



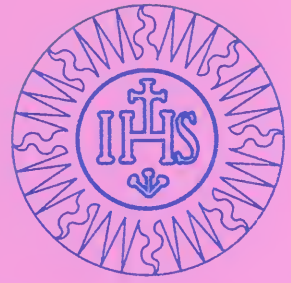




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# Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits

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What Does the Lord Require?

A Bibliographical Essay  
on the Bible and Social Justice

*John R. Donahue, S.J.*

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## THE SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

A group of Jesuits appointed from their provinces in the United States.

The Seminar studies topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and communicates the results to the members of the provinces. This is done in the spirit of Vatican II's recommendation to religious institutes to recapture the original inspiration of their founders and to adapt it to the circumstances of modern times. The Seminar welcomes reactions or comments in regard to the material which it publishes.

The Seminar focuses its direct attention on the life and work of the Jesuits of the United States. The issues treated may be common also to Jesuits of other regions, to other priests, religious, and laity, to both men and women. Hence the Studies, while meant especially for American Jesuits, are not exclusively for them. Others who may find them helpful are cordially welcome to read them.

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# What Does the Lord Require?

*A Bibliographical Essay on the Bible  
and Social Justice*



John R. Donahue, S.J.

Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits  
25/2: March 1993





## *For your information . . .*

"What Does the Lord Require?" The title of this issue of *STUDIES* starts with that question from Scripture. Central to the whole teaching of St. Ignatius is the conviction, born out of his own personal experience, that God can be discovered, that we come to know what God is like, what God asks of us, and what we might do to respond.

Our responses will vary from person to person, from age to age, and will depend on a great variety of circumstances; but the first source of the knowledge we need in order to respond comes from God's revelation in Scripture. For our own circumstances as Jesuits in our own present age, the overall context of that answer, however varied it may be for each of us individually, is what the Society has called "the service of faith of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement."

It is to help us know better God's revelation and our faith response to it and our possibilities of promoting justice that this issue of *STUDIES* is a "Bibliographical Essay on the Bible and Social Justice." This is only the second bibliography to be published as an issue of *STUDIES*. The first was "A Bibliography on Saint Ignatius's Spiritual Exercises" (*STUDIES* 13, No. 2 [March 1981]) by Paul Beghey, S.J., a member of the Netherlands Province of the Society. So useful was it and so frequent were the requests for additional copies that our supply was exhausted. Just two years ago we published a revised, updated, and greatly enlarged version of that same bibliography (*STUDIES* 23, No. 3 [May 1991]), by Kenneth Bogart, S.J., of the Philippines Province, the fruit of his continuing work on the subject over the preceding ten years. That new version of the bibliography continues to be in print and in demand. As an issue of *STUDIES* sometime next year, we shall publish "Christian Liturgy: An Annotated Bibliography for Jesuits" by John Baldovin, S.J. I am sure that it will be as important and as useful as the previous such issues.

The Institute of Jesuit Sources, too, has been busy with its own publications. Two new books that have just recently arrived from the printer narrate how two particular Jesuits responded to the Lord's inspiration. Together their stories might in a sense be called "antipodean," coming as they do from almost opposite ends of the earth.

The first book is *The Letters and Instructions of Francis Xavier*. It contains all of Xavier's writings, translated and introduced by M. Joseph Costelloe, S.J., who is also the translator of Georg Schurhammer's magnificent four-volume life of Xavier. These letters range from Xavier's days as a student in Paris in 1535, through all his years of work and thousands of miles of travel in the Far East, to the last letter in 1552, written as he lay dying on Sancian, an island off the coast of China. For the first time we have in English the complete collection of those writings that informed and inflamed their readers all over the Europe of Francis Xavier's day, and have continued to do so in the centuries since then.

The second book is called *The Spiritual Conquest*. It is the eyewitness, first-hand account of the founding and day-to-day tribulations and triumphs of the early Jesuit Reductions in Paraguay, written by one of the truly heroic Latin American Jesuits, Antonio Ruiz de Montoya. If you saw the movie *The Mission*, you may think that a more dramatic story could hardly be told. But Montoya's book is even more vivid. It has everything from anthropology to spirituality, from cannibalism to deep, personal piety, from the daily preaching of the Gospel to extraordinary jungle-river journeys. Collaborating on the translation of this book were C. J. McNaspy, S.J., of Loyola University, New Orleans; Martin Palmer, S.J., of the Institute of Jesuit Sources; and John Leonard, S.J., a member of the Irish province now serving in Paraguay.

And then on a calmer(?) note: The Institute is in the process of preparing a translation of the collected decrees of all the Society's previous general congregations. We hope to have it out in time for the province congregations that will convene in preparation for the approaching Thirty-fourth General Congregation.

*John W. Padberg, S.J.*  
*Editor*

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# What Does the Lord Require?

## *A Bibliographical Essay on the Bible and Social Justice*

### Introduction

**T**he Thirty-second General Congregation (Dec. 2, 1974–March 7, 1975) bequeathed many challenges to contemporary Jesuits. Not the least of these was how to respond to the definition of our mission today as “the service of faith and the promotion of justice.” This challenge came on the heels of the challenge left by Vatican II, to make Scripture the “soul of theology” (*Verbum Dei*, §24; *Optatam totius*, §16) and to nurture people from the table of both the word of God and the body of Christ (*Dei Verbum*, 21). In restoring the centrality of the ministry of the word to faith and practice, the council also laid the mantle of conciliar authority on the biblical renewal that had maintained a

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rather tenuous toehold in the Church since *Divino afflante Spiritu* (Sept. 30, 1943).

For the last quarter century, Jesuits have been faced with the challenge of a conversion of heart to relate their service of faith to the promotion of justice, as well as the intellectual task of finding resources for this in the Bible. Though this task often seems daunting, in recent decades there have been a great number of studies by biblical scholars offering fine resources for the theology and practice of the faith that does justice. I would like to survey and summarize some of the major issues and offer a selective bibliography for further study and use in different ministries. I make no attempt to be exhaustive and will mention titles available in English. While books and monographs will receive prime attention, I will also list important journal articles that might be of special help for personal study and teaching. At times it is difficult to say under which particular category a book should be listed, so frequent cross-referencing will be necessary.

In an overview of this kind, it would be tempting to begin with a discussion of the problem of hermeneutics, or how the biblical material can be used for theology and social ethics. Yet such a path can also lead to a labyrinth with no apparent sense of direction or exit. Even though exegesis can never be divorced from interpretation, I prefer first to present descriptive studies—what the Bible says—and then to offer some tentative guidelines on the interpretation and use of the biblical material.

This bibliography is partly in response to requests received over the years from Jesuits in different ministries who are responding generously to the call of the Thirty-second and Thirty-third general congregations. Some people want a few references for personal use; others want a longer list when preparing classes or retreats. Jesuits preparing for sabbaticals have asked for bibliographies. I have perhaps erred on the side of expansion and have produced what may seem a daunting number of works. Therefore, I have marked with an asterisk (\*) those works I feel are most helpful and most readable. (They might also be suitable

additions to a house library.) I have listed a large number of articles in periodicals, most of which would be accessible in any college or university library; these will be useful for those preparing courses or studying a topic in some depth.

### General Studies of Biblical Ethics

Concern for the faith that does justice demands reflection on both the theological meaning of biblical texts and their ethical implication. This would logically demand reflection on the Bible's understanding of God (theology), of the human condition (anthropology), of the manner in which men and women are freed from sin and death and restored to intimacy with God (soteriology), and of the proper relation to God and fellow humans (ethics). The works I list below, while concentrating on ethics, are a rich source of biblical theology.



### *Bibliography*

Though I will list bibliography for each topic, I cannot recommend strongly enough the *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. It represents the most up-to-date biblical scholarship and contains excellent bibliographies. Highly recommended on particular topics is the recently published *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, David N. Freedman, ed., 6 vols. (New York: Bantam Doubleday, 1992). Also furnishing brief treatments of important topics is the *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, Paul Achtemier, ed. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985).

1. \*Birch, Bruce C. *Let Justice Roll: The Old Testament, Ethics and the Christian Life*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991. The fruit of over twenty years of reflection, often in dialogue with Larry Rasmussen (an ethicist), this is the best available survey of OT ethics, with great sensitivity to social issues. It surveys the literature in a canonical and historical order from Genesis through the wisdom literature.

2. ———. *What Does the Lord Require? The Old Testament Call to Social Witness*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985. More popular presentations of material which Birch later develops in *Let Justice Roll*.
3. Birch, Bruce C., and Larry L. Rasmussen. *The Predicament of the Prosperous*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978. This work arose from discussions in both academic and pastoral settings. The first part treats of the challenges and dilemmas facing "the predominantly white, prosperous, middle-class churches of the United States" (p. 13), while the second part offers reflections on biblical themes and motifs which challenge such an audience. It is a model of interdisciplinary work and presents a fine method for dialogue with biblical texts.
4. \*Haughey, John C., ed. *The Faith That Does Justice*. New York/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1977. Though a bit dated, the essays by Donahue, "Biblical Perspectives on Justice," and Haughey, "Jesus as the Justice of God," offer a good introduction to important biblical themes and texts.
5. Mott, Stephen C. *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982. Organized thematically with coverage of both testaments. Mott represents a group of evangelical scholars committed to issues of social justice. Part 1 constitutes "A Biblical Theology of Social Involvement," and Part 2 considers "Paths to Justice." He views the Church as a "counter cultural" community dedicated to nonviolent implementation of social change.
6. Ogletree, Thomas W. *The Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics: A Constructive Essay*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983. A sophisticated attempt by an ethicist to bridge the gap between biblical studies and ethics. The chapter on "covenant and commandment" (pp. 47-85) is one of the best treatments of the implications of covenant for a theology of social justice. This book also treats the Synoptic portrayals of eschatological existence and Paul's gospel of freedom.



## The Old Testament

### Studies of Old Testament Themes and Blocks of Literature

While the biblical literature evolved over the centuries from diverse oral traditions to blocks of literature, its canonical shape was fixed rather late. For example, Genesis 1-12 (creation and primeval history), though it treated "at the beginning," was appended to the national history (Exodus through Deuteronomy) only after the exile (586-536 B.C.); and the *Torah* receives its final shape only between 300 and 200 B.C.

While qualified by subsequent scholarship, the positions of Von Rad and Noth still offer an excellent way to survey the OT. Von Rad argued that the Pentateuchal traditions developed from credal formulae such as Deuteronomy 6:20-25, 26:1-12, and Joshua 24:2-13, which provided the fundamental themes of Israel's faith, where a "theme" is understood as a basic act of God by which the people are constituted. When expanded into a narrative, these themes attract related themes and motifs. Noth underlined five such themes: (a) the guidance out of Egypt (Exodus), (b) the "guidance into arable land" (Joshua), (c) the promise to the patriarchs (Gen. 12-50), (d) the guidance (and testing) in the wilderness, and (e) the revelation at Sinai. I will offer some reflection and bibliography on two of these themes (Exodus and Covenant); but I will begin with the creation story, which is an important "overture" to the salvation history of Genesis through Joshua.

The final "canonical" shaping of the Pentateuch is important theologically. At its center stands the covenant of Sinai, which forms those liberated from Egypt into a nation with responsibilities and duties. God's gift of liberation involves a demand for fidelity. The older story of the taking of the land, with its triumphalistic tendencies, has been supplanted by the beginning

of the Deuteronomic history (Deuteronomy), with its theme of recurring infidelity.

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7. Noth, Martin. "The Major Themes of the Tradition in the Pentateuch and Their Origin." In *A History of the Pentateuchal Traditions*. Trans. B. Anderson, 46-62. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1972.
8. Von Rad, Gerhard. *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1966. A landmark study on the development of the Pentateuch.
9. Sanders, James A. *Torah and Canon*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972. An interesting discussion of the formation of the OT.

### **Creation (Gen. 1-11)**

A generation of Jesuits were nurtured on two perspectives that are no longer helpful for understanding creation in the Bible. The first was that Genesis 1-3 (culminating in the fall and the expulsion of Adam and Eve) could be read as an independent block of material. This was undergirded by the use of these chapters primarily for the doctrine of original sin. The second was that the biblical creation narratives dealt with cosmology. This latter view was supported by debates over evolution. As Claus Westermann has strongly argued, the whole primeval history (Gen. 1-11) must be read as a unity, culminating in the Tower of Babel. Theologically, creation is not concerned with the origin of the world and the universe, but rather with the situation in which later readers found themselves. Technically, these narratives are "etiological": they describe the causes of the yearning for God, the gap between God and humanity, and the divisions within humanity itself.

Today scholars often reject the division of the Pentateuch into four clearly defined literary "sources" (J, E, P, D), and speak instead of blocks of tradition that are often less separable than the



reconstructions of the older “documentary hypothesis.” Still, it is customary to see two major perspectives in the creation account. The “preamble” or first account (1:1-2:4a) is attributed to the priestly tradition (P) and is the later of the two accounts. The second account, which narrates the creation of the man and the woman, their offspring, and the spread of civilization (2:4b-4:26), is attributed to J (the Yahwist).

Contemporary reflection on social justice often turns to these accounts to ground human dignity in the creation in God’s image, to argue for the common claim of all humanity to the world’s resources, and, more frequently now, for reflection on ecological issues. I will now simply indicate elements in the text that are important.

The first account describes a primitive cosmology in rhythmic cadences marked off by a division into “days,” with the frequent refrain that “it was good” (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25), culminating in the final day when God views all creation as “very good” (v. 31). Claus Westermann, whose extensive writings on creation are the best resource for a proper biblical theology of creation, notes that these narratives reveal the priestly stress that all events have their origin in God’s commanding word. They prepare for the revelation on Sinai, when God’s word forms the somewhat chaotic throng into a people (*Creation*, 42). He also notes that the author, by placing the separation of night and day through the creation of “light” before the creation of “space,” stresses that human life is temporal and historical.

The goodness of creation is not something that men and women affirm but is a divine proclamation. By locating the creation story as a preamble to the whole sacred history, the priestly writer proclaims the goodness of all creation, even though the narrative which unfolds depicts the catastrophic results of sin on both nature and human history (Westermann, *Genesis*, 60-64). The proper response to creation is praise and thanksgiving even amid suffering and catastrophe, since God has affirmed that nature and its power are “good.” Two obvious implications arise from Gene-

sis 1:1–2:4a: first, the response to creation is reverence and praise, not exploitation; second, humanity shares a solidarity with both the inanimate and animate world in owing its existence to the word of God.

The creation narrative of P reaches its summit in Genesis 1:26: “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness and let them have dominion. . . .” This is then followed by the blessing of man and woman, the command to be fruitful and multiply, and God’s resting on the seventh day. Man and woman created in the image of God is one of the most frequently cited texts to undergird human dignity and human rights. Created “in the image of God” in its original context does not mean some human quality (intellect or free will) or the possession of “sanctifying grace.” Two interpretations enjoy some exegetical support today. One view is that, just as ancient Near Eastern kings erected “images” of themselves in subject territory, so humans are God’s representatives, to be given the same honor due God. Claus Westermann argues that the phrase means that humans were created to be God’s counterpart, creatures analogous to God with whom God can speak and who will hear God’s word (*Genesis: A Practical Commentary*, 10). In either of these interpretations, all men and women prior to identification by race, social status, religion, or sex are worthy of respect and reverence.

The term “have dominion” (see “to till and to keep” [Gen. 2:15]) has often been criticized by ecologists as the warrant for a utilitarian view of creation or as justification for the exploitation of creation for human convenience. The Hebrew term is used in other places to describe the royal care that characterizes a king as God’s vice-regent (Pss. 72:8, 110:2; see also Ps. 8:5–9). Like ancient kings, men and women are to be the mediators of prosperity and well-being (Westermann, *Genesis*, 51–53). In neither creation account is the human being given “dominion” over another human being. This is not part of the human constitution. Reverential care for God’s creation rather than exploitation is the mandate given humanity in this section of Genesis.

The second and older creation story (2:4b-3:24) is more anthropomorphic and more dramatic. It may be composed of two originally different stories. One deals with the creation of "man" (Heb. 'iš) from the clay of the earth, yet notices that this creature was incomplete without a complementary partner ('išša). The other, as Westermann stresses, is the spread of sin running through Genesis 1-11 (see also 4:1-6; 6:1-4, 6-9; 11:1-10). This latter motif has dominated the history of exegesis of the creation account.

Two elements of the creation of "man" and "woman" are important for contemporary reflection. First, as a story of mythic beginnings (akin to other ancient myths of "androgyny"), the narrative stresses the complementarity of male and female. The "human" is male and female united as "one flesh" (2:24), not understood simply as a description of marriage, but as a basic fact of prototypical human existence. On the anthropological level, this calls for a recognition of the presence of "male" and "female" in every human. On the social level it means that the human condition can never be defined or named in terms of the dominant characteristics or activity of one sex.

Proper understanding of the "fall," or sin of the first parents, also has implications for a theological grounding of social justice. Taking this narrative on its own terms requires a bracketing of its Pauline and post-Pauline interpretation (Rom. 5:12-20, 2 Cor. 11:3, 1 Tim. 2:13-15), as well as of the Augustinian doctrine of "original sin." The narrative remains, however, a rich source for understanding human evil and alienation from God.

It explains the human potentiality for evil, no matter how gifted one may be. The human person according to Genesis 2:4b-3:24 is created for life and knowledge. The ultimate test or temptation in this narrative is to "be like God" (3:5), knowing good and evil, which is "knowledge in a wide sense, inasmuch as it relates to the mastery of human existence" (Westermann, *Creation*, 92f.). The temptation is always to an autonomy which seeks this apart from the limits of being human or from life in community. Sin is overstepping the limits of the human condition by aspiring



to divine power. It can take place through action (the woman) or through complicity (the man). Their desire to be like God sadly separates them from God.

After the “fall” the narrative relates the trial and the punishment (3:8–24). The expected punishment of 3:3 (“you shall die”) does not occur. Instead, the harmony of their earlier status is destroyed. Desire for human autonomy leads to alienation and breakdown of community with nature and between man and woman. It is important to note that the subordinate position of women (3:16f.), which reflects the *de facto* situation of women in ancient society, is not something that was to be part of the original blessing of creation, but arises from human sinfulness. Alienation between the earth and humans (3:17–19) is likewise a result of sin. While the “work” of cultivating and caring for the earth is intrinsic to the human condition prior to sin, “toil” is its consequence.

The narratives of Genesis 4–11 capture the ambivalence of the human condition. As civilization grows through the multiplication of occupations (farmers and shepherds) and through the invention of elements of culture (4:19–22), sin is depicted as “crouched at the door” (4:7), and humans continually overstep their limits. This culminates in the Tower of Babel, where humans attempt to invade the realm of God. Though a reprise of the attempt to be like gods, the narrative has political ramifications. Though set in “primeval time,” it receives its final form after the Babylonian exile. The fate of Babylon, with its pretensions of world rule and its idolatrous self-exaltation, only to be split apart by the onslaught of Cyrus, is reflected in the Tower of Babel. The spread of sin culminates in the idolatrous pretensions of national power.

These chapters of Genesis are also important for reflection on the somewhat controversial notion of “social sin.” The term was first used by theologians and derived from reflection on certain official church statements. While speaking of the economic, political, and social order in its decree on the Church in the modern world, Vatican II declared that “the structure of human affairs

is flawed by the consequences of sin" (*Gaudium et spes*, §25). The 1971 Synod of Bishops noted that the present-day situation of the world is marked by "the grave sin of injustice" (§29) and called for a renewal of heart "based on the recognition of sin in its individual and social manifestations" (§51). In their pastoral letter on racism, *Brothers and Sisters to Us* (Nov. 14, 1979), the U.S. bishops describe racism as social sin "in that each one of us in varying degrees, is responsible. All of us are in some measure accomplices" (*Origins* 9, No. 24 [Nov. 29, 1979]: 383–89). The 1986 letter of the United States bishops on the economy, "Economic Justice for All," said that the elite's exclusion of masses of people in developing countries from use of their own natural resources is a form of social sin (§77). In 1972 and 1973 Peter Henriot, S.J., wrote two important articles that focused attention on the issue of social sin and did much to introduce the term into contemporary theology (see below). Social sin came to be identified with structures of injustice, discrimination, or oppression in which men and women participate either by acting directly or by being passive accomplices.

Though Vatican and papal statements have cautioned that sin is primarily a freely chosen act of an individual, they have allowed for the term in an analogous or extended sense. (See especially the *Apostolic Exhortation on Reconciliation and Penance*, issued on Dec. 11, 1984, by Pope John Paul II in response to the 1983 Synod of Bishops [*Origins* 14, No. 27 (Dec. 20, 1984): 434–58, especially pp. 441f.].) Actually, the biblical notion of sin is primarily social and only gradually becomes individual. In the Genesis accounts sin is a power that "lurks at the door" (4:7) and spreads through humanity. The prophets indict the sins of groups rather than of individuals, as in the denunciations of the nations or the indictments of "the house of Israel" (Amos 1:3–2:16). Those judged at the end of Matthew (25:31–46) for neglect of the little ones are "nations" not individuals. Paul conceives of sin as a power that threatens to rule over people's lives (Rom. 5:12–21); and, in the Gospel of John, Jesus is the lamb who will take away the "sin of the world" (1:29; not "sins," as in the Latin translation "qui tollis peccata mundi").



The primeval history of Genesis 1–11 thus provides a rich resource for reflection on issues crucial to faith and justice. Men and women are God’s representatives and conversation partners in the world, with a fundamental dignity that must be respected and fostered. They are to exist in interdependence and mutual support and are to care for the world with respect, as for a gift received from God. Yet the human condition is flawed by a drive to overstep the limits of the human situation and to claim autonomous power. The result of this is violence (Cain and Abel) and idolatry (the Tower of Babel). The Genesis narrative functions both as a normative description of the human condition before God and a critical principle against any power which distorts or usurps the dignity of humanity or God’s claim over men and women.

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15. ———. *Genesis: A Practical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987. Along with *Creation*, this offers a fine digest of Westermann's exegesis.
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## **Exodus: The Leading Out from Egypt**

The primeval history is followed by the patriarchal history (Gen. 12–50), which begins with God's call and covenant with Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 12:1–9, 15:1–21, 17:1–27); these constitute the foundation narrative for the emergence of Israel as a people. The subsequent stories of the children of Abraham describe how God's promise is maintained through adversity. Though these narratives are foundational, it is the narratives of Exodus and Sinai which constitute Israel's identity. I will offer some reflections on the Exodus and discuss covenant in the context of the Sinai covenant.

The Exodus from Egypt (Exod. 1:1–15:21) has emerged as one of the most dominant biblical events for a biblical theology of liberation from evil and unjust social structures. There are two dangers here: the first, that a too generalized statement of its

meaning absolves people from close attention to the rich theological dimensions of the text; the second, that the Exodus is considered in isolation from other biblical themes. While liberation from oppression is a fundamental aspect of the Exodus narrative, it is not simply freedom from which is important, but freedom for the formation of a community which lives under the covenant. As Michael Walzer says, the journey of Israel is to a "bonded freedom." Exodus and covenant, liberation and commitment, must be taken together as part of one process.

The narrative falls roughly into the following divisions: (a) the oppression of the Hebrew people (1:1-2:22); (b) the preparation of Moses as the agent of liberation (2:23-7:7); (c) the plagues on Egypt, culminating in the death of Egypt's firstborn (7:8-13:16); and (d) the crossing of the sea, the destruction of the Egyptian armies, and the hymn of Miriam (13:17-15:21).

The description of Israel's bondage has become paradigmatic of oppression. In fulfillment of the promise to Abraham and through no action of their own, other than fulfilling God's command to be fruitful and multiply, the people grow numerous and become a threat to a dominant power. The initial response is one of massive forced labor. Maimonides (A.D. 1135-1204) described this as service without limits of time or purpose (Walzer, *Exodus*, 27). The second major threat, the killing of the male children, is in effect genocide. The people's identity will be slowly but surely destroyed. Theologically, it is a challenge to the fidelity of God manifest in the promises to Abraham.

Though it is customary to mark the beginning of the liberation from the birth of Moses (Exod. 2:1-20), the "revolt of the midwives" (1:15-22) is an important paradigm of resistance to oppression. It is described briefly: "But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live" (1:17). These women, the daughters of Eve, the mother of all the living, commissioned to bring forth life in the world, reject the murderous command of Pharaoh. They do this in light of a higher law ("fearing God" [1:17, 21]). Therefore "God



dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and became very strong." On the narrative level they allow the promise to continue and also prepare for the rescue of Moses from death (2:1-10).

The process of liberation continues with the "liberation" of the liberator. The agent of liberation must suffer the same fate as that of the people (threat of death, life as an alien in an alien land [Exod. 2:15, 3:22]). At the same time the liberator must be equipped to meet the threat (3:1-11) and be the agent of a higher power (4:10f.). Liberation is a power struggle between humans and their oppressors, but more fundamentally between God and the powers opposed to God.

The theophany at the burning bush and the call of Moses proclaim that liberation is fundamentally an act of God. God's action begins in 2:24 ("God heard their groaning and remembered his covenant") and is detailed in 3:7-12, which is a virtual summary of the identity of Yahweh as the compassionate God who enters human history. Immediately after the revelation of the name, Yahweh says, "I have observed the misery of the people; I have heard their cry; indeed I know their sufferings; I have come down to deliver them" (3:7-12; see also, "By the tender mercy [compassion] of our God the dawn from on high will break upon us" [Luke 1:78]).

The liberation itself unfolds through the sequence of ten plagues, divided into three triads culminating in the killing of the Egyptian firstborn and the "passing over" of the firstborn of Israel. In the plagues nature itself turns against the Egyptians, almost in revulsion for their oppression of God's people. As the plagues escalate, the issue again becomes the nature of God and the usurpation of divine power. In 9:16-17a God speaks through Moses to Pharaoh: "This is why I let you live: to show you my power, and to make my name resound through all the earth. You are still exalting yourself against my people."

In the final plague, the Passover (11:1-13:16), the "P" source (12:1-38) becomes prominent, showing that the narrative

had become “the cult legend” for the later celebration of Passover. Here the Exodus receives the character of *anamnesis*, something to be re-presented and celebrated annually. Thus it continues to shape the identity of the people and reveal the nature God.

I will offer a few observations on Exodus as a paradigm of liberation. Liberation is a power struggle in which the issues of oppression are progressively highlighted. Pharaoh begins with concern about the growth of an alien population, but his real concern is whether he will be their “god” or whether they will be free to worship the one who called their ancestors. Oppression and idolatry are never far apart. Liberation does not come from the most oppressed members of the community. Moses is nurtured at the center of Egypt’s power and is equipped to enter its world. Through his own “conversion” and preparation by God, he becomes a prophet, one who speaks for God and for a people without a voice (see also, “Never since has there arisen a prophet like Moses” [Deut. 34:10]). Yet, as I will note below, “liberation” is but one aspect of a true concept of freedom. Israel’s journey is “from liberation to freedom,” which is the ultimate theme of the wilderness wandering and the covenant at Sinai.

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### Wilderness Wandering and the Covenant at Sinai

In the sweep of salvation history, the people of Israel are on a journey to the land of promise from Exodus 13:17 through the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, where Moses dies on Mt. Nebo gazing into a land he will not enter (Deut. 34:1-8). The long narrative thus becomes the context for interpreting how the liberated people are to live in community before God, and it constitutes the substance of the different law codes incorporated in this section. These represent traditions dating from the early nomadic origins of Israel to the latest post-exilic redaction of the material. It is as if the American Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, its Amendments, and the corpus of Supreme Court decisions were gathered into one book and all dated at the same time. Yet, in final canonical shape these Israelite codes are the *Torah*, the document that is the "constitution" of the people.

Of fundamental importance is the bracketing of the sojourn at Sinai (Exod. 19:1-Num. 10:10) by stories of the rebellions of the people in the wilderness. Examples would be Exodus 16f. (the gift of Manna and the water from the rock), Num. 11:16-34 (the revolt of the elders against Moses), and Num. 16:1-40 (the revolt of Dathan and Abiram). This is the root of the later ambivalence of "the wilderness" in Israel's traditions. It is the place of betrothal

and first love (Sinai) and simultaneously the place of corporate disobedience.

The initial grumblings of the people center around a nostalgic remembrance of the "soft life" in Egypt, where slavery at least provided life's necessities (Exod. 15:24, 16:3, 17:3). The challenge they face at Sinai is to be transformed from a "liberated" people to a free, responsible people. Walzer, citing Rousseau, states that Moses' great achievement was to transform a herd of "wretched fugitives" who lacked virtue and courage into a "free people." They are challenged to adopt a way of life which is not freedom from regulation but rather a "bondage in freedom," consisting of freely chosen obligations (Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*, 53).

These initial soundings of the wilderness traditions are important for a proper liberation theology. Though beginning as a power struggle, liberation is a process rather than an event. Freedom from external oppression brings with it the challenge of mature appropriation of freedom through adoption of a way of life that, as we will see, does not reproduce the very evils which have been overthrown. As Norbert Lohfink states so cogently (see below), Israel is brought out of Egypt to form "a contrast society," not to reproduce the Egyptian mode of governance. For this reason principally I would argue that liberation cannot be the center or sole focus of biblical revelation. St. Paul will tell the Galatians, "For freedom Christ has set us free" (Gal. 5:1), and then list a whole series of virtues which describe walking in the Spirit or living in freedom (Gal. 5:22-26). Too often the experience of oppression and the cry for liberation can produce a "moral holiday" for other virtues, during which the perceived oppressor is so demonized that, as Paolo Freire noted, those oppressed take on the attitudes of the oppressors. The sad current upheavals in the newly liberated nations of Eastern Europe show that liberation from an oppressive power is no guarantee of true freedom.

## Covenant and Law

A covenant is basically “a formal agreement or treaty between two parties with each assuming some obligations” (Jeremiah Unterman, *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, 190). As is generally known, the Bible contains two major covenant forms. The first, modeled on the Hittite suzerainty treaty, contains a preamble, historical prologue, stated obligations, blessings, and often some stated symbol of ratification. Exodus 19–24 and Joshua 24 are influenced by this pattern. When broken, such covenants must be renewed. The second are “people of destiny” covenants, which cannot be broken and which express God’s unaltered choice of an individual who will bear the destiny of the people (for instance, Gen. 17 [Abraham], 2 Sam. 7:1–17; see also Ps. 89:1–13 [the Davidic king]). The importance of covenant to considerations of justice is twofold: (a) in the covenant context Israel’s distinctive understandings of law and justice emerge; and (b) the covenant reveals a God who wishes people to live in a community combining worship and obedience to him with care for neighbor, a God who remains faithful even when people break the covenant. Only in this context are conversion and change of heart a constant demand and possibility.

## The Meaning of Justice

In my essay in *The Faith That Does Justice*, I attempted to describe the elusive biblical concept of *ṣědāqāh*/*ṣedeq* (with some allusion to its related concept of *mišpāṭ*). I stated there that *ṣědāqāh* is used for a wide variety of things. Some examples would be “God who has led me by the right way” (Gen. 24:48), “just” weights (Lev. 19:36), “You shall have honest balances, honest weights, an honest ephah . . . (Deut. 25:15), “You shall have only a full and honest measure (see Ezek. 45:10), “just” sacrifices (Deut. 33:19; Ps. 4:5, 51:19). Scales are “just” when they give fair measure; paths are “just” when they get you where you should be going. “Justice” is also used in the sense of “victory” or



saving act: "They repeat the triumphs (*šidqôth*) of the Lord" (Judg. 5:11) and "all the saving deeds of the Lord" (1 Sam. 12:7).

God is frequently characterized as "just" (2 Chron. 12:6; Neh. 9:8; Pss. 7:9, 103:17, 116:5; Isa. 30:18; Jer. 9:24), seeking and loving justice (Isa. 61:8; Pss. 11:7, 33:5, 37:38, 99:4); and justice is one of the stipulations of the covenant (Hos. 2:21, see below, and Jer. 9:23f.). The Bible speaks of a just individual who is in "right relation" to God and others, with a special concern for those "others" who are powerless or marginal (Job 4:3-4, 29:12-16, 31:16-19; Prov. 31:9).

Justice conveys the sense of "rightness" or "integrity," things being as they should be. It is often associated with other concepts such as *šālôm* ("peace"), fidelity, and loving kindness.

Ps. 85:11: Kindness and truth shall meet (*ḥesed . . . 'ēmet*); justice and peace shall kiss (*šēdāqāh . . . šālôm*).

Isa. 32:16: Right (*mišpāṭ*) will dwell in the desert and justice (*šēdāqāh*) in the orchard.

17: Justice will bring about peace;  
right (*šēdāqāh*) will produce calm and security.

Isa. 60:17: I will appoint peace your governor  
and justice your ruler.

In Hos. 2:21 justice is one of the qualities of God's covenant with the people, which leads to proper knowledge of God.

I will espouse you to me forever;  
I will espouse you in right and justice (*bē šedeq . . .  
bē mišpāṭ*);  
in love (*bē ḥesed*) and in mercy (*bē raḥāimîm*)  
I will espouse you in fidelity (*be 'ēmūnāh*)  
and you shall know the Lord.

See also Jeremiah 22:15f., where the doing of justice is equated with knowledge of the Lord.

In 1977 I defined justice as "fidelity to the demands of a relationship." God is just when he acts as God should, defending or vindicating his people or punishing violations of the covenant.



People are just when they are in right relationship to God and to other humans. My earlier reflections should be supplemented by the reflections of J. P. M. Walsh (*Mighty*, 1-12). Walsh underscores the social dimension of *šedeq* by describing it as “consensus” about what is right. People in all societies have some innate sense of this, even though it differs in concrete situations. Biblical revelation of *šedeq* involves the consensus which is to shape God’s people. More carefully than I, Walsh relates *šedeq* to *mišpāṭ*, the implementation of justice (*šedeq*) by action (juridical or otherwise). Finally, he treats *nāqām* (literally, “vengeance”) as the process by which “consensus” or sense of rightness is restored. The thrust of Walsh’s whole work is that the biblical tradition gives a different vision of these seminal concepts than does the modern liberal tradition. In the biblical traditions these terms define a consensus against the misuse of power and disclose a God who is on the side of the marginal.

In premonarchic Israel the responsibility for justice in the society was laid on the whole community. With the advent of the monarchy and under the influence of Ancient Near Eastern royal ideology, the king, as God’s vice-regent, enforces justice in the land and is the protector of the marginal. (See Psalm 89 for a virtual “job description” of the king, especially 89:14: “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne”; see also Pss. 45:8; 72, especially vv. 3f.; 85:11, 99:14.) Kings are judged good when they fulfill this mandate and evil when neglecting it (Jer. 21:11f., 22:13-17; Mic. 3:9-11).

The distinctive understandings of justice are revealed in the law codes of Israel, especially in their concern for the powerless in the community. Though examining the history and scope of the law codes is beyond the purpose of this essay, I will mention a few things which are important for a biblical foundation of social justice today.

The codes themselves comprise (1) “Covenant Code” (Exod. 20:22-23:33), parts of which date from northern Israel in the ninth century B.C. and reflect premonarchic rural life, though, like the

rest of the Pentateuch, it receives its final shape after the exile; (2) the decalogue, found in two versions (Exod. 20:1-17 and Deut. 5:6-21), which represent early covenant law; (3) the Deuteronomic Code (Deut. 12-26), which embodies traditions from the seventh century B.C., and perhaps from Josiah's reform, but which was incorporated into the full-blown "Deuteronomic history" only after the exile; (4) the Holiness Code (Lev. 17-26), put together after the exile and often attributed to priestly circles. This last-mentioned code is also similar to the thought of Ezekiel.

I will confine my comments on the legal texts to those sections that deal with the powerless (often made concrete as the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the stranger in the land).

Norbert Lohfink (whom I follow extensively here) has cautioned against viewing concern for the poor and for others who are powerless as unique to Israel's faith. A survey of a number of Mesopotamian texts (such as the code of Hammurabi) and Egyptian wisdom texts shows a similar concern for *personæ miseræ*, with the exception of care for "the stranger in the land," which is distinctive to Israel. While the content of concern is similar, the foundation and motivation are different. In Israel care for such persons is part of the "contrast society" that is created through the Exodus. Also in Israel this concern functions more as a critical principle against the misuse of power, while in some of the surrounding cultures it is a way in which those in power dampen down revolutionary tendencies of the people and thus maintain a divinely sanctioned hierarchy of power. Also, as Paul Hanson notes, in Israel responsibility for the well-being of such people devolves on the covenant community as a whole and not simply on the king.

Concern for the powerless emerges first as part of the "Covenant Code" (see above). For our purposes the first important section is Exodus 22:21-27. Here God says, "You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt" (v. 21; note the motivation of a contrast society). The following verse proscribes abuse of the widow and the orphan,

with the promise that God will heed their cry and “kill with the sword” their oppressors; and the section concludes with the prohibition of lending to the poor at interest and the command to restore a neighbor’s coat taken in surety for a loan. Here also the motivation is God in his role as the protector of the poor: “And if your neighbor cries out to me, I will listen, for I am compassionate” (Exod. 22:27). The next section contains a series of laws on the proper administration of justice. One of the first states, “You shall not side with the majority so as to pervert justice, nor shall you be partial to the poor in a lawsuit” (Exod. 23:2). The prohibition of “partiality” to the poor in the specific context of a lawsuit does not contradict the concern for the marginal, since verse 6 immediately thereafter commands that “you shall not pervert the justice due to the poor in their lawsuits” (there is no corresponding statement on the rich or powerful), and 23:9 repeats the protection of the alien. In verses 10f., in a more cultic setting, the code mandates a sabbath year of leaving the land fallow, “so that the poor may eat.”

The second major block of legal material dealing with the poor comes from the Deuteronomic legislation of Deuteronomy 12–26. Norbert Lohfink points out that the ideal in the Covenant Code of a contrast society without oppression and poverty was in fact not realized, and locates Deuteronomy in this context. While retaining an ideal that “there will be no one in need among you, because the Lord is sure to bless you” (15:4; see also Acts 4:34), Deuteronomy realistically states, “There will never cease to be some in need on the earth,” and commands, “Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in the land” (15:11). More strongly than the other codes, Deuteronomy commands justice and compassion for the powerless (Deut. 15:1–18, 24:10–15, 26:11f.). The historical significance of Deuteronomy is that it offers evidence for a continuing concern in Israel’s law for the *personæ miseræ*, a concern that attempts to institutionalize the covenant ideal through law and practice. The significance of Deuteronomy in its present canonical location is that it is cast in the form of farewell speeches from Moses to the people on the brink of the promised land. The



land is God's gift on condition of fidelity to the covenant ("These are the statutes and ordinances that you must diligently observe in the land the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has given you to occupy" [Deut. 12:1]). When read after the exile, it can be seen as a warning against an infidelity that allows the kind of society to develop which is in opposition to the Exodus event and the Sinai Covenant.

The Holiness Code (Lev. 17-26) contains provisions similar to Deuteronomy. In 19:9f. and 23:22 gleanings from the harvest are to be left for "the poor and the alien," though, as Lohfink points out, specific mention is not made of "the widow and the orphan," who now seem to be subsumed under "the poor." The Holiness Code has spelled out in detail other provisions for the poor, very often for those who have come suddenly upon hard times (Lev. 25:35-42, 47-52). Leviticus is also more concerned with the details of repayment of debts and cultic offerings made by the poor (Lev. 12:8=Luke 2:24). The significance of Leviticus is twofold. First, though it is primarily a cultic code concerned with the holiness of the people and the means to assure that holiness, it manifests a practical concern for the poor of the land. As John Gammie has shown in his excellent study, there is no tension between Israel's concern to be a holy people, consecrated to God, and a people concerned about justice. Secondly, and perhaps less positively, Leviticus seems to represent a relaxation of some of the earlier provisions for the poor. Lohfink argues that the stipulations of the Jubilee (Lev. 25:8-17, 23-25; 27:16-25) where debts are canceled every fiftieth year would hardly benefit the majority of people who lived in poverty, and that they represent a step back from the sabbath-year legislation of Deuteronomy. The Holiness Code may also reflect the radically changed postexilic political situation, when the monarchy was extinct and people had limited ability to enshrine the ideals of the covenant in law. This period also represents the beginning of apocalyptic thought, when many groups took their hope of God's justice and a society free of oppression and poverty and projected it toward a new heaven and a new earth that would be ushered in by cosmic cataclysm.



The events of salvation history, especially the Exodus from Egypt and the covenant at Sinai, are thus the foundations in Israel of a society that seeks justice and manifests concern for the marginal. This concern is incorporated in law and custom, which take different shapes in different historical circumstances, stretching over five centuries. As founding documents not only of the historical people of Israel but of the Christian Church, they offer a vision of life in society before God which is to inform religious belief and social practice. The laws of Israel have two great values. First, they show that religious belief must be translated into law and custom which guide life in community and protect the vulnerable. Paul Hanson states this well in describing *Torah* as "faith coming to expression in communal forms and structures" (*The People Called*, 47). Second, although these traditions do not offer concrete directives for our complex socioeconomic world, they offer a vision of a "contrast society" not ruled by power and greed, where the treatment of the marginal becomes the touchstone of "right relationship" to God. Christians and Jesuits today must ask soberly how our lives provide a contrast society and whether, when we think of our "right relation" to God, the concerns of the marginal in our own time have been really made concrete in our attitudes and style of life.

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## The Prophetic Concern for the Poor and Powerless

Let me precede this section with a word about terminology. The focus of this survey is on those writings which speak of concern for the marginal or powerless, often described globally as "the poor." The biblical tradition has a number of words for the poor. At the risk of seeming overly technical, I will indicate five of these.

1. *ʿānî* (plural, *ʿāniyyîm*) probably derives from a root *ʿnh*, meaning "bent down" or "afflicted"; it occurs eighty times in the OT; in the Greek translation of the OT (= LXX), it is translated by *ptōchos* ("beggar" or "destitute person") thirty-eight times, by *penēs* or *penichros* ("needy person") thirteen times, by *tapeinos* ("lowly"; see also Luke 1:52) nine times, or by *prais* ("gentle") four times.



2. *ʿānāw* (plural *ʿānāwīm*), derived from the same root as *ʿānî* and often confused by copyists (for example, at Qumran), is used twenty-five times; it is most often translated by *tapeinos* and *praüs* (“humble” and “lowly”), but also by *ptōchos* and *penēs*.

3. *ʿebyôn* (the term “Ebionites” derives from this), whose root is a very debated question, comes from a word meaning “lack” or “need” or “wretched,” “miserable”; it is used sixty-one times in the OT (especially twenty-three times in Psalms) and appears often in a stereotyped formula with *ʿānî*; for example, in Deuteronomy 24:14; Jeremiah 22:16; Ezekiel 16:49, 18:12, 22:29; it is translated by the LXX as *penēs* twenty-nine times, as *ptōchos* ten times, and as *adynatos* (“powerless”) four times.

4. *dal*, coming from a term meaning “be bent over,” “bent down,” or “miserable”, is used forty-eight times; and the LXX translates it as *ptōchos* twenty-three times, as *penēs/penichros* ten times, as *asthenēs* (“weak” or “sick”) five times. It is also used in synonymous parallelism with *ʿānî* (Isa. 10:2, 26:6; Zeph. 3:12; Pss. 72:13, 82:3; Job 34:28; Prov. 22:22) and *ʿebyôn* (1 Sam. 2:8; Isa. 14:30; Amos 2:7, 4:1, 5:11; Pss. 72:13, 82:4, 113:7).

5. *rāš* means “poor” in a derogatory sense, with overtones of a lazy person responsible for his or her own poverty. It is not found in the Pentateuch or Prophets, but in the Wisdom literature (for example, Prov. 10:4, 13:23, 14:20, 19:7, 28:3).

The New Testament vocabulary is not as rich, using almost exclusively *ptōchos* about thirty-five times; for *penēs*, see 1 Corinthians 9:9; for *penichros*, Luke 21:2; for *tapeinos*, Luke 1:52; Matthew 11:29; Romans 12:16; James 1:9, 4:6.

The importance of the terminology is twofold. First, it shows that “poverty” was not itself a value. Even etymologically the poor are bent down, wretched, and beggars. While the Bible has great concern for “the poor,” poverty itself is an evil. Secondly, the terminology (as well as the actual use) is a caution against misuse of the phrase “spiritually poor.” Though later literature (the psalms and Qumran) often equate the poor with the humble or meek and though the poor are those people open to God, in



contrast to idolatrous or blind rich people, the “prime analogue” of the term is an economic condition. When the “poor in spirit” are praised, as in Matthew 5:3, it is because, in addition to their material poverty, they are open to God’s presence and love. Certain contemporary usages of “spiritual poverty,” which allow it to be used of extremely wealthy people who are unhappy even amid prosperity, are not faithful to the biblical tradition. Nor is an idea of “spiritual poverty” as indifference to riches amid wealth faithful to the Bible. The “poor” in the Bible are almost without exception powerless people who experience economic and social deprivation (see especially the article by Soares Prabhu).

### The Prophets and the Call for Justice

When a people forget their origins or lose sight of the ideals, figures arise who often speak a strident message to summon them to return to God. In Israel’s history the prophetic movement represents such a phenomenon. The prophet, as the Greek etymology of the name suggests (*pro-phēmi*), speaks on behalf of another. This has a dual sense. The prophet speaks on behalf of God; he or she is a “forth teller,” one who also speaks on behalf of those who have no one to speak for them, specifically, the powerless and poor in the land.

Like all topics treated in this essay, prophecy is a mine field of historical and literary problems, so I will limit my reflections to a few introductory comments and then highlight some prophetic texts (now quite familiar to most Jesuits) that bear on the faith that does justice.

For many decades the social teaching of Israel was virtually identified with the prophetic message. There is a danger in this when prophetic religion was often contrasted to a religion of law or was seen as a criticism of all cultic activity. The reduction of the religion of Israel to prophetic ethics often fostered an undercurrent of anti-Semitism, since postbiblical Judaism was and remains heavily centered on *Torah*. The attitude developed among some Christian scholars that the Judaism after the prophets was a

decline into legalism. Also the somewhat naive interpretation of the prophets as anticultic was often seen as justification for the reduction of religious life to social activism or a neglect of communal liturgical life.

Recent research on the prophets has underscored a number of considerations of importance in assessing the prophetic texts that I will list below.

- 1. The prophets are generally “conservative” in the best sense of the word. They harken back to the originating experiences of Israel to counter the corrupting influences of urbanization and centralized power that developed under the monarchy, especially after the split between the northern kingdom (Israel) and the southern kingdom (Judea) following the death of Solomon (922 B.C.). Their works are also a collection of traditions, some going back to the originally named prophets, others additions by disciples and later editors. Much recent research has attempted to describe these levels of tradition.

- 2. The prophets are not opposed to cultic worship, but to its corruption. Jeremiah was the son of a priest, Isaiah used cultic imagery associated with the Jerusalem temple, and Ezekiel was steeped in the cult. Recent research on Amos, often popularly portrayed as a “righteous peasant,” has suggested some contact with the Jerusalem temple.

- 3. In assessing the prophetic texts on justice and concern for the marginal, we must give careful attention to the literary context of a given text, but more importantly, to its historical context. Amos, for example, prophesied at the northern court shortly before the fall of Samaria to the Assyrians (721 B.C.). During this time, however, the northern kingdom experienced material prosperity. Under Solomon’s rule a more prosperous upper class had emerged. This created a class with a vested interest in the accumulation of land and goods as capital. The old emphasis disappeared that regarded the land as the inheritance of every Israelite (see 1 Kings 21, the story of Naboth’s vineyard). James L. Mays describes this as “the shift of the primary social good, land,

from the function of support to that of capital; the reorientation of social goals from personal values to personal profit; to subordination of judicial process to the interests of the entrepreneur" ("Justice," 9). Amos's harsh words against the prosperous must be set in this context.

Isaiah of Jerusalem (Isa. 1–39) flourishes roughly during the same period. His political message to the southern kings is to avoid the kinds of political entanglement that would ultimately spell the downfall of the northern kingdom. Though Isaiah is eloquent on the demand for justice, his motivation is different from those of Amos or Hosea. The controlling principle of much of Isaiah's teaching was his conviction of the holiness and kingly power of God. Oppression of the weaker members of the community offended Yahweh's holiness, so Isaiah vehemently criticizes injustice (see below).

- 4. Though the prophets criticize the misuse of power by those in authority, their message is reformist rather than revolutionary. They do not envision a community without a king or without laws and statutes. During the bulk of the postexilic period—especially after the codification of the law under Ezra and Nehemiah, when the people lack their own kings and live under the successive rule of the Persians, under the successors of Alexander, and finally under the Romans—prophecy as a movement within Judaism virtually ceases. Biblical prophecy required a shared heritage of values by the rulers and the ruled, even when those in power did not live up to these values. When a people have no control over their destiny and are subject to brutal power, prophecy can take the form only of protest, not of a call to reform.



## Principal Prophetic Texts Which Deal with Justice and Concern for the Marginal

### *Pre-exilic Prophetic Texts*

▶ **Amos** (c. 750 B.C. from south [Tekoa]; he prophesied in the north against Israel). *Texts:* Amos 2:6-4:13 (strong criticisms of the life-style and exploitative practices of the upper classes); 5:10-6:14 (summons to justice and conversion).

▶ **Isaiah** (between 740-701 B.C. in Jerusalem, during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; see 2 Kings 14:23-20:20). *Texts:* Criticism of injustice: 1:10-17, 21-26; 3:13-15; 5:1-10, 20-23; 10:1-4; 32:6f. Isaiah also criticizes false religion (1:12-17; see Isaiah 58) and calls God the "stronghold of the poor" (25:5). In his eschatological section he looks to a time when the meek will obtain fresh joy in the Lord and the poor shall exult in the holy one of Israel (29:19f.; see Matt. 5:3f.). Yet Isaiah speaks of the power of conversion (1:18f., 26f.) and of hope in an ideal king (2:2-4, 9:1-7, 11:1-9).

▶ **Micah** (c. 725-701 B.C. from Moresheth in Judah; he attacked the Jerusalem leaders). *Texts:* 2:1-11, 3:9-12, 5:3-8 (note especially the recollection of Exod. 7:1-3). "The prophet knows at firsthand about the expulsion of small landholders from their traditional means of livelihood, dishonest business practices, venal priests and prophets, and a royal regime that connives in the oppression of the poor."<sup>1</sup>

▶ **Hosea** (fl. c. 745-721), the sole "writing prophet" from the north. More than the "southern" prophets, he draws on the early traditions of Israel, but contains few sayings dealing with social ills. Hosea speaks against idolatry and syncretism and summons the people to return to the first love they experienced from God in the wilderness. Apart from the covenant formulation men-

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<sup>1</sup> N. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 375.

tioned above (Hos. 2:19-21), only his summons to Ephraim in 10:12-14, to "sow for yourselves righteousness," and his criticism of their trust in "your power and in the multitude of your warriors" (10:13) reflect social concerns found in the other prophets.

▶ **Jeremiah** (c. 626-586 B.C.), prophet of Josiah's (639-609) Deuteronomistic reform (2 Kings 23); his historical context was one of turmoil. *Texts*: Jer. 5:20-31, especially v. 28; 22:13-17.

▶ **Zephaniah** (from reign of Josiah, 640-09). *Text*: Zephaniah 3:11-13; the importance of this text is that it pronounces the whole people as the "poor and lowly."

### *Exilic and Postexilic Prophetic Texts*

▶ **Ezekiel** (593-571 B.C.). *Texts*: 16:49, 18:5-18, 22:28-31, 34:1-31.

▶ **Deutero-Isaiah** (Isa. 40-55) and **Trito-Isaiah** (Isa. 56-66). The oracles of Dt-Isa seem to date from the period just before 539 B.C., that is, the restoration under Cyrus, while Tr-Isa reflects the postexilic period. *Texts*: Isa. 41:17, 51:21-23, 58:1-9 (the true fast), 61:1-7 (see Luke 4:16-19), 66:2.

▶ **Zechariah** (c. 520-18 B.C.). *Text*: 7:8-14.

## *Bibliographies on the Poor and the Prophets*

### *The Poor*

See also the works of Lohfink, #38 above.

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### Israel After the Exile: A New Situation

Above I alluded to significant changes in Israelite life after the Babylonian exile: 597 B.C., deportation of upper classes to Babylon; 587 and 582, other deportations; 539, return under Cy-

rus. The subsequent period is generally divided into the Persian period (539–332) and the Hellenistic Period (332–175), followed by a brief period of independence under the Hasmonean kings (175–63), which yielded to Roman rule either under client kings (Herod and his sons) or Roman prefects (in Judea). This period also witnessed the rise of a large corpus of “intertestamental writings” (Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha) which are important for the history of ideas and as a background to the NT, even though most are not part of the Jewish and Christian canon.

With conscious oversimplification I would like to highlight three considerations in regard to concern for the poor. First, during this period the sense of individual responsibility develops (Ezek. 18:1–32, 33:1–20), with the consequent focus on the justice or right relation of the individual to God. Second, there is the expansion of “apocalyptic” literature. Here the hope for God’s saving justice is removed from history and reserved for the end of history, when the wicked will be punished and the just rewarded. Allied to this are attacks with increasing invective and vehemence against the wealthy (for example, 1 Enoch 92–105). The third consideration is the expansion of “wisdom literature”; for example, the Wisdom of Solomon and Ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), couched in the form of maxims or sayings, many of which describe how to survive and succeed in everyday life. This literature shows a much stronger influence of Hellenism than the apocalyptic literature and may originate among the growing number of city dwellers engaged in commerce and in the governmental bureaucracy. Alexander DiLella, for example, suggests that today Ben Sirach might have an appointment in a business school. Such complex social developments in postexilic Israel would explain the seemingly contradictory attitudes toward wealth and poverty characterizing this period.

Again, riding the tide of oversimplification, I would like to propose a few summary statements on rich and poor in the Bible.

- 1. The “poor” are primarily the sociologically poor. They are the economically destitute and the socially outcast, typified by the

characteristic biblical figures of exploited powerlessness—the widow, the orphan, and the refugee (Soares-Prabhu, 326). In contemporary parlance the poor would better be described as “the powerless.”

- 2. The poor have a special claim on the community and its leaders; they are “just” because they do not follow the evil ways of the rich and powerful. Both the king and the whole people are obliged to seek justice, which involves being on the side of the poor and the powerless. This perspective informs all of Israel’s traditions in all stages of its history.

- 3. Riches are both a danger and an evil. Often they are associated with idolatry and oppressions (see especially Ps. 10). They present a temptation to secure one’s life apart from God (see Luke 12:13–21) or cause blindness in the face of the needy neighbor (Luke 16:19–31). Compare the standard of Satan in the *Spiritual Exercises*: “the lust of riches,” “the empty honor of the world,” and “unbounded pride.”

### *Selection of Texts Showing the Status of the Poor in the Postexilic Period*

- ▶ **Psalms** 10; 34:6; 37:14; 41:1; 69:33; 72:1, 4, 12–14; 82:1–4; 109:16–22; 112:9; 113:7; 132:14. At times in the psalms the poor are identified with the humble or those open to God. They are, however, subject to oppression and persecution by the wicked and the greedy (see especially Ps. 10). They are examples of the economically poor who are also spiritually poor, in the sense of placing their hope in God.

- ▶ **Proverbs.** Different strains are present: (1) Poverty is an evil brought about by humans (usually by sloth): Prov. 6:9–11 (= 24:33–34); 10:4, 15; 20:13; 21:17; 23:21. (2) It is a misfortune to be poor: 10:15, 13:8, 14:20, 19:4, 19:7, 19:22, 22:7, 28:3, 30:8f. (3) The poor are victimized by the powerful: 10:15, 13:23, 18:23, 22:7, 28:15, 30:13f. (4) God is “on the side of” the poor and wants justice for them: 14:31, 17:5, 19:17, 21:13, 22:2, 22:9, 22:22f., 28:27, 29:14,



31:9. (5) Riches can be evil and poverty can foster righteousness: 16:19; 19:1; 19:22; 22:16; 28:6; 28:11; 29:7; 31:9, 20.

► **Ben Sirach** (also called Ecclesiasticus) was written about 180 B.C. in Jerusalem by an instructor of wealthy youths; it was translated into Greek about 132 B.C. by the author's grandson. *Texts* which continue concern for the poor: 4:1-10; 7:32; 10:19-11:1; 21:5; 29:9, 22; 30:14; 31:1-11; 34:20-22; 35:13-20; 38:19; *Texts* which have a negative view of the poor: 13:3f., 19-23; 18:32f.; 25:2.

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and Other Postexilic Literature***

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## The New Testament

### Introduction

The canonical NT books emerged in less than a century; and their social, political, and cultural contexts were far less diverse than those of the OT and intertestamental literature. Yet many Christians today are somewhat like the second-century heretic Marcion, who rejected the OT; they often want to ground their ethics in the NT, to the neglect of the Hebrew Scriptures. I will select five areas of consideration where there have been significant discussions of issues lending themselves to questions of social justice. This means that the Gospel and letters of John are overlooked. Though there are significant sections, especially 1 John 3:11-18, that bear directly on issues of social justice, the Johannine writings thus far have not been the subject of intense discussion by those interested in NT social ethics. The areas I will deal with are (1) the teaching and ministry of Jesus, (2) Jewish Christianity as manifest in the Gospel of Matthew and in the Letter of James, (3) the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, (4) the letters of Paul, and (5) the Book of Revelation.

#### 1. The Teaching and Ministry of Jesus

While it is axiomatic to say that Jesus was not a social reformer, his teachings and actions had strong social implications during his lifetime and continue to shape the consciences of his followers today. A key to his life is his use of either explicit terms or parables to proclaim the imminence of God's reign or king-

dom. He also brings about the kingdom by performing acts of power (healings and exorcisms) and by associating with and offering God's love to "the marginal" of his day, especially tax collectors and sinners.

Many scholars today locate Jesus' teaching in the wider context of different "restorationist" movements alive in Palestine. Jesus is seen as summoning people to a renewed dedication to the primacy of God in their lives and to a deepened concern for their neighbor (the dual command of love). This command of love is made perfect in love and forgiveness of one's enemies. The God disclosed by Jesus makes his sun shine on the good and the bad. Jesus' teaching breaks down the penchant people have for dividing the world into clearly identifiable friends and enemies, outsiders and insiders.

Like many of his contemporaries, Jesus hoped for the intervention of God in history in the near future (imminent eschatology), yet he proclaimed that the reign of God had already begun in his teaching and action and that people were to live in response to it (eschatology in the process of realization). The eschatological thrust of Jesus' teaching (and later of Paul's) should not be invoked to undermine its effective impact (as if the nearness of the end made ethical behavior superfluous); rather it is "a view from the future" of what life should be in the present. The fact that God's definitive reign is still in the future does not dispense us from living according to its norms and values in our everyday lives.

Jesus' teaching is a summons to a conversion which is to affect the way people live in the world. In Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer (6:9f.), Jesus prays that God's will be done and God's kingdom come on earth. In the beatitudes, which are also in the Q source, with high claims of authenticity, Jesus calls the poor and the oppressed "blessed," not because their actual condition is such, but because the kingdom that he proclaims and enacts will confront those values and conditions which have made them marginal. This was the great value of the massive studies of Jacques Dupont on the beatitudes that are summarized in the



essay mentioned above (in George, ed., *Gospel Poverty*). In all levels of this teaching, from the early "Q" source through the Lucan writings, response to the kingdom demands complete reliance on God rather than on power or wealth.

The kingdom as proclaimed by Jesus challenged the deep-seated expectations of his hearers. This is especially true in his parables, which contain frequent reversals; for example, those who worked only one hour received the same wage as those who had worked all day; Jesus says that one should invite not friends but unknown strangers gathered from the highways to a banquet; the hated outsider, a Samaritan, teaches the true meaning of love of neighbor; the prodigal is accepted as readily as the dutiful. These reversals challenge deeply held values and invite people to enter imaginatively into a different world, providing a paradigm for the manner in which a new vision of social justice can be presented to people today. (See especially Michael Cook, *Jesus' Parables*.)

Jesus' acceptance of marginal groups counters the evaluation of people by class and social status that was characteristic of first-century society. Also, by associating with those seen as ritually unclean and by being willing to break the law on their behalf, Jesus alienates the religious establishment of his day in such a way that he is both a political and a religious threat. By taking the side of these people, Jesus, like the OT prophets, gives a voice to the voiceless. Ultimately, Jesus dies a victim of a mode of execution reserved for those who were threats to the "public order," due to collusion between the Jerusalem temple authorities (whose power rested on proper subservience to Rome) and the Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate. Jesus' life is a paradigm of the cost of discipleship for those who take the side of the poor and the marginal. On Nov. 16, 1989, our Jesuit brothers and their co-workers in San Salvador again proclaimed this cost to the world.

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***Bibliography on the Life and Teaching of Jesus***

Before beginning, I will note that there has been an explosion of "Jesus books" in recent years, with more on the horizon. This survey will necessarily be selective.

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munity engaged in passive resistance to both Roman power and the violent strategy of the Zealots.

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92. Perkins, Pheme. *Love Commands in the New Testament*. New York/Ramsey: Paulist, 1982. An excellent popular treatment of all the major NT texts.
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99. \*Verhey, Alan. *The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984. An excellent survey of NT ethics, especially pages 1–33, on the ethics and politics of Jesus.

## 2. The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish Christianity Represented by James

My reason for joining these two works is that they reflect a similar background. Matthew, the most “Jewish” of the Gospels in its content, is written perhaps in opposition to Jewish movements at the end of the first century for a community composed of a great number of recent converts from Judaism. Similarly, James is directed at a Jewish Christian community with a theology heavily influenced by the OT. They are also similar in their common emphasis that belief and discipleship should be translated into action on behalf of powerless and poor people.

In Matthew this concern emerges in two ways. The long-recognized similarities between Jesus and Moses in Matthew would suggest that Sinai and the formation of a covenant community of responsible care for each other are a concern of Matthew. Matthew’s Jesus is also concerned about faith translated into action. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns against people who simply say “Lord, Lord” or who prophesy and cast out demons, but do not “bear fruit.” The true disciple is the one “who listens to these words of mine and acts upon them” (7:15–24). In the scathing denunciations of the Pharisees, who may also be “Christian” Pharisees in Matthew’s own community, Jesus contrasts external trappings of prestige and power with the service required of his disciples (23:1–11). The Pharisees are further castigated for stressing external observance or minutiae while neglecting the weightier things of the law, “justice, mercy, and faith” (23:23; see Hos. 2:21, where three of these are qualities of the covenant).

The section of Matthew most often invoked by a wide spectrum of Christians and non-Christians when engaged in a discussion of faith and justice is the “parable” of the Sheep and the Goats (25:31–46). Structurally, this contains the final words of Jesus before his passion and arches backward to the very beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, where suffering and persecuted people are pronounced blest by Jesus. The narrative is familiar.

In a scene of apocalyptic judgment, when the Son of man will return as king and summon all the nations of the world, they will be separated like sheep and goats, the former for eternal joy, the latter for eternal punishment. The criterion for judgment will be how they treated the king (Son of man) when he was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or in prison. When both the elect and the condemned question when or how they came to the aid of the king in these circumstances, he answers, "As often as you did this to the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it to me."

The story seems simple on first reading. Jesus is identified with suffering men and women, and any who care for them with or without explicit Christological motivation gain salvation. Yet in recent years a major debate has arisen between this "universalistic" reading and a reading proposed by a number of scholars and adopted by Daniel Harrington in his new commentary on Matthew (see #105 below). Basing himself principally on the argument that the "little ones" in Matthew are Christian disciples and that "brother or sister" is similarly used, he interprets the parable as a judgment on pagan nations that reject the proclamation of the missionary disciples, who are to announce the teaching of Jesus "to all the nations" (28:16-20). At present there are very competent scholars on both sides, with John Meier, among others, representing the "universalistic" view.

In an article in *Theological Studies* and in *The Gospel in Parable*, I presented a modified version of the "missionary" interpretation. I felt, as well, that the "universalistic" interpretation is a bit anachronistic. Matthew is a Jewish-Christian work directed at people who believe that goodness comes from following God's word and the teaching of Jesus. The idea of the "anonymous Christian" behind the "universalistic" interpretation would be foreign to Matthew. Basically, I argued that sufferings such as hunger, thirst, imprisonment, nakedness, and weakness are the very kinds of things Paul mentions as the lot of the missionary (1 Cor. 4:9-13; 2 Cor. 4:8f., 6:4f., 11:23-29). In an apocalyptic context, however, the key point is that the people who assist the hungry and other sufferers are called "just." Treatment of the



least, who I argued are Christians in mission and witness to the world, becomes the occasion by which the true meaning of justice is revealed. What is done positively **for them** is not to be limited **to them**. The Christian disciple, through a life of witness and even martyrdom, is the occasion by which eschatological justice is made visible to the world. Like Jesus, the disciples in mission are to be the occasion of the disclosure of God's will for all peoples. This interpretation (a bit over-condensed here) would, I felt, maintain the stress on the doing of justice characteristic of the universalistic interpretation, while avoiding the sectarian overtones of the missionary interpretation. It also makes the Church the primary recipient of the challenge of the Gospel. Only a Church in mission bearing apostolic sufferings will provide the witness necessary for God's justice to be revealed in the world.

The Jewish Christian Letter of James presents a severe and pragmatic spirituality. One of its early exhortations is "Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves" (1:22), which is followed by the definition of true religion as "to care for orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (1:27). James exhorts his community to avoid partiality and in biting language mocks the attention given to rich and powerful, even though the rich are oppressing the community (2:1-7). He criticizes his listeners for dishonoring a poor person, even though God chose the poor to become heirs of the kingdom. In line with being doers as well as hearers of the word, James declares that faith without works is dead and specifies one of the works as clothing and feeding a poor brother or sister (2:14-17). Towards the end of the letter, James voices one of the NT's most violent denunciations of the rich: "Come now, you rich, weep and wail over your impending miseries." In addition to amassing gold and silver jewelry, the rich have withheld the wages of their harvesters and lived on earth in luxury and pleasure, thus "you have fattened your hearts for the day of slaughter" (5:1-6). Behind the words of James can be heard Amos of Tekoa almost seven centuries earlier.



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### 3. The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles

The Lucan writings constitute about one quarter of the whole NT. In these writings, with the exception of James, are the most explicit statements on wealth, poverty, and the use of resources. Luke's special concern is manifest from his editing of the Marcan tradition and, most importantly, by the incorporation of "L" material (=material found only in Luke), which is itself a combination of tradition and Lucan composition. Luke-Acts has also been that NT work most often invoked on issues of social justice and concern for the marginal.

#### *The Gospel of Luke*

- 1. The infancy narratives show a special concern for the 'ānāwīm ("people without money and power"). In her "Magnificat" Mary praises a God who puts down the mighty from their thrones, fills the hungry with good things, and sends the rich away empty (Luke 1:52f.). The first proclamation of Jesus' birth is to people on the margin of society ("shepherds" [2:8-14]); the



sacrifice offered at the presentation is that determined by law for poor people (2:24); Simeon and Anna (a widow) represent faithful and just people (2:25–38).

- 2. To the Q tradition about John's preaching, Luke adds an exhortation that the one who has two coats should share with the one who has none (3:10).

- 3. Luke begins the public ministry of Jesus, not with the proclamation of the imminence of the kingdom (compare with Mark 1:15 and Matt. 4:17), but with Jesus citing Isaiah 61:1–2: "the good news to the poor" (Luke 4:17–19; see also 7:22).

- 4. Only in Luke does Levi "leave everything" when he follows Jesus (5:28; compare with Mark 2:14 and Matt. 9:9).

- 5. In Luke it is simply "the poor" who are blessed, and Luke adds woes against the rich and powerful (6:20, 24–26). Luke adds these words to the saying on forgiveness: "Give and it will be given to you" (6:38).

- 6. Only Luke contains the parables of the Rich Fool (12:13–21), of the Unjust Steward (16:1–8), and of the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19–31).

- 7. Only in Luke is the "great banquet" to be celebrated with "the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind" (14:13, 21).

- 8. Only Luke recounts the story of Zaccheus, the "chief tax collector," who upon his conversion is willing to give half his goods to the poor (19:8).

- 9. Luke presents Jesus in the form of an OT prophet who takes the side of the widow (7:11–17, 18:1–8), the stranger in the land (10:25–37, 17:16), and those on the margin of society (14:12f., 21).

### *Rich and Poor in the Acts of the Apostles*

- 1. In Luke's version of the death of Judas (Acts 1:18–20), in contrast to Matthew 27:3–10, Judas does not return the money,

but “buys a farm” (see 4:32) with the “payment of his injustice”; he seems to die accidentally, and the farm is deserted (cursed).

- 2. The early community is one which shares its goods in common; in it there is no needy person (2:41–47, 4:32–37).
- 3. In both the Gospel and Acts, almsgiving is stressed (Luke 11:41, 12:33, 19:8; Acts 10:2, 4, 31; 24:17).
- 4. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11), by withholding the “proceeds of the land,” are guilty of deceiving God. Though they were free to give or not to give the proceeds, their possessions became an occasion for duplicity.
- 5. Simon tries to use money (v. 18) to buy power (8:9–24).
- 6. Lydia, “the seller of purple” who was a worshiper of God, shows Paul hospitality, thus giving an example of the good use of resources (16:11–15); see also 17:12, where upper-class men and women accept the Gospel.
- 7. Paul and Silas are beaten for freeing a slave girl from venal owners (16:16–24); see also 19:23–41, where the silversmiths of Ephesus feel their livelihood threatened by Paul’s preaching.
- 8. Paul concludes his final address to the Ephesians with comments about the use of goods and concern for the poor (20:32–35).

From this overview it is clear that the Lucan writings present a dilemma. In the Gospel, riches are evil when they become such a preoccupation that they dominate a person’s whole life or when a person attempts to secure the future through them, as in the case of the rich fool. They are also evil, as in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, when they blind people to the suffering neighbor at their doorstep. Discipleship demands renunciation of one’s goods and adoption of the itinerant life-style of Jesus. Acts does not develop the more radical statements of the Gospel. Here the proper use of possessions through mutual sharing and almsgiving, rather than total dispossession, is commended. As Luke Johnson notes, if hospitality to the missionary was such an important aspect of Acts (and Paul), there must have been a great num-

ber of Christians who retained their homes and resources. If almsgiving is praised, the community could not have been composed of the wandering dispossessed.

Many solutions (see Donahue, "Two Decades") have been proposed for this dilemma, ranging from the older view of a two-level morality—one for the committed disciple and one for the ordinary Christian—to views that Luke accurately portrays the difference between the teaching of the earthly Jesus and its accommodation in the ongoing life of a first-century Church. In the latter case the teaching of Jesus is only of historical interest and possesses no lasting value as a model or ideal for subsequent Christians.

I would suggest (somewhat tentatively) that the social setting of the final composition of Luke-Acts offers guidelines for interpretation. Luke-Acts was put together most likely in a Hellenistic city between A.D. 85–95. At this time more and more people of relative means and higher social status were entering the Church. As I noted earlier, economic difference in antiquity was accompanied by social discrimination and often scorn for "the lower classes." By stressing the radical poverty of Jesus and his first followers and by emphasizing their origins among people of low status, Luke reminds his community of their "roots." Though Jesus can be acclaimed as "Lord and Savior," titles normally reserved to the Roman emperor, he himself was of low status and died a criminal's death. His followers lived as a community without status and class division. At the same time, in the Jewish tradition of almsgiving ("For almsgiving delivers from death and keeps you from entering the darkness" [Tob. 4:10]), Luke exhorts his community to a proper use of wealth by putting it at the service of others. The old Deuteronomic ideal of a community where there are no needy persons has been resurrected by Luke (Deut. 15:4, Acts 4:34).



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#### 4. Pauline Theology and the Issues of Faith and Justice

A certain paradox confronts us when we approach Paul. On the one hand, no NT author uses the term *dikaiosynē* ("justice") more than Paul, nor does any other author link it so explicitly with issues of faith. Yet the contemporary concern for social justice has been most often based on OT considerations (Exodus, the Prophetic concern for the poor) or on the teaching of Jesus. Three principal reasons explain the neglect of Paul. First, the traditional theological debate over "faith and works" and justification by faith has given a radical individualistic bent to presentations of Pauline theology, often phrased in terms of how the individual sinner finds acceptance by God. Second, since Paul is the most "theological" of the NT writers, it is those portions of his letters which receive prime attention. The latter sections of most letters, where Paul deals with practical problems facing the communities, are rushed through, and their relation to the theological sections is not developed. Third, since Albert Schweitzer, Paul has been accused of teaching only an "interim ethic." Evidence for this would be in his exhortation to people not to change their marital or social status because "the time is short." Paul's eschatological view that the shape of the world is passing away and his own personal hope to be with the Lord have made some interpreters doubt whether Paul's ethics offers any help for Christians settling in for the long haul of history.

I would like to offer some suggestions on how both Paul's theology and his pastoral engagement in the lives of his communities provide resources for the faith that does justice.

##### *Theological Observations*

Central to Paul's thought is the proclamation of the Christ event, which Joseph A. Fitzmyer has described as "the meaning that the person and lordship of Jesus of Nazareth had and still has for human history and existence." ("Pauline Theology," *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 1389). It is equivalent to the "objective



redemption" and embraces "the complex of decisive moments of the earthly and risen life of Jesus Christ"; specifically, his passion, death, and resurrection, along with his burial, exaltation, and heavenly intercession (ibid., 1397). This "Christ event" as proclaimed and lived by Paul has a number of implications for issues of social justice.

▶ 1. *The Christ event as the foundation of Christian Faith demands responsibility for the world.* Christian faith in the death and resurrection is not simply faith in the promise of eternal life, but faith in the victory over death achieved in Jesus. Through baptism Christians participate already in this victory: "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in the newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). Here in Romans Paul does not say, as does the author of Colossians, that the Christian has risen with Christ. The resurrection has an ethical counterpart, "walking in the newness of life." Also, in Paul the Christian contrast is not between earth and heaven or between material and spiritual reality, but between the "old age" and "the new" (see especially Rom. 8, 2 Cor. 5:16-21). Fundamental to new life in Christ is the experience of "power" ("With great power the Apostles gave testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" [Acts 4:32-37; see also 1 Cor. 1:18-31, 2 Cor. 12:9-13]). The Christian is to be a witness in mission of the victory over death and the transforming power of the resurrection. To pursue the quest for justice in faith means that the Christian walks in confidence that evil is not the Lord of life and that even death for the sake of others cannot separate a person from the love of God (Rom. 8:28-39).

▶ 2. *Justification of the sinner by God's grace through faith results in a personal and communal liberation which enables people to live for others rather than for themselves.* Theologically, Paul states that the Christ event frees the Christian from sin, law, and death. Equally important as this "freedom from" is the Pauline notion of "freedom for." Paul stated this succinctly: "For freedom Christ has set us free" (Gal. 5:1a). Freedom for Paul is liberation from the self-serving and self-destructive aspects of

“striving for” and “boasting of” human achievements, in order to direct one’s attention to the needs of others. In Galatians, which along with Romans is his major theological statement on justification, after having somewhat polemically rejected those opponents who want to reimpose Jewish practices on Gentile Christians, Paul says: “For you were called for freedom, brothers and sisters. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for self indulgence [‘flesh’], but through love become servants of one another” (Gal. 5:13). Paul then goes on to describe “walking according to the spirit” and “walking according to the flesh” (5:16–21). The virtues and vices listed here for the most part either foster or destroy life in community. Paul then concludes this whole section with the statement: “Bear one another’s burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ” (6:2).

Therefore, the justified and graced Christian is a person who does not seek a community of isolated individuals, but rather one in which concern for the weak and suffering is the touchstone of living according to the law of Christ. The final sentences of the United States bishops’ letter on economic justice capture this aspect of Paul’s thought:

We know that we are called to be members of a new covenant of love. We have to move from our devotion to independence through an understanding of interdependence, to a commitment to human solidarity. That challenge must find its realization in the kind of community we build among us. Love implies concern for all—especially the poor—and a continued search for those social and economic structures that permit everyone to share in a community that is a part of redeemed creation (Rom. 8:21–23).

► *3. Pauline eschatology does not warrant an “interim ethic,” but rather summons Christians to responsibility for life in the world.* Since Albert Schweitzer’s challenge that Paul provided only an “interim ethic,” significant research has been done on the social context and meaning of Paul’s eschatology. For Paul the Christian lives between the “already” and the “not yet.” Through Christ the evil powers have been subdued (Phil. 2:10f.) and Christians live in the new age (1 Cor. 10:11, 2 Cor. 5:17). Yet Paul has an eschatological reservation. All creation is groaning (Rom. 8:23)

and Christians are to look forward to the final victory over death, when the risen Christ hands over the kingdom to his Father (1 Cor. 15:51–54). Between the “already” and the “not yet,” Christians are to walk in the newness of life and not let sin reign in their mortal bodies (Rom. 6:12). They should yield themselves to God, so that they might become instruments and servants of justice (Rom. 6:13, 18). Eschatology thus provides a “view from the end,” a vision of a restored creation and of the kind of community which should exist in the world, and summons Christians to implement this vision, however incomplete, in their individual and social lives.

### *Paul’s Practical and Pastoral Directives*

Paul is not simply an itinerant missionary moving feverishly from one city to another, but a pastor deeply concerned with life in his communities. Some of these concerns have bearing on issues of faith and justice today.

Principal among these is Paul’s concern to collect money for the churches in Judea. For approximately eight years, from the Jerusalem Council (approximately A.D. 48–49; see also Gal. 2:10) until the letter to the Romans (about 56–57; see Rom. 15:25–29), Paul manifests concern for the collection. Much of his work among the Corinthians is taken up with the collection (1 Cor. 16:1–4, 2 Cor. 8f.). For Paul the collection is not simply an act of charity, but a way to affirm solidarity between the Greek churches and the Jerusalem mother church. Such a view is significant today. The growing gap between rich and poor within Catholics in the United States is not simply an economic problem but a problem of the unity of faith within the body of Christ. As U.S. Catholics move up the economic ladder, they often forget their immigrant and working-class origins. Effective concern for the growing number of Latino Catholics and the new immigrants from Asia, many of whom are Catholic, is a way to affirm the inclusive vision permeating Paul’s writings.



Also a reading of 2 Corinthians 8f. shows that Paul envisages a relation between rich and poor that avoids heavy-handed moralism in dealing with the more prosperous and respects the dignity of the poor, rather than treating them as “objects of charity.” Following to some degree the later Jesuit pedagogical principle of *emulatio*, he tells the Corinthians about the generosity of the economically less-well-off Macedonian churches (Thessalonica and Philippi), with a hint that they can do likewise. After invoking the example of Christ, who “though rich became poor for your sake,” he tells the Corinthians that, “as a matter of equality, your abundance should supply their want, so that their abundance may supply your want.” Paul goes on to explain that the spiritual abundance of the Jerusalem church will be a reciprocal gift for the material abundance of the Corinthian communities. He will also argue that any gift should be freely given from a motive of generosity, “for God loves a cheerful giver.” The important thing is not that we try to translate Paul’s collection rhetoric and strategy into present-day practice, but that he provides an example of theological ideas translated into concrete action for the poor.

The second issue is the dispute over the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. At Corinth the Eucharist was celebrated in the context of an ordinary meal, when Christians gathered in the evening at the end of the customary working day. The only place with enough space for a community gathering would normally have been the home of one of the more prosperous members of the community.

Paul directly addresses problems with the Supper. “I heard that when you meet as a community [as a church], there are divisions among you”; then he gives his initial judgment on the situation: “When you meet in one place, then, it is not the Lord’s supper that you are eating, for when the time comes to eat, each one goes ahead with his own supper and one goes hungry, while another gets drunk” (1 Cor. 11:22f.).

Thanks principally to the work of Gerd Theissen, we are able to see that this theological quarrel had a social and ethical

dimension. Apparently, the more prosperous members of the community simply became hungry and tired of waiting for the small artisans and day laborers to arrive after a working day that stretched from dawn to dusk. They began the celebration of the Lord's Supper and also ate special food and drink that they had prepared for themselves rather than sharing it with others. Paul reacts strongly to this practice: "Do you not have houses in which you can eat or drink?" (1 Cor. 11f.); then he proceeds to highlight the evil effect of this custom: "Do you show contempt for the church of God, and humiliate those who have nothing?" (the Greek here is literally "the have-nots"). Paul is in effect saying that those social distinctions between upper-class and lower-class people which are part of the fabric of the Hellenistic world have no place in the Christian assembly. One might recall here Paul's early statement to the Galatians that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female (Gal. 3:26).

After this initial programmatic assault on the position of those who were shaming the have-nots, Paul cites the tradition of the institution of the Eucharist, which is parallel to accounts found in the Synoptic Gospels and very similar to the words of institution used at Mass today. Having evoked this tradition, Paul then applies it to the situation in the community. He first says that anyone who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord (11:27), and that anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself (11:28). I will unpack these statements a bit.

For Paul the words of institution make present again the self-offering of Christ: "My body for you." The "you" are all the Christians equally. As Paul has noted in other places, Jesus died like one who did not choose his own benefit but that of others, dying for the weak or marginal Christian brother or sister as well as for the powerful. "For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone" (Rom. 14:7) expresses for Paul the real meaning of imitation of Christ. The practices of the Corinthians are a direct affront to the example of Christ. By preferring

their own good and shaming other community members of lower social and economic status, they are making a mockery of the Eucharist. This explains Paul's harsh judgment: "It is not the Lord's supper that you are eating."

When Paul says that one who eats without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on oneself (11:28), the "body" is a reference not primarily to the body of Jesus (as the later concept of sacrilege affirmed), but the community as the body of Christ (which he will discuss in great detail in the following chapter). Discerning the body for Paul means assessing the impact of one's actions on the good of the community, especially in regard to its weaker members, and asking how the actions of the community re-present Christ in the world.

Paul's directives here show that issues of justice and concern for the more vulnerable members of the community enter into the most central act of Christian community, the celebration of the Lord's Supper. They also show Paul's constant concern for the weaker members of the community and for the creation of a community in which economic and social divisions do not invalidate the faith that the community as a whole professes. Contemporary Christians are faced with the challenge to join together worship and social action, to live in such a fashion that there is no gap between the faith they celebrate on Sunday and the way they live the other six days of the week. (See also the bibliography on liturgy and social justice.)



### *Bibliography on Paul*

The potential bibliography is vast. I will select works that present leading Pauline theological motifs and those bearing on his ethics. For an excellent overview of all aspects of Paul, see J. A. Fitzmyer, "Paul," *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 1329-37, and "Pauline Theology, *ibid.*, 1382-16; this is also available as *Paul and*



- His Theology: A Brief Sketch*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1987.
136. \*Bassler, Jouette. *God and Mammon: Asking for Money in the New Testament*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991. A popular and learned presentation with stress on Paul.
  137. Beker, J. Christian. *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1980. A major theological study focusing on the apocalyptic in Paul.
  138. ———. *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. A popular and much-condensed presentation of major ideas contained in the above work.
  139. Betz, Hans Dieter. *2 Corinthians 8–9*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1986. A technical but informative treatment of the "collection" letters.
  140. Furnish, Victor P. *Theology and Ethics in Paul*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968. An older but thorough work.
  141. \*———. *The Moral Teaching of Paul: Selected Issues*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979. Excellent short studies on issues of marriage, divorce, homosexuality, and church and state.
  142. Georgi, Dieter. *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992. A translation of Georgi's important 1965 scholarly study of the collection.
  143. Hock, Ronald. *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980. A good short picture of Paul's trade (leather worker) and its implication for his theology.
  144. \*Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. *Becoming Human Together: The Pastoral Anthropology of St. Paul*. Good News Studies. Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1982. An original and very interesting presentation; see especially parts 2 and 3, "Society" and "Community."
  145. ———. "Eucharist and Community in 1 Corinthians." *Worship* 50 (1976): 370–85; 51 (1977): 56–69. Interesting and important essays.
  146. Nickle, Keith. *The Collection: A Study of Paul's Strategy*. Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 48. Naperville: Allenson, 1966. A somewhat technical but thorough study.
  147. Schrage, Wolfgang, see #97 above, especially Chapter 4.
  148. \*Theissen, Gerd. *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. Important studies of the social context of Paul; see especially Chapter 4, "Social Inte-

gration and Sacramental Activity: An Analysis of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.”

149. Tobin, Thomas. *The Spirituality of Paul*. Message of Biblical Spirituality. Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1986. A synthetic and readable overview of Paul.

## 5. The Book of Revelation

Because of its “otherworldly” character, its sanguinary hope of divine vengeance on enemies, and its use by fundamentalist groups, Revelation (The Apocalypse) often seems of little use for reflection on the Bible and social justice. Yet, as Adella Yarbro Collins notes, this work reminds us that the love command of Jesus must be complemented by the call for justice found in the Apocalypse (*The Apocalypse*, p. x). Apocalyptic literature in the OT, in the intertestamental literature, and in the NT arises from a consciousness that the world is “out of joint.” It originates most often from marginal or persecuted groups, and its vivid imagery conveys a hope for divine vindication. Though employing vivid images of battle and warfare, Revelation describes a struggle to be fought by divine power, since the human struggle reflects a heavenly battle between God and cosmic forces opposed to God. Paradoxically, apocalyptic literature diffuses the human desire for vengeance and assures those persecuted that God is ultimately on their side and that evil will not triumph in the end. It can provide a powerful warrant for nonviolent resistance to massive social evil and sustain communities with the hope of God’s presence.



### *Bibliography on Apocalyptic and Revelation*

150. Barr, David. L. “The Apocalypse as a Symbolic Transformation of the World.” *Interpretation* 38 (1984): 39-50.
151. \*Collins, Adela Yarbro. *The Apocalypse*. New Testament Message, No. 22. Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1979. One of the most helpful popular commentaries on the Apocalypse by an expert on apocalyptic literature.

152. ———. "Reading the Book of Revelation in the Twentieth Century." *Interpretation* 40 (July 1986): 229-42. A fine survey of contemporary approaches to apocalyptic. Other articles in this issue are also most helpful.
153. Collins, John J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity*. New York: Crossroad, 1984. The best introduction to those texts classed as apocalyptic.
154. Jewett, Robert. "Coming to Terms with the Boom Doom." *Quarterly Review* 4 (1984): 9-22. Good guidelines for interpreting apocalyptic.
155. Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985. An excellent collection of essays; see especially Chapter 7, "Visionary Rhetoric and Socio-political Situation."
156. \*———. *Revelation: Vision of a Just World*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991. An excellent introduction, followed by a section-by-section commentary.

## Application and Interpretation of Biblical Material

My purpose thus far has been to highlight biblical themes, blocks of literature, and secondary resources that provide reflection on the faith that does justice. Most Jesuits will use this material principally in some ministry of the word—preaching, teaching, retreats, or spiritual direction. I would like now to offer some admittedly inadequate guidelines for use of this material, as well as bibliographical resources. I will also add bibliography on feminist hermeneutics and the relation of peace and justice, since these are important issues related to the quest for justice in the Bible.

Often more important than the preparation of the sermon or the class is the preparation of the preacher or the teacher. The first task is to gain an increased knowledge of pertinent biblical texts in their historical and literary context and to read them with a concern for issues of social justice. Allied to this is a "hermeneutics of suspicion" about interpretations supporting individualized piety. Philip Esler (#123 above, p. 170) states that Luke's writings are read through a layer of *embourgeoisment* to foster middle-class values. One way to avoid this is to become aware of the social dimension and the social context of biblical material.



Second, though virtually no one feels that the Bible offers concrete directives or solutions to today's complex social problems, the Bible is the foundation of a Judeo-Christian vision of life. It discloses the kind of God we love and worship. This God is interested in the world, in human history, and in the manner in which humans live in community. This interest is pervasive throughout both testaments. In one sense, the "faith that does justice" is simply an application of the great command to love God with one's whole heart, mind, and soul and the neighbor as oneself. What the Bible relentlessly affirms, from the law of Moses to the Pauline summons "to bear another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2), is that the love of neighbor is manifest especially in care for the weak and the powerless.

Third, some principle of analogy is helpful for application of the biblical texts. Though the social and cultural situation of biblical texts is very different from our modern, postindustrial society, there are profound similarities, especially at the level of human behavior. Amos's criticism of the ostentatious rich (2:6f., 4:1, 6:4-7), the plight of the poor man in Psalm 10, and the blindness of the wealthy to the needy at their gates (Luke 16:19-31) are hauntingly familiar in our own day. Paul's concern for the poorer churches of Palestine and even his collection strategy has relevance to a church in the United States increasingly divided along socioeconomic lines. Paul Tillich once defined the task of theology as one of correlating the symbols of the faith (where symbol is understood as sacred text and sacred tradition) with the existential question of a given age. In our age socioeconomic questions are the most pressing; and conversion, study, and imagination are necessary to achieve the task of correlation.

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***Bibliography on the Use of Scripture for Ethics***

157. \*Bauckham, R. *The Bible in Politics: How to Read the Bible Politically*. Third Way Books. London: S.P.C.K., 1989. An introduction to

- hermeneutical problems and a discussion of significant texts by a well-respected British NT scholar.
158. Barr, James. "The Bible as a Political Document." *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 62 (1980): 268-98. Important observations by a well-respected biblical scholar, with certain cautions about the use of the Bible for social ethics.
  159. Birch, Bruce C., and Larry Rasmussen. *The Bible and Ethics in Christian Life*. Rev. ed. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989. The best single resource.
  160. Cahill, Lisa Sowle. "The New Testament and Ethics: Communities of Social Change." *Interpretation* 44 (1990): 383-95.
  161. Collins, R. F. *Christian Morality: Biblical Foundations*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986.
  162. Curran, Charles E. "The Role and Function of the Scriptures in Moral Theology." In C. Curran and R. McCormick, eds. *The Use of Scripture in Moral Theology*. Readings in Moral Theology, No 4. New York/Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist, 1984. All the essays in this volume are most helpful, especially the following ones by J. Gustafson.
  163. Gustafson, James M. "The Changing Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics." In *The Use of Scripture in Moral Theology*, 133-51. Readings in Moral Theology, No 4. New York/Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist, 1984.
  164. ———. "The Place of Scripture in Christian Ethics: A Methodological Study." In *The Use of Scripture in Moral Theology*, 151-78. Readings in Moral Theology, No 4. New York/Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist, 1984.
  165. Hays, R. B. "Scripture-Shaped Community: The Problem of Method in New Testament Ethics." *Interpretation* 44 (1990): 42-55. *New Testament Abstracts* 34.847.
  166. Himes, K. R. "Scripture and Ethics: A Review Essay." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 15 (1985): 65-73.
  167. Kysar, R. *Called to Care: Biblical Images for Social Ministry*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1991. A short and readable survey of biblical images of God and their relation to social ministry, with pastoral reflections on challenges to social ministry, for example, changing consciousness and overcoming fear.
  168. Sandeen, Ernest, ed. *The Bible and Social Reform*. Chico, Cal.: Scholars Press, 1982. A study of how the Bible has been used by North American theologians concerned with social issues.
  169. \*Schneiders, Sandra M. *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991.

Though not explicitly on the use of Scripture for issues of justice, this work provides the best discussion of how to bridge the gap between academic study of the Bible and its use in the Church. Though dealing with complex theories of hermeneutics, it is clearly and elegantly written.

170. Sleeper, C. F. "The Use of Scripture in Church Social Policy Statements." *Theology and Public Policy* 2 (1990): 47-60. A helpful essay by a well-known ethicist, with important cautions about the use of biblical material.
171. \*Spohn, W. S. *What Are They Saying About Scripture and Ethics?* New York/Ramsey: Paulist, 1984. Presently out of print; it will be reissued in revised form.
172. Stackhouse, Max L. "Jesus and Economics: A Century of Reflection." In J. T. Johnson, ed. *The Bible in American Law, Politics and Political Rhetoric*, 107-52. Chico, Cal.: Scholars Press, 1985. An important survey of the use of the Bible for social reform, written mainly by Protestant scholars (for example, Walter Rauschenbusch and Shailer Matthews); it shows that many trends in contemporary Catholicism have historical precedent.
173. Wright, C. J. H. "The Use of the Bible in Social Ethics: Paradigms, Types and Eschatology." *Transformation* 1 (1984): 11-20.

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***Bibliography on Preaching, Other Ministries of the Word,  
and Liturgy***

My comments here will overlap with those offered by John Baldovin in his excellent essay "Christian Liturgy: An Annotated Bibliography for Jesuits," to be published at some future date in *STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS*. Baldovin calls attention to the important bibliographical essay by Mark Searle, "Liturgy and Social Ethics: An Annotated Bibliography," *Studia Liturgica* 21 (1991): 220-335.

174. Achtemeier, Elizabeth. *The Old Testament and the Proclamation of the Gospel*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973. Not specifically on issues of social justice, but it contains helpful guidelines for use of OT.



175. Baldovin, John F. "The Liturgical Year: Calendar for a Just Community." In *Liturgy and Spirituality in Context*. Ed. E. Bernstein, 98-114. Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 1990.
176. Burghardt, Walter, et al. "Preaching the Just Word: Resources for Homilists." *Homily Resources*. Special issue. Available from the Department of Social Development and World Peace of the U.S. Bishops' Conference. Essays on preaching and justice by Walter Burghardt, John Coleman, John Donahue, and James Connor. This volume is also available through the Woodstock Center.
177. \*Empereur, James L., and Christopher Kiesling. *The Liturgy That Does Justice*. A Michael Glazier Book. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1990. An excellent study with fine insights, covering all aspects of the liturgy. The annotated bibliography is worth the price of the book and should be consulted as a supplement to the present brief bibliography.
178. Gonzalez, J. L., and C. G. Gonzalez. *Liberation Preaching: The Bible and the Oppressed*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1980. Some good suggestions on preaching about social justice.
179. Grosz, Edward M., ed. *Liturgy and Social Justice: Celebrating Rites—Proclaiming Rights*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1988. Papers read at the 1988 meeting of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions. See especially Dianne Bergant, "Liturgy and Scripture: Creating a New World," 12-25, and J. Bryan Hehir, "Liturgy and Social Justice: Past Relationships and Future Possibilities," 40-61.
180. Guroian, V. "Bible and Ethics: An Ecclesial and Liturgical Interpretation." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 18 (1990): 129-57. Written from an Orthodox perspective, this essay offers interesting suggestions on the Bible, liturgy, and social justice, using examples from John Chrysostom.
181. Hessel, Dieter, ed. *Social Themes of the Christian Year: A Commentary on the Lectionary*. Philadelphia: Geneva Press, 1983. A collection of essays on the lectionary cycle. Most helpful as a way to think differently about biblical texts, though the specific applications are uneven. Available through Westminster/John Knox Press.
182. Hughes, Kathleen, and Mark R. Francis, eds. *Living No Longer for Ourselves: Liturgy and Justice in the Nineties*. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1991. A good collection of essays. See especially Hughes, "Liturgy and Justice: An Intrinsic Relationship," 36-51, and R. A. Kiefer, "Liturgy and Ethics: Some Unresolved Dilemmas," 68-83.

183. Searle, Mark, ed. *Liturgy and Social Justice*. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1980. Important essays by Burghardt ("Preaching the Just Word"), Searle, Kilmartin, and Duffy.
184. Weakland, Rembert G. "Liturgy and Social Justice." In *Shaping the English Liturgy*. Ed. P. Finn and J. Schellman, 343-57. Pastoral Press, 1990.
185. Wolterstorff, Nicholas P. "Justice as a Condition of Authentic Liturgy." *Theology Today* 48 (1991): 6-21.

### Feminist Exegesis and Hermeneutics

One of the areas that have posed a major challenge to issues of faith and justice is the rise of feminism and the realization of the injustices to which women have been and are still subjected in both church and society. While feminism, and its more recent self-designation "womanism," has spawned most fruitful research in countless areas—for example, literature, sociology, psychology, and all the branches of theology—feminist biblical scholars have been in the forefront in calling attention to the forgotten or suppressed history of women in the texts themselves and to the need for a feminist hermeneutics of texts and traditions. Carolyn Osiek, R.S.C.J., a professor of New Testament at the Catholic Theological Union, describes feminist interpretation in its broadest sense "as a concern for the promotion and dignity of women in all aspects of society, and in this context especially inasmuch as that promotion and dignity are conditioned by biblical interpretation" ("The Feminist and the Bible," 100); she offers as well an excellent overview of the different feminist approaches to the Bible. I will list works that fill out the picture she presents. (For further works in addition to these, see Tribble, #12 above, and Schneiders, #169 above.)

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### *Bibliography on Feminist Hermeneutics*

186. Anderson, Janice Capel. "Mapping Feminist Biblical Criticism: The American Scene 1983-90." *Critical Review of Books in Religion*, 21-

44. 1991. An excellent survey of both feminist theory and application to biblical texts.
187. Farley, Margaret. "Feminist Consciousness and the Interpretation of Scripture." In *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*. Ed. Letty Russell, 41-51. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985.
188. Lindboe, I. M. "Recent Literature: Development and Perspectives in New Testament Research on Women." *Studia Theologica* 43 (1989): 153-63.
189. Osiek, Carolyn, R.S.C.J. "The Feminist and the Bible: Hermeneutical Alternatives." *Religion and Intellectual Life* 6, Nos. 3 and 4 (1989): 96-109.
190. Sakenfield, K. D. "Feminist Biblical Interpretation." *Theology Today* 46 (1989): 154-68.
191. \*Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Construction of Christian Origins*. New York: Crossroad, 1983. This is the most significant historical and exegetical study of the NT, providing the basis for feminist interpretation.
192. ———. *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1984. A fine collection of essays showing how feminist biblical interpretation poses important challenges for biblical scholarship and church life. For Schüssler Fiorenza's most recent statements on interpretation, see her introduction to the Apocalypse, #156 above.
193. Tolbert, Mary Ann. "Defining the Problem: The Bible and Feminist Hermeneutics." *Semeia* 28 (1983): 113-26.

### The Intimate Connection Between Peace and Justice

The principal biblical term for peace, *šālôm*, does not mean simply the absence of conflict but suggests wholeness, completeness, or health. For this reason, in certain important biblical texts, especially those describing the effect of the just use of royal power, or in eschatological expectations of a restored kingdom, peace and justice are closely linked; for example, "Justice will bring about peace; right will produce calm and security" (Isa. 32:17, in the New American Bible translation); "Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. Truth shall spring out of the earth and justice shall look down from heaven" (Ps. 85:11f.). See also Isaiah 9:7, 60:17; Psalm 72:7. One legacy of the OT is that



peace, the condition which prevails in a healthy society, can never exist apart from the quest for justice. Yet, sadly, in Western history the Bible has been invoked far more often to warrant violent attacks on perceived enemies than to foster true peace. Yet the command of Jesus to love enemies and his sayings against violent resistance to evil not only have inspired individuals and spawned prophetic communities who proclaim and live in fidelity to these commands, but they also challenge all readers of the Bible to assess their own acquiescence to hatred and violence.

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### *Select Bibliography on Peace*

The potential bibliography is vast. See especially Swartley, #208 below, for a comprehensive bibliography.

194. Cadoux, C. J. *The Early Christian Attitude to War*. New York: Seabury, 1919, 1982. An early and important historical study of the first three centuries.
195. Craige, Peter C. *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978. A popular and readable treatment of difficult issues such as the "holy war."
196. Daly, Robert J. "New Testament and the Early Church." In *Non-Violence—Central to Christian Pacifism*. Ed. J. T. Culliton, 34–62. New York and Toronto: Edward Mellen Press. A good essay on the NT; the whole volume is recommended.
197. ———. "The New Testament, Pacifism and Non-violence." *American Ecclesiastical Review* 168 (1974): 544–62. A good overview of important texts.
198. Harnack, Adolf. *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1905, 1981. An important study of original sources for the relation of Christians to the military.
199. Hengel, Martin. *Victory over Violence: Jesus and the Revolutionists*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973. A careful historical study of the relation of Jesus to the revolutionary movements of his time.
200. Hirsch, R. G. *The Most Precious Gift: Judaism in Pursuit of Peace*. New York: Union of Hebrew Congregations, 1974. An excellent description of peace in Judaism.

201. \*Klassen, William. *Love Your Enemies: The Way to Peace*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984. An excellent study of the love of enemies in Hellenistic and Jewish thought as well as in the NT. Excellent bibliography.
202. McSorley, Richard. *The New Testament Basis of Peacemaking*. 3rd ed. rev. and expanded. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1985. A good overview of pertinent texts; excellent for a parish or lay group.
203. Melko, Matthew, and Richard Weigel. *Peace in the Ancient World*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co., 1981. Written by historians, this book studies a number of ancient societies that had sustained periods of peace, and it attempts to assess the political and social conditions which brought this about.
204. Perkins, Pheme. *Love Commands in the New Testament*. See #92 above.
205. Piper, John. *Love Your Enemies: Jesus' Love Command in the Synoptic Gospels and the Early Christian Paranesis*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, No. 38. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979. An excellent scholarly study of the literary setting of the love command.
206. Schrottroff, Luise. "Non-Violence and the Love of Enemies." See #96 above.
207. \*Swartley, Willard M., ed. *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992. An excellent collection of essays on love of enemies and nonviolence, including a fine bibliography. See especially William Klassen, "Love Your Enemies: Current Status of Research"; Walter Wink, "Neither Passivity nor Violence: Jesus' Third Way (Matt. 5:38-42)"; John R. Donahue, "Who Is My Enemy? The Parable of the Good Samaritan and the Love of Enemies."
208. ———. *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women*. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1983. Chapter 3, "The Bible and War," is one of the best treatments available. This work also contains comprehensive bibliographies on the issues covered.
209. Wengst, Klaus. *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ*. Trans. John Bowden. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987. An outstanding scholarly and historical study of the ways in which Rome maintained its power and Christians offered nonviolent resistance to it.
210. Yoder, John H. *The Politics of Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972. Perhaps the most influential book in recent decades on Jesus'

relation to political issues, with a clear affirmation of nonviolence.

211. Zampaglione, G. *The Idea of Peace in Antiquity*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973. A good collection of primary sources, but with little critical reflection.

## Concluding Reflection

There is a sobering aspect to a survey such as this. Karl Barth once wrote: "The question, What is within the Bible? has a mortifying way of converting itself into the opposing question, Well, what are you looking for, and who are you, pray, who make bold to look?"<sup>2</sup> We boldly look into the Bible from the perspective of prosperous, upper-middle-class citizens of the United States. And yet the Bible summons its readers to a hermeneutics of suspicion of the culture in which they live. The Bible images a "contrast society." Can we face the contrast between the ideals presented by the Bible and life in our nation today or even in our "least Society"?

Most importantly—and not stressed enough in this survey—the Bible is radically not an ethical document, but the proclamation of the gracious love of God manifest for Christians in the Christ event. The gift precedes the demand: good news comes before good advice. For the Bible to be effective in social or individual ethics, we must have been captured by its saving message and have experienced the power of God's Spirit at work behind the written word. Apropos of the love command, Thomas Merton once expressed this well:

The beginning of the fight against hatred, the basic Christian answer to hatred, is not the commandment to love, but what must necessarily come before in order to make the commandment bearable and comprehensible. It is a prior commandment to **believe**. The root of Christian love is not the will to love, but **the faith that one is loved**. The faith that one is loved **by God**. That faith that

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<sup>2</sup> *The Word of God and the Word of Man* (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1957), 32.



one is loved by God although unworthy or rather irrespective of one's worth!<sup>3</sup>

To do justice and walk humbly with our God ultimately proceeds from a deep experience of faith and conversion that is at the heart of the Spiritual Exercises and of Jesuit spirituality in every generation.

### **An Afterword**

One of my hopes in offering such a survey is that readers will say, Why didn't he mention this or that work, which I found very helpful? This bibliography is part of a larger project and may someday appear in revised form. I would appreciate it very much if readers would send any additions, criticisms, and suggestions directly to me at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley.

### **Appendix**

For those who inquire, Where can I find the books? I have listed a large number of books and articles that I hope will send them scurrying to libraries and bookstores. The publishing business has been in considerable flux in the past decade, with the merger and moving of publishers. For example, Fortress Press and Augsburg have merged, as have John Knox and Westminster. Michael Glazier, which had contributed so much to Catholic Biblical scholarship, went out of business, and Liturgical Press purchased the line of books as well as the name. Books listed above from the publishers should now be ordered from the merged publishers. I will list below some addresses, so that those who might not have immediate access to a bookstore can contact the publishers directly. People also might want to write for catalogues, which are a fine way to keep abreast of issues. Some of these publishers have branch bookstores in many cities.

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<sup>3</sup> A *Thomas Merton Reader*, T. P. McDonnell, ed. (Doubleday: Image Books, 1974), 322, quoting from Merton's *New Seeds of Contemplation*.

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