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Tilling and Telling

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Tilling and Telling
A Liturgical Drama based on Genesis 2:4-24
By John Steven Paul
For the marriage celebration of Sarah Elizabeth Mutch & Peter Justin Hinck
Saturday, February 5, 2005 4:15 p.m.
Chapel of the Resurrection - Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, Indiana

The Characters:

Man One (God)

Man Two

Woman One (Narrator)

Woman Two (The Garden, the Serpent)

I

A WOMAN (ONE) enters to begin the story called “Tilling and Telling.”

WOMAN ONE:

Did you ever think about this? How has our God chosen to reveal himself to us...? Through stories. Maybe you've heard this one.

She begins to tell “The Garden of Delight” from Genesis 2 using the words verbatim from the Bible.

WOMAN ONE:

In the day that the Lord God (*MAN ONE enters as GOD*) made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet spring up for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground then the Lord God formed man (*MAN TWO enters, dusting himself off*) from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils th breath of life; and the man became a living being.

MAN TWO is somewhat lost or unlocated and shows it.

WOMAN ONE:

(continuing) And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food...

*WOMAN TWO , a dancer, enters. She is THE GARDEN.
She dances "The Garden."*

WOMAN ONE:

... the tree of life also in the midst of the garden (*WOMAN ONE becomes the Tree of Life*), and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (*MAN ONE becomes the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*). A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches.

MAN ONE:

The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.

WOMAN TWO:

The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush.

MAN TWO:

The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria.

WOMAN ONE:

And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

II

WOMAN ONE:

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

MAN ONE:

Till it. Keep it.

MAN TWO and WOMAN TWO now perform a brief pas de deux. After this dance is over...

MAN ONE:

(to MAN TWO) And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.

WOMAN ONE:

Why?

MAN ONE:

That's a long story.

WOMAN ONE:

Do you know it?

MAN ONE:

Of course I know it.

WOMAN ONE:

(inviting) So...

MAN ONE:

Let's focus on this story first, the delightful one.

MAN TWO:

Tell us about the tree. Just a little.

MAN ONE:

Maybe later. First, this...

III

MAN ONE:

It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner. So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field...

WOMAN ONE, wearing the mask of a moose, steps up to MAN TWO to be named.

MAN TWO:

Moose. (He looks back at MAN ONE for approval.)

MAN ONE:

Good.

WOMAN ONE:

Wife?

MAN TWO:

No.

MAN TWO knows instinctively that these animals will not do for a wife. Another way to say this is that MAN TWO feels no sexual attraction to the animals. As each animal, in turn, "proposes to him," MAN ONE grows progressively more frustrated and confused. He looks back to MAN ONE ("GOD") occasionally to seek assurance, express protest, etc.

WOMAN TWO, wearing the mask of a sheep, steps up to MAN TWO to be named.

MAN TWO:

Sheep. (He looks back at MAN ONE for approval.)

MAN ONE:

Good.

WOMAN TWO:

Wife?

MAN TWO:

No.

*WOMAN ONE, wearing the mask of a duck, steps up to
MAN TWO to be named.*

MAN TWO:

Duck. (He looks back at MAN ONE for approval.)

MAN ONE:

Good.

WOMAN ONE:

Wife?

MAN TWO:

No.

*WOMAN TWO, wearing the mask of a tiger, steps up to
MAN TWO to be named.*

MAN TWO:

Tiger. (He looks back at MAN ONE for approval.)

MAN ONE:

Good.

WOMAN TWO:

Wife?

MAN TWO:

No.

WOMAN ONE, wearing the mask of a panda, steps up to MAN TWO to be named.

MAN TWO:

Bear... no... panda. *(He looks back at MAN ONE for approval.)*

MAN ONE:

Good.

WOMAN ONE:

Wife?

MAN TWO:

No.

WOMAN TWO, wearing the mask of a chicken, steps up to MAN TWO to be named.

MAN TWO:

Chicken. *(He looks back at MAN ONE for approval.)*

MAN ONE:

Good.

WOMAN TWO:

Wife?

MAN TWO:

but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

MAN ONE:

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept;

WOMAN ONE:

Wait. Before you do that, tell us the other story.

MAN ONE:

Which one?

WOMAN ONE:

The story about the tree of Good and Evil.

MAN ONE:

It's too long a story for now. It's time for bed.

MAN TWO:

Tell the short version. Pleeeeease.

MAN ONE:

Once upon a time there was a man who lived in a delightful garden.

MAN TWO:

Me?

MAN ONE:

Maaaaaybe. Lots of creatures lived in the garden with the man.

MAN TWO:

It is me!

MAN ONE:

Who's telling this story? You or me?

MAN TWO:

Okay, okay. Keep going.

MAN ONE:

One day, a serpent came up to the –

MAN TWO:

It can't be me, I never named anyone "serpent."

WOMAN TWO:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman,

MAN TWO:

Who?

MAN ONE:

Shhhhhhhh.

WOMAN TWO:

"Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

WOMAN ONE:

The woman said to the serpent – I changed my mind; I don't think we should tell this story.

MAN ONE:

We've started now. We must continue.

WOMAN ONE:

The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'"

MAN TWO:

Die?

WOMAN TWO:

But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

WOMAN ONE:

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.

MAN TWO:

So, do they die?

MAN ONE passes his hands over MAN TWO and MAN TWO falls asleep.

WOMAN ONE does not like this story. She moves away from the others and sits on the ground with her head in her hands.

WOMAN ONE:

Die?

MAN ONE:

Yes, die.

WOMAN ONE:

Then all this (*indicating the garden*) is a really short story.

MAN ONE:

In the sense that “a thousand ages in my sight is like an evening gone,” yes.

WOMAN ONE:

This is the end, then.

MAN ONE:

The end of the story of “The Garden,” where God and man and woman and all God’s other creatures live together in perfect harmony.” Yes, it’s the end of that story. We can’t live together

now. You'll have to leave. And, you won't have an easy time of it from now on. But it is the beginning of another story.

WOMAN ONE:

The title of which is... ?

MAN ONE:

"The Plan." My plan to bring us all back together again.

WOMAN ONE:

Is it a long story?

MAN ONE:

Depends on how you figure. (*His little joke.*) Yes, it's a long story and right near the end, there's a death.

WOMAN ONE:

Another death?

MAN ONE:

There's a lot of sin and death in "The Plan," but near the end, one perfect person dies, and makes up for this your disobedience.

WOMAN ONE:

Who is this perfect person who dies?

MAN ONE:

My son.

WOMAN ONE:

Your son gives up his life for us? He sounds wonderful. This story will be worth telling.

MAN ONE:

It must be told. Everyone must look forward to his comings. And then *everyone* must be told what he has done.

WOMAN ONE:

Everyone. Even children.

MAN ONE:

Especially children.

WOMAN ONE:

That's a lot of telling. A world of telling. Will I be able to do it?

MAN ONE:

I'll get you some help.

(continuing) Then god took one of the man's ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

From MAN TWO's torso, MAN ONE takes two rings. He walks to WOMAN ONE, lifts her up and gives her one of the rings.

WOMAN ONE:

And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man

MAN ONE takes WOMAN ONE to MAN TWO. MAN ONE gives MAN TWO the other ring.

MAN TWO:

This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called Woman, For out of Man this one was taken.

MAN ONE:

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

MAN TWO:

Finally, someone to help with all this tilling.

WOMAN ONE:

Finally, someone to help with all this telling.

MAN TWO:

Are you ready, Sarah?

WOMAN ONE:

I'm ready. Are you ready, Peter?

MAN TWO:

I'm ready.

ALL:

Amen.

END