her Emily, the name of her former "second" and now "first" assistant. When she enters the office, Priestly literally dumps a different designer coat and handbag each day on Andy's desk, making demands without making eye-contact. In a marvelous montage of multiple dump-accompanied demands, we see that Andy, like her desk, becomes buried in haut couture, fashioning her life, both literally and metaphorically, according to Priestly's standards. After all, as Priestly arrogantly pontificates during one of their first encounters, even Andy's unflattering cerulean blue acrylic sweater was ultimately determined by haute couture. Having been flaunted on Parisian runways years earlier, cerulean finally trickled down to the masses who shop at Kmart. Andy's choice of color was not her own.

Andy nevertheless assumes that she individually has chosen to wear Prada, telling her friends that Priestly's ensuing approval will advance her career toward more "authentic" vocational goals. As Andy slowly alienates these more low-brow friends, however, we see that her desire to "get ahead" in her career is itself embedded in American discourse. Indeed, the very language of "getting ahead" fashions the American sense of self. "Success"—and dressing for it—has become the miracle, mystery, and authority of our culture. Even Priestly, the Grand Inquisitor of the fashion industry, has no "self." Defining her life by the discourse of success, she neither gives nor receives love from her children, her husband, her employees, or her colleagues. And when Andy realizes that she is headed for the same fate—loved by the masses from afar but loveless up close—she turns her back on the discourse of American success. We see her quite literally turn her back to Priestly in a visual emblem of conversion, "with turning," at which point she throws away the cell-phone by which Priestly's language controls her. Foucault would call her defiance an act of "micro-politics." The film's title signals a more ancient authority. Andy has renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil.

*The Devil Wears Prada* does not self-consciously deliver a Christian message the way *Superman Returns* tries to. But, ironically, when placed side by side, *The Devil* exposes the Christ of *Superman* to be merely the Grand Inquisitor in haut couture. ¶

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The Dazzle of the Fact


She wore a brassiere made out of two tomato cans and a piece of string. She sported earrings made from teaspoons, garments made of feathers, and a birdcage with a live canary for a hat. She assisted her second husband in faking his suicide. She collaborated on a film with Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray entitled *Elsa, the Baroness von Freytag-Loringhoven, Shaving Her Pubic Hair*. She trumpeted her poetry from street corners:

She

Moon
Top
Olive
Firridge

Hazy
Waked-

Blue
Squats
Snow-

Stirless
Brush
Blacks
Mute-

She
Strips-
Naked*

She—the flesh and blood Baroness. She—the inspiration for the central character and dynamo of Rene Steinke’s latest novel, *Holy Skirts*.

Every novelist requires a deeply empathetic imagination to create well-rounded characters that actually live on the page in full subjectivity. Without that empathy, characters fall flat. A novelist must, therefore, step into the character’s shoes and not only know her fears and desires but how those fears and desires often conflict. A novelist must inhabit a character’s contradictions. It takes an especially gutsy novelist to approach an historical personage, especially one as fantastic and flamboyant as the Baroness. History mesmerizes us with the dazzle of the fact, with the flash of the surface. Who could possibly imagine that a woman capable of wearing tin cans feels anxiety or knows doubt or experiences conflicted desires? René Steinke does. Her empathetic imagination gets beneath the pizzazz and the performance and produces an incredibly complex and nuanced character, one strong enough to earn *Holy Skirts* a nomination for the National Book Award.

Perhaps to free her imagination from the lure of historic detail, Steinke makes a clear choice not to stick to the facts. In her author’s note, she shares some of her choices and explains that “[b]ecause the story is told from the Baroness’s perspective, I have often recast events as she might have seen them. As such, the portrayal of recognizable figures is always fiction and never meant to be factual, even when drawn from sources” (357–58). For readers interested in the biographical, Steinke points them to Irene Gammel’s recent work, *Baroness Elsa*. Yet, we should not be afraid to trust Steinke. She has done her homework (and provides a nice bibliography in her acknowledgements). Elsa’s world is her world, not ours. For example, in Berlin of 1904:

Hansom cabs crowded the streets, the horses in such close proximity that they bit one another on the tail and neck. . . . People came from towns with one beer hall and a single church and from farms abutted by forests. They came for work,
and they came for excitement—a dinner of snail's tails, the parade of beautiful prostitutes in wigs along Potsdamer Platz, the department store with bear rugs beside harps next to lamps shaped like trees (5–6).

In this world, women wear hats and gloves, and they smoke cigarettes only if they want to announce their "progressiveness." Later in the novel they forsake corsets for brassieres and take up electrical appliances. To correct sallow skin, they turn to Beechem's Pills. Occasionally, details of this world sound strikingly familiar. When America enters the First World War, the flags come out—"little ones in toothpicks stuck in ice cream sundaes" (171)—and the names of things begin to change: "In a store window [Elsa] saw the sign for 'liberty sausages,' twenty-five cents—the new word for sauerbraten. Dachshunds were 'liberty hounds,' stollen was 'liberty cake.' Everything German was outlawed" (215). Steinke, like all good writers of historic fiction, uses detail to distance readers from their contemporary life and then, in a shock of recognition, thrusts them back into it. In this way, we come to care about the issues of the novel, not just because they belong to the central character, but because they belong to us as well.

Steinke does retain history to structure the novel, providing us with a chronological framework for understanding her development of Elsa. Beginning in 1904 when Steinke's version of Elsa is nineteen, Part One spans thirteen years and three husbands. Steinke introduces us to Elsa just as she arrives in Berlin, determined to shed her provincial past and become, of all things, an actress. Elsa is, in many ways, naïve. Not only does she fantasize how "her photograph would appear in little cameo circles on the theater page, and the critics would write about her voice and her grace" (13), she also accepts most invitations by the men who "waited at the stage door" (14) of the Wintergarten Cabaret where she has taken employment as a scantily clad, "living statue." Natalye, her street-smart colleague, finally has to teach Elsa not to give herself away for nothing. But even here Steinke paints the outlines of a more complex character. Elsa doesn't simply trust the men out of innocence, but out of the fulfillment the trysts with them bring:

The men's love made the house in Swinemünde distant, the locked doors and angry chairs, the helpless bedposts, all so far away they might have belonged to someone else's girlhood (15).

Without these hints about a problematic family past, readers might write off Elsa as a silly young woman. But Steinke's version of Elsa has gumption and backbone from the start. In Part One, readers watch as experience strips her of her naivety, but we also watch as Elsa mines her experience to become ever more fiercely committed to the woman she wants to be: an artist and a lover. In her mind, the two are cut from the same cloth.

Part Two presents that woman in full fruition. In this section, opening in April of 1917 and drawing to a close almost ten years later, Steinke explores and develops Elsa's character in the context of the avant-garde circle Elsa discovers when she settles in Greenwich Village. Day-to-day life is difficult. Elsa survives hand to mouth after being abandoned by her third husband, but finally finds a place for her poetry, first with a little magazine, LETTERS, that goes bust before it can publish her work and finally with The Little Review, known famously for publishing installments of Joyce's Ulysses when no one else would. Elsa's reaction to the review accepting (and paying for!) her poems will sound all too familiar to writers and artists, but it is not the kind of reaction one expects from a woman who reads her poetry spontaneously in rowdy longshoremen's bars where signs hang in the window reading, "No WOMEN." At the news of her acceptance, Elsa hesitates:

LETTERS had gone bankrupt after all, even with Caldwell's promises, and why should it be that these women would find her poems more worthy than others? There was that shiny, tambourine feeling, but she did not trust it yet (232).

In spite of its unlikeliness, readers understand Elsa's hesitancy because Steinke has been exploring the flipside of Elsa's audaciousness from the beginning of the novel. Even at nineteen, Elsa:
... could not remember when there had not been an alarming absence inside of her. She felt it most acutely when she woke in the middle of the night, not knowing who or where she was, her body melding with the dark. But also in that gray light just before morning, when voices spoke in her inner ear, slow and taffy-pulled, or yammering like a faucet. She knew that it meant there was not enough of her somehow, that she could so easily be snuffed out.

The sensation made her want to create evidence of herself (7).

By the end of Part Two, Elsa has learned to excel at creating evidence and finds herself the centerpiece of New York's Dadaist movement. Readers relish Elsa's accomplishments, especially those that involve her trademark puckish-side, like her taillight bustle that flicked on with the touch of a switch she had hidden in her pocket, or the time a censor who had burned copies of The Little Review found himself confronted by Elsa in her birdcage hat and tin-can brassiere. But Steinke refuses to let readers view Elsa only from the outside, and so in the last chapters of Part Two, we find ourselves worrying over Elsa as well. Her voices have grown more adamant, and she's begun to hallucinate—the very sources of her creativity threaten to undo her. In the end, evidence of herself may not be enough to save Elsa from being snuffed out. After all, historically she has been largely forgotten. Fortunately, we now have not only the Baroness's creations by which to remember her, but Steinke's as well.

Steinke concludes Holy Skirts with an epilogue, date: 1927, location: Paris. Unfortunately, Steinke's epilogue feels like a conclusion, a wrapping up, a pinning down—an essayistic move rather than a novelistic one. A sudden shift in point of view largely accounts for this sensation of closure. We no longer see the world through the Baroness's eyes (1927 was the year she died). Instead, we take the perspective of Sara, a young woman, painter, and dear friend to Elsa. Steinke chooses Sara wisely—the relationship is one of the most interesting and important in the second part of the novel—and yet the shift itself jars readers out of the world in which we have gladly immersed ourselves. Steinke makes up for it, employing her eye for detail to recreate the Paris streets for us, but already the readers have begun to surface. We are leaving 1927 behind, headed for 2006, a not quite satisfying, in-between place to be.

Steinke cannot do much about the vertigo brought on by the shift in point of view. She can and does, however, manage to undermine the expectation of closure caused by the shift. Instead of leaving readers with a feeling of finality, Steinke drops us back into the world of the unknown. “Isn't it a happy accident? . . . I didn't expect it to happen this way at all” (356). By re-invoking the theme of chance in the novel's final lines, Steinke turns the tide on closure and returns us to Elsa, who has been our source of interest and pleasure. What would Elsa do with a bit of vertigo? She would turn it into art, of course. And, in the end, so does Steinke. ♦

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* Translated from the German by Irene Gammel: (theliteraryreview.org/sp2003/vonfreytag-loring-hoven.html).
MAKE USE OF IT

How the mind labors to make some use of suffering, to ease the heart’s burden. Think of the 20-year old tanner bending behind his house, the sting of lye rising as he scribbles couplets to sell for 2 pence with gloves.

The need for pounds pounding down bright concourses of his blood. His wife and three children squabbling inside. Oh, it’s the old story, desire pitched against rampant minuses, red ink exploding on the ledger, the need to make something out of nothing everywhere he looked—cracking his egg at breakfast—the shell seemed like a purse to keep the white and yolk in. As his desperation grows heavy, it splits into stories, into names, each one him, each gnawed by the lion’s tooth of love and passion: a mob crowded in his desperate, lonely heart.

Reading the map of Stratford in the dark school, did he search for a road to some place where he could be Shakespeare? When did the word London open its door, when did he see an O as possibility—crown, globe, thatched octagon, a stage with voices raging in a tongue that even he had never thought of? When did he guess that if God loves us, it must be because our aptitude for suffering breaks his heart?

Let’s say one afternoon a shadow by the name of Bottom saw him staring down the road and drew the map to London on a pebble. Let’s say the tanner, looking innocent, slipped it in his pocket.

Jeanne Murray Walker
Despite everything else one might cite as a challenge facing Lutherans and Lutheranism today, human nature remains the most serious threat to the ongoing vitality of this movement within the church catholic. Lutherans have never managed to become different from everyone else in the world, and like others they remain addicted to the intoxications of self-righteousness and playing God. Sometimes they have recognized this and lived for a spell out of repentance and faith. At other times, like now, they have staggered about looking for handholds that might assist them to appear—if not to be—upright, steady, and sober.

Worldwide, sixty-six million Lutherans make up one percent of the world’s population and three percent of its Christians. In the southern hemisphere, those numbers have grown rapidly in recent years. In North America and Europe, however, thanks to an aging base and population shifts that do not portend growth in the regions where they have long been most numerous, Lutherans have become an endangered species. According to one set of demographic projections floating around these days, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will disappear in 2046, and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) shortly thereafter. Both church bodies have experienced steady membership declines in recent years because new membership cannot come close to matching attrition. Since 2000, the ELCA has shrunk by approximately 30,000 baptized members per year, and the LCMS by 25,000.

Many find these trends alarming, including the folks at Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, a Fortune 500 company that prospers handsomely by selling life insurance and other financial services to North American Lutherans. Church leaders have launched evangelism and outreach programs in hopes of reversing the pattern. For example, the LCMS’s Ablaze! campaign has ambitiously committed to the goal of reaching 100 million unreached and uncommitted people with the Gospel by 2017, the five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation (www.lcms.org). To date, however, the tide has not turned.

In the past, Lutheran groups in North America grew without difficulty, as German and Scandinavian immigrants found their way into Lutheran parishes and then as the infamous, mid-twentieth-century Baby Boom expanded nearly everyone’s numbers. While ethnic loyalties remain a stabilizing factor in a few communities, primarily in the upper Midwest, Lutherans in most regions have tried to reverse their declining memberships by trying to look more like everyone else on the religious landscape. For the most part, efforts to appear more generically American have amounted to an imitation of mainline Protestantism on the one hand and the adoption of Evangelicalism’s theology and worship styles on the other.

In order to establish their new identities, Lutherans have found it necessary to sacrifice such things as the theology of the cross, the centrality of the sacraments, and both the artistic and intellectual depths of its musical tradition. In many places, survival goals finally have trumped formal goals. Accordingly, few parishes try any longer to teach hymns and chorales to a generation that cannot imagine life without wires connecting their ear-buds to the hundreds or thousands of popular musical selections on their iPods. Instead, contemporary and blended worship services rely on praise songs comprised of solipsistic phrases with one idea, six words, repeated a minimum of three times. Prayers to a new, personal deity named O-Lord-Ah-Jist-Wanna have replaced the corporate prayers of the church.

If this sounds like a traditionalist’s screed, the fear that generates it comes from imagining deathbed scenes over the next two or three decades.
Older folks who sang their parents over to the other side with the aid of the Nunc Dimittis or hymns like “Abide with Me” have nightmares anticipating the difficulty of dying peacefully to the strains of some bouncy, vacuous praise song.

As for theology and the sacraments, two decades already have passed since David S. Luecke argued in *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance: Facing America's Mission Challenge* (Concordia Publishing House, 1988) that churches could retain the substance of Lutheranism even if they needed to take on the accidental qualities of Evangelicalism for the sake of survival and growth. The philosophy behind this assertion worked effectively enough in explaining the real presence of Christ's body and blood over the centuries, but has it held in the case of Lutheran bodies cloaked in Evangelical garb?

A look at parish libraries and a sampling of Sunday bulletin inserts as one visits Lutheran congregations around the country these days suggests that James Dobson’s Focus on the Family organization and the mini-industries surrounding Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Life*, Bruce Wilkinson’s *Prayer of Jabez*, plus all those *Left Behind* books, have as much influence in supposedly Lutheran circles as they have elsewhere in the increasingly Evangelical culture of American Christianity.

On a national level, conventions and elected leaders of the LCMS have joined forces with the conservative political wings of Evangelicalism in publicly supporting legislation that would ban abortion and same-sex marriage. They also have made statements of various sorts in favor of prayer and the teaching of creationism in public schools. The public postures of the ELCA prove a bit more complex. In general, that body tends to reflect the political values and efforts of the Lutheran World Federation, which in turn employs forms of liberation theology in addressing questions and issues of politics and society. Sometimes, liberationist rhetoric encourages the faithful to eat and drink with outcasts and then take the lumps that inevitably come as a consequence. At other times, it sounds like a call to serve as the army by which God will fulfill the words of Mary’s *Magnificat*, which rejoices in the day God casts the mighty down from their thrones and sends the rich away empty. Establishing justice and redistributing wealth replace the forgiveness of sins as the primary work of the church when it takes for itself a chiefly prophetic role in the public square.

Both the LCMS and ELCA remain genuinely concerned over the roles of women in the church and in the world. The LCMS has come close to staking its very identity on the fact that it alone among major Lutheran groups has kept women from ordained ministry and from positions of authority. Indeed, it sometimes seems as if the need within the LCMS to read Genesis 1–3 as history and science, rather than as a diagnostic and formative but nevertheless poetic and mythic text, stems from the need to keep women in their place as a secondary and subordinate class in comparison to men. The ELCA, meanwhile, not only ordains women, but through the agency of its Director of Justice for Women watches carefully how women get treated not only in the church but in the world as well.

Regardless of whether one agrees or disagrees with the political postures of either church body, the focus of concern in each easily shifts attention away from the disciplines of daily repentance, dying, and rising again in the waters of baptism and in the sharing of the body of Christ. Instead, the church’s energies and resources of all kinds get spent on trying to change the rules and patterns by which other people live. Ultimately, cultural reactionaries and practitioners of liberation theology share a common belief, namely, that their politics are better than anyone else’s, and the quicker they take over the better.

The scandal of this scenario becomes evident when we realize that our children learn from watching and listening to us that the whole point of becoming or remaining a Christian lies in being doctrinally pure, politically correct, and
generally happy and well-adjusted. The combination of our human nature and the pursuit of survival goals have left us addicted to law, not dangling mercifully by faith from the gospel's simple, cruciform promise.

The Lutheran confessional writings have bequeathed to us a simple tool for discerning when we have abandoned gospel for law. In Article IV of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Philipp Melanchthon, working from the epistles to the Romans and Galatians, asserts that genuine gospel does two things. It accounts for both the full necessity and the complete sufficiency of Christ's death as God's response to the human condition, and it comforts penitent hearts. To the extent that penitent hearts do not receive consolation, or when faith is prompted to cling to anything whatsoever besides Christ's death, the church and its various agents have failed at the work of proclaiming the gospel. When matters of gender, environment, wealth, or other peoples' sex lives become more important than the cross of Christ and the believer's own, daily dying, the gospel is at risk and so is the church. When the point of a Christian's life boils down to being right, while all others are wrong, one has found God not on the cross, but in the illusion of self-righteousness.

Another way to gauge the faithfulness of the church's mission appears in the New Testament's story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4 and Luke 4). The challenges that confront Jesus there have little to do with breaking rules or winning and losing at the game of jousting with Bible passages. At stake is the kind of messiah Jesus will be or become. For as long as human beings have dreamed of setting the world right, we have assumed that if only everyone had enough of everything, from bread to gasoline to laptops, we all would be satisfied. Never again would people need to fight against others, at least for the sake of economic well-being. Again, if only someone would leap from the heights, with us on board, over the valley of the shadow of cancer, HIV, and auto accidents, to land safely below, thus giving every one of us our threescore years and ten, plus a modern bonus of another score perhaps, we could all die happily in our beds. No more tragedy. No more tears for loved ones gone too soon. And if only someone would simply admit, regrettably of course, that the dark side's method of gaining control by means of force and ruling through intimidation is the only way for even a well-meaning messiah to gift the world with peace, such a one could fix the world.

That Jesus chooses none of these, except through signs and miracles to declare them part of an eschatological promise and hope, but instead set his face toward the place where the cross awaited him, suggests that genuine Christ-following, whether Lutheran or otherwise, entails taking up the cross. "Come die with me," Jesus calls. That remains the first and greatest challenge to Christians of all stripes and traditions, including Lutherans.

Perhaps North American Lutherans can answer this call faithfully enough by continuing to vanish. Along the way, we might also become skilled at the kind of daily cross-bearing that Simon of Cyrene learned through following Jesus, particularly as he does in Luke's passion narrative. We can weep not for ourselves, but for and with those upon whom the mountains have fallen. We can ask God's forgiveness upon those who do away with us and erase us from the history books. We can join our fellow-condemned in imagining what God might accomplish, even today, through the agency of crucified folks. And with our dying breaths we can sing our old psalms and hymns, the ones our mothers once taught us at bedtime.

We can die with hope. God will not let the gospel fall silent or leave it without witnesses. ¶

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I t is 9:29 AM on Sunday morning. I have just entered the sanctuary to lead my congregation’s weekly worship service. John catches my eye and heads for the exit. I brace myself. John’s wife has been diagnosed either with “something a lot like cancer—it’s pretty rare,” or “That other doctor’s crazy, this is cancer! Cancer I say!!” The diagnoses, and uncertainty, have been very hard on John and his marriage.

I walk over to the organist and whisper, “Stretch out the prelude, I need to talk to someone.” I rarely do this, but I’m not worried. Sarah’s a pro. I meet John in the coffee hour room. He points to the announcement sheet in the bulletin, “Pastor, the bulletin says the pancake breakfast is February 5, but it’s the 12th.”

“Right. Thanks, John, I’ll point out the error. Tell me how Karen’s doing later, OK?”

I’m thinking “cancer,” he’s thinking “pancakes.” This sort of thing happens in ministry.

I t is Saturday night. I need a children’s sermon. Tomorrow’s gospel lesson is Jesus calling the fishermen. I decide to do the same thing. The kids gather up front. I look at them and say, “Follow me.” I walk away to the side. They follow! I am not ready for this! I expect them to sit there and then we’d have a great dialogue about how hard it is to trust someone and how remarkable it was that Simon, Andrew, James, and John dropped what they were doing, quit their jobs, and followed Jesus. We go to the corner of the sanctuary. I count the kids, stalling, “They’re cooperating. Now what?” We walk to the back of the sanctuary. They are in a single file line. I’m Mama Duck, and they are imprinted on me. I count them again. We walk to the last corner of the sanctuary. Now everyone can see again how cute they are. By this time, I’ve got an idea. Not great, but it’s something. We return to the front of the sanctuary. The kids sit on the steps as they had just a few minutes before.

“Why did you follow me?” I ask.

Catherine raises her hand, “Because you asked us to.”

“Jamie, why did you follow me?”

“Because you’re the pastor and we’re supposed to do what you say at church.”

“Do you think it was easy for the fishermen to follow Jesus when he said, ‘Follow me?’”

They’re not sure. This is good.

“It might have been easy to trust me enough to follow me because you guys are up here all the time and you know me. I think it was a lot harder for the four fishermen to follow Jesus, but they did. There must have been something about Jesus that made them know they could trust him, so they followed him. Wouldn’t it be great to trust Jesus enough to follow him, live as he did, all the time? It’s a lot harder than following me around the sanctuary. Oh, and another thing...” I rarely do this. I bounced the message off the kids to the rest of the congregation, “You don’t want your pastor thinking he’s Jesus. Thanks for coming up, see you next week.”

The kids cooperated. I wasn’t ready for that. In ministry, sometimes you have to be ready for the gracious surprise of things working out.

My favorite description of grace is the feeling you have when you have received something so surprising, so stunning, that you cannot even say “thank you.” It is the feeling of getting exactly what you wanted for Christmas, even though you did not know this was exactly what you wanted until you unwrapped the gift.

T hursday is sermon writing day, and this week writing Sunday’s sermon was the only thing on my “to-do” list. I’ve learned that writing sermons takes exactly as much time as I have. This was the rare day when I
planned to spend eight hours crafting my fifteen-minute message.

But this Thursday morning, my phone rang at 9:30.

"Pastor! Are you going to be in your office today?" It was a long-standing member. Demographers would call him and his wife "vigorous retirees."

"Yes, I expect to be here all day."

"Well, the wife and I want to stop in and see you. We'll be in this morning."

I alerted the office staff that I was expecting visitors. An hour later, the couple came into my office and sat down.

"Pastor, we'd like to give the church $50,000. How would you spend it?"

"So, uh, you're both... all right?"

"No, we're not getting a divorce!"

"Actually, I was thinking 'diagnosis'."

It took me a moment to recover. Several moments. No, about a week. In the course of our conversation, I learned how important the church's work with children is to this couple. I had some thoughts, ran them past the Session and various committees, and the Session accepted this anonymous gift, earmarking $16,000 for our after-school program, support for a seminar for parents, implementation of a new safe child policy for the congregation, and continuing education for our Christian Educator.

**DIVORCE. WINDFALL. FEAR. BLESSING.**

Gracious surprises happen often in ministry. They are fertile moments when God throws us off balance in stunning ways and reminds us that God's in charge and has something better in mind than his children dare to hope.

**AT MY LAST CHURCH, AN EIGHT YEAR OLD BOY**

was diagnosed with a very aggressive abdominal cancer. I would visit Jeff in the hospital at least once a week. Usually, I would talk to his parents or grandparents. One Friday morning, he was all alone. I was not ready for this. I asked how he was feeling, how his treatments were going, the sort of questions one always asks of people in the hospital.

Jeff asked why God would give him cancer.

"I don't know, Jeff. It doesn't make sense to me. But I believe that God is feeling what you're feeling."

"So, when I get the chemo stuff and it makes me have a funny taste in my mouth, God can taste it too? Cool!"

I'm talking process theology to an eight-year-old, and he totally gets it!

"Right, Jeff. God can taste it and can feel how achy and tired and hot and weird all these drugs make you feel."

Jeff also asked me why President Clinton didn't find a cure for cancer. I suggest that Jeff might want to become a researcher when he gets older. He would have a great perspective on that kind of work, because he knows how it feels to get chemotherapy.

I ask about the food, because hospital patients always have opinions on the food. Food tastes funny to Jeff these days.

"Pastor Tom, what's your favorite food?"

"Chicago-style pizza. But I haven't found good pizza here so I've learned to make my own."

"What's so great about Chicago pizza?"

"Tell you what, Jeff. When you get out of the hospital, I'll make a Chicago-style pizza for your family, and I'll bring it to your house!"

I felt uneasy about saying this. I expressed a confidence I did not have. I thought of a scene in "Hoosiers." During the last minute of the semifinal game, down by one point, the worst player on the team coached by Gene Hackman's character is fouled and goes to the free throw line. During the time out, Hackman says, "After Ollie makes the second shot—and you will make the second shot..."

He's speaking with a confidence that is not rooted in anything beyond wildest hope and fantasy.

Jeff was an extremely sick little boy. There was a very good chance that he would not be getting out of the hospital. Still, as I walked to my car in the parking lot, I smiled to myself about having talked about process theology and pizza with an eight-year-old. It was a moment when I felt great joy in being a minister.

Ollie made both free throws.

**SIX MONTHS LATER, I ANNOUNCED IN WORSHIP**

that Jeff had been declared "cancer free." I stood in the pulpit and wept, as I do now, recalling that moment. It was difficult to get the
words out, but I took my time. Crying at that moment seemed the most honest thing I could do. I didn't wipe the tears away.

I could tell by the number of parishioners who told me after the service, “It was just fine, Reverend, what you did” that crying ministers were not “just fine” at that particular franchise location of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Jeff’s family threw a huge “No-Mo-Chemo” party. I could write pages about the party alone, but I’m writing about grace and surprise, not frivolity, so I’ll only say that this was one of the great parties of all time. They had a bouncy castle, a steel drum band, a popcorn machine, and a llama.

A few weeks after the party, I made good on my promise. I brought a hot, homemade Chicago-style pizza to Jeff’s house to share with his family. It felt sacramental and triumphant. I told Jeff’s parents and brother about how much I love kneading the dough and the smell of the yeast. And how yeast is like police dogs and college math professors. It can sense fear. You have to trust and be confident when working with yeast. And I told them how the sauce looked a little lean, so I went out to the garden and picked three Roma tomatoes and crushed them with the garlic and basil. I was proud of this pizza. I was stunned at Jeff’s recovery. We were all still giggling about the llama.

A few years after Jeff’s recovery, his father shared this reflection with the congregation: “Sometimes you witness miracles that reinforce that deep-seated, irrational belief that there is more to life than that which you can put your arms or your mind around.” Which is another definition of grace.

But, at this particular moment, Jeff shrieked, “This has tomatoes in it? I ain’t eatin’ it!”

His parents were mortified. I laughed till Pepsi came out my nose, which I now know, is another indication of a fertile, gracious surprise.

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IN A BENCHMARK ARTICLE, "THE MORALITY OF Obliteration Bombing," published in 1944 in the prestigious Jesuit journal *Theological Studies*, John C. Ford, boldly criticized the strategy of area, or obliteration, bombing used by military forces on both sides of World War II. Not only did he condemn Germany’s policy of Blitzkrieg, which involved indiscriminate bombing, Ford also judged as immoral the Allies’ carpet bombing of cities in Germany and Japan. In doing so, he did not morally equate Germany and the Allies. He regarded the Allies’ decision to wage war as just, even though some of the means they used, such as obliteration bombing, were unjust. More recently, human rights groups, peace and justice organizations, and religious bodies have voiced concern over the use of cluster bombs, especially in connection with the United States-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Cluster bombs are bombs or shells designed to release multiple submunitions or bomblets. In this essay, I will use Ford’s thoughtful article as a point of departure for evaluating these weapons and their use.

Ford began by affirming that he believed in the abiding relevance of the principles of the just war tradition. Although a number of moralists held that modern war is necessarily total and indiscriminate, and although Ford acknowledged that much of the warfare of the early twentieth century involved devastation previously unimaginable, he nevertheless maintained that limited, and thus just, war is possible. Sixty bloody years later, there are many who continue to assert that there can be no just wars in today’s world. Many pacifists hold this view, and many non-pacifists have become practically pacifists by arguing that no wars today satisfy the criteria of the just war tradition. That is, they point out that wars are not fought for just causes, are not a last resort, are not discriminate, and so on. However, it should be noted that this viewpoint continues to rely on the criteria of the just war tradition in order to make its case. I admit that very few, if any, wars in recent history have been just in the sense of meeting all of the just war tradition’s criteria for both the right to wage war (*jus ad bellum*) and justice in the conduct of war (*jus in bello*); however, at this time, I follow Ford’s lead in maintaining the continuing relevance of the just war tradition and the ongoing possibility of a just war.

Ford then distinguished between precision bombing, which involves definite, limited targets, and obliteration bombing, which aims at larger, unlimited targets. This distinction between precise and imprecise bombing has as its parallel in recent years the distinction between smart and dumb bombs. Cluster bombs fall within the latter category. Although there are indications of a move toward developing smart cluster bombs with precision guidance circuitry, today’s cluster bombs continue to have a wide area, or footprint, and a long duration of effect. The bomblets dispensed by cluster bombs can cover an area as large as a couple of football fields, and many of these bomblets fail to explode when intended, thereby continuing to pose a danger to others later on. Given the wider area of effect, the likelihood of hitting civilians in addition to legitimate military targets is increased. At the same time, given the dud rates, which range from five percent to twenty-three percent, the threat to civilians remains serious.

From a just war perspective, Ford’s concern about the difference between precision and obliteration bombing hinged on the *jus in bello* criterion of noncombatant immunity (also known as the principle of discrimination). According to this criterion, civilians should not be intentionally or directly targeted. Put differently, intentionally and directly killing civilians is morally equivalent to murder. However, the other side of the
coin is that unintentional, indirect targeting or killing of civilians is permissible. This is referred to as collateral damage. Concerning the Allies' strategy of obliteration bombing, Ford asked, "Looking at obliteration bombing as it actually takes place, can we say that the maiming and death of hundreds of thousands of innocent persons, which are its immediate result, are not directly intended, but merely permitted?" He thought not.

Indeed, he noted that the Allies at the outset of World War II initially had condemned Germany's use of obliteration bombing. For instance, on 27 January 1940, Winston Churchill castigated Germany's strategy of indiscriminate bombing as a "new and odious form of warfare," and the British government insisted that its military in contrast would aim only at military objectives. However, by 1942 the British Royal Air Force revised its policy to include obliteration bombing, and in 1943 Churchill called for "the systematic shattering of German cities." Why this change? One reason that was given basically comes down to "They started it first." Another reason offered was a variation of the old cliché, "If we can't beat them, join them." In other words, the Allies asserted that if Germany was not going to play by the same rules, then they also would have to break rules in order to defeat Germany. In addition, the claim was made that obliteration bombing would shorten the war by destroying Germany's infrastructure and by undermining the morale of the civilian population. That is, in Ford's estimation, "the direct intent [was] to wipe out residential districts where workmen live with their wives and children, so that absenteeism will interfere with industrial production" that contributes to Germany's war effort. As such, Ford determined that obliteration bombing would shorten the war by destroying Germany's infrastructure and by undermining the morale of the civilian population. That is, in Ford's estimation, "the direct intent [was] to wipe out residential districts where workmen live with their wives and children, so that absenteeism will interfere with industrial production" that contributes to Germany's war effort. As such, Ford determined that obliteration bombing involved the "direct intent to injure and kill civilians," which is thus a violation of the just war criterion of discrimination.

Two decades later, the Roman Catholic bishops of the Second Vatican Council, in their document Gaudium et Spes, employed this same principle in their criticism of the development of "scientific weapons" during the Cold War arms race that "can inflict massive and indiscriminate destruction far exceeding the bounds of legitimate defense" (paragraph 80). Total warfare, including nuclear war, which by its very nature encompasses and indiscriminately harms civilian population centers, was condemned unequivocally by the Council as a crime against God and humanity.

What about cluster bombs? Are they indiscriminate by their very nature? Given their wide area and long duration of effects, which increase the likelihood of harm to civilians, it seems reasonable to regard cluster bombs as such and therefore as comparable to poisonous gas, atomic bombs, biological agents, or land mines. However, if cluster bombs can indeed be made that are smarter and more discriminating, then they would not be per se contrary to the principle of discrimination.

What about the current use of cluster bombs? Are they being used intentionally to target civilians or directly to kill civilians as a means by which a military objective is accomplished? In my opinion, the United States and its allies in recent conflicts have demonstrated significant concern for keeping civilian casualties at a minimum. While some hawks, to mix metaphors, play armchair quarterback and call for indiscriminate bombing of "the enemy," whether combatants or noncombatants, I believe the military generally has demonstrated its commitment to upholding the principle of discrimination. Compared to the first war with Iraq over a decade ago, the more recent campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq—though not without other serious problems from a just war perspective—involved more smart bombs getting dropped and less infrastructure (e.g., water treatment facilities) being damaged intentionally. Unlike the quotes from British and American politicians and commanders that Ford was able to find, I have not seen any comparable official calls for indiscriminate bombing of civilian population centers through the use of cluster bombs today.

Therefore, I do not think that cluster bombs are being used in the same way that obliteration bombing was used intentionally or directly to kill civilians during World War II. Of course, if we know that cluster bombs are likely to yield the unintended harmful effects on civilians, and yet we continue to use these munitions anyhow (or
we do not spend the money to develop smarter cluster bombs, or we do not spend the time and money to clean up unexploded submunitions cluttering the area after hostilities have ceased), then perhaps our intent should be subjected to closer scrutiny.

Ford, moreover, referred to the principle of proportionality in his article on obliteration bombing. As included with the jus in bello criteria of the just war tradition, proportionality holds that the damage from a given weapon, tactic, strategy, or battle must not be greater than the damage being prevented or the offense being avenged. According to Ford, the Allies' claim that obliteration bombing would shorten the war and save more of their soldiers' lives was “speculative, future, and problematical, while the evil effect is definite, widespread, certain, and immediate.” Put differently, this was an assertion by the Allies that may or may not turn out to be true; whereas, the evils connected with carpet and fire bombing cities already were clearly evident. Furthermore, Ford warned, “Once it is conceded that this is a lawful means of waging war, then it is equally available to our enemies, present and future.” This is a short and long term effect to be taken very seriously.

Applying this principle to the use of cluster bombs, I suspect that they are regarded by the military as particularly effective against amassed bodies of troops on a battlefield. Accordingly, the use of cluster bombs may in the short term lead to an earlier cessation of military hostilities. However, given their wider area of effect and their longer duration of effect, especially on civilians whose hearts and minds we are hoping to capture, there may be both short term and long term negative consequences that undermine or outweigh the good we are seeking to achieve. There is also a precedent established for our enemies to resort to (or continue to resort to) similarly indiscriminate measures against us.

In conclusion, I do not consider the strategy of using cluster bombs at this time to be the same morally as the Allies' strategy of obliteration bombing during World War II. To be sure, the same just war principles that Ford used to condemn area bombing sixty years ago can be used today to evaluate cluster bombs and their use as ethically suspect, though perhaps not (yet) as completely immoral. In the end, if we rightly condemn terrorists' intentional targeting and murder of civilians, then we ought to take the moral high ground by sticking to strategies and tactics that aim at the responsible perpetrators and that minimize risks of civilian casualties.

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ON RAKING

I rub the pads of my hands, calloused now. The leaves—mostly yellow, some red—line the street near the curb, a new mountainous shoreline, thrust up into existence with each lift of the rake. The neighborhood kids, just now reaching the age when terrorizing becomes attractive, may zip through on their bikes, laying waste the virgin land like low bombers on a test site. Then again, they may not. I heave a sigh, then wonder how something so light (a sigh) can also be so heavy, can require heaving, though when it has been heft, I watch it drift, watch it settle before me like a leaf just snapped from its branch by a brisk wind. I stoop to pick it up and twirl it, the twirling made awkward by the bend of the stem, now one side wobbling into view light and dull, now the other side dark and rich with pigment—accomplishment colored by loss, contentment shadowed by the dream of who one used to be. Veins map out the palm of the leaf—Head Line, Heart Line, Luck Line. Each branches out into smaller veins until the minor lines meet, because of course how I comprehend the past and the future rests on how I feel about the past and the future, and feeling for me turns like a roulette wheel, black when I call red, red when I call black, rarely red on red. Today, however, red has settled on red, one leaf atop another in a landscape of yellow, and I do not need to know tomorrow, and the past has curled up for its nap in the windowsill, and the calluses on my hands throb but rubbing them helps, and the cries of the neighborhood kids draw near, a call and response that may or may not include me and my freshly raked leaves, which, in the end, do not look like a new shoreline, but rather like an invitation to jump.

Allison Schuette-Hoffman
On Being Crunchy

FIRST.READ.ROBERT.FARRAR.CAPON'S.\textit{The Supper of the Lamb}, surely the most unusual cookbook ever written, about ten years ago. Well over half the book consists of a recipe for cooking a single leg of lamb in such a way as to produce four distinct meals. But the recipe itself is only an excuse for elaborate theological digressions inspired by the love of good cooking and good eating. In these reflections posing as a cookbook, Capon playfully reveals the attitude of piety implicit in the most ordinary activities—like the simple slicing of an onion, upon which he lavishes both an hour and a chapter—when we approach them with gratitude, wonder, and care. “Man’s real work,” he writes, “is to look at the things of the world and to love them for what they are.” Though it may reflect a political scientist’s tunnel vision, I always have found political as well as theological significance in Capon’s description of how even a mundane activity like cooking embodies the craftsmanship, attention to detail, and concern for quality contained within a traditional practice handed down from one generation to the next. His book is a metaphor illustrating how certain religious and political inclinations dovetail in an attitude of loving care towards the world and human activity, an attitude of wider relevance than might first be apparent.

It was thus with some eagerness that I awaited the publication, earlier this year, of Rod Dreher’s \textit{Crunchy Cons}, short for “crunchy conservatives.” Having read Dreher’s original “crunchy con” article in \textit{National Review}, I already knew something about the book—for instance, that a Caponian attitude towards food would play no small role in its argument. And indeed, the chapter on food—which Dreher prefers locally grown, minimally processed, lovingly prepared, and whenever possible, organically produced—is the longest in the book. The remaining description of crunchy cons falls under five other headings: “consumerism,” an obsession with material goods that Dreher claims characterizes mainstream American life and that crunchy cons, unsurprisingly, oppose; “home,” crunchies prefer well-built older houses with character to the cookie-cutter McMansions of suburbia; “education,” best done in one of those charming old homes, since home schooling is the preferred crunchy educational method; “the environment,” crunchy cons are much greener than stereotypical Republicans; and “religion,” as Dreher suggests that crunchies gravitate toward Jewish or Christian orthodoxy.

The glue holding these themes together is what Dreher calls the “sacramental worldview,” an affirmation of the created world’s fundamental goodness and a willingness to see in it an image of a higher, transcendent reality. “To see the world sacramentally is to see material things—objects and human actions—as vessels containing or transmitting ideals. To live in a sacramental world is to live in a world pregnant with meaning, a world in which nothing can be taken for granted, and in which no one or no thing is without intrinsic worth.” Persons with this attitude view the created world with respect and affection, seek to express that respect in the beauty and human scale of their physical surroundings, and want the culture to pass along such traditions and attitudes to future generations. “It sounds lofty and precious,” writes Dreher, “but all this really means is that we begin to take seriously the connection between the physical and the spiritual worlds, and how the good life depends on harmonizing the soul and the body.”

I will come out of the closet and admit that I fit the crunchy con mold pretty well. I would not endorse Dreher’s consumerism chapter, not because I support consumerism, but because I’m not persuaded that ordinary Americans are as thoroughly materialistic as he suggests. But my
wife and I do buy our fresh produce from a local, organic farm. I admit to finding many new housing developments—with those impressive brick fronts that jar horribly with depressing, windowless side walls of white siding—pretty tacky. We do home school; we don’t watch television. We recycle faithfully and worry about the environmental effects of pesticides or food pumped full of antibiotics. And we are traditional Christians. So call me crunchy.

Religious believers should accept the gifts of creation in a posture of grateful stewardship, and this sensibility can have practical consequences that are more than mere matters of taste. Should we turn our attention to food, it seems appropriate that we appreciate its quality, preparation, and the fellowship that attends its eating.

Critics have charged that Dreher wishes to impose upon us all the “crunchy” lifestyle that he happens to prefer. Dreher attempts to fend off this criticism by recognizing, frequently, that not everyone will be able to home school, purchase organic food, or live within walking distance of work. Still, he does claim that the sacramental worldview points towards particular lifestyle choices. Presumably he therefore regards those choices as in some fashion obligatory. Indeed, one of the best critical reviews of the book made precisely this point: that Dreher fails “to separate his likes and dislikes about how to live from questions on which, as a matter of morality, we need to agree” (First Things, May 2006).

This is helpful, and certainly mainstream conservatives have not unreasonably regarded abortion or genetic engineering as of more pressing moral significance than organic farming or urban development. But we should resist the urge to dismiss Dreher’s concerns merely as matters of taste, as if de gustibus were the only relevant principle in these areas. Just as my students’ inability to distinguish between a better and worse argument does not mean there is no difference, so too is my own limited palate hardly the arbiter of culinary excellence. As Burke wrote, “[I]f ever we should find ourselves disposed not to admire those writers or artists, Livy and Virgil for instance, Raphael or Michael Angelo, whom all the learned had admired, [we ought] not to follow our own fancies, but to study them until we know how and what we ought to admire; and if we cannot arrive at this combination of admiration with knowledge,
rather to believe that we are dull, than that the rest of the world has been imposed on.” I see no reason why Burke’s principle should not apply equally well to cuisine, architecture, or any practice susceptible of judgments about quality.

Still, if we apply the de gustibus principle at one remove, as it were, we may begin to see why Dreher’s recommendations strike many of his less crunchy readers as far too exclusive, or just plain arbitrary. We need not pretend, in a kind of faux populism, that Kraft singles and Campbell’s cream of mushroom are actually as good as the “slab of Manchego” or “creamy sorrel soup” that Dreher prefers, or that the clashing combination of bricks and windowless siding is as aesthetically pleasing as a more modest but architecturally harmonious dwelling. Nevertheless, many people, even many conservatives sharing a “sacramental worldview,” will choose Kraft, Campbell’s, and McMansions for any number of defensible reasons. There is much room for play in the joints of the sacramental worldview. Neither traditionalist conservatism nor orthodox religiosity, the two components of Dreher’s “sensibility,” compels any very determinate set of lifestyle choices. Traditions evolve gradually over time, and their perpetuation is always a creative act, as participants in any tradition necessarily make choices about its more and less important elements and their applicability to changing circumstances. Religion, too, is clearly compatible with a broad range of cultural and political viewpoints, from quite conservative to quite radical.

As a result, two people sharing a sacramental worldview may nevertheless lead extremely different lives. Both may exhibit an attitude of gratitude, love, and care towards the world. But they may do so in different ways. One person may devote loving attention to the art of cookery; another may devote the same passionate care to a meticulously arranged butterfly collection. A third may be committed to athletic excellence, pursuing it as a participant or merely appreciating it as a fan—perhaps, even, on television (a special target of Dreher’s). Another may expend great care and effort on excellence in her work—perhaps even work to which she must commute a significant distance from her home in suburbia. Even an oil magnate could display the sacramental worldview in seeking to make good use of the world’s natural resources. In short, while I think it true that something like what Dreher calls the sacramental worldview is morally obligatory, we cannot predict what shape that attitude may take in a given person’s life or insist on any particular pattern. The issues that concern Dreher for the most part reside within the significant realm of human choice and activity that is more than arbitrary but less than required, a realm in which we might describe actions as appropriate, suitable, or fitting, rather than obligatory. This realm, where moral responsibility interacts with human freedom, is inevitably robustly diverse. To the extent that the crunchy sacramental worldview revels in the inexhaustible particularity and diversity of life, one might almost say, ironically, that Dreher is not quite crunchy enough.

Even an entire community of people all sharing a sacramental worldview (could one exist) would thus exhibit a tremendous diversity of lifestyles, with respect to food, education, and pretty much everything else. This raises a final important question implicit in Dreher’s argument, one about the nature of political community. Dreher suggests that crunchy cons work hard at building “authentic community.” He continues, “People these days go on and on about the need to build strong communities, but it’s hard to see how that’s possible without shared basic values.” This idea of consciously sharing a way of life among like-minded people seems central to his conception of community. For example, he lavishes praise upon a group of Christian families who set out to build an “intentional community” by buying a bunch of “worn-out duplexes in a crime-ridden part of Augusta” and beginning an “experiment in communal living.” These people, Dreher writes, “have something that the rest of us only dream of: a real community, knit together not only by neighborliness, but also by common bonds of faith, friendship, and shared ideals. Unlike most of us, they aren’t merely a group of random people who happen to share the same few blocks, but who have little more than that in common.” Similarly, Dreher praises home schooling for helping families shield their children from the undesirable, media-fed values of the broader, mainstream community and instead form “natural communities.”
with “diverse people who [a]re nevertheless committed to the same basic moral values.” And his closing chapter calls for a kind of secession from mainstream American life, which “is too often rich in everything but meaning and purpose.”

It is certainly true that shared values play an important role in political community. Still, that role is limited. The most important values, as Augustine pointed out, will never be fully shared as long as the earthly and heavenly cities “are interwoven and intermixed in this era, and await separation at the last judgment.” And short of that ultimate disagreement, politics frequently rests less upon shared values than upon arguments over what values we share. (What does it mean, for instance, to say that all men are created equal?) Aristotle, criticizing Plato’s argument in the Republic that the city requires unity, pointed out, to the contrary, that “a city-state must indeed be a unity up to a point, but not totally so.”

[I]t is evident that the more of a unity a city-state becomes, the less of a city-state it will be. For a city-state naturally consists of a certain multitude; and as it becomes more of a unity, it will turn from a city-state into a household, and from a household into a human being... A city-state consists not only of a number of people, but of people of different kinds (1261a 17–24).

Community arises as much from shared experiences as from shared values, and politics is often the interplay between unity and disagreement. Understanding this can help us feel a sense of community even with those fellow citizens who choose to lead very different lives from our own. With a suitable exercise of the imagination, it can even help us understand how their choices, too, might proceed from a sacramental worldview. The most unfortunate aspect of Dreher’s book is how quickly he assumes the worst of the non-crunchies: “[M]ost [!!!] Americans are so busy bargain-shopping or bed-hopping, or talking about their shopping and screwing selves, that they’re missing the point of life.” Or, in a particularly ill-chosen sentence: “We Americans are a religious people, but the way most of us live out our religion is fairly superficial.” One might hope that the sacramental worldview, which finds special meaning in mere physical reality, would generate a no less charitable assessment of our fellow citizens.

But charity is also an interpretive principle, and since Dreher has written a book of journalism, not political philosophy, it would be unfair to saddle him with too much theoretical baggage. Suffice it to say that the crunchy life he describes is an appropriate manifestation of the sacramental worldview, though not its only one. His book should be taken less as a demand that we all become crunchy than as an invitation to recognize crunchiness as a genuine form of traditionalist conservatism. And Dreher performs a valuable service by reminding us that our attitudes toward everyday matters such as the food we eat and the homes we build are not devoid of political significance. If we are willing to think sufficiently broadly about both the sacramental worldview and the nature of community, there is room in the conservative tent for both the crunchy con sipping a chilled Riesling on the front porch of his Arts and Crafts bungalow and also his soggier compatriot gulping down a super-size Diet Coke during the commute back to his McMansion. At the Supper of the Lamb, at least, each will find a seat.

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Race at the Schoolhouse Gate

This fall, the United States Supreme Court will hear challenges to programs in two cities designed to promote integration in public schools. The cases, from Seattle and Kentucky, are immediately significant because hundreds of districts across the country use race as a factor in assigning students to schools. More broadly, the implications of the Court's decisions may force the Justices to reconsider accepted arguments about the constitutionality of affirmative action.

Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1 has attracted more attention. Seattle's school district has a student population that is approximately forty percent white and sixty percent nonwhite in a city where the general population is about seventy percent white. Seattle schools had never been found by a court to engage in legal segregation, but the city's residential areas are clearly racially distinct. A vast majority of white students live north of downtown; a majority of African-American, Asian-American, Latino, and Native American students live south of downtown. Previous policies encouraging neighborhood schools only replicated this residential imbalance.

To rectify this problem, the Seattle school district adopted a "controlled choice" program for admission of ninth graders to the district's ten public schools. Each student submits a list of high schools he or she would like to attend. If a high school has more applicants than available seats, then admissions decisions are determined according to a tiebreaker process. The first tiebreaker automatically admits students who have a sibling already attending that school. The second tiebreaker produced the lawsuit. If a high school is imbalanced—not within fifteen percent of the racial demographics of the district as a whole—then the district applies a racial classification to all applicants of all races. Admissions decisions are made to ensure that the enrollment of each school is brought in line with the demographics of the district as a whole.

In 2001–2002, about three hundred students—including eighty-nine classified as nonwhite—were denied admission to schools they had chosen, because those schools were deemed to have too many students of their racial classification. A group of parents sued, claiming the district's second tiebreaker violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Last October, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the policy. It ruled that the policy was enacted to promote socialization of students in a racially diverse society. All students are admitted to a public school in the district, and the tiebreaker does not benefit or burden any particular race. Because individual qualifications are not considered in this process, the Ninth Circuit argued, students suffer no racial stigma from not being admitted to a particular school.

The Ninth Circuit's reasoning clearly departs from the Supreme Court's recent constitutional justification for affirmative action. In its two 2003 decisions involving admissions policies at the University of Michigan, the Court approved the use of race to assemble a "critical mass" of minority students on the basis of "the educational benefits that diversity is designed to produce." But diversity was not reduced solely to racial diversity. Approval of affirmative action policies was premised on the importance of treating each applicant as an individual. Thus in one case (Gratz v. Bollinger), the Court struck down Michigan's policy of undergraduate admissions, which automatically assigned twenty points of the one hundred needed for automatic admission to all applicants identified as members of underrepresented minority groups. In the second case (Grutter v. Bollinger), the Court approved by a five–four vote the more holistic admissions policy of the law faculty.
school, which did not assign a fixed value to race but assessed the individual academic and social characteristics of each applicant.

Under the Michigan precedents, the dissenters on the Ninth Circuit clearly have the better argument. Seattle's tiebreaker process seems even more objectionable than Michigan's undergraduate point system. Michigan allowed applicants of all races—even those who did not get the twenty automatic points—to gain enough points for admission in other ways, including grades, performance on standardized tests, awards and accomplishments, place of residence, relationship to alumni and the application essay. The Seattle district classifies applicants to oversubscribed schools solely on the basis of race (defined as white or non-white), and it makes admissions decisions without considering any other personal or educational characteristics applicants may have to contribute to diversity, aside from having an elder sibling attending the school. Even Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's majority opinion in Grutter which upheld the law school program rejected "outright racial balancing" as "patently unconstitutional."

The Seattle schools will have difficulty gaining five votes on the U.S. Supreme Court. O'Connor, the fifth vote in Grutter, is no longer on the Court. Justices Scalia and Thomas are certain votes against Seattle. They oppose all government affirmative action programs that classify by race as violations of equal protection. In an earlier case, Scalia wrote that "in the eyes of government, we are just one race here. It is American." He also criticized the Michigan rulings as a "split doubleheader" that only "prolongs the controversy and the litigation." Thomas has written that any government distinctions on the basis of race "undermine the moral basis of the equal protection principle" founded in the Declaration of Independence "that underlies and infuses our Constitution."

The two newest Justices, who were not on the Court when it decided the Michigan cases, seem no more receptive. In a voting rights case decided this June, Chief Justice Roberts noted "It's a sordid business, this divvying us up by race." Alito not only joined Roberts's concurrence in that case, but in 1985, before coming to the Court, he wrote of his service in the Reagan Justice Department that "I am particularly proud of my contributions in recent cases in which the government has argued in the Supreme Court that racial and ethnic quotas should not be allowed."

Justice Kennedy appears to be the vote the school district must attract. On the surface, he seems a promising target. In Grutter, Kennedy accepted diversity as an important interest and stated that the Constitution allows "racial minorities to have their special circumstances considered to improve their educational opportunities." Further, Ninth Circuit Judge Alex Kozinski—a noted libertarian and former Kennedy clerk—wrote a special concurring opinion that urged a reconsideration of the existing judicial approach to affirmative action. He argued that Seattle's plan differs from prior policies struck by courts because it does not burden or benefit any particular ethnic group. Further, it advances the great value of building in children "the ability to interact with individuals who are very different from oneself." Given this important interest, and the fact that no individual suffers a racial stigma from being denied a spot in a particular school, Seattle's policy should be evaluated under less exacting scrutiny and affirmed. Seattle's "stirring of the melting pot" is "eminently sensible," Kozinski writes, and he "would leave the decision to those much closer to the affected community, who have the power to reverse or modify the policy should it prove unworkable."

But it is unlikely Kozinski's plea will sway Kennedy. Despite accepting the constitutional basis of affirmative action in Grutter, Kennedy still voted to strike down Michigan's law school admission program because it weighed race too heavily. He wrote that courts must continue to play an important role in protecting individual rights, because "preferment by race, when resorted to by the State, can be the most divisive of all policies." Unlike Kozinski, Kennedy has emphasized the need for strict judicial scrutiny to protect the right of each person to be treated as an individual and not solely as a member of an ethnic group. Such concerns are magnified in Seattle's program, which classifies individuals on the basis of being either white or non-white and allocates scarce seats to preferred schools on that basis. If Kennedy does not undertake the re-examination
of affirmative action proposed by Kozinski and remains true to his earlier statements, he will be a fifth vote to overturn the Seattle plan.

Along with the Seattle case, the Court will hear arguments in a case from Louisville, Kentucky. Jefferson County uses a similar race-based placement policy for its elementary schools. Unlike Seattle, it had been found to have a history of legal segregation in its schools. Combining the two cases raises the possibility of another split doubleheader and more confusion about the constitutional status of affirmative action. This time, however, the Court seems poised to speak more clearly about the limits on government's ability to classify by race.

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A CHINESE TALLOW TREE, PLANTED AD 2002

The tree progresses. Spring the wintered seedpods give way to leaves, shoots small then covering the tree in green, a shimmer in the breeze. By June the pollened tendrils run. These attract bees, and days the tree just hums. The flowers drop like worms upon the ground, and then, not even August, the seeds begin to form: small, hard, and green, in clustered threes or fours. These will ripen, burst, and dry by winter; the cycle will repeat.

Just as the sun warms roses, the cold that winter brings will dry these leaves and strip them. Abundant spring gives way to heat and color of summer and then to fall.

Michael Kramer
IN THE PARLANCE OF ITS PRACTITIONERS, the field of liturgical studies is now often concerned with what lies “beyond the text.” Frank C. Senn’s *The People’s Work: A Social History of the Liturgy* exemplifies this “beyond the text” understanding of liturgical studies. This book realizes the necessity of moving beyond the consideration of texts and structures to an exploration of the people whose texts and structures they were and are.

After an introductory chapter in which he explains that writing a social history of liturgy involves a telling of the story of Christian liturgy from the perspective of the worshiping people, Senn provides some methodological considerations (“Sociologically Speaking, What Kind of Group Was the Christian Assembly?”) to acquaint the reader with the various forms that early Christianity assumed. Then, in seventeen subsequent chapters, following more or less a conventional periodization that most liturgical historians employ (early, medieval, Reformation, modern), Senn pursues his “aim” of demonstrating “the impact of the people on the performance of their ‘public work,’ by means of which they signified their hopes and aspirations, expressed their devotion to God, and acted out their human relationships in the presence of the Judge of all” (7). While Senn is aware that a social-scientific or social-historical approach runs the risk of reductionism by either ignoring or downplaying the salience of the theological in a consideration of the church’s worship, he makes a deft methodological move by asserting that “the incarnational principle of Christian theology” makes it possible, if not necessary, to observe how “the church really operates as a human institution in order to affirm its meaning as a community created by the Holy Spirit in the image of the Triune God” (8).

From this theological-cultural vantage point, Senn charts how those human communities formed by God, triune and holy, and in which the Son of God is present in Word and Sacrament have encountered this reality in a myriad of settings and styles ranging from the austere to the awe-inspiring—house churches, cemetery gatherings around the graves of martyrs, in great basilicas, in the elevation of the host, in processions, in the word of preaching, in the devotions of the pious—to name but a few.

To conclude his social history, Senn offers an epilogue—“Postmodern Liturgical Retrieval”—in which he addresses the “sticky-wicket” of what worship might look like in our time. Whether it is “ancient/future worship” or the “alternative worship” of the so-called emerging churches, Senn finds here the potential for crafting ways to worship God that embody ancient rites and symbols but are connected in fresh ways to contemporary culture. His own hunch “is that the retrieval of tradition, combined with instances of inculcation, will also be the way of Christianity in Latin America, Africa, and Asia—‘the next Christendom’” (332).

At the outset, Senn notes the limitations of his enterprise which means that he can only “paint a picture using broad strokes,” thus leaving to “others to color in the details of particular traditions and local worshipping communities” (8). Hence, as I read the book, I found myself doing this, particularly with the medieval and Reformation material. The rather well-known study of James Russell on *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, or the essay of
Mary Collins, “Evangelization, Catechesis, and the Beginning of Western Eucharistic Theology,” would be two examples of such coloring in of the details. Or, one might be more acutely aware of how John Bossy’s work on medieval Christianity is often an over-romanticizing of late medieval Catholicism or a caricaturing of Protestantism.

Similarly, with regard to the Reformation, one could attend to the work of those who have proclaimed the Reformation a “failure,” merely substituting one system of coercion for another. Or, one could address some of these more “negative” works with the contributions of historians who view the Reformation as a “new experiment in companionship and community.” For instance, good use can be made of the work of David Warren Sabean, Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany, that has shown, on the basis of church visitation records, that the more social understanding of the Lord’s Supper was still operative in an early Lutheran piety. Or, one could emphasize at this juncture, too, how the great sixteenth-century debate about religious ritual belonged to a larger, early modern discourse over the nature of the person, one defined not by individualism but by reference to the social and moral community that was embodied in liturgical practice. Finally, Christopher Boyd Brown’s Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation is a social-historical study that has shown that the success of the Reformation lay not only in its effect on the public institutions or educated elite of sixteenth-century Germany but in its hold in the homes and on the hearts of its people.

Another place “to color in the details” would be in the realm of the “theological.” This is often the soft-underbelly of many social-historical approaches in liturgical studies. To Senn’s credit, he does come down on the side of the _theological_ that is the guiding thread in his book—that is, whatever it is that believers say, sing, or do in the worship of the church, it is the work of God. Or, in the words of another recent “sociological” history of Christian worship, it is this _opus Dei_ that provides a distinctive understanding of this event being about a relationship of intimacy between the human and the divine (Martin D. Stringer, _A Sociological History of Christian Worship_, 20-21).

Another set of observations about Senn’s book concerns both his repeated use of the definite article, “the liturgy” as well as the title, The People’s Work. Paul Bradshaw has noted that the former presumes a continuity over time that recent historical research has rendered increasingly difficult to demonstrate. With regard to the title: in spite of what is often said, the original sense of the word leitourgia—public service—does not imply a community activity. Individuals performed public services [e.g., producing dramatic performances, paying taxes, serving in the military, paying for garbage collection]. However, a Christian understanding of liturgy is not determined by etymology. So, the title is unfortunate, though I suspect, in order for the book to “work,” the author had to find a way of acknowledging that the church’s worship is as much a human artifact as it is a theological reality.

A final observation or question: How does the study of liturgical texts relate to the work of the social-historian of liturgy? This is an important question to ask, what with some of the gratuitous fiddling around with words and images of various so-called “renewing” projects that can only dilute any “confessional” or “orthodox” understandings of Christian faith, making of it instead some sort of pious meandering into what can only be “the black hole of the self.”

But in the end, I do not wish to detract from the contribution that Senn has made. He has written a useful book that can help broaden our sense of what constitutes liturgical history. Liturgical historians seek to understand the evidence they have, be it historical, textual, literary, or the archaeological remains of buildings, furnishings, and artifacts, as testimonies to what is _per se_ a living event in which God and human beings have come together in ways that are faith-forming, faith-sustaining, and life-giving. And, Senn’s book is refreshingly free of any overdetermining “theory” as well as of any overbearing
hermeneutics of suspicion that can accompany books of this kind. He has instead immersed himself in the material at hand. In so doing, he has given to students of the church’s worship a resource or a point of departure for better understanding what has occurred in this event over time, not to mention our own time.

Michael B. Aune
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John Perry, the author of *Torture: Religious Ethics and National Security,* is an adjunct professor of ethics at the Arthur V. Maura Center for Peace and Justice at the University of Manitoba. He characterizes his book as “an exercise in human rights advocacy from a Roman Catholic perspective.” His fundamental claim is that “torture is immoral and sinful not only because it violates the dignity we owe to the human person but also because it directly or indirectly degrades any society that would tolerate it.” He describes his method as one of “moral phenomenology,” involving careful analysis of the experiences of torture survivors (13-14).

The author’s writing style is accessible to general readers. His basic theological and ethical claims will be familiar to Christians. His condemnation of torture as a violation of human dignity is rooted in the Genesis story that people were created in the image of God (43, 68-69, 161) as well as in the teachings of Christian theologians from Tertullian to popes Nicholas I and John Paul II. Perry also strongly criticizes decisions by some Catholic authorities (including at least three other popes) to endorse torture in the interest of suppressing heresy, defeating communism, and other ends (13, 17-18, 47-50, 55-58, 123, 127-128).

This book is weakened by the author’s tendency to offer sweeping, poorly supported, repetitive or disconnected generalizations, rather than well-organized and sound arguments. For example, on p. 37, Perry tries to ground a right not to be tortured in a right to life, and asks rhetorically, “Is torture less lethal than shooting someone?” (37). Well yes, it can be non-lethal. Of course, torture usually is non-lethal, in which case the question is begged as to how a right to life is automatically violated by torture. A better approach to torture would begin from other ethical principles, such as an obligation to respect human dignity (on which the author draws elsewhere in the book) or an obligation not to inflict pain on someone without their consent and not for their own good.

In addition, the author offers contradictory answers to the empirical question of whether torture ever works in interrogation. Though he initially claims that “torture is a highly inaccurate method,” (46), he cites instances when it appears to have been effective against terror suspects (51).

Moreover, his claim that “the rules that bind governments to human rights are treated in a much looser manner during times of war than in times of peace” is misleading, especially when combined with his inference that a state of war permits soldiers to beat detainees, which is simply false (30). Under the Geneva Conventions, which have the same status under federal law as any other international treaty signed by a President and ratified by the Senate, U.S. soldiers are legally bound never to attack directly and intentionally noncombatants, and must
limit harms to them even when attacking legitimate military targets. They must also treat all detainees humanely. In those respects at least, their obligations are quite similar to those of domestic police officers, who are not permitted to use violence in interrogations even of suspected murderers. Recognizing that atrocities sometimes occur in war does not mean that human rights have any less weight under these circumstances than during peacetime.

Perry also exhibits confusion regarding the distinction in international law between torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment (33–36). This is not to excuse the latter by any means. In a moral sense, they also probably qualify as torture. But the author does not help readers distinguish among potentially conflicting definitions of torture, which surely is vital to advancing public debate on the issue.

The author does not seem to recognize the real ethical dilemma facing an intelligence officer who has detained someone suspected of plotting to kill innocent people, and against whom non-coercive interrogation techniques have been ineffective. If the plot were carried out, would the author say that the intelligence officer is free of moral blame if he refused to use coercive methods that might have saved many lives?

This book is helpful in relating stories of torture victims and torturers which the author has carefully gathered from numerous sources, and in outlining various arguments for and against torture that have been voiced within the Catholic tradition. But on balance, it cannot be recommended to Cresset readers, since it adds little that is original or substantial to the existing scholarly literature and contains many serious flaws in reasoning. Readers would be better served by consulting some of the works cited in the opening paragraph of this review.

David Perry
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I had often wondered what the real thought was behind the word “peace.” As one looks at the history of Holy Church and its sainted membership, one finds hardly a generation that lived by Webster’s definition of the term. Wars, rumors of wars, brother against father, saint against sinner, reformer against traditionalist—these are history, but hardly peace.

People in this north-Alabama community are “typical” Americans. They need the Gospel of Jesus Christ just as much as any generation. Their approach to Jesus Christ is just as ego-centric as the next person’s.

The Lutheran parish that I served as intern-assistant (vicar) is typical of the Alabama frontier. Small membership. Comparatively new building. Constant awareness of indebtedness. Here was a peaceful parish. Not too active. Not overly quiet. Just peaceful. Its growth was not phenomenal. But it was moving.

One could say also that the students were typical—at least that quarter of the Lutheran campus population that “showed-up” regularly. Their main objective was to have their own “center” and their own pastor. Then everything would be on the “up-swing.” Then the Lutheran Church could start making an impression on the student body of the University of Alabama.

Could anyone ask for a more peaceful atmosphere in which to work? Did the Southern way of life have something to offer the Yankee brethren? Could this be the “peace that passes all understanding”?

February 5, 1961, was an average Sunday all the way through. When the Lutheran students met for their discussion that evening, Pastor Joseph Ellwanger and three from his flock in Birmingham were there. Everything seemed quite in order. The discussion was better than usual. But this was to be expected, for so was the topic: “The Church and Human Relations.” Here were fellow Christians of different races in communion with one another. Here was peace in the Southern way of life. It was a restful night.

As suddenly as a head-on collision awakens a sleeping driver, the peace passed from our midst. A quiet Lutheran parish in a striving community on the “frontier” was thrown into turmoil. In the few short hours after the February 5 meeting, peace-loving people were moved to turmoil by deep-seated prejudice and hate. “We are a peace-loving people,” said the White Citizens Council [WCC], “but don’t disturb our peace.” “We love the nigger as long as he does what we tell him.” The federal government and the integrationists were “the only ones who wanted to disturb the peace.” I am sure the pastor had a hard time remembering this as his telephone jingled at all hours of the night. “No,” I was told, “there is no place in the Bible that says I must treat the ‘nigra’ as a brother—the Jew either for that matter.” It is true that the WCC is a minority—the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan also. But they sound like a majority when no voices are raised in opposition. Indeed the Lutheran Church in that community was “caught with its pants down.” These groups, it seems, “maintained the peace” for the majority by a campaign of fear.

When I returned from New Orleans (where conferences were held with my superiors), “peace” again was the word of the day. Besides, there was much to talk about. The Lord Almighty by His powerful hand brought rain and tornado to the community. The area

James David Fackler (1938–1984)

The Lord will give strength unto His people.
The Lord will bless His people with peace.
came under the federal disaster relief, but this was peace. The parish had a hole in its roof, but this was peace.

Work continued as it had before. There was much to be done. My preaching assignments were extremely limited. But this is not the only way in which a clergyman serves. Much was said about love. But the evasive approach was noticeable. About the only ones who wanted to talk on the "subject" were the students. What voice have "egg-heads"?

March 12 I had an opportunity to preach at the parish. I was asked rather late in the week, so I went to the "barrel" (a ready supply of old sermons previously delivered and kept on file) and took a copy from my Lenten series in 1960. The text was I John 3:16. The Topic: Reflections on the Crucifixion—St. John Looks Back—"... by this we know love." After much prayer and thought, I was sure that this was a necessary topic. Not much was said about the "touchy" subject, a sentence or two at most. In the late service, I elaborated on our Lord's foot washing by saying: "... and how many of us would wash a Negro's feet"... as our Lord has washed His disciples' feet. Other than this, the sermon was, as usual, general. No negative reaction was received from either Pastor or congregation that day.

Another week was begun. Hardly a different beginning from those prior. It was an usual week. Thursday evening, March 16, Pastor had asked if my wife and I would baby-sit his children. This was in order. We had done it before. My wife had to work until 11:00 PM, but we would spend the night at Pastor's home. Again, nothing was different as I went to pick up my wife at the hospital except that I thought I had left a book at church, earlier, and so expected to pick it up on the way to the apartment. When I arrived at the hospital entrance, my wife was not there (as usual), so I decided to go pick up the book and thus save that much time getting back to Pastor's home. I drove to the parish, turned the lights to dim, left the motor running and started toward the door. Then the "fun" began.

Hardly was the door ajar than I was grabbed from behind by a pair of gloved hands—one over my mouth and another over my eyes—and carried to the back seat of a waiting automobile. Lying cross-wise in the back seat of a speeding auto, I had many thoughts cross my mind. I had no idea that it was the Klan but naively hoped it was some of my college friends out for fun. This last thought was squelched when my custodian said: "You ain't on no joy ride, preacher," as I attempted to get more comfortable. After many bumps, sounds, and prayers, we arrived at our destination. I prayed and I prayed and I prayed.

Following a short interval of what seemed to be a conference, I was masked, punched in the stomach, and lifted out of the automobile. Someone was holding me from behind when another fellow punched me in the stomach again. I was scared, but the Lord was there. Had He not said: I will give strength unto my people; I will bless My people with peace? I was at peace, but what about my wife?

Next I was told to lie face down on the ground and was helped to do so. Now they wanted to talk to me. Many invectives were hurled—between and during which I was flogged. "Yes, I love all people"—Negroes included. This is what Christ did. This is what I must try to do. "Nigger-lovers disrupt our Southern way of life." Lord Jesus Christ, give me strength. The flogging continued as a "friend" held my legs and another stood on my wrists. "Yes, I had seen the cross, but didn't know what it meant." This was America—things like this do not happen here. "Yes, I will leave town—but why haven't you warned me?" I asked. I had been warned, they said—this was final. After more floggings and invectives and prayer, I was lifted to my feet and led across some railroad tracks and told to lie down again. Here they removed my mask and warned me not to look up until I had counted to one hundred... "we have a gun." My final direction was to follow the "red lights" on the railroad track to get back to town. It was a peaceful night.

It was a peaceful night as I walked along the tracks. Sounds of the night in the swamps were everywhere. It
was difficult to walk at first. My thighs were quite swollen.
But so close to God, a nature-loving vicar thinks of many things. I think I sang about every hymn I knew plus a good bit of the Divine Liturgy. Not a few thoughts from the psalms came to mind. My wife was on my mind also, but we had talked much about uncertainty and death. We lived by faith—I knew she was all right. My watch was gone, probably lost in the shuffle. So I had no idea of time. One pipe was broken but I had others. It was a long walk. It was a beautiful night. God was near. This was peace.

The rest is history now. I was picked up by a very dear student friend. My automobile was found as I left it—motor still running. My wife was in good spirits. After contacting my superior, my wife and I left town. We were sad of countenance but confident that we had witnessed to our Lord. It was a peaceful drive.

Thus I found what the peace of God is all about. Here was hate. Here was turmoil. Here was peace. I had witnessed for Christ against the hate of a people. Emotions were stirred. Fear was aroused. All things work together for good to them that love God. Indeed, the Lord will give strength unto His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace—those in Christ know peace. ♦

Kenneth F. Korby, 1924–2006
Editor of The Cresset, 1972–1978
Photo: Valparaiso University Archives
Junius R. Sloan, a Midwestern artist who began his career as a portraitist and then later chose to focus on depicting the Hudson River and Midwestern landscapes, is an important figure in the Brauer Museum of Art's history. In 1953, Sloan's son Percy gave to Valparaiso University a large number of his father's works along with a collection of fine pieces by regional artists he had acquired through the years, thus forming the basis for the Brauer Museum of Art.

This small painting of a Wisconsin scene in autumn provides a fine example of the artist's painting style and careful attention to the details in the landscape he saw before him. Sloan's realistic representational approach, rich colors, and balanced composition may well encourage viewers to imagine themselves in this setting, relaxing among the trees displaying their brilliant hues.

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Environmental Racism
James Martin-Schramm

Liturgical Reconstruction
James Brooks Kuykendall

My Father Told Me
Gary Fincke