

ORDINATION PAPER: PATRICIA K. NOVICK

It sounded like the end.
Period.
Next case.
But the woman had his number.
She caught his rebuff between her teeth,
borrowed his metaphor, and sailed it back:
“Even the dogs eat the crumbs.”
Jesus was impressed.
Such wit deserved more than disappointment;
such doggedness more than a denial.
So he revised his answer,
giving the anecdote a happy ending.
Don’t be so fainthearted, he’d later say.
If you have serious faith, spar with me.
You’ll get more than crumbs. – Sister Pat Schnapp

MY FAITH JOURNEY

I was very small as a child, much smaller than my peers. My earliest childhood memories are of people towering above me. Not only was I small for my age, my “age” was misreported. My parents, anxious to get me moving in life, altered my birth certificate to make it appear that I was a year older than I actually was. I started nursery school when I was barely out of diapers.

Moreover, my parents were large. My father was tall, and my mother weighed as much as 250 pounds at different times in her life. My only sibling, my sister, was ten years older than me. I was surrounded by bigness.

The playground at the nursery school was like a wilderness experience: the asphalt surface seemed to go on to infinity; the equipment was Everest-like. I was lost, I was afraid, and I was alone; everything was an incomprehensible blur.

One spring afternoon, a teacher distributed cans of orange juice to those of us on the playground. Standing in the sun, I opened mine, put in the straw, and sipped. I felt suddenly suffused with light, bathed in it and emanating it from myself. Exquisite peace

came over me, a body-centered knowing that I was not alone and not lost and not afraid, that I had been saved from what I would now call my alienation.

At many times, then and later, I returned to that feeling as a source of faith that I was all right, protected, and that things would turn out well.

As I now reflect on that experience, the words that come to me are, “The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.” And, “When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining.” Even then, without these words, I understood God as the source of grace, as my context for understanding the experience.

So, from an early time in my life, I have been aware that without spirituality I was not a whole person. It took a long time, however, for me to recognize the two corollaries: first, that spirituality is in fact the essence from which my other values and actions flow; and second, that the most abiding source of spirituality for me is in Christianity.

I grew up in an essentially non-religious home in Hyde Park. I was interested in religion as a young child, and on my own I attended the Unitarian church in the neighborhood. As a young adult, I took the opportunity to study for 18 months at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and I was deeply moved by the spiritual qualities of the city. This experience of the spiritual significance and impact of place has been a continuing theme in my life.

My parents, my spirituality, my schooling at the University of Chicago’s Lab School—and, probably, my compassion for the “smaller” ones among us—instilled in me

a strong commitment to social justice. This led me, while still a young adult, to undertake many activities, including the following:

- Founding Sojourner Truth Child Care, Chicago's first client-directed daycare;
- Creating Saturday Playhouse, a live children's theater series at the University of Chicago;
- Organizing the efforts to create a vest-pocket park at 55th and Cornell streets);
- Founding the Midwest Women's Center, an advocacy center for women;
- Organizing the group, Academic Women, at the University of Chicago;
- Teaching Chicago's first women's studies course at Roosevelt University.

It can be seen that those activities not only furthered my ideas of social justice, they were also communal, group-based. As I look back on those early activities and the many that followed them, I see that I was creating temporary secular "congregations" of like-minded people devoted to a higher purpose. This is very consistent with the understanding of "church" that I will discuss later.

I served on the staff of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Dr. King's strong emphasis on the connection between justice and God further shaped my view of my community-organizing work. I made church attendance part of my life because I found that collective prayer added to my wellbeing. My husband Al Raby was a leader in the Chicago civil rights movement and our home was a gathering place for both political and religious leaders in the sixties. Rev. Andrew Young, former mayor of Atlanta and United States Representative to the United Nations, is godfather to my daughter, Alison.

Alison developed a life-threatening illness when she was barely two and a half years old. To save her life, I began studying alternative methods of healing, and I realized

that the majority of such methods are faith-based. She survived, as much in my view through the power of prayer and other non-traditional interventions as through the power of medical technology. I lived with my child when everyone believed that she was irretrievably dying. I learned about suffering, I learned of a knowing and love that surpasses understanding, and I learned that two humans can be so connected as to be one. People thought I was strong, but in fact my only strength was theirs, hers, and God's.

From then until today, I have continued as a practitioner of holistic healing, working with clients in the context of their faith traditions. I created a project in Chicago called "Reclaiming Spirituality," in which I worked with a team of holistic practitioners in a variety of congregations, conducting training sessions linking holistic health practices to the specific liturgy and tradition of the congregation. The connections between the health of the individual and the health of the community became clearer to me during this project. I also created and directed the United States' first degree-granting program in holistic health, called "Foundations of Holistic Health."

As an activist in Chicago in the late 1960s, I experienced the bitter events surrounding the 1968 Democratic national convention. When the convention was again scheduled for Chicago in 1996, I thought about how I would participate this time. I wanted people outside and inside Chicago to understand the sacred qualities of this city. I created and led a project called "Sacred Spaces/Public Places," which ultimately engaged thousands of Chicagoans in contemplating and writing about the ways in which certain public spaces have a sacred feeling for them. It was during this project that I met David Rhoads, from LSTC, who encouraged and supported me. I was invited by Steve Bevans from the Institute on Global Ministries to facilitate a sacred space workshop at the

Institute's conference. I arrived at the conference and found that these people were like me. All of the conference events were fascinating to me and I was incredibly comfortable. I was, in short, at last At Home.

CALL TO MINISTRY

Not long after that realization, David Rhoads invited me to spend a year as a Scholar in Residence at LSTC. I spent the school year taking courses at Meadville-Lombard, LSTC, and McCormick. I delivered a training program in holistic health and faith at LSTC, and with Homer Ashby I created an M. Div. concentration in health involving faculty from four of the Hyde Park seminaries.

I experienced many denominations during that period, but I was most drawn to the United Church of Christ. I had attended Trinity UCC, albeit irregularly, for many years. Rev. Wright, as a person, spoke powerfully to my sense of how a religious leader should think and act.

So, in 1998, with Homer Ashby's encouragement, I enrolled at Chicago Theological Seminary. My primary interest was to deeply explore my relationship with God—ordination was really only a distant consideration. As I will discuss later, I was not really committed then to UCC as a denomination; it just seemed at the time like the best fit for my interests.

In a sense, I believed that what I had been doing with my life for the past twenty-five years was already "ministry." I had struggled for the oppressed; I had stood up against false values; I had resisted the calls of commerce and mammon. I just needed, I thought, to understand God better.

Then one day in my presence two seminary leaders were discussing the need for a new pastor at an urban church. “What we need,” one of them said, “is someone like Pat Novick.” I was stunned—I had *never* thought of myself in that kind of “official” role as a representative of God’s word to others. Many sleepless nights and restless days followed as I considered that possibility. I realized that even if I was not going to proceed to hold a church position, I needed to fully understand the gravity of what it meant to be a representative of God to others. If I couldn’t accept that responsibility, I needed to find a different path.

I decided to try to accept that responsibility, while remaining attuned to the possibility that I might fall short. At that point “ministry” took on a profoundly new meaning for me, in which my actions were inseparable from my relationship with God. I approached my studies differently, seeing personal challenge in them where before I had been more detached. I examined the life I was living through the lenses of what I was learning.

Realizing how much there was to know, absorb, and act upon in order to live a life as fully integrated with God’s will as possible, I decided to pursue a doctorate in ministry after I had completed my masters in divinity. I completed that doctorate, also from CTS, in 2004.

MY PRESENT MINISTRY AND CALL

I am currently the Director of Health Programs at Erie Neighborhood House, a large Chicago social-service organization that primarily serves immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries. This position grew out of the project I undertook while studying for my doctorate in ministry, in which I provided self-care training for a

group of Latino leaders of social-service organizations. That training grew out of the “Reclaiming Spirituality” course I mentioned earlier.

I work both within Erie House and with many other organizations. Within Erie, I have created a Health Promoters program, through which individual employees design and implement wellness programs. With Erie’s sponsorship, I have carried that program to several other organizations. Before anyone can become a Health Promoter, they must attend a self-care course that I teach. That course has eight units, including breath, water, movement, and nutrition. Each unit includes scriptural quotations and prayers.

I have taught the self-care course in many other places around the United States with the sponsorship of religious organizations: for example, to leaders at Catholic Healthcare in San Francisco and to African-American congregations of several denominations in the San Francisco Bay Area, and to a range of African-American congregational leaders in Boston. I also presented it to an international group in London, and members of that group have carried it forward in Europe, Africa, and Asia.

At Erie House, I have also had important responsibilities in relationship to its Institute of Social Justice, which trains community members to become social-justice advocates, and I have initiated an intergenerational wellness program that reaches participants from the age of two to the age of 85.

Outside Erie House, I have initiated and led a project to create small parks and community gardens in Little Village, which is not only Chicago’s most densely Latino area but is also the part of Chicago with the smallest amount of accessible green space per individual. The connection of green space to community health, social cohesion, and

nonviolence is increasingly demonstrated by research studies and it speaks to the eco-theologian in me (I am a member of the Green Space Committee at Trinity).

Health is in itself an important social justice issue, and I'm pleased to be able to be making a substantial difference in that regard. Just as important to me is the development of local leaders who are inspired and empowered to act and advocate for social justice in general. I believe there is a direct correlation between personal wellness and social activism—among other things, healthy people have more energy, stamina, and resilience—and I also know that the participants in my programs have been strengthened for leadership in many other ways. One such way is the “pass it on” model that I use in all my work, in which people who receive training commit to conduct that training for others. As they conduct the training (a small part of it for which they have been carefully prepared), they are experiencing leadership, and as the people they train also “pass it on,” they see the big effect that one person's actions can start in motion. Several hundred women have been trained in self-care through one manifestation of this model.

MY THEOLOGY

The poem that begins my paper refers, of course, to the story of the Syro-Phoenecian woman. It defines my core theology: “If you have serious faith, spar with me. You'll get more than crumbs.”

Perhaps the word “spar” is too limiting—“engage with me” is better—but often it does feel like sparring. I believe that I am in a covenantal relationship with God to pursue a common project. The project is the realization of God's kingdom. I consistently need God's help to understand how I can serve in that way. When I go at that in the wrong way or fail to go at it at all, I know God will rebuff and correct me. With Julia Speller I am

creating a course on prayer that will be offered at Trinity. I leapt at the chance to be involved in that because the more I understand about prayer, the better equipped I will be to engage with God.

I understand God to be an omnipresent, infinite force for goodness and harmonization, yet I recognize that all my understandings of God are limited and partial, and that it is my place in the relationship to continue trying to expand that understanding without ever arrogantly presuming that my knowledge of God is more than what it is.

I know that God created me and redeemed me and all humankind. It is through the deeds and words of Jesus that I best understand God's expectations of me. I accept what Huston Smith has written in that regard:

Among the many possible meanings that the word "God" carries, none is more important than "that to which one gives oneself without reservation." In saying that Jesus Christ was God, one of the things the Church was saying was that his life provides the perfect model by which to order human life. Slavish imitation of details is never creative, but insofar as Christ's love, his freedom, and the daily beauty of his life can find authentic parallels in our own we are carried Godward, for the traits are authentically divine.

Jesus, in his life and his mission, provides the template for not just for appropriate human life, but for an ongoing relationship with God. As the divine force can be said to make order out of chaos, so it can be said that Jesus aimed to make chaos out of the existing order, in the name of a higher order, and that he challenges us to do the same — to resist what Walter Brueggemann evocatively calls the "royal consciousness" in the search for an ultimate order, an "alternative consciousness," that is worthy of the

authentically divine in ourselves. There can be no smugness and no sense of finality; instead there is ongoing engagement and “sparring” with my understanding of God. To be unsettled in that way is to be fully drawn in to the mystery of God and to be steeped in love.

THE BIBLE: ITS AUTHORITY, RELEVANCE AND APPLICATION TODAY

The Bible is the divinely-inspired word of God, and as such its authority is unquestionable. It is more relevant and applicable today than ever. It is the source document for all who wish to live harmoniously with God.

And it is, of course, deliberately and unintentionally misread, often used as justification for errors and outright evils.

So I understand it as my duty to continually study the Bible as part of my ongoing effort to live harmoniously in relationship to God myself, and to share the Good News with others. It is not possible to open a thoughtful theological text that does not in some way enrich, challenge, or alter one’s understanding of some part of the Bible. This is all part of the theological engagement or sparring that I have described. But it is essential to always recall that if we posit God as omnipotent, then we accept that God wants us to wrestle with the words of the Bible—to accept that within those words lie God’s purpose, will, and presence, and the means to a responsible and coherent life, but they will not be ours if we cannot hear them, test them, and grow into them.

In a world where so much easy wisdom is doled out by so many in so many forums, from radio talk-show hosts to internet bloggers to the pulpit, the Bible’s importance today is that it challenges us all to meet with God with all our human creativity and intellect and to *engage*, not merely accept or absorb.

In my ministry, I regularly use Biblical quotations and stories to remind people that God wants them to be well and whole; that he wants them to seek and render justice. I am often distressed to see that entire faiths seem to have elevated suffering to an exalted position (or at least that persons observing that faith devotedly have understood that to be their faith's message). So I offer them alternative understandings from the Bible, and I permit them the freedom to engage with those alternatives in the way that God has permitted all of us to spar with the divine. I hope they will reach the conclusion that Delores Williams has reached (and that I share):

Humankind is redeemed through Jesus' *ministerial* vision of life and not through his death. There is nothing divine in the blood of the cross. . . . Jesus came for life, to show humans a perfect vision of ministerial relations that humans had very little knowledge of. As Christians, black women cannot forget the cross, but neither can they glorify it. To do so is to glorify suffering and to render the explanation sacred. To do so is to glorify the sin of defilement.

But if they do not reach that conclusion, or do not reach it at the moment I would like them to, I know that God's will is working in them, and that the permission to question is a first step toward deeper faith. I am there for them when—as they often do—they return to me to discuss the issue further. That is my approach to the relevance and application of the Bible today: not that I know its Truths, but that Truth is there for all of us to find, and it can make us free.

THE CHURCH: ITS MISSION AND MINISTRY

I wholeheartedly endorse the ideals of the theologically-conceived Church, *kerygma*, *diakonia*, and *koinonia*, generally described as proclamation, service, and

community or communion. *Proclamation* is not just announcing the good news, but living it; *service* is not just offering aid to others but also contains criticism of all rule and aims to do away with oppression; *communion* is not just with each other but with God. Church is the shape of faith.

Who could contest these ideals? As Jim Perkinson has written, “It is part of the power of religious practice to have rendered utopia thinkable in momentary approximations in concrete history—offering glimpses that are usually hidden, often tragic, always partial and fallible, but nonetheless, integral to the possibility of sustaining human hope.”¹

As I react to those ideals for my own theology and conceptualization of my own ministry, I find myself sometimes snared in my perception of “church” as a particular social organization, as an institution in which many, many humans have an investment that is not fully aligned with manifesting God’s grace and Jesus’s example. It is not comprised, that is, of the Christian type characterized by liberation from anxiety, self-preoccupation, and self-interest.

I think it may be fair to speculate that Church was not understood to be an institution subject to the power of any individual person, but rather a metaphysical construct of an *ekklesia* of souls, which would sometimes be expressed in a spontaneous, temporary (or at least non-permanent, non-institutionalized) coming together of true equals for the purposes of proclamation, service, and communion. Dominic Crossan uses the term “brokering” to describe the intercession of individuals with presumed or assumed “authority,” writing:

Neither Jesus nor his followers are supposed to settle down in one place and establish there a brokered presence.... Instead they go out to people and have, as it were, to start anew each morning. For Jesus, the kingdom of God is a community of radical or unbrokered equality in which individuals are in direct contact with each other and with God, unmediated by any established brokers or fixed locations.²

God, as I have said here, is available to us in partial and unfinished glimpses. So, too, the message of Jesus, though it can be expressed in words like “Love thy neighbor as thyself,” is as hard to pin down as love is. To Church and ministry fall the tasks of deciphering, communicating, and actualizing those things as far as possible.

THE SACRAMENTS

The two sacraments of the United Church of Christ—baptism and communion—commemorate central events in the life of Jesus and convey God’s grace to those who participate in them. Through the one-time act of baptism we enter the community of faith; through communion (the Lord’s Supper; the Eucharist) we regularly renew our relationship to that community.

I have mentioned the courses I teach, linking health to faith. In them, I use water and food as “anchors” of belief. It is my goal, for myself and others, that each time we experience those elements in any setting we deepen our relationship to God. When we bathe, we experience again God’s ability to cleanse us of sin and hatred; when we refresh ourselves with a drink of water we remember that our souls and spirits can constantly be refreshed by God’s power; when we see a stream or a pool of water in nature we rejoice in all that God has provided for us, and we remember the baptism of Jesus by John. Whenever we eat, we say a prayer of Thanksgiving for all that God has granted us and we

remember the gift of his son's sacrifice; we "break bread" and recall the broken body of Jesus, given for us.

For individuals, then, the sacraments are not just vital in themselves, but they can lead us through their connections to our daily lives to do as Paul admonishes us to do in Thessalonians—to "pray without ceasing."

Moreover, because the sacraments are experienced communally, they unite all members of Christian fellowship in a renewal of our shared gratitude to God and commitment to honor what God wishes from us.

REGARDING PASTORAL ETHICS & BOUNDARIES

As a clinical psychologist, I am very familiar with the issues of boundaries in relationships. In addition, I completed the spiritual directors' training program with Jerry May at the Shalem Institute in Maryland. Boundary issues were a significant part of that training experience.

However, I found the Boundary Training experience offered by CMA to be the most powerful of my three serious explorations of boundary awareness. The combined opportunity to see videos of other UCC clergy and the conversations with a group of UCC ministers made the experience invaluable. I was consistently surprised by the range of views and first-hand experiences. I felt myself expanding and informed at the same time.

The format of using videos of UCC clergy to talk about their diverse experiences was powerful. Julia Speller and I are designing a course on prayer for Trinity. As a result of my boundary-training experience, we are incorporating video interviews with

members of the staff and congregation at the beginning of each session as “pump primers” for a deeper discussion of the types of prayer we are exploring.

I don't know very many UCC clergy and this was an opportunity to have in-depth discussions about very specific issues and experiences that my colleagues experience in their congregations. I learned so much about the variety and sensitivity of boundary issues they experience. Many of the examples were extremely subtle and important. In addition, I met people from a range of congregations that I would never have encountered. I intend to visit their churches in the near future. We formed bonds and deeper understandings of each other's positions and concerns.

In addition, Bonnie Condon, who had been one of my CPE supervisors, was in the group. We were often in small groups together and had the opportunity for in-depth conversation. Her deeper understanding of my spiritual journey and familiarity with my life experience created a safe context for me to reach even deeper into my own understanding of the topics that were raised.

In my work setting, there is a family atmosphere. The staff is primarily Mexican and they come from large, intimate extended families. This intimacy is wonderful and engaging. On the other hand, I have become more aware of boundary issues for myself and other members of the staff. I have discussed this at the leadership team meetings at work and have had powerful follow-up conversations.

CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION

My CPE experience was remarkable from the beginning. Brenda Jackson, Vice President for Pastoral Care at Trinity Hospital, interviewed me for my CPE candidacy under her direction. This first session with her was deep and immensely powerful. Her

questions forced me to look deeply into my own needs and desires for the CPE experience. Although I rarely cry, I wept for most of the interview. I knew that I would be on an important faith journey during my time at the hospital.

I had surprising little experience in hospitals prior to my time at Trinity. After some time on the floors, I was soon assigned to the emergency room, telemetry, and intensive care. I felt overwhelmed and emotionally exhausted much of the time. It was a constant learning experience and confrontation with the unfamiliar. Brenda was consistently available and source of spiritual inspiration and new learnings. It was difficult but not too much. The learning was so strong.

The requirement of being constantly available and on the alert on a daily basis was outside my style in the universe. Generally, I am out in the world and then take time to reflect and spend time in silence. I do this on my own timetable and rhythms. The CPE experience required me to adjust of own pattern of interaction and reflection to match the needs of the hospital population. Brenda was totally responsive to my needs and supported me in finding my own way in the process.

Because there were only two of us in my group at Trinity, we combined our group sessions with the CPE folks at Good Samaritan and West Suburban hospitals. This meant that we had two additional supervisors for reflection, and I had a richer experience in my group discussions. I have maintained close relationships with the other participants in my CPE group.

I don't believe that I have the personality or the stamina to work as a chaplain. However, I did develop a close relationship with Trinity. After my CPE, I led a self-care

training course for nurses at Trinity, created an “art that heals” project with them, and worked on the creation of a sacred restorative space for nurses.

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST: IDENTITY, ATTRACTION, AND STATEMENT OF FAITH

Initially, as I have said, I was not particularly drawn to the UCC as a denomination. I liked Trinity UCC and I immensely admired Rev. Wright, but I considered that it was him, his spirit, that made Trinity great, and that perhaps he could have done the same within any denomination. When I took the “Church and Polity” class at CTS, I found it relatively ho-hum. I liked the core ideas of local autonomy, commitment to diversity, and social justice, but I was not clear about my commitment to the denomination, only about my commitment to Trinity.

When I took the UCC church history class at Trinity, I became aware of the rich history and diversity of our UCC heritage. I became engaged and interested. Still, I knew that if I was not committed to the denomination I could not pursue ordination, and I was more committed but still not fully committed. I met with Reverend Stacey Edwards, who helped me sort out my issues, and subsequently with Edward Goode. They both offered me a broader perspective on the possibilities within the denomination.

My in care supervisor, Blair Hull, was another excellent source of understanding and personal inspiration. She suggested that I visit other UCC churches, and so I attended twelve different services as part of my in care experience. They were all very different; however, the core of commitment to social justice was in every one of them. I began to appreciate that the UCC was much bigger than Trinity and Rev. Wright, and yet it was

largely consistent with what that place and that person had meant to me, linking the spiritual life of the congregating and social justice activities.

One of the phrases by which the UCC characterizes itself—"In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity"—speaks vividly to me of why I choose the UCC. I now recognize that the UCC offers me a home where local autonomy, commitment to minority rights, and social justice play a significant role in the life of the denomination, and where each individual pursues a personal relationship to God (in the way of the Syro-Phoenecian woman: through "sparring"; through engagement). In the same way that I truly accepted the call to ministry when I fully understood and accepted that my works and my faith had to be an integrated whole, I see membership in the UCC as an extension of that integration. I sometimes refer to the importance of things being "holographic"—no matter where you look at them from, they are the same. I am not just an individual whose faith is embedded in her deeds and whose deeds are embedded in her faith; I am part of an organization about which the same can be said. (Of course, maintaining that integrity is understood as a daily, hourly effort of awareness and action, for me and for the denomination.)

The UCC Statement of Faith defines the "essentials" that unify the churches and individuals within it. For me, those essentials can be stated as follows:

I trust in an all-knowing God as the source of strength and meaning in my life. I glorify God in the name of Jesus Christ and I am called to profess God's deeds and glorious name to all humans.

God created the universe and all that is in it. (In this regard, I am particularly fond of Psalm 104.) God's benevolence falls upon all of us and supports us in our struggle with sin, leading us to the path of life and away from death.

Jesus Christ, is the model and template for Godly action in the world.

The Holy Spirit enlivens God's covenantal community, which includes *all* people.

Loving and following God means accepting the joys, the rigors, and the pain of living God's word and proclaiming it to all, rejecting sin, and standing against injustice. In return, God offers courage and comfort, grants forgiveness, and promises eternal life.

To borrow some words from Walter Brueggemann, to be called upon by God "is a job not for a timid clerk who simply shares the inventory but for people who know something different and are prepared, out of their anguish and amazement," to live in accordance with God's expectations and to call upon and assist others to do so, too.³

ORDINATION VOWS

The important ritual of ordination is a way for me to name and fully acknowledge in a public setting my life's work and commitment to my relationship to God. It is an expression of my identity as a member of UCC and my accountability to the denomination and what it represents. It is a statement of the importance of my life being embedded in faith and service to the communities I touch.

It reinforces my engagement with church, community, and self as an expression of God's love and my devotion to that relationship. This is not a part-time commitment but rather a life-long and ongoing, deeply felt engagement with my faith. It is a statement to the world that I have embodied my Christian awareness. It requires that I maintain a ongoing practice of public work and spiritual reflection. It demands an ongoing course of study in bible, theology, and faith and justice issues.

I choose to be ordained because I believe that I have been called by God to this work. Ordination will be a public naming of this covenantal understanding between me and God. I believe that I will become more self-conscious of this relationship and how it manifests moment by moment in service to God's holy name.

As Isaiah wrote: "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

NOTES

¹ Perkinson, Jim. "Identity Politics and Identity Spiritualities: Soteriology at the Intersection of Race and Religion?" In *Negations* www.datawranglers.com/negations/issues/97f/97f_jperkinson.html

² Crossan, John D. *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994): 101

³ Brueggemann, Walter. *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1978), 66-67