

Outline of Lecture

Chapter Twelve: Ray Anderson, *On Becoming Human* A Liturgical Paradigm for Authentic Personhood

Prefatory Comments

I: See James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace*.

Def'n: "Worship is the gift of participating through the Holy Spirit in the incarnate Son's communion with the Father." I.e., worship isn't something we have to invent or generate or maintain; instead we are "borne along" through the power of the Spirit in the Son's adoration of and obedience to the Father.

Baptism: by the Spirit we participate in the vicarious baptism of Christ; i.e., we are baptized into his baptism.

Repentance: by the Spirit we repent into that repentance wherewith Christ repented on our behalf at the Jordan and at Calvary.

Faith: by the Spirit we exercise faith in the faithfulness of Christ who alone is the faithful human covenant partner of God.

II: Note the three understandings of the church (Lesslie Newbigin)

[1] the people who gather to hear the Word preached;

[2] the body of Christ;

[3] the community that has been ignited by the Holy Spirit.

Note the truth that each brings, and the distortion when any one is isolated from the other two.

180 "The power of O'Connor's writing is in the juxtaposition of the stark inhumanity of life with the promise of the gospel." LIFE IS DIFFICULT.

181: "Three core aspects to Christ's liturgy of reconciliation: restoration, renewed relation, Sabbath rest.

Restoration: to the Kingdom of God.

Renewed relation: we renew that covenant which God has "renewed" with us by *living it as a human*.

Sabbath rest: shalom.

181: To this end note that Jesus's ministry is highly "bodily."

(THE EVENT OF COMMUNITY AS INTHERENTLY COMMUNAL.)

182: the personhood of God is intrinsically communal.

Therefore the community of the church *isn't* a social club with a religious interest. Rather, the church is grounded in the vicarious humanity of Christ. Note the presuppositions and implications of this truth. For this reason the church as community provisionally includes all of humankind. The church's liturgical acts reinforce this.

183: Therefore the church's liturgy aims not at novelty but at "repetition." (This is not a monotonous "been there, done that" but a re-enactment of a reality in which worshippers *own afresh* the reality that now characterizes them and defines them.

E.g., Passover in the contemporary Jewish home: "I was at the Red Sea."

E.g., "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob."

(COMMUNITY AS A PARADIGM OF WHOLENESS)

184: We are to welcome, affirm and esteem each other, and reflect this in

- 1] the youngster from the group home
- 2] schizophrenic persons
- 3] the bipolar person who can be trusted but won't be trusted anywhere but in church life
- 4] children at the Lord's Table
- 5] a better blend in worship of the audible and the visual
- 6] the avoidance of events in church life that cruelly exclude: e.g., Fund raising that eliminates the non-affluent; Couples' Clubs.
- 7] a greater recognition of gifts beyond speech and music

(COMMUNITY AS A PARADIGM OF HOLINESS)

189: "We do not first become believers, as those who have yet to find true value, and then belong in order to count. Rather, we are included by God before we include ourselves." (Recall the material in chapter 11 on Election, Covenant, Atonement.)

Shepherd: scripture from cover to cover is [1] God's reaffirmation of *his holiness* in the wake of our denial of it, [2] God's re-establishing of *our holiness* in the wake of our contradiction of it.

The "holy/holiness" word-group in scripture is used 833 times. Nothing is mentioned anywhere nearly as frequently.

Since Jesus Christ is our "righteousness, wisdom, **sanctification** and redemption" (1st Cor. 1:30), he *is* our holiness, which holiness we then (but only then) pursue as we endeavour to "become what we are" (by grace.) This is the opposite of a striving that seeks to gain us admittance to God's favour or the church.

189: "Paul, as a matter of fact, did not address himself to the presence of unbelievers at the Lord's table. His warning was addressed to believers."

- 1] then should we "fence the table?"
- 2] Wesley insisted the Lord's Supper to be *converting* and not merely *confirming*.

(COMMUNITY AS A PARADIGM OF IMMORTALITY)

Since Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, can never die, his body can never die. Therefore we find our longing for an existence that survives death fulfilled as we are bound to Jesus Christ and to his people. Only here is our fragile, vulnerable self preserved. ("The borderline between sanity and insanity is a thin line which we must walk." (193) Therefore the *person* is preserved through a twofold intimacy: with Jesus Christ, and with his body. (In fact there is no relationship to Jesus Christ without a relationship to his body.) All we do in church life ought to reflect this.

Note the haunting lack of intimacy in people's lives.

(Shepherd: What have I been up to for 40 years? I've been trying to foster intimacy with God and intimacy with my fellows.)

INTIMACY

Def'n: bondedness plus warmth.

Bondedness can include emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual links.

Not all close relationships are intimate; e.g., close relationships are found wherever people are rendered situationally proximate: workplace, sports teams, community tasks. Mere proximity doesn't guarantee

intimacy.

Intimacy always has to do with personal relationships rather than merely functional relationships.

Intimacy entails familiarity with many features of the other person.

It includes proactive expression of one's thoughts and feelings that serve to express familiarity. (I.e., intimacy is characteristically proactive rather than merely reactive.)

Intimacy may entail ambivalent feelings, positive and negative, that co-exist. I.e., mature intimacy entails being able to live with the exhilaration and burden of being close to someone else.

Pseudo-intimacy: the relationship *appears* to be intimate but isn't. E.g., sexual ardour or erotic attachment *substitutes* for genuine intimacy. Here the true nature of the relationship is denied or kept secret in order to [1] maintain the illusion (for public or private consumption) that genuine intimacy exists; [2] avoid confrontation with each other or with the public.

Barriers to Intimacy

-whatever impedes forming or maintaining a bond with someone else.

E.g. [1] counterproductive behaviours:

- unwitting rudeness
- unwitting invasion of someone else's 'space'

E.g. [2] skill deficits:

- how to put people at ease rather than putting them on edge
- how to disagree with the idea someone is advancing without clobbering (or seeming to clobber) the person whose idea it is
- how to encourage without bribing or coercing
- how to resist what you need or want to resist without alienating
- how to exhibit warmth non-seductively
- how to maintain appropriate boundaries without appearing cold
- inability to communicate.

E.g. [3] off-putting dispositions:

- fear of being engulfed in the relationship, of being taken over, of being rendered a tool or function of someone else
- inability to trust
- chronic negativity, or at least unwarranted negativity
- unrealistic expectations (perfectionistic) of self or others
- limited ability to empathize
- out-and-out self-deception
- psychiatric problems: narcissistic, borderline or anti-social personality disorders.

Nevertheless, Jesus Christ has named us his FRIENDS. How, then, ought we to relate (or try to relate) to those *he* names his FRIENDS?