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Theology, News and Notes - Vol. 48, No. 02

Fuller Theological Seminary

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DISCIPLINE OF WORSHIP; ART AND WORSHIP; WORLD MUSIC; FOLK ART; INTERVIEW WITH THE BREHMS; MOVIES AND WORSHIP; MODERN-DAY REVELATION; POWER OF MUSIC

Theology, News and Notes

FALL 2001

FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



Art for Faith's Sake

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COVER: STAINED-GLASS WINDOW FROM FULLER'S PRAYER GARDEN,
PHOTO BY DON MILICI

Theology, News and Notes

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Those familiar with the goings on at the Pasadena campus of Fuller Seminary will note the similarity between the theme of this issue and the name of a newly established institution: the Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts. While this issue was not proposed as a forum for those involved in the emerging center, there is a convergence of interest in the topic among people who teach, administer, and learn at Fuller. There is also a growing fascination in many Protestant and evangelical circles about the topic of worship. As evidence of this waxing liturgical interest, one of Fuller's adjunct Doctor of Ministry faculty, Robert Webber of Wheaton College, has recently compiled a collection of articles on the history and theology of Christian worship that comprises 12 large volumes.

The intent of the writers for this issue of *TN&N* is to explore some of the questions relating to the integration of worship with art and theology. As a reader, you might note certain differences of opinion among them, and certainly different emphases. Our purpose has not been to provide a comprehensive or univocal look at the topic, but merely to voice some ideas as to its scope—and to hint at the kind of work Fuller's new center might pursue.

Fuller's William Dyrness deals with the historical and theological connections between worship and art. Alexis Abernethy focuses on the spiritual and psychological power of music. I discuss the profound need for the arts in the human experience of worship. We have also provided some brief snapshots of how art might be used in worship services (see Robert Johnston's piece on using movie clips in worship and Roberta King's consideration of world music).

In addition, award-winning author and Fuller alumnus Richard Foster shares his thoughts on the discipline of worship. Then, in a thought-provoking essay, professor Leonora Tubbs Tisdale views preaching as folk art—while Todd Farley, the Brehm Center's artist in residence, illustrates how the arts can reveal God. And we are pleased to include an interview from the insightful perspective of Bill and Dee Brehm themselves.

There are many people talking about worship and the so-called "worship wars." The writings collected here are part of that large conversation. They are offered with our conviction that in order for the church of Christ to be active in the world, it must first be actively involved in worship where we are met by God and nourished for Christian service and mission. We hope that the articles and examples in this issue of *TN&N* will help to point the way toward a "fuller" understanding of how worship, theology, and the arts can work together for the good of God's people.

Clayton J. Schmit

Art for Faith's Sake

BY CLAYTON J. SCHMIT

Worship has always been an artistic enterprise. We know that ancient Jewish worship was centered in the Temple, an architectural masterpiece, and that it was musically elaborate and replete with ritualistic art. The religious environment of Rome during the earliest days of Christianity, as Larry Hurtado has recently shown, was rich with architecture, statuary, and painted imagery: artistic artifacts created for worship of pagan idols.¹ In this Roman setting, Christianity emerged, borrowing heavily from Jewish, but also pagan culture. From the Jewish synagogue, Christian worship borrowed numerous artistic elements: readings from the Prophets and other Hebrew writers, the singing of psalms and spiritual songs, traditions of ritualistic prayer, and ritual furnishings. Images of God were not allowed in Jewish worship, however, so when painted and sculpted images of Jesus began to appear in Christian worship, in this particular aspect, Christian worship resembled Roman pagan worship, where images of deities were common.

Since its emergence, Christian worship has continued to find expression through artistic means. In large measure, the histories of Western art and music run parallel to the history of the Christian church. And today, regardless of denominational or liturgical tradition, Christian worship is made up of artistic forms. In most traditions, music holds central place as, to use Luther's term, "the handmaid of the gospel." Whether Christians sing hymns, settings of the psalms, spiritual songs, anthems, or praise choruses, music is the principal artistic form that shapes Christian worship. But many others are involved. We gather in architectural structures; we enter rooms sunlit cobalt and ruby through stained-glass filtered light; we sit in well-fashioned furniture; we listen to the literature of the Scriptures; we hear aesthetically crafted messages; we move in processions; and we view images of the symbols and historic figures associated with our faith. When we gather for worship art is all around us, and even within us. We even claim that worship is an art in itself. Just as in opera, which is made up of dance, orchestral music, vocal music, literature, and visual art, worship is a distinct form of art that combines many elemental forms.

Clearly, the forms of art that relate to worship function in the public interest. When people gather

for public worship, art draws them together, instructs them, unites them, enlightens them, and provides the means for personal expression and transformation. The numerous artists and artisans that create opportunities for Christian worship do their work for the sake of the people of God who gather to have an encounter with their Creator and Redeemer. Worship art is created for a clear purpose.

Art for Art's Sake

Throughout its history, art has regularly been used as a tool for accomplishing particular purposes. In medieval churches, stained-glass pictures of biblical narratives were presented in order that the illiterate public might know the stories of their faith. Pictures have long been painted to commemorate historic occasions or to reinterpret significant events. Statues of great persons have been erected to serve the purposes of honoring a memory or creating solidarity for a nation's populace. Using art as a means of meeting public needs was, in fact, a typical reason for creating art up until the mid-nineteenth century. Christopher Witcombe has summarized the prevailing attitude: "The so-called academic painters of the nineteenth century believed themselves to be doing their part to improve the world in presenting images that contain or reflect good conservative moral values, examples of virtuous behavior, of inspiring Christian sentiment, and of the sort of righteous conduct and noble sacrifice that would serve as an appropriate model . . . to emulate."² But in that era, as the moon of progressive thought rose, its light began to reveal an emerging reaction against the way that art had been used.

The use of art for public purpose began to change as artists started to exercise a sense of artistic freedom. Rebelling against the conservative notion that the purpose of art was to safeguard tradition, a wave of "avant-garde" modernists began to encourage artists to educate the public in a new way, by depicting political and social problems. Art still served a public purpose, but its function was not to uphold the status quo or preserve tradition. It was to raise to public view the plight of humanity and to illuminate exploitation. (A characteristic example of this use of art can be seen in the novels of Charles Dickens, wherein the deplorable social conditions of Victorian England are vividly depicted.)

Since its emergence, Christian worship has continued to find expression through artistic means. In large measure, the histories of Western art and music run parallel to the history of the Christian church.

Worship consists of art that is not created for its own sake. It is created and brought into liturgical use precisely because it serves a good public purpose. It gives expression to people's experience. It teaches the faith. It serves as a vehicle of the Spirit and a means of communication with God. Why is it that worship consists of artistic forms that serve such particular functions? The answer is a theological one.

But even this noble purpose was soon abandoned as artists exercised greater freedom. They began to seek release not only from academic art, but also from any demands of the public. Before long, artists claimed that their work should be produced not for the sake of public enlightenment, but for the sake of the art itself. The watchword of this movement was "art for art's sake." It stood for an artist's freedom from the tyranny of purpose.

Since that time, artists have enjoyed the freedom to express themselves in ways that explore and stretch form without regard for inherent meaning or purpose. Still, some forms of art have continued to function in public service. Among these are forms such as film, as it has been used to present news or to propagandize. Painting and photography are, and have long been, used for the purposes of advertising and amusement. And music can be used for many things, such as the expression of nationalism (as in "La Marseillaise" or "The Star-Spangled Banner"), social commentary (as in the sixties' folk music or modern rap), or lament (as in settings of certain psalms or the moaning of country-western singers).

One of the settings where art has continued to serve a public function is in Christian worship. Worship consists of art that is not created for its own sake. It is created and brought into liturgical use precisely because it serves a good public purpose. It gives expression to people's experience. It teaches the faith. It serves as a vehicle of the Spirit and a means of communication with God. Why is it that worship consists of artistic forms that serve such particular functions? The answer is a theological one.

The Wellspring of Worship

God's people assemble for worship to enter into a communion and a communication that runs along vertical and horizontal axes. Vertically, there is the encounter between God and God's people. The lines of communication run both ways. God speaks to us when the Bible is read and when the Word is proclaimed by the preacher and the choir. God speaks to us also as we wait upon the Lord and listen for the stillness within. God's word comes to us in Scripture, sermon, song, and silence. And the communication runs in the opposite direction when God's people pray. Heavenward flow our pleas and petitions, our praises and thanksgivings, our confessions and confusions, the emptying of our deepest reservoirs of human concern.

By what measure can we determine whether this communication and encounter is effective? It would be impossible to invent an empirical means by which to measure the quality of such a highly subjective experience. But we do know that when God speaks to us, it is about matters of the soul. Worship is not concerned merely with our minds and moods. It is not about education or entertain-

ment. We do not go to worship to learn math or science or how to spell Ecclesiastes. And we do not worship in order to be made to laugh or cry or be moved by music. God's people worship because we long for an encounter with the God of the universe. We seek a deep sense of meaning and belonging and to enter into a dialogue with the One who knows us better than we know ourselves. The communion of worship is no shallow stream, but a deep river into which our souls dive to find comfort and contentment. This cannot be measured, but it can be known and felt.

The horizontal aspect of worship is also deeply enriching. We assemble not only for communion with God, but also to be with God's people. They are the body to which we belong. To worship together means that we meet God together and that we share God's love with one another. Again, this is no trifling encounter. It has greater potential for intimacy and depth than the average PTA or Rotary meeting. Worship is not only the place where we experience God's love, but also the moment in which it finds immediate expression. Here, we pray for one another, sing in solidarity with one another, share the kiss of peace, and open ourselves to one another through the transforming power of word, water, and wine. To calculate the success of such an experience is also beyond science. But the soul knows when it has been reached.

Worship, when it is effective as vertical and horizontal communion, is about matters that are soul-deep. The psalmist, who knew this, said, "As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. . . . Deep calls to deep at the thunder of your waterfalls; all your waves and your billows have gone over me" (Psalm 42:1,2,7). Worship is a wellspring from which we draw and dispense living water.

The Function of Art

But the question remains, Why art in worship? We use art in worship because worship is about the deep issues of faith and life. In fact, we need to use art in worship for precisely that reason. How else could we reach the depths of human experience than through art? This is what art is uniquely able to do. To calculate the function or meaning of art is another mercurial task. It may mean and do many things. Artists themselves find it difficult to point to precise meanings in their own work. What it means to them may be far from what it means to or how it affects the percipient. But they do know that art has something to do with their emotions and their experience with the world. They observe human experience, filter it through their own, and find symbols of expression that present those feelings and experiences to the world through artistic creations. Somehow, in the process, something deep is said. Deeper, in fact, than

can be put into words. Ask a painter what a work means. She will likely tell you to look at the painting. That is what it means. Words cannot better describe what she has to say. They can only capture a fraction of what the art is about.

Words fail, unless your artistic medium is the use of words. And even then, a poem means what it says and *not* what one might describe it to mean. Poems create images that describe real things better than pages of detailed, accurate reporting can. For example, imagine trying to describe a flower. How could you improve on this: "If you're not familiar with the trillium, imagine the flower that would come from a flute if a flute could make a flower. That is the trillium, a work of God from a theme by Mozart."³ We are used to using words in worship, but not in a technical way. Words in worship are poems. What does it mean to say that "my soul longs for you, O God," as a "deer longs for flowing streams?" It means so much more than you can say in more precise, less poetic language. The range of emotion and faith indicated by these words cannot be reduced to so many digits or word units on a page. The key to art is that it speaks of many things, deeply held things, deeply personal things, and richly true things. Art speaks of human emotion and experience on a stratum that other, more discursive media cannot reach.

Why do we need art in worship? Because faith resides on that soul-deep level of human experience. To reach that depth in human or divine communication, or to unleash the secrets of the heart in prayer, we need symbols that get us to that level. Mere words will not suffice. We need music, the flow of aural symbols that set us upon "the river whose streams make glad the city of God" (Psalm 46:4). We need the narratives of biblical life which are the aesthetic analogs to our own lives. We need the poetry of sermon and prayer which are the metaphors for our experience and concern. We need imagery that draws our imagination into the sphere of revelation. We need movement and dance, so that our soul's deepest held yearnings can find physical expression and release. In worship, we need art that has a purpose. Without it, we are mute. When we attend worship that does not work, we do not realize the failure empirically. It comes to us as an unkept promise. Something wells up that finds no expression: a volcano that cannot erupt; a stroke victim who has much to say but cannot find speech. That kind of worship is frustrating on the deepest level. What it needs is the art. Therein lies our voice, our fluency, our exclamation, our eruption of praise.

Art's Liturgical Purpose

Not all art today is made for particular purpose. In many cases art is still made simply for its own sake.

But the art that we use in worship is made for liturgical purpose. It is the expression of things deeply felt. Art that has this kind of purpose does not correspond to the notion of "art for art's sake." But, it does correspond to another apt phrase. It was coined by art collector and church musician Jerry Evenrud. He refers to art in worship as "art for faith's sake."⁴ Precisely. That is what we need: worship that is art-filled for the sake of the faith of the people of God who gather for communion with God and with one another.

This means, of course, that preachers and worship leaders are artists. Or, they should be. This also means that there is an aesthetic responsibility that worship leaders bear. Imbedded within that responsibility is the understanding that worship artists will comport themselves as all successful artists do: They will observe the world honestly and report it truthfully. They will practice so as to be prepared to present their art in the best way. They will coordinate their work with that of other artists so that as an integrated experience, worship will emerge as an art form in itself. And they will seek excellence in performance not for the sake of themselves or their art, but for the sake of those who perceive it. There may be many reasons for an artist to create a form of art. But when it is made available for use in worship, a clear public purpose prevails. When it functions effectively, art that is used in worship is never more, but nothing less than *art for faith's sake*.

ENDNOTES

¹ Larry W. Hurtado, *At the Origins of Christian Worship: The Context and Character of Earliest Christian Devotion*, (Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 19-26.

² Christopher L. C. E. Witcombe, "Art and Artists: Art for Art's Sake," www.arthistory.sbc.edu/artartists/modartsake.html, p. 1.

³ James Kilpatrick, *The Writer's Art* (Andrews and McMeel, 1984), p. 1.

⁴ Jerry Evenrud, former director for music, worship, and the arts in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, describes himself as "a freelance advocate for music and art in worship." His lectures on the use of art and music in worship are given under the title, "Art for Faith's Sake."



CLAYTON J. SCHMIT, Ph.D., the Arthur DeKruyter/Christ Church Oak Brook Associate Professor of Preaching, is the integrator of this issue of Theology, News and Notes. Dr. Schmit, who has been appointed the academic director of the new Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts at Fuller, brings

extraordinary gifts to the art of effective preaching and the ministry of music. A classically trained conductor, performer, and award-winning composer, Schmit has directed choirs and choruses on tours in the United States and Europe. Also a member of the Academy of Homiletics, Schmit's teaching specialties include transformational preaching and the performative aspects of liturgy, as well as music.

The key to art is that it speaks of many things, deeply held things, deeply personal things, and richly true things. Art speaks of human emotion and experience on a stratum that other, more discursive media cannot reach.

The Discipline of Worship

BY RICHARD J. FOSTER

To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.

—William Temple

To worship is to experience reality, to touch life. It is to know, to feel, to experience the resurrected Christ in the midst of the gathered community. It is a breaking into the *Shekinah* (the glory or radiance) of God, or better yet, being invaded by the *Shekinah* of God.

God is actively seeking worshipers. Jesus declares, "The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him" (John 4:23 [italics added]). It is God who seeks, draws, persuades. Worship is the human response to the divine initiative. In Genesis God walked in the garden, seeking out Adam and Eve. In the crucifixion Jesus drew men and women to himself (John 12:32). Scripture is replete with examples of God's efforts to initiate, restore, and

maintain fellowship with his children. God is like the father of the prodigal who upon seeing his son a long way off, rushed to welcome him home.

Worship is our response to the overtures of love from the heart of the Father. Its central reality is found "in spirit and truth." It is kindled within us only when the Spirit of God touches our human spirit. Forms and rituals do not produce worship, nor does the disuse of forms and rituals. We can use all the right techniques and methods, we can have the best possible liturgy, but we have not worshiped the Lord until Spirit touches spirit. The words of the chorus, "Set my spirit free that I may worship Thee," reveal the basis of worship. Until God touches and frees our spirit we cannot enter this realm. Singing, praying, praising all may lead to worship, but worship is more than any of them. Our spirit must be ignited by the divine fire.

As a result, we need not be overly concerned with the question of a correct form for worship. The issue of high liturgy or low liturgy, this form or that form is peripheral rather than central. We are encouraged in this perception when we realize that nowhere does the New Testament prescribe a particular form for worship. In fact, what we find is a freedom that is incredible for people with such deep roots in the synagogue liturgical system. They had the reality. When Spirit touches spirit the issue of forms is wholly secondary.

The Object of Our Worship

Jesus answers for all time the question of whom we are to worship. "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve" (Matt. 4:10). The one true God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God whom Jesus Christ revealed. God made clear his hatred for all idolatries by placing an incisive command at the start of the Decalogue. "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exod. 20:3). Nor does idolatry consist only in bowing before visible objects of adoration. A.W. Tozer says, "The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him."¹ To think rightly about God is, in an important sense, to have everything right. To think wrongly about God is, in an important sense, to have everything wrong.

We desperately need to see who God is: to read about his self-disclosure to his ancient people

Worship is the human response to the divine initiative.



WORSHIP THROUGH SYMBOLISM

"This icon bears the echo of monumental art, felt in the treatment of the solemn figure of Christ and the drapery of the wide himation and observed in the artist's deliberate emphasis, by means of size, on Christ's head and His right hand. Such conventionality was characteristic for Old Rus' art. It permitted the medieval painter to emphasize one or another detail and sometimes an attribute, and thus accentuate their significance."

christusrex.org

The Deesis
Ukraine, late 15th century,
Church of the Nativity
of the Virgin, village of
Starychi
Lviv National Museum



WORSHIP THROUGH STRUCTURE

"When Christianity achieved imperial sanction under Constantine, there was suddenly the urgent need to set up buildings that would meet the requirements of the Christian liturgy. . . . Dedicated about 330, [Old] St. Peter's is probably the most important design in the history of church architecture. . . . Its extraordinary dimensions are difficult to realize from the old drawings; the nave was as long, as high, and twice as wide as the nave of a great Gothic cathedral."

Horst de la Croix and Richard G. Tansley
Gardner's Art Through the Ages

The Coronation of Charlemagne, Fouquet,
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

Israel, to meditate on his attributes, to gaze upon the revelation of his nature in Jesus Christ. When we see the Lord of hosts "high and lifted up," ponder his infinite wisdom and knowledge, wonder at his unfathomable mercy and love, we cannot help but move into doxology.

*Glad thine attributes confess,
Glorious all and numberless.*²

To see who the Lord is brings us to confession. When Isaiah caught sight of the glory of God he cried, "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" (Isaiah 6:5). The pervasive sinfulness of human beings becomes evident when contrasted with the radiant holiness of God. Our fickleness becomes apparent once we see God's faithfulness. To understand his grace is to understand our guilt.

We worship the Lord not only because of who he is, but also because of what he has done. Above all, the God of the Bible is the God who acts. His goodness, faithfulness, justice, mercy all can be seen in his dealings with his people. His gracious actions are not only etched into ancient history, but are engraved into our personal histories. As the apostle Paul says, the only reasonable response is worship (Rom. 12:1). We praise God for who he is, and thank him for what he has done.

The Priority of Worship

If the Lord is to be Lord, worship must have priority in our lives. The first commandment of Jesus is, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30). The divine priority is worship first, service

second. Our lives are to be punctuated with praise, thanksgiving, and adoration. Service flows out of worship. Service as a substitute for worship is idolatry. Activity is the enemy of adoration.

The Leader of Worship

Genuine worship has only one Leader, Jesus Christ. When I speak of Jesus as the Leader of worship, I mean, first of all, that he is alive and present among his people. His voice can be heard in their

WORSHIP THROUGH SONG

That it is good and God pleasing to sing hymns is, I think, known to every Christian; For everyone is aware not only of the example of the prophets and kings in the Old Testament who praised God with song and sound, with poetry and psalter, but also of the common and ancient custom of the Christian church to sing Psalms. St. Paul himself instituted this in 1 Corinthians 14 and exhorted the Colossians to sing spiritual songs and Psalms heartily unto the Lord so that God's Word and Christian teaching might be instilled and implanted in many ways.

Therefore I, too, in order to make a start and to give an incentive to those who can do better, have with the help of others compiled several hymns, so that the holy gospel which now by the grace of God has risen anew may be noised and spread abroad.

And these songs were arranged in four parts to give the young—who should at any rate be trained in music and other fine arts—something to wean them away from love ballads and carnal songs and to teach them something of value in their place, thus combining the good with the pleasing, as is proper for youth. Nor am I of the opinion that the gospel should destroy and blight all the arts, as some of the pseudo-religious claim. But I would like to see all the arts, especially music, used in the service of Him who gave and made them. I therefore pray that every pious Christian would be pleased with this [the use of music in the service of the gospel] and lend his help if God has given him like or greater gifts. As it is, the world is too lax and indifferent about teaching and training the young for us to abet this trend. God grant us his grace. Amen.

Martin Luther, Preface to the *Wittenberg Hymnal*, 1524
From *Luther's Works Volume 53*, edited by Ulrich S. Leopold, copyright 1965,
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Service flows out of worship. Service as a substitute for worship is idolatry.



WORSHIP THROUGH LITERATURE

The Dogwood Stays
A Sonnet for Good Friday

The dead dogwood shone in the steady sun,
In ebony and red it shone, no leaves,
No blossoms hinting life within. What grieves
The human heart: An inner life undone,
A soul's dark night grown long from having won
Its final round with reasoned hope—fine sieves
To strain from thought what vanity believes—
The soulless bark sustains. But lest we shun
With careless disregard a holy sign,
That other tree of death that shines in rays
Eternal as the sun, its ebony
Stained red with life's blood strained through veins divine
And so lose hope entire, the dogwood stays
Encroaching dark with brightened memory.

Charles L. Bartow

(Legends say that the cross of Christ was hewn of dogwood.)

which the intent of the heart is revealed and we know that King Jesus is in charge. Perhaps there is a prophecy or an exhortation that puts us on the edge of our seats because we sense that the *Kol Yahweh* has been spoken. Preaching or teaching that comes forth because the living Head has called it forth breathes life into worship. Preaching that is without divine unction falls like a frost on worship. Heart preaching enflames the spirit of worship; head preaching smothers the glowing embers. There is nothing more quickening than Spirit-inspired preaching, nothing more deadening than human-inspired preaching.

The Fruits of Worship

Just as worship begins in holy expectancy, it ends in holy obedience. If worship does not propel us into greater obedience, it has not been worship. To stand before the Holy One of eternity is to change. Resentments cannot be held with the same tenacity when we enter his gracious light. As Jesus says, we need to leave our gift at the altar and go set the matter straight (Matt. 5:23,24). In worship an increased power steals its way into the heart sanctuary, an increased compassion grows in the soul. To worship is to change.

Holy obedience saves worship from becoming an opiate, an escape from the pressing needs of modern life. Worship enables us to hear the call to service clearly so that we respond, "Here am I! Send me" (Isaiah 6:8). Authentic worship will impel us to join in the Lamb's war against demonic powers everywhere—on the personal level, on the social level, on the institutional level. Jesus, the Lamb of God, is our Commander-in-Chief. We receive his orders for service and go . . . with the word of truth.

These excerpts were taken from Richard Foster's Celebration of Discipline (HarperSanFrancisco, 1978, 1988, 1998). Now in its third printing, the book's "Special Twentieth-Anniversary Edition" is available at the Fuller Seminary Bookstore by calling 626-584-5624 or by E-mail: bookstore@fuller.edu.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (Harper & Brothers, 1961), p. 11.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- ³ George Fox, Epistle #288 (1172), quoted in *Quaker Religious Thought* (Vol. 15, No. 2 Winter 1973-74), p. 23.



RICHARD J. FOSTER
(D.Th.P., '70) is the founder of *RENOVARÉ*, an organization that is committed to the spiritual renewal of the church through transformed spiritual living. Dr. Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*, that has sold more than a million copies in English, was chosen by church leaders and contributors of

Christianity Today as one of the top ten books of the twentieth century.

Reclaiming Art for Worship

BY WILLIAM A. DYRNESS

Then Beatrice began: "You dull your own perceptions with false imaginings and do not grasp what would be clear but for your preconceptions. You think you are still on earth: the lightning's spear never fled downward from its natural place as rapidly as you are rising there."

Dante, *The Paradiso*, 1:88-94.

Have you sometimes wondered how we got from the engrossing stories of Jesus to the mind-deadening outlines of contemporary Bible teachers? How did we come to exchange the poetic imagination of Dante, who casts biblical truth as a dramatic ascent of the soul toward God, for the abstract categories of contemporary theology manuals?

How did we get into our present situation? And why does art play the role it does in most of our traditions? How far have we strayed from the biblical modes of praise and worship? I believe that the Bible authorizes us to use visual, dramatic, and musical means, not only to illustrate truth, but to embody it!

The Reformation Influence

For the Reformers, the great fear was the idolatrous distractions of medieval imagery. In the Middle Ages, the image had come to play an important role—through relics and processions—in the communication of spiritual power.¹ Consider one of famous frescos of Luca Signorelli done around 1505 in the church at Orvieto. *The Resurrection of the Flesh*, placed in the nave of this great church, is a kind of interpretation of biblical theology as it was understood by Augustine. It was meant to impact worshipers with biblical truth. The Reformers believed spiritual power was mediated in very different ways. The polemic of John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli needs to be seen in the light of the centrality of images in all medieval worship, in frescos as well as in pilgrimages and processions. But it also needs to be seen as a preference for the verbal as the focus on the inward disposition of the heart and as the locus of power in religion.

Calvin, in particular, attacked Gregory the Great's contention that images are the books of the uneducated. To the contrary, Calvin laments, "Whatever men learn of God in images is futile, indeed false. The prophets totally condemn the

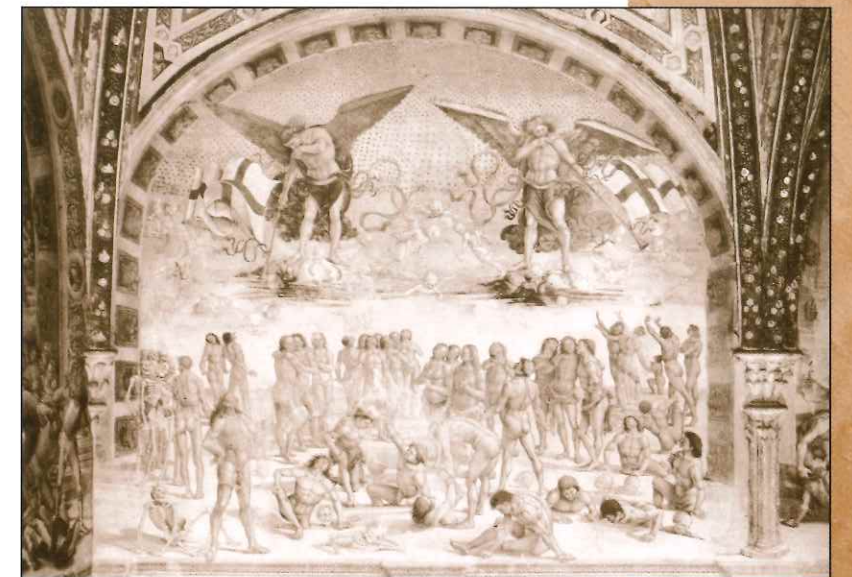
notion that images stand in place of books."² While Calvin is careful not to forbid the making of imagery,³ he clearly implies that the teaching of doctrine is superior to using imagery as a way of conveying truth. As Calvin says:

*"In the preaching of his Word and sacred mysteries [God] has bidden that a common doctrine be there set forth for all. But those whose eyes rove about in contemplating idols betray that their minds are not diligently intent upon this doctrine."*⁴

What is this "doctrine" that Calvin intends to be put in the place of the medieval images? It is the true preaching of the Word of God which is faithful to scriptural teaching. In this preaching, "Christ is depicted before our eyes as crucified. . . . From this one fact they could have learned more than from a thousand crosses of wood or stone."⁵

Calvin is saying much more than that certain images ought to replace others. He is saying that there is a higher and more important way of understanding than that provided by the sense of sight—and that is a grasping of the gospel by faith in one's heart and soul. For only here can God's true majesty be grasped by a faculty which "is far above the perception of the eyes." So that "even if the use of images contained nothing evil, it still has no value for teaching."⁶

Ulrich Zwingli presents an even clearer contrast between inward faith and outward devotion. He argues that the true believer is one who trusts in



The Bible authorizes us to use visual, dramatic, and musical means, not only to illustrate truth, but to embody it!

The Resurrection of the Flesh, Luca Signorelli, Church at Orvieto, Duomo

Worship enables us to hear the call to service clearly so that we respond, "Here am I! Send me."

We Are All Artists

How might all churches help worship participants know that in response to God we all are called to the "work" of worshipping God and of being church for the sake of the world? In other words, how might our churches help worship participants know that in response to the splendor of God, we are all artists? . . . Wouldn't it be wonderful if all who worship would realize that what they do in worship—the music they make, their attention to the sermon and prayers, and the way they live in response to the God they have encountered in worship—has cosmic significance? Furthermore, if we all recognize that what we do in worship is art, then we would recognize that all musical forms and styles must be chosen carefully for their musical and textual and spiritual merit, that they must be sung or played as excellently as possible, and that they must be offered to God as the best we can craft. . . . The art of worship belongs to the church. It is the means by which the people of God live, work, remember, learn to be the church, and enjoy being God's.

Marva Dawn, *A Royal "Waste" of Time: The Splendor of Worshipping God and Being Church for the World* (Eerdmans, 1999). Used by permission.

God alone. Anything that one places between one's self and God immediately takes on the character of a substitute.

*"They are not believers who go to anyone else for help other than to the one, true God. For thus are the believers differentiated from the unbelievers in that the believers, or those who are trusting, go to God alone; but the unbelievers go to the created (thing)."*⁷

As evidence of this, Zwingli refers to the fact that churches of that period were crowded with all manner of images, before which the faithful bowed to pray. Whether or not they "worshiped" the images, Zwingli noted, when fear gripped their

hearts they went to them for help, thus betraying where, in fact, their trust lay.

Consider the way that art was used in the tradition influenced by these Reformers. For example, P. J. Saenredam's seventeenth-century *The Church of St. Bavo at Haarlem's* plain walls and austere pillars speak of God's majesty but do nothing to distract the mind from the preached word. By contrast, the Counter-Reformation responded to the Chair of St. Peter through the work of the sculptor Bernini. He illustrated the splendor that the Church of Rome artists were encouraged to employ in the service of worship.

The Church of St. Bavo at Haarlem
P.J. Saenredam
Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam



A New Way of Grasping the World

If Protestants were not allowed to use visual imagery to convey truth and focus worship, what forms did they use? The most significant figure in the generation after the Reformers is probably Peter Ramus, arts professor at Paris from 1551 until his death in the St. Bartholomew Day massacre in 1572. Ramus' work on logic, which developed the implications of nominalist metaphysics, was reprinted 1,100 times in the next hundred years.⁸

The object of speech for Ramus was teaching, pure and simple. This is accomplished primarily as material is clearly organized according to categories (or loci). The loci or "places" are the key notions, the concrete conceptualizations to which one can turn to discover what is available in one's store of knowledge. These are not meant to be abstract categories so much as concrete entities, which Ramus called "arguments," which can be studied by the eye as well as the mind.⁹

In Ramus' view, verbal teaching is said to communicate clearly only when any sort of ornamentation is avoided. Unlike Calvin, in this view, figures of speech are an inferior means of communication used only to sway an uncomprehending people when their minds are incapable of grasping plain words. Ramus writes:

*"This is what the poet does as a major part of his tactics, when he sets out to sway the people, the many-headed monster. He deceives in all sorts of ways. He starts in the middle, often proceeding thence to the beginning, and getting on to the end by some equivocal dodge."*¹⁰

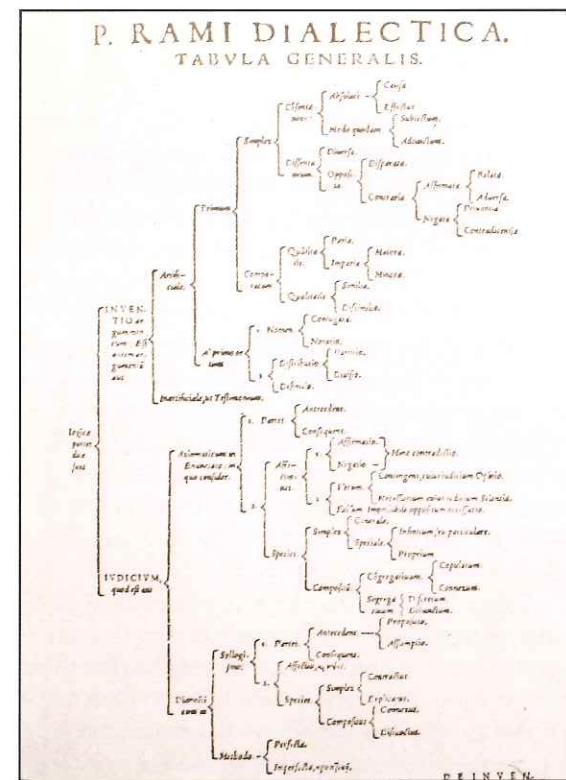
So he believed one becomes an orator, poet, or artist only when one gives up teaching in a direct manner, and when an audience can only be tricked into accepting what they otherwise would not hear.

Ramus' method is meant to be "visual." He believed truth is best understood when it is laid out graphically according to its location in the extension of terms. Ramus felt if things were properly laid out, they would naturally be remembered.

Puritans in America

Puritan preachers coming to America were universally influenced by the way Ramus conceived of argument and preaching. They were convinced, with the Westminster divine William Temple, that by the use of this logic, "the Scripture could be stripped of its outward habit and its natural meaning laid forth."¹¹ For these Puritans, logical study came to mean simply a "careful and detailed outlining of the contents of the text considered."¹²

According to Perry Miller, the Puritans sensed that they were beginning a new intellectual era, reflecting the certainty that Ramist logic gave them.



They believed they were not merely thinking about things, they were achieving access to things as they objectively were. Miller concludes: "The laws of God found in the Bible were hypothesized by the logic of Ramus into never-failing realities, as enduring as facts, and from that assurance Puritanism got its strength and its confidence."¹³

This is one source for William Ames' emphasis on the plain style of preaching and the art of living well. He developed this emphasis on clarity and intelligibility into his famous "technomatria"—an all-embracing map of human knowledge—which had great influence among American Puritans.¹⁴

This view of knowledge and reality even influenced the architecture of New England. As with *The Church at Haarlem*, the interior of the Puritan's meeting houses were reflective of this plain style, mirroring the order and clarity of the preaching that was being heard week by week.

The Images of Revivalism

When Jonathan Edwards experienced the Holy Spirit's moving in what became the first Great Awakening of the 1740s, this was the understanding of preaching and worship. What was the media they sought to use? Three episodes give us a clue.

Between 1730 and 1745 a great controversy arose in New England. Up until that time, music in the Puritan churches consisted entirely of singing from the *Genevan Psalter*, dating to Calvin's Geneva (and incidentally sung in a strictly metrical fashion). Focus on the pure Word of God admitted singing only the same! Then a worship war broke out. Some musicians actually tried to introduce "hymns" into

worship—and all hell broke loose! This was felt to be a distraction from the clarity of the preaching and to introduce all kinds of questionable emotions. When one reflects on the role that hymns and singing played in subsequent revivals—from Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts to Fanny Crosby—one can see what an important innovation this was.

The second innovation happened when preachers went out into the countryside to preach to whoever would listen. In England George Whitefield—just about the time of Edwards' revival in America—took his message of regeneration to the open fields of Britain and, later, America. He went from place to place, usually not stopping longer than a day or two in each location. This was an astounding innovation to many, encompassing the idea that one could actually meet God outside of a church building. John Wesley, under the influence of Whitefield, also went outdoors to preach—even against his own better judgment—preaching the word in ways that people would understand and drawing imagery, as his Lord did, from creation. It is hard to overestimate the importance of this for the American church, as it laid the groundwork for a century of open-air revivals and camp meetings.

A third example: In the early days of the first and second Great Awakenings, at the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the swelling American population moved out of the Eastern urban areas to the frontiers, first to the Midwest and later to the West. In 1799 a religious tract society was founded in England to produce gospel tracts for these growing and diverse populations. They saw that the "plain didactic style" of most tracts produced sleep more often than conversion. So they inaugurated a new series of tracts in 1905 to capture the hawkers market and counteract the "profane and vicious tracts" that were so common. They catered to common taste, adding a drawing on the cover of each tract.

Here, for the first time, visual imagery came into general use for Protestants—over the protest of many church members. This style was incorporated into the tracts published by the American Tract Society which was founded in 1825. Jonathan Edwards, Isaac Watts, John Bunyan, and Richard Baxter all were used in this new media. By mid-century, a large system of colporteurs traveled across America, distributing this literature and seeking to bring the masses to Christ. The link with the revivals was strong, and tracts were often used, together with preaching, to reach the unreached.

Two Traditions of Images

One final period completes this brief survey of the use of images and media in evangelism and worship. In the nineteenth century, not everyone approved of the raucous revivals as a means of

Outline of Peter Ramus' "Dialectica"

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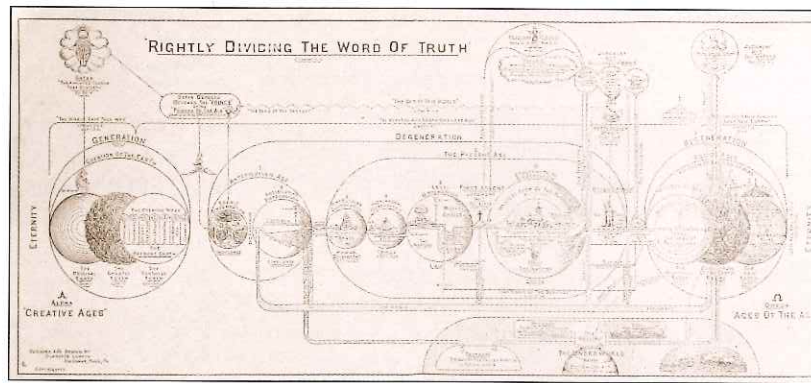


Chart of Clarence Larkin

Preaching and teaching still are seen as the central activities of worship. Many feel that art, drama, and music can illustrate this, but they can not replace—or even supplement—this.

bringing about moral improvement. In fact, in 1947 Horace Bushnell published his influential book *Christian Nurture* specifically to counteract the wide appeal and influence of revivals. He argued that children should be nurtured and grow up as Christians "and never know [themselves] to be otherwise." Interestingly, this led to a whole tradition of imagery that encouraged the role of the home and church, and especially women, as the source of nurture and emotional growth. This developed into a popular tradition of imagery that has been influential up to the present.

But not everyone appreciated this appeal to development—and especially its implicit optimism about the "natural Christianity" assumed to be present in every child. Others preferred the view of the world as a dramatic working out of a divine plan in terms of which human beings decide for Christ and subsequently order their lives. As early as 1828 this view of the way history is ordered, in the form of charts, appealed to those attracted by the revivals. They were urged to decide for Christ and escape the immanent judgment which the Scriptures promise. Interestingly, here is continuity with the tradition we have traced: that truth is a clear and precise rendering in literal forms of the truth of Scripture. The visual form again is the servant of the higher truth, which is understood as both abstract and biblical.

In our own century, this tradition continues in the widely known work of Clarence Larkin (1850-1924). Though trained as a mechanical engineer, he soon felt the call to ministry, and over a period of many years of biblical study and prophecy manuals, he developed his charts of God's plan of the ages.

Larkin claims in the Foreword to his book *God's Plan and Purpose for the Ages* (1920): "The charts had to have had the Scripture knowledge of the author; for the charts had to be thought out and developed under the direction of the Holy Spirit." Though Larkin does not claim infallibility, he insists that in working out his detailed charts, mistakes would become apparent. He said he sought not the opinions of men but the teaching of the Word of God, and with an "open mind" he sought the leading of the Holy Spirit.

A Renaissance of Art

Implicit in all this is a fear that the visual description, even the precision of a professional draftsman, if it contained ornament or imagery, would distract the mind and heart from an inward focus on the truth of God—which can be grasped by the human mind with clarity and power. Larkin said that the Holy Spirit uses truth, not images.

I believe that in spite of the current renaissance of art in many of our churches today, this view continues to influence us and impede the full development of the arts and Christian imaginations. Preaching and teaching still are seen as the central activities of worship. Many feel that art, drama, and music can illustrate this, but they can not replace—or even supplement—this.

A popular Christian magazine recently quoted someone responsible for bringing art into a worship service: "We don't use art to preach. That's the preacher's job. We want to shed light, to illustrate, to present characters, conflicts and visual representations that will pose questions and stir emotions."

Cannot the arts, also, in their own way, preach what is true?

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is excerpted from a longer work which is available in its entirety at www.fuller.edu/news/pubs/tmn.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ See on this the magisterial study of Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art* (Univ. of Chicago, 1995).
- ² *Institutes*, I, xi, 5.
- ³ "Sculpture and painting are gifts of God," *Ibid.*, I, xi, 12.
- ⁴ *Institutes*, I, xi, 7.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, I, xi, 12.
- ⁷ Quoted in Charles Garside, *Zwingli and the Arts* (Yale Univ. Press, 1966)
- ⁸ Walter J. Ong, S. J., *Ramus: Method and the Decay of Dialogue* (Harvard Univ., 1958), p. 5
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-109.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 253.
- ¹¹ Jack B. Rogers, *Scripture in the Westminster Confession: A Problem of Historical Interpretation for American Presbyterianism* (Eerdmans, 1967), p. 90.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 238.
- ¹³ Perry Miller, *The New England Mind* (Beacon, 1961), p. 148.
- ¹⁴ Lee W. Gibbs, "Wm. Am's Technometry," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 33 (1972): pp. 615-624.



WILLIAM A. DYRNESS, D.Théol., dean emeritus and professor of theology and culture at Fuller, returned to the classroom full time this past year, after a decade of outstanding leadership of the School of Theology. Among his many lasting legacies, he has been a leading voice in exploring the relationship

between theology and the arts. Two of his recent books are: *The Earth Is God's: A Theology of American Culture* (Orbis, 1997), and *Visual Faith: Art, Theology, and Worship in Dialogue* (Baker, 2001).

The Ministry Bridges of World Church Music

BY ROBERTA R. KING

The group of singers process down the aisle and proclaim in a South African language: "Siyahamba, hamba, siyahamba hamba!" ("We are marching in the light of God!"). The song rings out from Ohio to Nairobi, Kenya. The church has begun to embrace the global outpouring of worship songs offered in praise of the living God. Such world music, music from different ethnic groups found around the world, provides ministry bridges that can change the life of the church.

World church music serves as a bridge to engaging current global Christianity. We need to recognize the people who are in our congregations by including songs from their traditions. When we include Messianic Jewish, African, Thai, Mandarin, or Bengali Christian songs in our worship, we are saying that we recognize God's work in the lives of these peoples. Our understanding grows of who we are as the global church. Using Christian songs of various people groups provides a way of demonstrating God's love for all peoples. We become authentic world Christians by recognizing various peoples in our congregations through their music.

World church music provides a bridge for building Christian community and fellowship. It enriches us as the community of faith. Many misunderstandings come as a result of not knowing one another or understanding where people are coming from. Ethnic people are often invisible people in the church. However, involvement in world church music provides a means for building a commonness of Christian experience. For example, a Kenyan pastor learning to play a Thai two-string violin from a Thai worship leader (see photo) goes beyond the joy of learning music. The two men are entering into Christian community because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Likewise, an evening of learning worship songs from Kenya brings a sweetness of Christian communion to Americans. It reveals the people's spirituality on a deep level. They expose their love of God through their heart-level songs. Such events provide opportunities to get acquainted with new peoples, to welcome the strangers in our midst. They also lead to the discovery of the common and distinct aspects of our Christian faith. We become

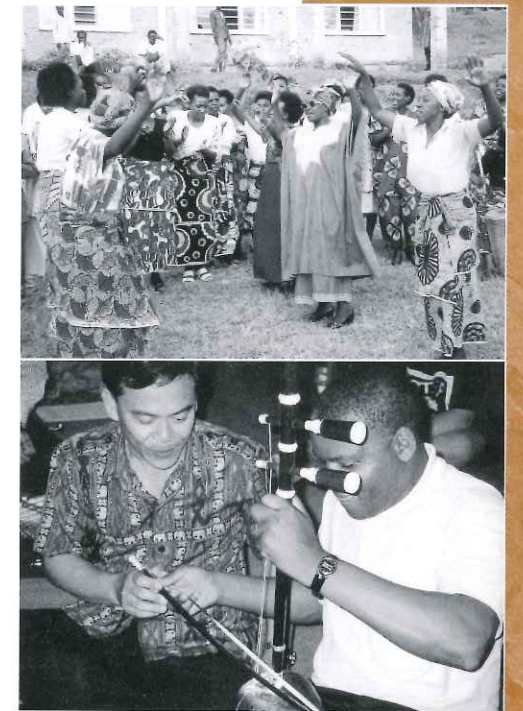
interdependent in our Christian lives and thus build community.

World church music creates a bridge for expanding theological understanding that impacts us in new ways. Christian songs express the depths of a people's soul and mirror who they are. When people of various ethnic backgrounds worship together, they bring with them their unique blend of personal and national history, their hurts and their joys. They sing and tell of God's work in their lives. When Rwandese widows, survivors of the 1994 genocide, begin to move slowly with dignity, then lift their arms toward the sky and sing of their faith in God, we are caught up with them. They sing, "Nothing can separate us from the love of God, not even death" (see photo). Knowing the horrors they have experienced, we are forced to contemplate anew the depths of God's love. Our vision of God is enlarged.

As the psalmist said, "All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord" (Psalm 86:9). Through world church music, we join in coming before God as a united community and witness to the world.



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Top: Rwandese widows, who survived the 1994 genocide, lift their arms and sing praises to God.

Above: A Kenyan pastor learns to play a two-string violin from a Thai worship leader.

Preaching as Folk Art

BY LEONORA TUBBS TISDALE

At its best, Christian preaching is not only an art of theological construction, it is also a work of art. Through its language, images, and form, preaching creates a world and invites the one hearing it to enter it. As Elizabeth Achtemeier asserts, "In the art of preaching, the English language is framed in such a way that the congregation is allowed to enter into a new experience—to exchange their old perceptions of themselves, their world, and God for new perceptions, to step outside an old manner of life and see the possibility of a new one."

Charles Rice says that artistry in the sermon is inescapable because the mystery of divine revelation propels the preacher toward speech which, in some way, reflects that mystery. Preachers, like artists, are engaged in a vocation that requires them to express the inexpressible. Their quest is for symbols which can communicate both the deepest longings of the human spirit and the deepest mysteries of God and God's revelatory presence in the world. In order to undertake this task, preachers rely upon discipline, imagination, and the illumination of the Spirit.

The Artfulness of Proclamation

While agreeing with Achtemeier and Rice that preaching is (at its best) art . . . preaching, given its congregational locus, should also be conceived as folk art. Most contemporary authors in the homiletical field speak of the artfulness of proclamation by making reference to the "fine arts." Achtemeier, for example, urges preachers to read fine literature to improve their preaching. Rice encourages pastors to pay greater attention to contemporary literature, plays, and cinema in their proclamation. In homiletics classrooms across the country, students are urged to consider the fine arts as prime material for sermon illustrations.

On one level, encouraging such attention to the fine arts is good for preaching. If, as we have suggested, preaching is primarily an art of hermeneutical and artistic imagination, then it is crucial that the preacher feed his or her own imagination in the creative process. Time spent reading a good book or listening to classical music or browsing in an art gallery opens the senses to the mysterious power of art to reveal worlds and feeds the preacher's own creative and integrative abilities.

Fred Craddock, who encourages preachers to read novels, short stories, and poetry at least once a week, reasons:

Reading good literature enlarges one's capacities as a creative human being and has a cumulative effect on one's vocabulary, use of the language, and powers of imagination. Not by conscious imitation but through the subtle influence of these great storytellers and poets, a preacher becomes more adept at arranging the materials of the sermon so that by restraint and thematic control, interest, clarity, and persuasiveness will be served.

In like manner, the fine arts have proved to be fertile ground for effective sermon illustrations for preachers of generations upon end. Good art is itself able to touch the deep places of the human soul and to transcend distances of time and space through its symbolic address to the universals of human experience. Through the words of a poet, the preacher is often enabled to express theology far more profoundly than mere prose allows. The skillful preacher can also retell a story or recreate a scene or paint a portrait with words in such a way that even those who are unfamiliar with a particular work of art can become a part of its world, caught up in its mystery.

However, an emphasis upon preaching as "fine art" has also had detrimental effects upon proclamation in our day. Too many pastors have gone into the pulpit on Sunday morning, peppering their sermons with quotations from a favorite novel, citing a beloved poet, or recreating a scene from a contemporary play—only to find that the deep meaning they perceived in these artistic expressions is somehow lost or diminished in their local communities of faith. On a surface level, the art forms themselves may seem far removed from a congregation whose own world more readily revolves around "folk arts" (such as quilting, oral storytelling, banjo-playing), for whom Broadway and its plays seem as distant as the moon.

On a deeper level, however, lie issues related to congregational subculture. . . . Quite often the problem is not only that the preacher is bringing "foreign" materials into the sermon (artistic expressions that are relatively uncommon or not as highly valued in the life of a particular subculture), the difficulty is also that the worldview and values assumed in contemporary or classical art and litera-

ture are far removed from the ordinary, everyday worldview and values of a particular faith community. Questions raised about life in a contemporary novel are not the congregation's questions. Assumptions made about God, humanity, nature, and time by the poet are not the congregation's assumptions. Values expressed in a play are at odds with those shared by the congregation and present a stumbling block for their hearing of the connections the preacher is trying to forge. And so, once again, the sermon lacks in "fittingness." Art, in this instance, opens up a life world—but it is not a world in which local congregants can seriously imagine themselves living and acting.

Preaching as folk art, on the other hand, presses toward proclamation that attends as closely to the congregation in its artistic design as it does in its theological construction. The preacher is not only a "local theologian" engaging in a dance of the imagination in order to discern fitting and faithful themes for proclamation. The preacher is also a "folk artist"—searching for the expression of local theology through symbols, forms, and movements that are capable of capturing and transforming the imaginations of a particular local community of faith.

The Preacher as Folk Dancer

While there are many "folk art" forms to which we could liken local preaching (visual art, crafts, literature, poetry, music), my own preferred metaphor for contextual proclamation is that of "folk dance"—especially the circular styles of folk dancing enjoyed by a number of subcultures within the United States.

My exposure to circle dancing came as a child when my family spent several weeks each summer in a retreat center of our denomination in the Blue Ridge mountains of North Carolina. One of the traditions of this community was that on Friday nights everyone gathered at "the barn" for an evening of "big circle mountain dancing." The Stony Creek Boys—a local mountain musical group—brought their banjos and fiddles, and played lively, foot-tapping tunes indigenous to the mountain culture. A local resident, well acquainted with both the patterns and the practice of the dance, served as our leader.

The leader played many roles at our circle dances. At times he served as dance initiator, standing on the floor with us, grasping the hand of the nearest person, and inviting all—young and old, men and women, partners and singles—to join the circle and become a part of the dance. At times he served as dance modeler, teaching us the steps of the dance not only with his words but also with his bodily motions. At times he served as choreographer and caller, directing and giving shape to the

dance through his rhyming banter. And when we totally lost our way and no one got the dance right, he served as corrector and encourager, taking us back to the beginning and patiently walking us through the motions one more time. . . .

Pastor, Lead Our Circle Dance

Pastor, lead our circle dance which the Spirit has begun.
Help us hand in hand advance, show us how to move as one.
Some demand a driving beat, others ask to slow the pace.
Teach us how to bend and meet our conflicted needs with grace.

From the center lead and show steps and leaps we never tried,
Then allow the dance to flow, dancing with us side by side.
Let each dancer take a turn, dancing in the center free,
So that all can teach and learn what our circle dance could be.

If the circle gets too tight, stop the dance and don't begin
Till our open hands invite all whom Jesus welcomes in.
For the dance of faith belongs to the strangers in the street,
And we need their steps and songs for the dance to be complete.

Pastor, lead our circle dance as the Spirit leads and calls
Till the circle's whole expanse moves beyond our bounds and walls,
And we dance with distant suns, dancing in the dark above,
Dancing as creation runs on the energies of love.

Thomas H. Troeger, *Borrowed Light: Hymn Texts, Prayers, Poems* (Oxford University Press, 1994). Used by permission.

Contextual congregational proclamation on Sunday mornings is a lot like folk dance. The preacher, functioning both as dancer and as leader in the dance, stays close to the ground of the local community, inviting and encouraging others to join in the circle dance of faith. The sermon itself is a participatory act in which the preacher models a way of doing theology that meets people where they are, but that also encourages them to stretch themselves by trying new steps, new moves, new patterns of belief and action. In this dance, as in the circle dance, the leader must always be alert to what is happening in the life of the community—sometimes correcting, sometimes encouraging, sometimes guiding, sometimes pushing toward new vistas—as the need arises. And in this dance, as in the circle dance, the preacher is not the only leader. Indeed, there are those in the circle far more adept at the dance than the preacher—faithful Christians who help keep the community growing, learning, and moving in the rhythms of faith by their own seasoned modeling and teaching.

Often we speak of preaching as if it were a performance—akin to a ballet—in which the goal is for everyone in the audience to go away marveling over the skill of the lead performer, the preacher. But when preaching is viewed as folk dance, the

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goal is quite different: namely, that the leader model the dance of faith in such an accessible, imaginative, earthy, and encouraging way that everyone—young and old, visitor and member, old-timer and newcomer—will want to put on his or

Giving Honor to the Works of God

If . . . we believe that we are living souls, God's dust and God's breath, acting our parts among other creatures all made of the same dust and breath as ourselves; and if we understand that we are free, within the obvious limits of mortal human life, to do evil or good to ourselves and to the other creatures—then all our acts have a supreme significance. If it is true that we are living souls and morally free, then all of us are artists. All of us are makers, within mortal terms and limits, of our lives, of one another's lives, of things we need and use.

This, Ananda Coomaraswamy wrote, is "the normal view," which "assumes . . . not that the artist is a special kind of man, but that every man who is not a mere idler or parasite is necessarily some special kind of artist." But since even mere idlers and parasites may be said to work inescapably, by proxy or influence, it might be better to say that everybody is an artist—either good or bad, responsible or irresponsible. Any life, by working or not working, by working well or poorly, inescapably changes other lives and so changes the world. This is why our division of the "fine arts" from "craftsmanship" and "craftsmanship" from "labor" is so arbitrary, meaningless, and destructive. As Walter Shewring rightly said, both "the plow and the potter have a cosmic function." And bad art in any trade dishonors and damages Creation.

If we think of ourselves as living souls, immortal creatures, living in the midst of a creation that is mostly mysterious, and if we see that everything we make or do cannot help but have an everlasting significance for ourselves, for others, and for the world, then we see why some religious teachers have understood work as a form of prayer. . . . We must see that no art begins in itself; it begins in other arts, in attitudes and ideas antecedent to any art, in nature, and in inspiration. . . . Traditionally, the arts have been ways of making that have placed a just value on their materials or subjects, on the uses and the users of the things made by art, and on the artists themselves. They have, that is, been ways of giving honor to the works of God. The great artistic traditions have had nothing to do with what we call "self-expression." . . . The arts, traditionally, belong to the neighborhood. They are the means by which the neighborhood lives, works, remembers, worships, and enjoys itself.

Wendell Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation," in *Sex, Economy, Freedom and Community: Eight Essays* (Pantheon, 1999). Used by permission.

her own dancing shoes and join in. . . .

Now we turn toward the task of creative choreography, asking how the preacher as folk artist can enfold the sermon's theology in language and form that are equally fitting and transformative for congregational imagination.

The Language of Local Preaching

"Preaching is about the teaching of a new language—the language of Christian faith."

"Preaching should be framed in the ordinary language of everyday congregational speech." Out of the tension that exists between these two statements is born the language of the sermon. While preachers do not invent a third amalgamated language in which to preach the gospel, they do, through the bringing together of biblical and congregational vocabularies, name and vision a new reality where gospel and life intersect. Paul Scott Wilson calls this creative and recreative process "language renewal."

For the contextual preacher, language renewal involves both a revisioning of the assumed world of the congregation in light of the language and symbols of the Christian faith, and a reinterpretation of the ancient language of the Christian faith in light of the world of the congregation. Language not only reflects a people's culture, it also has the power to reshape and transform it.

But what does the language of contextual proclamation look like? How might an emphasis upon preaching as "folk art" influence the choices the preacher makes regarding the words, images, and examples used in sermons? While certainly not exhaustive, the following guidelines give initial direction to the preacher who wants to stay closer to the ground of local hearers in the language of proclamation.

Preaching as "folk art" exhibits a preference for the simple, plain, conversational speech of the local congregation. When I was in high school I had an English teacher who was fond of saying, "Why use a fifty-cent word when you can use a five-dollar word?" She was, of course, trying to expand our facility with the English language by encouraging us to use words that were more complex and nuanced than our typical teenage vocabularies ordinarily provided.

When preaching is viewed as folk art, however, there are actually very good reasons for choosing a fifty-cent word when you can use a five-dollar word: namely, that some of our five-dollar words may create unnecessary barriers and stumbling blocks for members of our congregations for whom they have little or no meaning.

One of the most consistent complaints that I hear from laypersons about preaching is that sermons are "over our heads." When I ask for elaboration of that phrase, people talk about sermons being too "academic," using too much "theological jargon," assuming more biblical knowledge than they actually have, or using a style of speech that is highly formal and exhibits little humor. . . . By contrast, the people who talk favorably about their preachers often point to their ability to bring the gospel "down to earth" and to communicate it in a way that is clear, appropriately humorous, easy to follow, and interesting.

Preaching as folk art encourages pastors to employ more "folk speech"—the ordinary, everyday language of local congregations—in their proclamation. The more the preacher can interpret Scripture and its symbols within the particular language of the congregational subculture—employing its peculiar idioms, turns of phrase, colloquialisms, and proverbial sayings—the more "down to earth" the sermon will seem to a local community. . . .

Preaching as folk art uses examples and illustrations that are reflective of life as members of the congregation actually experience it. In *The Preaching Life*, Barbara Brown Taylor labels the preacher a "detective of divinity," whose task is to search for the extraordinary within the ordinary fabric of everyday existence. . . .

Preaching as folk art presses pastors to become such detectives of divinity right where they are. Such preaching will not be easily fed by quick-fix pulpit aides that come to pastors unsolicited in the mail, or by books of illustrative materials. Rather, it will require the preacher to do harder, more imaginative work—examining the ordinary world the hearers inhabit, and seeking, like a detective of divinity, to discover the gospel in its midst.

Preaching as folk art searches for local images and metaphors capable of bringing the biblical world and the world of the congregation together in transformative ways. In recent years much has been written about the power of metaphor and image to capture the imaginations of the hearers in preaching. Instead of simply proclaiming an "idea," preachers have been encouraged to search for symbols that can bring the congregational world and biblical world together in imaginative and transformative ways. . . .

The Bible itself offers many transformative symbols for congregational preaching. A boat, threatening to capsize after an unexpected catch of fish at Jesus' command, becomes a metaphor for a congregation reeling from the effects of rapid growth and its resulting tensions. The kingdom of God, envisioned by the prophet Zechariah as a "public park where the streets are safe for children," provides a vision of eschatological hope for a congregation in a city whose streets ordinarily hold terror and death for children. The "river's edge"—where Pharaoh's daughter encounters a Hebrew infant and must decide whether the prejudices and laws of the Egyptians or her own human compassion for this baby will rule her actions—becomes a metaphor for similar decision-making junctures in a congregation's life.

However, preaching as folk art also recognizes that congregations and their day-to-day worlds can also be fertile soil for discovering symbols capable

of communicating the gospel in imaginative and transformative ways. Taking a clue from Jesus, whose theological reflection in the Gospels frequently began with some ordinary experience of everyday life (separating wheat from chaff on the threshing floor, traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, or searching for a lost coin), preaching as folk art uses ordinary local symbols to communicate extraordinary holy truths. . . .

Preaching as folk art does not have to go far afield to find symbols worthy of gospel proclamation. In the ordinary clay of local experience, it finds the stuff pots are made of, and uses it to shape earthen vessels capable of conveying the priceless treasures of the gospel.

In the circle dance of preaching, the pastor as folk artist not only stays close to the pulse of the local congregation in discerning what to preach, the pastor also stays close to local rhythms in discerning how to give appropriate language and form to the sermon. Attending carefully to the congregation's own idiom and ways of knowing, the pastor designs sermonic choreography that is accessible yet also stretching, affirming yet also challenging, fitting yet also transformative.

Certainly it is the Spirit that ultimately provides the music for this dance of faith. And it is the Spirit that must move if the dancers (including the preacher) are to be inspired, energized, and empowered for the dance.

Yet I am also convinced that preachers can be better instruments of the Spirit in this process. By attending closely to congregations and their cultures, by identifying and removing false stumbling blocks to the hearing of the gospel, and by enfolded the gospel in sermons which are—in their theology, language, and form—both more fitting and more transformative for local communities of faith, preachers encourage others to join the circle and to participate with their whole beings in the gospel's liberating dance.

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LEONORA TUBBS TISDALE, Ph.D., having recently completed nine years as the Elizabeth M. Engle Professor of Preaching and Worship at Princeton Theological Seminary, is enjoying a year of Jubilee in Basking Ridge, New Jersey. She formerly taught on the faculties of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia and the Presbyterian

Theological Seminary in Seoul, South Korea. An ordained minister as well as author, she has also served in several pastorates with her husband, Al Tisdale, the current pastor of the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church.

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The Word, Beauty, and a Place Set Apart

AN INTERVIEW WITH BILL AND DEE BREHM

Sponsors of the Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts

BY CLAYTON J. SCHMIT

Clay: Bill and Dee, as you have spearheaded the vision for Fuller to establish a Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts, we are especially interested in your views on how these elements are related and why such a center is important in a seminary. Let me begin by asking, How do you define worship?

Dee: I see "worship" in two ways: As a noun, it is a public event, fostering a sense of belonging to a group coming together to meet the Host, to adore and praise him. As a verb, it is something private, an ongoing acknowledgment of God's grace during life's hills and valleys.

Bill: I think of worship as an experience within an environment that transcends the normal—one in which I can sense the presence of God, lifting me above the ordinary. It is emotional, thrilling, deep, and memorable. We can (and must) work to provide the environment, but we cannot guarantee the result—since it requires God's intervention. On balance, however, that is not bad: It leaves room for the mystery.

Clay: You have both mentioned location or environment as an important element in creating a useful setting for worship. What are the essential things that go into the creation of a worshipful environment?

Bill and Dee: There are three collaborating attributes: the Word, beauty, and "a place set apart," where the Word and beauty can come together to enhance our focus on God. A place set apart could be an elaborate structure obviously intended for worship—a cathedral, a neighborhood church, a mosque, or a temple. Or it could be an informal setting—at home, or around a campfire. The Word and beauty likewise can be either elaborately or simply expressed. But each in its own way must be eloquent. Their combined effect can then evoke thought and emotion, thereby animating the Word and transforming the place set apart into a place of worship.

Thus, the worship experience could involve a spontaneous reading of The Lord's Prayer on the beach at sunset. Or it could surround a thought-

provoking interpretation of Scripture in a cathedral, accompanied by the sun shining through an incredible stained-glass window and by sensitive music and movement. In a true worship setting, all of these serve to interpret the message. So, the place must be congenial to the transforming power of the integration of the Word and beauty, in a manner appropriate to those gathered.

What makes a place "congenial"? It must support the speaker and artists, and free the worshipers from distractions. The place will not be a place set apart if during the sunset reading of The Lord's Prayer on the beach, there is a spirited volleyball game nearby. Or if a meal is being served at the other end of the hall during a meeting. Or if the church's audio system is so poor that the words of the speaker and the singers cannot be understood.

The worship experience ultimately depends on divine gifts. The Word itself is a gift, as is the ability of the speaker. And so is the beauty, whether created by nature (as in the sunset over the beach), or through the God-given talents of architects, speakers, and artists—using talents they have developed to interpret their faith.

Clay: You also mentioned that in worship, there is room for mystery. This suggests a sacramental quality. Where, for each of you, are the touch points in worship—those places where the mysterious presence of God is revealed most clearly or tangibly?

Bill: God has told us that in this life we don't get to see or understand it all—thus the "mystery." But, in real worship, we can get a little closer; the glass is not quite as dark. One can feel lifted to a new level of emotion and understanding. Then, for awhile at least, we are "new creatures"—and eager to come back for more.

Dee: The mystery most often happens for me during the sacraments of baptism and communion, and at weddings and funerals, when I sense the presence of the Lord, hovering to be a part of the drama of the events that are changing people's lives. Appropriate and moving music touches me at a deeper level during a sacrament

than at any other time. For me, the mystery is the deep sense of the presence of the Lord at those sacred and spiritual events.

Clay: Do you sense that there is a worship crisis in the church today?

Bill and Dee: Certainly there are problems today. But for centuries there have been tension and controversy as to what constitutes worship and what constitutes "good" worship. Today is no different, and the "worship wars" we read and hear about are simply the current manifestation of that phenomenon. Here are two things that we think could help reduce today's tension:

First, worshipers deserve an environment that enables them to experience a connection with God—with the deeper sense of what that can mean. Worship preparation should reflect real thought and caring. Worship styles, whatever they are, should then be well executed.

Second, a church is a busy and demanding place. So, a church tends to hire professionals, especially (but by no means solely) for the pulpit and the music ministry. Planning and executing a worship service require the integration of skills. Unfortunately, such integration is not natural for professionals from different fields to do. Yet in a church—as well as in business or government—to be fully effective, the professions must work together. This takes a special effort.

Whatever the chosen style of worship, it should feed the flock. We want to challenge ministry professions involved in worship to emphasize the importance of the integration of the pulpit and music ministry—and to help make such collaboration second nature for the professionals and lay leaders.

We anticipate the establishment of a major program at Fuller through which pastors and lay leaders can learn how to work together for the benefit of their congregations. Through classes and workshops, we hope the program will involve both education and training. We need to reach not only seminary students but, through extended education courses and special campus events, we want to train local pastors, worship leaders, musicians, and artists how to become more effective ministry teams in their churches.

Clay: Your response leans in the direction of addressing something that is often avoided in the discussion of worship: performance. What, in its best sense, does performing have to do with worship leadership?

Bill and Dee: First, the key is the actual goal of the performer and his or her focus: Whether in the pulpit or the choir loft, worship leadership must

point to integrating the facets of worship, not to individual performances. Second, the speaker and the artists must be perceived as competent by those in the place—or the transformation to worship will not happen.

Clay: What is it about art that makes it particularly useful for worship?

Bill: Art in all its forms can help create the worship environment. Art is beauty; art is emotion; and art can affect the senses more than the spoken word alone. Using art forms to support the spoken word can produce an effect in which the whole is far greater than the sum of the parts.

But to achieve this result, the art forms must be integrated into the worship fabric. The fabric must be holy, not "holely." We hope that Fuller Seminary will be able to encourage all forms of art and think systematically about how the arts can become equal partners in the worship experience. To support this, the campus needs a facility that is fully conducive to chapel worship, workshops, conferences, and training.

Dee: "Art" encompasses all music, dance, architecture, painting, sculpture, movement—any creative endeavor that adds beauty to the worship experience and expands one's soul by reaching and enriching the worshiper. We all come to the Lord handicapped in some way. On occasion, as we enter the worship space, our minds may be filled with distractions that take us away from the Word. In such cases, the arts—thoughtfully integrated into the worship environment—may be all that we can assimilate at that moment. Perhaps all that we can take with us is a hymn beloved since childhood, or the sun streaming through a window, or the grace of an interpreter signing, or a single rose announcing a birth, or the choir's stirring benediction. Any of God's inspired art may touch us at some level.

Clay: What, in your view, is the difference between art that is highly effective in creating that sense of assimilation in worship and that which is not?

Dee: Art should not point to itself if it is to contribute to the worship experience. When a performance has no relevance to the day's message and does not serve to enhance worship, then it is simply a "performance." The congregation will—directly or indirectly—sense that it is not relevant. The congregation may appreciate the excellence of the performance, but not be moved spiritually.

Bill: The "quality" of the art should not be confused with the level of performance skills. Each congregation—whether 40 or 4,000—has the choice to match its artistic ambition to the talent

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Using Movies in Worship

BY ROBERT K. JOHNSTON

For the last five years, I have been teaching theology and film classes at Fuller and helping to give leadership to our seminary's initiative in linking the church and Hollywood. Fuller has cosponsored the annual City of the Angels Film Festival at the Directors Guild of America Theater, as well as offered a series of conferences for pastors and filmmakers titled "Reel Spirituality." During these occasions, those working in the church have repeatedly asked two questions of me: "What is your favorite movie?" And, "Where can I get a list of film clips that I can use in my church?"

This latter question might smack of the quick fix—something akin to using a quotation from a philosopher you haven't studied, or a line from a story you haven't read. And at its worst, such a use of movie clips is exactly that. They can easily be misinterpreted if the worship leader has not carefully viewed the movie in its entirety beforehand. Even if only a short sequence of the movie is used, the worship leader will need to know how best to set up the clip so those who have not seen the movie can also benefit from the experience.

But most of those who ask me about clips are avid moviegoers themselves. They only want help in knowing which movies to see, or in choosing those moments that might best capture the heart of a movie they have seen.

Sociologists sometimes speak of people taking in information by "grazing." That is, we often listen or observe with half-interest until something captures our attention. Then we hone in for a brief period before again putting our mind on "cruise control."

This is how most of us listen to speeches (and sermons!) today. We are like cattle who pick and choose as they wander the range. Good preachers realize this and compensate. To keep listeners attuned, they have learned the importance of story, variety, and repetition. Most churchgoers simply can't (or won't) stay focused on a sustained linear argument for 30 minutes.

A similar phenomenon is apparent in our movie-watching. We are simply being entertained until we are riveted by one scene. Afterwards, we will remember the movie by that particularly funny or gripping moment. The rest often becomes a blur in our minds. It is the memorable moment that remains. Here is why clips can be so effective.

Robert Towne, the Academy Award-winning screenwriter of *Chinatown*, commented: "A movie, I think, is really only four or five moments between two people. The rest of it exists to give those moments their impact and resonance."

In his book *Reflections on the Movies* (Victor, 2000), Ken Gire, who teaches for Fuller in Colorado, writes about hearing God speak in those "four or five moments." His book is about "grazing" at the movies, about how he has heard God speak within a film. He does not give you a list of those clips you desire. Neither will I. But what he does is far better. Reading Gire's book will encourage you to recall those movie moments that have spoken deeply to you, those occasions when you have experienced transcendence at the movies.

One such occasion for me was the movie *Life Is Beautiful*. The final scene of Joshua shouting, "We won!" as the tank passes by brings tears to my eyes. I am not only crying for him. I am crying for myself, as I wish I could have been as extravagant in my love to my daughters as Guido was to his son. Or I think of a scene in *Becket*, where Thomas, who is now archbishop, refuses to give in to his friend King Henry—as they sit on horses, facing each other on the coast of France. That movie was the occasion for me to hear God saying I need not first be holy to be called into ministry, only obedient. And so I obeyed God's call.

If you preach and teach using clips from those movies that made you cry or laugh—that have changed and challenged you—there is a much stronger likelihood that your congregation will also be changed and challenged, not merely entertained. We need to make our own lists. It is also more fun!



ROBERT K. JOHNSTON, Ph.D., is professor of theology and culture in Fuller's School of Theology. In addition to his active role in the annual City of the Angels Film Festival, he is cochair of the Reel Spirituality Conferences which bring together entertainment industry professionals and leading pastors to explore issues

of faith and film. His recent book *Reel Spirituality* (Baker, 2000) provides a comprehensive introduction to those wanting to dialogue theologically with the messages of movies.

A Modern-Day Revelation

BY TODD FARLEY

Pastor Smith had just been taken over the proverbial coals by Sister Cincinnati for permitting a drama in the sacred Sunday morning service. With arms crossed, she delivered her tirade: How dare Pastor Smith introduce entertainment into the church! How dare he bring the devil's arts into the sanctuary they had help build! As Pastor Smith went home grieving, he searched for an answer to her questions. This was his sermon the following week:

The congregation of Israel had asked to encounter God. Yet when God appeared in thunder and lightning, shaking the mountain and causing it to be filled with smoke, their knees gave away and they ran from the very presence they had sought. They ran straight to Moses, saying, "You speak to God; we will speak to you" (Exod. 19:16; 20:18-19).

Moses must have thought to himself, "Will this be the bane of all congregations—that they ask to know God and yet run from his revelation? Will the leaders of God always be wrestling between their congregation's desire to know all and their fear of the unknown?"

Moses climbed up into the presence of God, as the people fled. There, in that cloud of glory, God gave Moses a plan that would help the congregation encounter his presence in a stage-by-stage revelation. This revelation would include symbols and forms that the congregation could understand. A tabernacle—with statues, gold, stonework, furniture, incense, fine weaving, and design—was to be an entry point into the very presence of God. This fine-arts building would be similar to the temples the children of Israel were used to seeing in Egypt, yet it would hold truths in each symbolic art that would reveal God's redemption for all people. Art would be the vessel in which God resided, as he dwelled between the wings of the cherubim.

God was the architect, but he told Moses who the artists and constructors would be:

The Lord said to Moses, "See, I have chosen Bezalel . . . of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts, to make artistic design . . . and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship" [to make the tabernacle] (Exod. 31:1-5).

Moses pondered upon these qualifications. First, Bezalel was born in a tribe which was called "the tribe of praise." Apparently, an artist must first be a worshiper of God. Second, in Moses' day, "being filled with the Spirit of God" was a very special anointing, reserved for those prophets who spoke with God's voice. Yet here was an artist so anointed that obviously his art was to carry a prophetic voice. Third, the words used to describe his skill and talent told Moses that this was a man masterfully trained, schooled in Egypt, with the techniques it would take to construct this master work.

When God finished imparting the vision to Moses, Moses assembled the whole Israelite community and said to them, "These are the things the Lord has commanded you to do" (Exod. 31:1). From the pulpit of mountain stones his words rang out, describing how God was going to use this artful tabernacle as part of God's revelation. He imparted God's vision into the congregation before the building began. Before the arts were seen or used, he explained what would be their purpose. Then, having given them a vision of the tabernacle, he asked them to pay for it! By their sacrifice of goods and work, they would partake in its construction. Thereby, it would be their own.

Everyone who was willing and whose heart moved him came and brought an offering to the Lord for the work on the Tent of Meeting (Exod. 35:21).

After taking an offering, Moses outlined the project's leadership and direction. He told of God's appointment of Bezalel. They looked to see who this "Bezalel" was and wondered how this concerned them. They had already given of their goods—that was all they had to do, or so they thought—until Moses' words broke into their thoughts.

Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab . . . of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you: the Tent of Meeting, and the Ark of the Covenant (Exod. 31:6-7a). And he has given both him and Oholiab . . . the ability to teach others (Exod 35:34).

Oholiab lifted his head at the mention of his name. He was as skilled as Bezalel, but didn't have

To keep listeners attuned, they [preachers] have learned the importance of story, variety, and repetition. Most churchgoers simply can't (or won't) stay focused on a sustained linear argument for 30 minutes.

Will this be the bane of all congregations—that they ask to know God and yet run from his revelation? Will the leaders of God always be wrestling between their congregation's desire to know all and their fear of the unknown?

Fuller offers an extraordinary opportunity to initiate inquiry as to what essential worship is and is likely to be in the future.

Bezalel's maturity of spirit and was glad not to bear the burden of leadership. However, he could teach and work his craft. He knew God could use his arts even if he didn't understand what it all meant.

Moses continued to speak:

All who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the Lord has commanded: the tabernacle . . . the furnishings, and vestments (Exod. 35:6,7,10).

At these words the carpenters stepped forward, as did the skilled weavers, and others whose talents were usually seen as mundane. Talented people weren't left undirected; they didn't do their own designs. Nor did they "just flow in the Spirit." They were taught and directed by Oholiab and Bezalel, according to the words of Moses which he had received from God. Together, the congregation created a house in which God dwelt.

When Pastor Smith finished reading the text, he said, "Now we stand at the foot of God's mountain, wanting to hear his voice. Like the children of Israel, will we run from his revelation? As the arts are raised up to reveal God, can we enter into an encounter with God? Or will we walk away from his tabernacle, shaking our heads in fear and trepidation? How can we, as his children, enter into his presence through the use of the arts?"

He illustrated this truth by listing Jesus'

parables, the symbolism of Daniel and Revelation, the poetry of Psalms and Proverbs, the analogy of the Song of Solomon, the mimed prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel—and the list went on. Then Pastor Smith introduced the idea of seeing God's artistic voice restored in their church—to reach those who had run from God's thunderous voice. The plan would involve every member of the body. It would be their project, their tabernacle.

A half-year later, the church funded a concert with Sister Cincinnati's Women's Auxiliary hosting the event. The props for the production, built by one of the church's carpenters, were paid for by an offering taken for the project. The guest artist included the church's drama team in the production, to encourage its development. And those who were not on stage helped usher.

God revealed himself again!



TODD FARLEY, Ph.D. student at Fuller, is the Brehm Center's artist in residence. Trained in Paris by the legendary Marcel Marceau, Farley leads a ministry network of international mimes called Mimeistry. His books, videos, and ministry have been seen in more than 38 nations. For more information, see Mimeistry's web page at

www.mimeistry.com or E-mail tfarley@fuller.edu.

A Place Set Apart

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inherent in the congregation and to ensure that the art supports the worship. For instance, in a 40-member congregation with a choir of eight, the choir could choose a two-part octavo, learn it well, sing it with sensitivity, and thereby move the congregation. Or, if the choir of a 4,000-member church chooses Handel's *Messiah*, it should remember to perform that, or any other work, only if it fits the theme of the worship service.

Clay: *What are your hopes for integrating worship and the arts and how can Fuller foster those dreams?*

Bill and Dee: As an institution, Fuller is curious. It is courageous. It is capable. It is incredibly diverse in its population and its theological, missiological, and therapeutic thrusts. And it is renewal-minded. Fuller offers an extraordinary opportunity to initiate inquiry as to what essential worship is and is likely to be in the future. It reflects a wide array of theological traditions among its students and faculty that represent more than 100 denom-

inations and 60 countries. Through the seminary's integration of the spoken Word with other art forms, the Fuller community can demonstrate how diverse worship forms not only foster an appreciation of others' traditions, but reveal the oneness of the church of Jesus Christ throughout the world. We are pleased to be part of the emergence of a center to glorify God through the integration of worship and the arts.



WILLIAM K. (BILL) BREHM and his wife, **DEE BREHM**, are long-time friends of Fuller Seminary. Bill has served on Fuller's Board of Trustees since 1983, including a term as board chair from 1994 to 1997. Among his other gifts, Bill

Brehm is a talented musician and composer. In seeking to enrich the worship experience at Fuller, the Brehms have been enthusiastic supporters of the seminary's focus on worship, theology, and the arts. They were born and educated in Michigan, but now live in McLean, Virginia, where Bill is in business. He has also served the U.S. government in the area of national security.

Music Ushers in God's Presence

BY ALEXIS D. ABERNETHY

Worship, theology, and the arts encompass many styles of worship, different theological perspectives, and varieties of art in which psychologists may collaborate in the areas of research, clinical practice, or teaching. A psychologist may conduct research studies to understand the process of worship and the arts. Potential questions include: What dimensions of worship produce change in the participants? What are the emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and physiological responses to music, dance, and visual art? Is one type of art, music, or dance more effective in producing change in some people as compared to others?

Psychologists and other mental health professionals increasingly have incorporated creative arts, music, and movement in their therapies. From a clinical perspective, understanding how to incorporate the arts in individual or group psychotherapy in a way that promotes healing and helps people encounter God may be a therapeutic focus. As experts in human behavior, psychologists have theoretical and practical knowledge to impart to church pastors, musicians, and the laity regarding how to build effective teams, engage in conflict resolution, and communicate effectively.

Clearly, psychological collaboration in worship, theology, and the arts has rich possibilities and connects with current areas of research, practice, and teaching in psychology. Several journals include studies of music and psychology: *Empirical Studies of the Arts*, the *Journal of Music Therapy*, *Psychology of Music*, *Psychology of Marketing*, *Psychomusicology*, and the *Journal of Research in Music Education*. Although most of the work presented in these journals does not incorporate a theological perspective or an examination of spirituality, this work provides an excellent background for studies in the areas of spirituality, psychology, and music. The relative paucity of work in this area provides an exciting opportunity for collaborative research involving psychologists, artists, and theologians.

The power of music has been well-documented. In ancient Egypt priest physicians described music as the "physics of the soul" and utilized music in their healing rituals. Ephesians 5:19 encourages Christians to speak to "yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

Music has the potential to strengthen our con-

nection to God. The book *Music as Medicine: Deforia Lane's Life of Music, Healing, and Faith* provides a contemporary example of the powerful role of music, therapy, and faith. Dr. Lane has ministered to hospital patients suffering from cancer and other serious illnesses and has received a grant to study the effects of music on cancer patients. Her testimony has become even more powerful as she has survived breast cancer herself. She writes:

Music has the power to move a person between different realities; from a broken body into a soaring spirit; from a broken heart into the connection of shared love; from death into the movement and memory of life. And there is more. Music has the power to touch the heart of a child with God.

Music touches all peoples of all ages and may usher people into the presence of God. Some songs and works are more effective than others. The spiritual, "Ain't Got Time to Die" soothes, heals, and exhorts singers and listeners to remain focused on praising and serving the Lord. An individual may feel empowered by the Holy Spirit after experiencing this spiritual. The rich promise of worship, theology, and the arts is to understand more clearly what it is about the rhythm, the lyrics, the melody, the presentation, the singers, the listeners, and their relationship to God that ushers in his presence through this song. Research has demonstrated the effects of music on differing aspects of human behavior, but greater insight regarding how music enhances or interferes with our connection to God will provide valuable information for therapists, musicians, and pastors.

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Psychologists and other mental health professionals increasingly have incorporated creative arts, music, and movement in their therapies.



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