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his life, his death and the resurrection of his life in the deep life of his disciples constituted a **happening**, a personal event of truth that broke the molds of both Jewish moralism and Greek philosophy. And this was not a new morality or a new philosophy, it was a new mode of truth, a revolutionary mode of truth that has lasting relevance for all times to come.

The term "being in Christ," as understood by Paul, includes a complete rejection of the discourse of the Jewish moralist and the discourse of the Greek philosopher. The interior death required for entering into the aliveness of Christ includes a death to every morality that seeks to rule the behaviors of our living and to every philosophy that claims to make sense of our lives. Life does not make sense in some rational way. Reason is useful for thinking through and applying the truth that happens to us, but reasoning cannot be the root of our deep confidence. Similarly, moral teachings cannot fill this need.

So, if you are demanding some sort of miraculous teaching or text that shows you how to conduct your life, then you are requiring a master, an authoritative lawgiver who fulfills this demand that you are making for moral certainty. You are asking to be a slave of some master. And there are many masters out there who are willing to enslave you.

Similarly, if you are seeking rational answers about the deep meaning of your life, you are seeking a teacher. You are requiring some sort of philosopher, theologian or master teacher – an authoritative truth bringer who provides you with the meaningful life you seek. You are asking to be a slave of some master. And there are many masters out there who are willing to enslave you.

Entering into the life of Christ, according to Paul, includes an absolute end to all masters who make us slaves to their mastery. When the "grace" of the "death-and-resurrection" happening takes place for you, there are no masters anymore. We are all sons and daughters in an absolutely equal coworkerhood. We are not slaves of any master; we live our unique lives as equals in the service of One Universal Actuality. When this Jesus Christ happening is the master truth of our lives, **there are no masters anymore.**

There Are No Masters Anymore

a sermonette by
Gene Marshall



Reading Alain Badiou's book *Saint Paul: The Foundations of Universalism* called my attention once again to the realization that truth, the truth that matters, the truth that grounds and motivates our lives **is a happening**, a personal event that breaks the molds of our culture, of our religious traditions, of our customary ways of seeing.

Here is a paraphrase of a core teaching of the apostle Paul. (See I Corinthians 1:22-24.)

In Christ there is neither Jewish righteousness nor Greek meaningfulness, there is just the scandal of cross and resurrection, a stumbling block to the Jews (the moralists) and sheer foolishness to the Greeks (the philosophers), but to us who share in this blessing, it is the fullness of life.

The Exodus from Egypt broke the mold of that traditional hierarchical society and led to the development of a new social law that presupposed freedom from those old ways of living. Moses and his followers organized society in a way that made everyone equal before the law. Similarly, Jesus was a mold breaker. Furthermore, Paul saw that Jesus,

THERE ARE NO MASTERS ANYMORE

Each son or daughter of Reality becomes his or her own master, free from all miracle workers, all consciousness guides, all philosophers, all theologians, all parents, all cultures, all modes of social organization, all ideologies, all hierarchies, all bigotries, all racial arrogance or depreciation, all raised platforms, all pulpits, all popes, all bishops, all gurus, all mentors – all masters and from all rebellion from masters. Paul calls this “FREEDOM.”

This FREEDOM is not a license to indulge in one of these many slaveries to some master. This FREEDOM is not a license to become a master myself, one who presumes to enslave others to my great wisdom or my moral clarity. This FREEDOM entails the eternal loss of all masters and of all being a master to others. This FREEDOM entails living in the humiliating yet exalting equality that applies to every ordinary human being. This FREEDOM is special only in that it is not special, but the simple actuality of our profound establishment as an ordinary, everyday, everyplace human being.

This FREEDOM is a blasphemy to all preachers of moral truth who seek to enslave us to their authoritative rulings. This FREEDOM is foolishness to all teachers of intelligible systems of reason who seek to enslave us with their authoritative reasonings.

To those of us who are being healed of all these master/slave relations, this FREEDOM is not blasphemous or foolish, but aliveness and health and wisdom and righteousness and happiness and fulfillment and contentment and peace and joy. It is the reversal of the fall of Adam and Eve. It is a new Adam and a new Eve. It is a new start for humanity. It is the final coming of every valid expectation for human beings. It is the presence of the “Messiah” long foretold in every forward looking Scripture. It is IT, PERIOD, FULL STOP.

This UNIVERSAL TRUTH AND ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE does not mean that Christianity is better than other religions. Rather, it means seeing that the Christian religion is just one more religious practice – invented, practiced, perverted and restored by a particular set of sometimes genuine human beings. It means that all religions, all religious practices, are revealed to be what they are, finite efforts by finite human beings to tell about the Unspeakable, to access the profound Truth about what human beings essentially ARE.

We are not slaves to some morality or some dogma/ideology/text. We are FREEDOM. When we participate in the healing event of joining the

CHRIST BODY of LIBERATION from all slaveries, we access FREEDOM. We then joyously BE this FREEDOM. FREEDOM is the calling to which we have been called through Paul’s declarations.

Perhaps this sermon on Paul’s ancient words can assist you to recognize your specific slaveries and renounce them, to recognize your specific tendencies to enslave others and renounce them. On the other side of such renunciations, there appears life and life abundant. But we have to trust that this unusual life is indeed life. We have to trust in the gift of resurrection. We have to trust in the light that shines through the cracks in our habituated moralities and our supposed truths. We have to choose to open ourselves toward the light, toward real life, toward the resurrection that is our actual being.

This no-masters-any-more message is especially important to a person like myself who has had many mentors and played mentor to many others. It means that I do not understand being mentored or mentoring others unless I see that I must not be a master to others and I must not allow any other person to be my master. As a mentee I must practice the FREEDOM of taking from my mentors what is truly juice for my actual life and leave behind the limitations, flaws, omissions, and exaggerations of these mentors. As a mentor myself, I must learn the FREEDOM of recognizing the need in my mentees for being set loose from all masters, including me. My task is assisting others to access their own FREEDOM and LOVE and TRUST, their own Authentic Life. I have nothing to give them that they do not already have. I can only provide clues and road maps, urgings and warnings that may be useful to these separate unique beings who are making their own journey into their own profundity.

This teaching has enormous implication for the reconstruction of Christian community. All our inherited images of clergy and laity come up for review. In this emerging vision, our currently passive laity will cease to expect their clergy to be more profound or more Christian than they. Our pedestal-sitting clergy will join ordinary humanity and expect of everyone the same essential profundity to which they have, hopefully, felt the call. Indeed, the line between clergy and laity will blur if not disappear: everyone will expect to be witnessed to as well as being a witness to others concerning this healing declaration. Sitting in circles will replace placement in pews and lofts and pulpits. The polity will change. The economics will change. A role of humble servant leadership in the wide world will take the place of

every form of theocracy – every illusion of a Christian culture or a Christian morality or a Christian ideology or a Christian politics or a Christian economies. FREEDOM from all these tempting patterns of mastering others or being mastered by others will disappear. Herein is our vital vision for the next form of practicing a Christian life together.

Those of us who are constructing this new Christianity are experiencing a puzzlement also realized and addressed by Paul and by Jesus. What does it mean to be a leader in our Christian circles of renewal if there are no masters anymore? Clearly, there are those who are more deeply experiencing and living out of the deep authenticity released by the Jesus Christ happening. There are adepts and novices in any spirit community. There are those who have journeyed deeper into their human essence. Both Paul and Jesus resolve this puzzlement with the image of “servant.” The leader is a servant, not someone to be served. The leader is not a master and this leader’s worth to others is not some mastery learned by this leader. The leader leads in humble service, leads others in the life of humble service. And this service is not service to the desires or whims or illusions of others, not knuckling under to others’ egoistic drives. This service is service of the Christ life in others and of the Universal Truth that brings others as well as oneself into abundant life.

I conclude with this saying of Paul from his first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13 verse 1: “If I speak with the eloquence of men and angels, but have no love, I become no more than blaring brass or crashing cymbal.”

My metaphorical translation: If my talk resonates with my culture and occasions states of Awe in my listeners but is not directed toward the well being of their Spirit life, I am just a bunch of noise.

Ideology is for Idiots

a political commentary
by Gene Marshall



Ideology is for idiots who do not want to do ongoing creative thinking. Most ideological idiots are allowing someone else to do their thinking for them. Some ideological idiots count themselves smart enough to do other people’s thinking for them.

The opposite of an ideological idiot is a thinker who does his own thinking and assists others to do

theirs. Such honoring of self and others is an aspect of Christian love as well as Buddhist love, Islamic love, Jewish love and every other description of profound love that truly expresses the “higher angels” of humanity’s inner essence. That inner essence also includes freedom, a freedom that can dare bold ventures outside the boxes of inherited patterns of thought and action. When a person retreats to the safety of an ideology, that person restrains his or her natural love and freedom to a narrow ideological view of things.

Communism and **capitalism** are prominent examples of ideological idiocy. Each strives to overcome the other, and yet both are aspects of one overall massive error. They both see no sacredness or value beyond their own self-made ideas. They both accept the proposition that establishing their view of good society is more important than caring for nature as a whole. They both assume that society must be run by “experts” controlling centralized economic and military power. They both strive to create a culture that is a reflection of their ideology. Culture for them is not an expression of and a participation in the profound nature of being human, but simply an arbitrary social form created by the strong to tyrannize the weak through propaganda, advertising, misinformation, useful lies, and the intentional twisting and censorship of the truth.

There are, of course, moderations of the blatant flaws of a Joseph Stalin or a Milton Friedman. There are free-enterprise supporters who are also democratic innovators and ecological radicals. There are democratic socialists and existentialist Marxists, and so on. But even these moderations are often ideologies of great rigidity and lack of openness to the wider truth. The practical truth of a workable world economy is some sort of mixture of firm government supervision and entrepreneurial creativity set in the context of a thoroughgoing ecological sanity. The old ideological warfare between communism and capitalism is simply the ranting of out-of-date idiots.

And here are some other all too common examples of ideological idiocy: libertarianism, pacifism, aristocracy-ism, majoritarianism, and futilitarianism. Each of these examples possess some elements of truth that attract a constituency, but in each case the truth omitted proves to be more destructive than the constructive force of the truth included. I will spell this out.

Libertarianism sees the truth that society cannot be micromanaged by a centralized government, but it promotes the deregulation of

needed governmental firmness and thus allows for a lack of restraint of the dark powers of human corruption.

Pacifism sees that all warfare and all use of violence for social change or social order have horrific downsides, but it underestimates the ongoing need for bold and firm governmental restraints of genocide, ecocide, economic tyranny, criminal/terrorist organizations, and raw social chaos. Indeed, raw social chaos is more murderous than warfare.

Aristocracy-ism is my made-up name for the notion that the general citizenry are not trustworthy and that an elite core of people must control society. It is true that competent leadership is needed in the centers of power, but it is a gross error to trust any minority of powerful people over the general consensus of the whole population.

Majoritarianism is a limited view of democracy, trusting that the majority of voters will be correct enough, most of the time. But this is not true. A workable democracy requires that the minorities must be protected from the biases of the majority. Most often, the deeper truths that a society needs are originally held by a minority of people. Furthermore, minority races, religions, and subcultures must be provided with clear and well-enforced constitutional rights and equal opportunities for a workable democracy to be in place.

Futilitarianism is my name for the many expositions that claim that our major challenges have already been so neglected that they are already destined to work out in a catastrophic fashion. Futilitarians are those who claim that nothing can be done for the whole picture. Perhaps small groups of us, seeking to protect ourselves from the ongoing collapse can survive to seed some yet to be invented presence for a very few humans. This view is quite seductive, for there is much truth in the assertions that we are too late to prevent dire consequences set in motion decades ago. It is also true that what we have called "civilization," "industrial civilization," or "empire" is a mode of social organization that cannot succeed in providing long-range survival and thrival for even a billion humans. The futilitarian view is also seductive in that it tends to excuse us from the horrific, overwhelming responsibility to imagine and create social institutions that can bear the load as empire/civilization finishes collapsing. The truth omitted by the futilitarian ideology is a clear exposition of the existence of the profound power of human imagination and human freedom to create out-of-nothing answers where answers are currently not yet even dreamed.

"Moderate," "extreme," "left," "right," "center," – all such terms reflect ideological idiocy. All of them are mere name-calling from some rigid ideological perspective. Such terms are sometimes carefully defined and used as short hand for saying something – but even then their use hides the deeper truth that these terms are inherently inexact, misleadingly polemical, and very far from illuminating.

We know we are being misled when we hear people like Rush Limbaugh and others like him combine the above terms with simplistic old thoughts and a heavy sprinkling of outright lies. But surprisingly similar misleading speech and writing take place when sophisticated thinkers omit or minimize facts and real experiences in order to promote some ideological perspective that makes them feel wise and secure.

So how is truth discerned and expressed if all ideology is excluded? There are three sources of truth: scientific research, contemplative inquiry, and tentative overviews of these two empirical explorations of truth.

"Scientific truth" is a highly disciplined search for objectivity, the illumination of factual processes discernible by the five senses of humanity. It creates a body of knowledge that is always expanding and being transformed through and through. Scientific knowledge is approximate, temporal, and progressive. "Approximate" means that the more we know scientifically, the more we realize the vastness of what we do not know. "Temporal" means that scientific knowledge is truth for now; it will change as time goes on. "Progressive" means that once a factual matter has been illuminated, we cannot go backwards and simply deny that this knowledge has a validity that we must honor. For example, we cannot live as if the Darwinian or Einsteinian breakthroughs did not happen. Each new scientific breakthrough is fresh ground for further advances in objective knowledge.

"Contemplative inquiry" is a highly disciplined focusing of our interior gaze upon the dynamics of consciousness itself. It means looking within our own beings in search of what we can directly know about the functioning of our own minds, our own emotions, our own profound dynamics of awareness. Contemplative inquiry is the key to the truth of art, religion, and all the so-called "humanities." While the humanities may employ knowledge derived from the sciences, the key to their quest for truth is the inward gaze. Readers, hearers, or viewers of the humanities must employ their own inward gaze to

appropriate the truth of these works.

“Tentative overviews” is a term that points to our practical pull together of the best of our scientific and contemplative wisdom. Such pull together are “for the time being.” A tentative overview is a truth communication that replaces rigid ideologies. A tentative overview is an operational consensus useful for some body of humans for resolving some problem that faces them. To create a tentative overview, competent scientific thinkers and competent contemplative inquirers must gather together and build a program of action that provides some next-step common sense for their common social life. But all such overviews are tentative. They need not disintegrate into rigid ideologies. Ideologies are nothing more than tentative overviews that are overwrought into dogmatic positions that misrepresent the truth and divert our attention from resolving challenges that actually face the human species. Humans are always on the move where truth is concerned. This means that ongoing openness, curiosity, thoughtfulness, creativity, innovation, and bold adventure is the style of study and citizenry that will save whatever can be saved of our human destiny on this planet.

The current ideological critiques of President Barack Obama illustrate the idiocy of ideology. Whatever be the limitations and mistakes of this talented statesman, he is not what the various ideologues view him to be. He is not a dangerous dictator out to restrain the inventive spirit of this once holy nation. He is not a warmongering business pawn out to promote the U.S. empire through one more grand drama of self-defined victory of world economic domination. He is a pragmatist attempting to move one step at a time through the maze of limitations provided by a money-driven Congress and an apathetic, underinformed citizenry.

There can be illuminating critiques of the Obama administration from well-formed tentative overviews of factual and contemplative truth. For example, my own tentative overview suggests that Obama should give up a portion of his conviction that useful democratic discussion can be conducted with the rigid right-of-center ideologues who so blatantly oppose him. I believe that he might better defeat these opponents by awakening their constituencies to thoughtful citizenship and thus to the electoral exclusion of these stubborn ideologues from the governing dialogue. I believe that he can accomplish very little by attempting to compromise with for-profit healthcare corporations or with oil, coal, and nuclear energy investors and managers. I

advise moving full speed ahead with citizen supported healthcare plans and energy plans. He should play the game in such a way that citizens learn to be citizens and rise up to dismantle the power of corporation managers who spend other people’s money (investor’s money) to maintain the status quo a few more years. Obama has the skills to do this. He has a teachable moment in history. He has some secret service protection from being killed by these vitriolic opponents. He has the support of a great host of us in doing a rapid transformation of our failing social systems.

So, let those of us who truly want such change cooperate with this talented statesman. Let us use Obama to assist us in calling our population to informed citizenship. As Robert Reich so admirably points out in his book *Supercapitalism*, if we became as informed and passionate as citizens as most of us already are as consumers and investors, things would change. Our rugged individualism, whatever its virtue, needs to be augmented by communal participation – by a post-ideological informed citizenship that gets done what can be done through simple, passionate openness to the truth and some boldness and inventiveness in putting that truth into action.



Protesting the Supremes

a call to action
by Gene Marshall

In an upcoming case, five Supreme Court Justices – Roberts, Alito, Kennedy, Scalia, and Thomas – are poised to vastly increase the power of the corporations over the voting public. They may rule as unconstitutional that aspect of the McCain/Feingold bill that put limits on the amount of investors’ money corporation managers can use to finance candidates of their choice. This opens a floodgate for corporation money to enter the electoral process. This is not only a wrong direction for the quality of current elections, but contrary to the Constitution laid down by our founding fathers. We citizens who wish to be citizens, rather than couch potatoes who knuckle under to such violations of our citizenship, must think through our response to this.

If you are not already angry, I aim to help you access your anger on this matter. And anger is not enough. We need action – the sort of action that teaches the whole voting population that these justices and those who support them are viciously un-American, deserving impeachment. If the

expected court action takes place, we can at least insist upon the censure of these justices by the Congress of the United States and every State legislature in the land.

For a thorough exposition of this crime against the U.S. citizenry, see Jim Hightower's September 2009 issue of *The Hightower Lowdown*. Here is a quotation:

These hierarchical autocratic, profit-seeking entities (*public corporations*) are created by state issued charters. Today the charters are handed out with few questions asked, but in our nation's first 70 years or so, they were hard to get. To be chartered, a corporation:

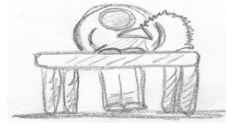
- **Had to have a public purpose.** If it failed to adhere to this purpose the state yanked its charter and the corporation was dissolved.
- **Was limited in what business it could pursue,** was not allowed to buy other corporations, and could amass only a specified level of capital.
- **Faced term limits,** with charters usually expiring after 20 years, requiring investors to apply to the legislature for charter renewal.
- **Had to treat farmers,** small businesses, and other suppliers fairly.
- **Was strictly prohibited** from lobbying or playing any role in political campaigns.

One fundamental point was established from the outset: a corporation is not a person. The people in a corporation (shareholders, management, workers) have the inalienable rights of citizens – they vote, participate in campaigns (give money, volunteer, run for office) serve in government, speak and assemble. But the corporation itself – an inanimate object – can't. People breathe, think, ponder their souls, and can be put in jail. A corporation can't. It is a paper construct, an artificial being – a thingamajig.

When the Supreme Court Justices, whose role is to defend the Constitution of the United States, grossly undermine that Constitution, what do we do? In addition to citizen education, some of us might organize censure campaigns in State legislatures and in Congress. It may not matter if any of these campaigns win legislative or congressional victories. What matters most right now is that the voting public learn the facts. Our long-range aim is to prevent corporation investor's money from having any influence on public policy. The job of a corporation is to provide a useful affordable product to its customers and a reasonable return to its investors. Using investor money to influence public policy should be forbidden in both a corporation's licensing charter

and in the law of the land. A corporation should be severely punished if it spends one dollar lobbying and campaigning for a public policy. That dollar belongs to its customers, workers, and investors. The government belongs to the people, not to the corporations. As citizens we need to understand this and insist upon correcting this, or our democracy is a joke. We should not give up our protests until this policy is established. Our democracy is at stake.

Meanwhile, we the progressive citizenry of the United States are going to be faced with raising enough money from our limited sources to be heard amidst the thunder of the money rush that corporations will assemble. We will have to do this to keep reactionary corporatists from retaking the reins of power. Such a tragedy would not only delay the types of change we so desperately need, it would destroy our democracy, what there is left of it. Reactionary politics destroys the potential we have in this nation to move forward to a more complete democracy – to a democracy that can also be ecologically sane and justly competent.



Metaphorical Translations

The Symposium on Christian Resurgence for Century 21 has become skilled in doing what we have called "metaphorical translation" of the Scriptures. Below are two examples. But first a few words about metaphorical translation.

Metaphorical language has always been used and always will be used to speak of the unspeakable qualities of the inner life. But metaphorical language is a human creation that is invented, changes, and dies like every other human creation. A crisis for Christianity and most other religious heritages came about because a very central religious metaphor died. It died because it no longer fit into the fabric of modern culture and because that culture had become scientific in a manner that valued objective or literal talk and no longer had a commonly accepted vocabulary for speaking about the inner life.

The death of the two-story metaphorical language does not mean that there was anything wrong with that language. It had been the smart way to talk about the inner life for maybe 100,000 years. Moses, Amos, Jesus, Paul, John, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Wesley, etc. were not less bright or less aware of Spirit actuality than any of us living today. They merely spoke a different language.

So our job is not to get rid of the two-story

myths, but simply to translate them into language we can understand, and to do so without changing what the original users of this language were attempting to say with it.

Such translation is important because without it we fall off into one or the other of these two directions: (1) We throw out the Old and New Testament baby with the two-story bathwater, or (2) we hang onto fragments of two-story talk because we believe that there is no other way to talk about these crucial matters. A huge percentage of Christian teachers today take one or the other of these inadequate paths.

Finally, metaphorical translation is a deeper quest than simple substitutions, such as: "The Ultimate Mystery is like a parent to me" for "Our Father who art in heaven." Metaphorical translation entails seeing the Spirit truth spoken in the old metaphorical language and composing fresh poetry in the metaphors of our times. Here are two examples:

**Harold Slater's Metaphorical Translation
of Psalm 23**

Eternal Reality is my guide to authentic existence,
I lack nothing.
In gratitude I receive all the stuff
that nurtures and sustains life.
In serenity I trust that whatever is given
is what is needed.
Reality is the larger frame of reference
that corrects my illusions.
Every NOW moment is filled with Mystery and
Wisdom,
Even those times that the oblivion of passing life
casts its shadow of grief and despair over me,
I will not cave into my fears;
Wisdom and the freedom to decide
will fortify me in my journey.
Abundant life is available even in the midst
of detractors and nay sayers.
I am blessed and surrounded abundantly
with all I ever need.
I am assured of integrity and compassion
all the days of my living,
sustained in being that never goes out of style.

**Irma Hudson's Metaphorical Translation
of Psalm 49**

Listen, everyone!
I tell you in song
what words cannot say.
The rich have no power
no real control.

They all die,
end up in tombs, not mansions.
They never find the light of Truth.

But I trust Reality,
I am safe
unlike those who lack understanding,
who die like animals
in spite of their riches.
I trust Reality.

ART ON THE HUMANNESS SCALE



reviews by Joyce Marshall

NOVELS

Into the Beautiful North
by Luis Alberto Urrea

This book is laugh out loud funny; yet the dark side is always right there threatening to intrude. The vivid characters are unforgettable, beginning with Nayeli, the heroine. Inspired by the movie, *The Magnificent Seven*, Nayeli decides to travel north to find men to repopulate their village. She recruits three friends to go along. It's a road trip book, a border book, a 'buddy' book. It's about the great beauty and pain of Mexico, about the kindness and compassion of some and the cruelty of others. It's about the good and bad of the U.S. and about surprising kindness and pointless evil. It's about life.

The Ballad of Trenchmouth Taggart
by M. Glenn Taylor

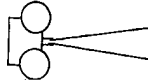
108-year-old Trenchmouth Taggart, the oldest person in the state, tells a reporter the story of his life in the mountains of southwestern West Virginia, near the Tug River border with Kentucky. Woven into the story is history of the place and the times. Taggart is involved in the coal-mining labor wars, meets Jack Kennedy during the 1960 presidential primaries, and runs into a couple of well-known country singers. Taggart, a recluse on the run for murder, goes for years without seeing another human. When he emerges from seclusion, he takes on different lives and aliases. He plays in a band and later becomes a newspaper reporter. Taggart's talents are extraordinary. He is a sharpshooter with rifle, pistol, and slingshot. He plays a mean harmonica, is an outstanding reporter, and his talents with snakes and women are beyond the pale. This mythic tale is about a rather magical baby, tossed out by his mother and raised by a saintly mountain woman to live a remarkable life. In his first novel Taylor proves himself to be one fine writer.

The Sparrow

by Mary Doria Russell

I'm not much into science fiction, but this novel is a good one. Novels are important to me in working out my life issues by observing how other people (the characters) deal with theirs. This story, which deals with why bad things happen to good people, has similarities to the book of Job and brings helpful insights. It is constructed around a Jesuit space mission to another planet in 2019. The novel goes back and forth between the story of the mission and the story of Father Emilio, the sole survivor, and his struggle after his return in 2060. As well as suffering severe physical trials, Emilio is overcome by guilt and a sense of responsibility for those who were lost on the mission. I was intrigued by his struggles and those of the Father General who is charged with being his priest. The Father General is a model of the unrelenting tough love needed for Emilio to open up and reveal that which he resists and which will allow healing. He also demands that Emilio be kind to himself and not inappropriately blame himself. The characters remain with me as guides; and you can't ask more of a novel.

MOVIES



Capitalism: A Love Story is Michael Moore's best. I kept applauding throughout the film. Moore's argument is less with capitalism than with capitalism's most egregious excesses in the U.S., mainly the greed of the banking industry and the gambling on Wall Street. His ideal is not the end of private ownership, but more cooperatively owned businesses where everyone shares the wealth and makes collective decisions. With clips from Ronald Reagan's old movies and days in office, Moore colorfully shows how Reagan's policies began our current economic decline. The funniest moments are when Moore asks several bankers to explain what derivatives are. All fumble and stumble. Of course, derivatives themselves aren't funny. For example, they might involve bets placed on the expectation that folks will default on their mortgages. Perhaps the most horrifying account in the movie is of a judge who was paid for each juvenile he sent to privately owned detention centers. He happily sent large numbers, many for trivial offenses. Another horrifying moment is the segment on "dead peasant" insurance. (Yes, that is what it is called.) This is the insurance which companies (like WalMart) take out on their employees, making them more valuable to the company dead than alive. The heroine of the film is Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) who advised her

constituents not to move if a bank foreclosed and to demand that the bank produce a copy of their mortgage. In many cases, the banks can't. The most encouraging moment is about the workers who protested Bank of America's refusal to pay wages earned. The workers won. My favorite image is of Moore using bright yellow police-crime-scene tape to block off the Stock Exchange. I cheered! The most inspiring moment is a clip of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, not long before his death, proposing his Second Bill of Rights for Americans, calling for the right to homes, jobs, education, and health care. What a tragedy that he did not live to carry out its passage! But it is there for us to carry out. And that is the challenge of Moore's wonderful film.

Waltz With Bashir is an animated documentary regarding a well-documented massacre that took place during Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. The victims in Palestinian refugee camps were killed by Christian militia in collusion with the Israeli forces. The director, a documentarian, had been an Israeli infantry soldier and was unable to remember anything from the Lebanon War. In an attempt to reconstruct what happened and why, he searched out old soldier friends, a psychologist, and a reporter who was there. Animation is perfect for bringing to awareness the occluded nightmare memories and the horrors of the event. The film ends with a transition from animation to actual footage of the aftermath of the massacre. It shows the necessity of illuminating these dark events so that healing can happen, to both the victims and the perpetrators.

Cherry Blossoms - After she learns of his terminal illness, Trudi convinces her husband Rudi to leave their rural Bavarian home and visit their far flung children. The film leads us slowly through lanes of mourning and regret as Trudi and Rudi discover how alienated they are from their children. Then, in a twist of fate, Trudi dies on the trip. Her loss awakens Rudi to aspects of his wife's life that she had suppressed to please him. Making the journey to Japan that she wanted and exploring the artistry of Butoh dancing, which she loved, he is poignantly connected to her at last. An incredible film.

Kung Fu was one of my favorite television series of the early 1970s. Watching the entire three-season series recently, we found that its beauty and mastery continue to be both moving and instructive. Do not expect 2009 special effects or scripts but do expect fine photography of meaningful stories dealing with racism, bigotry, mental illness, vengeance, oppression and such.

David Carradine is perfect as Kwai Chang Caine, a half-Chinese, half-American who was raised in a monastery in China. The setting in the wild West of the U.S. includes flashbacks to his training by the monks. The training emphasized compassion and nonviolence, yet included the Kung Fu which Caine uses when needed in his "tough love" approach. The first two seasons are the best.

Trouble the Water is a Sundance prize winner. Kimberly Roberts, 24, without resources to evacuate New Orleans before Katrina, recorded with a camcorder the experience of her family and neighbors as they rode it out hunkered in her attic. They escaped the waters with the help of a neighbor who found a boat drifting by. Later they retreat to shelter in Alexandria, La., where they are discovered by documentary film makers who use Kimberly's footage and add their own, following up Kimberly's story and that of her neighborhood. The film shows one example of outrageous behavior by the Bush administration that was new to me. After the storm, Kimberly and many others were directed for refuge to the nearby Navy base, which had empty housing with hundreds of beds. They are turned away at gunpoint by sailors with M-16s. What makes the film memorable is the spirit of Kimberly and her husband, Scott, whose creativity and determination never cease. She finds her calling as a performance artist, providing much of the soundtrack of the film, and he finds his as a builder, rebuilding the homes of his destroyed community.

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas. The Holocaust obviously holds lessons that humanity has not yet learned. Many fine films have explored those lessons. This is one which expands our understanding through the eyes of Bruno, a small Aryan German boy whose father is promoted to become Commandant of a death camp. Slipping out when his mother is gone shopping, Bruno walks through the woods to the camp and makes friends through the fence with a Jewish boy his age. Bruno is not the only one in his family raising questions about the Nazi "solution." His grandmother and his mother, each horrified as they learn the situation, rise to a form of revolt. This is a fascinating and powerful film.

The Betrayal. For over 20 years cinematographer Ellen Kuras collaborated with Thavisouk (Thavi) Phrasavath, a Laotian-born writer and film editor, to produce this film about betrayals. One is the U.S. government's betrayal of Laotian soldiers who faithfully helped the U.S. carry out clandestine operations during the Viet Nam War and were then abandoned by the U.S. The Laotian soldiers,

including Thavi's father, became enemies in their own country. When most of Thavi's family escaped to the U.S., Thavi's mother and eight of the ten children were separated from his father for years. His father's marriage to another woman was another betrayal. The family in the U.S. senses betrayal by the United States. They had expected a "heaven on earth" in escaping their dangerous situation in Laos. Instead they found themselves in a filthy, overcrowded neighborhood in Brooklyn, terrorized by crack addicts and gang members. Thavi's mother, who had protected her large brood in a war-torn country, felt betrayed by them when they became like many American teens who disrespect their parents. The film reveals a hidden aspect of American history through the personal experience of a displaced family, a courageous group that finally triumphs through their adversity.



RECOMMENDED READING

reviews by Joyce Marshall

Shantung Compound

The Story of Men and Women Under Pressure

by Langdon Gilkey

Harper Collins, 1966

This book came about because Gilkey, a young American teaching in China in 1943, was rounded up by the Japanese with 1500 other foreigners and interred in a camp for 2 1/2 years until World War II ended. Fortunately, Gilkey, a fine writer, kept a lengthy journal and has a sense of political and moral dynamics. The book, therefore, is a novelistic narrative of a sociology laboratory which is both fascinating and sobering. His opening quote is from Bertolt Brecht: "For even saintly folk will act like sinners, unless they have their customary dinners." Gilkey continued to be surprised that this diverse group of 1500, shut up with barely enough food and space to survive, and with the necessity of creating their own system of housing, feeding, and governing themselves, would often have difficulty doing the obviously just and fair thing. In creating technical solutions to their problems, they were ingenious; but when food and space were short, they had difficulty seeing things from the perspective of the group as a whole. The most divisive issue arises when the 200 American internees receive generous supply packages from the Red Cross. Should they share with the others? In reflecting on democracy Gilkey remembers his teacher Reinhold Niebuhr who said that the goodness and rationality of people made the rise of democracy possible. But Gilkey

observed in the camp that it was the grouching, the orneriness, and outright resentments of people that made democracy necessary.

Gilkey discovered a number of things that apply to any group, whether a small community or a nation or the world:

1) Without a degree of moral health no community can survive. Gilkey asserts: "A democratic society can possess no stronger law than the moral character of the people within it will affirm and support." This means that some people in any group must be capable of self-sacrifice for the good of the whole. At the beginning, when the group was setting up their quarters, kitchens, and governing bodies, it seemed to Gilkey that all that was needed was the wonderful ingenuity evident in these activities. But as time went on and stress on the community increased, it became apparent that skill was less important than character. Gilkey says: "Far from being at the periphery of life, spiritual and moral matters are the foundation for all the daily work of the world."

2) Justice as an ideal is not the same as justice in real situations. You have to do the best you can in the midst of ambiguity and it likely won't be perfect.

3) The things the human family most longs for (e.g., peace, prosperity, long life) depend less on the latest inventions than on the ability to achieve harmony and justice among ourselves.

4) A viable community must possess force to compel compliance to its agreements (laws) and to punish serious offenders. In Gilkey's words: "Morality can never replace force, but it must provide the deep basis for the creative use of force."

Of the missionaries and religious of various stripes in the group, the Catholic monks, priests, and nuns were the favorites. They were willing to do the dirtiest work, made friends with everyone, and generally communicated acceptance of all. The Salvation Army people also won affection by their willingness to help others. The fundamentalists were trying so hard to be "holy" that their compassion for others was stunted. Gilkey's stories about all these groups are lessons – sometimes inspiring and sometimes cautionary tales.

Gilkey's final words about the camp include this statement: "The unwanted is often creative rather than destructive. No one wished to go to Weih sien camp. Yet such an experience, resisted and abhorred, had within it the seeds of new insight and thus of new life for many of us. Almost because of its discomfort, its turmoil, and its boredom, it eventually became the source of

certainities and of convictions with which life could henceforth be more creatively faced. This is a common mystery of life, an aspect, if you will, of common grace: out of apparent evil new creativity can arise if the meaning and possibilities latent within the new situation are grasped with courage and with faith."

On Niebuhr

A Theological Study

by Langdon Gilkey

Univ. of Chicago Press, 2001
and

Gilkey on Tillich

by Langdon Gilkey

Crossroad Publishing, 1990



Langdon Gilkey was a boy when he first encountered Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr was a friend and colleague of Gilkey's father, who was dean of the University of Chicago Chapel. Later, in 1940, when Gilkey was about to graduate from Harvard and was in turmoil about the state of the world as World War II was beginning, he heard Niebuhr preach at Harvard Chapel. His response was "Who the hell was that?" as Niebuhr opened up the possibility of a realism about social affairs that did not lead to cynicism, and which, in fact, supported renewed moral commitment. Gilkey read Niebuhr's books prior to his experience in China (narrated in the book reviewed above, *Shantung Compound*) and was guided through that experience by Niebuhr's thinking. After the war he returned to the U.S. and entered Union Theological Seminary, where he was a student and later a colleague of both Reinhold Niebuhr (1898-1971) and Paul Tillich (1886-1965). Before his death in 2004, Gilkey was professor of theology at the University of Chicago Divinity School. These two books mostly summarize the theology of these two influential theologians, and include personal stories from Gilkey's relationship with them as he developed his own thinking.

Reinhold Niebuhr was convinced that all cultures have a "religious substance," that all are relative and, including Christian culture or U.S. culture, become demonic whenever they claim to be absolute and universal. Like Tillich, he was an existentialist, in that he did not connect faith to doctrines or beliefs. He saw meaning as the main gift of religion, giving a sense of purpose to who we are and what we do. While not claiming that Christianity was the only true religion, he felt that the Christian symbols, more than any other, make sense of the confusion of ordinary life by giving meaning to our historical life. They give "confidence, courage, and self-affirmation to our

common being in the world; direction to our common projects and our acts; the principle of judgment on our relative successes and failures; providing comfort and intelligibility in the face of discouragement and tragedy; and hope for our future even in the possible grimness and suffering of the present.” Reinhold Niebuhr felt that the proper arena of concern for Christians is living in history in such a way that justice and love are maximized. He was a profound influence on social changers including Martin Luther King, Jr. and Myles Horton.

Paul Tillich was a more systematic theologian than the more freewheeling Reinhold Niebuhr. Tillich clarifies how important it is for us to have a “unified, encompassing, and intelligible statement of the Christian message” (which describes RS-I, to those of you familiar with that history) pointing out the dangers of various forms of fundamentalism. We have certainly experienced those dangers with both Muslim fundies and American fundies. What is needed is to understand more fully the truth present in other religions. Tillich showed how “a religion can relate creatively and humbly to other religions and yet preserve its own characteristic witness.”

I particularly appreciated Gilkey’s description of Tillich personally. His students experienced him as both lovable and awesome, personally powerful yet accessible, a person of “smoldering vitality.” When he gave lectures, not all of his audience could understand everything he said, “but few failed to hear and respond to his at-oneness with them in his angst and yet in his courage and faith.” Gilkey quotes one woman: “I did not understand a word of what that man said, but he was speaking directly to me every moment of the lecture.”

Neither of these books is a walk in the park to read, but Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich are well worth a trip, and Langdon Gilkey is a passionate and articulate guide.

Envisioning Sustainability

by Peter Berg

Subculture Books, 2009

Peter Berg was a part of my introduction to Bioregionalism in 1984 when we attended the first North American Bioregional Congress--NABC I. (The name is now Continental Bioregional Congress, to include both Americas. The tenth CBC took place at The Farm in Tennessee last month.) Berg’s genius includes being a very funny performing artist, a poet, and a visionary with the capacity to articulate his vision passionately, practically, and distinctly. *Envisioning Sustainability*

is a collection of his essays, talks, diatribes, and articles which have helped to define the bioregional movement since the early 1970s. The pieces vary from deeply inspiring to broad historical vistas to canny step-by-step policy. Berg makes a clear distinction between bioregionalism and environmentalism. Even though environmentalists are morally correct, the movement, as Berg sees it, is like “a hospital that consists of only an emergency room.” Bioregionalism is a proactive stance that answers the question: “What do we do instead?” In answer to that question, words like self-reliance, ecology, watersheds, life-places, ecosystems, renewable energy, carrying capacity, native plants, Green Cities, retrofitting and reinhabitation arise. In 1974, Berg spoke of the fading off the landscape of the Nation-States as: “We begin to reinhabit the earth as planetarians, starting where we are, aware of where our food and water are coming from. Aware of what the land beneath our feet is doing, how it works with the unique life and weather of that spot.” Berg lays out the steps of his Green City model, developed at his home in San Francisco, which has been adopted in cities around the world. He has worked personally with projects in Ecuador and Japan. At a Washington D.C. conference on Watershed in 1996, Berg told of meeting with a group in Japan concerned about the ecological impact of the Winter Olympics. He went with them to a hillside with a natural spring, to a diverse forest, and other settings. Then they went to the Olympics site where construction crews had pounded hillsides and cut trees, creating erosion and pollution. The trip concluded on a cliff overlooking their valley and from which they could see the natural pattern of the watershed. Peter said to them: “You know all of this was here before people came. All of this will stay here after the Olympics are over and even after people leave. Here’s your choice. You see how powerful it is. You see how rich it is. You can either harmonize with this watershed pattern, try to get along with it and maintain it, or you can allow it to be degraded. It’s a values decision. You have to find the basis for making that choice in your hearts.” Which sums up why I felt so at home at that first bioregional meeting. Bioregionalism is a heartfelt relation to Earth and all its inhabitants.

Of Water and the Spirit

Ritual, Magic, & Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman

by Malidoma Patrice Some`

Tarcher/Putnam, 1994

Malidoma, born in what is now Burkina Faso, West Africa, was his shaman grandfather’s shadow

until age four. That year his grandfather died, and Malidoma was kidnapped from his home by a French Jesuit missionary. For the next 16 years he suffered almost every kind of abuse as he was trained in Western culture. He escaped at age 20 and, walking 300 miles from the seminary, found his way back to his tribal village, where he now was an outsider. The elders offered him the opportunity to participate in an intensive six-week shamanic initiation with younger tribal boys which, if he survived, would reestablish his connection to the tribe. After undergoing the initiation, Malidoma learned that his destiny lay in being a bridge between Western civilization and indigenous culture. Studying in the Sorbonne and Brandeis University, he now holds three master's degrees and two PhDs. Though he returns regularly to his tribal home for renewal, he makes his home in the U.S. where he has taught at the University of Michigan and now leads seminars, intensives, and rituals.

Malidoma's open, vulnerable, detailed stories of his experiences in the Jesuit school and in his initiation are riveting. I noticed two major lessons that his culture can teach ours. One is to connect our bodies to our minds. When Malidoma first came to the U.S., he saw with the spirit eyes of his elders that people's heads were not connected to their bodies. There was a blank space where the neck should be. One aspect of this is that we place great importance upon words. Malidoma says: "The speech of silence is achieved when words, and their potential ability to hurt meaning, are done away with. Words entrap meaning, torture it, slice it into pieces the way a butcher cuts the meat of a slaughtered animal and serves it to us. . . . In silence, meaning is no longer heard, but felt; and feeling is the best hearing, the best instrument for recording meaning." The second lesson is the importance of wise elders. In Malidoma's words: "Elders and mentors have an irreplaceable function in the life of any community. Without them the young are lost -- their overflowing energies wasted in useless pursuits. The old must live in the young like a grounding force that tames the tendency toward bold but senseless actions and shows them the path of wisdom. In the absence of elders, the impetuosity of youth becomes the slow death of the community." This is a book that changes the reader.

In Praise of Slowness
Challenging the Cult of Speed
 by Carl Honoré
 HarperOne, 2004



addiction to speed when he was tempted to buy a book of "one-minute bedtime stories" to read to his son who always wanted to hear more stories than Honoré felt he had time to read. He also noted movements around the world that were urging human beings to slow down. He embarked on a quest to explore these movements and write a book on the cultural phenomena of Fast and Slow. The result is an engaging story of human culture and of Honoré's exploration of slower approaches that changed his life and can change the reader's as well.

Honoré begins with the state of affairs, a familiar summary of what he calls "the age of rage." Next he explores how humanity, more and more ruled by the clock, sped things up. He then looks at the possible underlying causes of our obsession with speed. The remainder of the book, which is fun to read, is devoted to the Slow Movement in its various manifestations. He defines Slow as more a state of mind than a rate of motion. You can be Slow and move fast. He defines Slow as: "calm, careful, receptive, still, intuitive, unhurried, patient, reflective, quality-over-quantity. It is making real and meaningful connections -- with people, culture, work, food, everything."

Honoré discovered a number of organized efforts to regain a sense of freedom from rush. In Austria, Honoré visited the Society for the Deceleration of Time, and in Japan, the Sloth Club, which runs an organic cafe with T-shirts and coffee cups that proclaim "Slow is Beautiful." In his chapter on Food, he describes a meal with a Slow Food proponent in Italy. As it ends he is surprised to realize that without feeling bored or restless, he has spent four hours enjoying natural food prepared with expert care with companionable conversation and periods of silence. He moves on to Cities. There are about 50 towns in Europe involved in the Slow City movement. He observes that young people are responding positively to the slowing down in these towns. In the Mind/Body chapter, Honoré tells of skeptically attending a meditation retreat; now he makes meditation a part of his routine. He also looks into yoga, Chi Kung, and SuperSlow weightlifting with good results. The highlight of the chapter on Sex (titled A Lover With a Slow Hand) is his description of the tantric workshop he and his wife attended. Other chapters reveal the benefits of slowing down in medicine (better health care when doctors spend more time with patients); the workplace (productivity improves with fewer work hours and more vacation); leisure (more is needed, and watching TV is not leisure); and children.

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Hopefully, more and more people are becoming aware of the destructive pressure placed on children. In Finland, they take the Slow approach -- children don't enter preschool until age 6 and do not face high-pressure exams. Finnish students today rank highest in the world in performance and literacy. Families who cut out (or severely reduced) TV time noted that family relationships improved and the children slept better and did better in school. This book makes it clear that human beings are happier in Slow mode than Fast. For example, after all his experiments with Slow, Honoré reads a long bedtime story to his son; then he reads another story and he feels happy to continue reading, unaware of time. His son, instead of the usual demand for more, decides that he's ready to sleep. Honoré has reached his goal: to be able to read to his son without watching the clock.

Love's Garden

A Guide to Mindful Relationships

by Peggy Rowe Ward and Larry Ward
Parallax Press, 2008

The authors, married and ordained by Thich Nhat Hanh, use his approach to Buddhist teachings in this guide to loving oneself, one's partner, and the world. I appreciate the Buddhist understanding that we must love ourselves before we are capable of truly loving another. Especially strong in this book is the section on relationship to an intimate partner. Peggy and Larry's personal stories about their struggles are candid and quite helpful. They also include vignettes written by others about working through sticky events in their relationships. Gene and I went through this section together, reading and doing the exercises. We found it wonderfully pushy, encouraging honesty with yourself and your partner and vulnerability in owning up to one's own "unskillfulness" and fears. The book also reminded us of the importance of spending quiet time together regularly with no TV, no computer, no phone, no car. It is very easy to become addicted to these. We have recommitted to a real "sabbath" on Sundays, with no technologies and no work on the agenda. It is amazing how that simple decision changes the quality of the relationship. I recommend this book for anyone interested in cultivating the qualities of the heart.

The Assertiveness Workbook

How to Express Your Ideas and Stand up for Yourself at Work and in Relationships

by Randy J. Paterson, Ph.D.

New Harbinger Publishers, 2000

It is my experience that few people have strong

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communication skills -- are capable of gracefully disagreeing, giving opinions, asserting boundaries, confronting people. Most of us either go along with others, try to pacify, avoid confrontation and never say "No," (the passive style) or we boss others around, intimidate them, and force them to give in to "our way" (the aggressive style). There is also the passive-aggressive style which attacks indirectly in order not to take responsibility -- by forgetting, having "accidents," being late, or being slow in responding to a request agreed to. AND sometimes, hopefully more and more, we use the assertive style. The essence of assertiveness is assuming responsibility for your own behavior and acknowledging your thoughts and preferences honestly while also respecting the feelings and opinions of others. Paterson notes that each of these styles is used by all of us at one time or another; and we each have a style we use most.

The book is an excellent handbook which will increase your awareness of yourself and others in all interactions. Further, the author guides you step by step into increasing your flexibility of responses. First, Paterson has assessments for determining which of these four styles you use most. He also explores how we learn these behaviors and when it is appropriate to use each. Beginning with the easiest situations in your own life, you start practicing the assertive style. One of my favorite exercises was called: A Walk in Town. The idea is to practice overcoming passivity by the way you walk. You use a favorite actor or dancer as a model of confidence. The best guide for me was: let your chest enter the room first, not your nose. Although the subtitle of the book emphasizes overcoming passivity, this book is also for those who are overly aggressive. Aggressive persons might be less likely to perceive a problem, but overuse of the aggressive style usually indicates a fear of being out of control and tends to keep us distant from others. This book is a fine resource for personal relationships, for work situations, or conflict management. It is readable, workable, and fun.

"Just Checkin' on Ya"

My Journey of Being a Caregiver for a Loved One

by Jeanette Stanfield, 2009

Available from ica-usa.org or ica-associates.ca

Many of us may face going through the death process with a loved one. Jeanette Stanfield describes her own walk on that path with unflinching honesty. Her writing is matter-of-fact, straightforward, and thereby deeply moving. Brian Stanfield was a five foot giant of a man. Jeanette decided soon after she met him that she

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did not want to miss sharing her life with this man. I was fortunate to know this couple, who formed their own ghanthood as they traveled the world, teaching and creating material and books for community leadership. The main gift of this book is the attitude with which Brian and Jeanette face death. Recognizing death as a natural and good part of life, they handle whatever sorrows and inconveniences it brings with wholehearted creativity, not blaming or complaining, simply living it to the full.

The Courage to Lead
Transform Self, Transform Society
by R. Brian Stanfield
New Society Publishers, 2000
Available from ica-usa.org or ica-associates.ca

This is one of Brian's books (see review above). I reviewed his book, *The Art of Focussed Conversation* in a prior journal. The premise of this book is that to transform society, we first need to transform ourselves. The book includes a history of the Ecumenical Institute/ Order:Ecumenical/ Institute of Cultural Affairs and a summary of the amazing fifty-year in-depth research and practical experience of that network of people. Brian's summary includes a secular rendering of this work. It begins with the basic religious course (some of you will recognize RS-I --Religious Studies-I) which underpinned work in the world, and moves on to: The Meditative Council; Knowing, Doing and Being; States of Being; Profound Vocation; The Four Life Phases; The Comprehensive Relation to the World; The Global Grid; The Social Process Triangles; and more. In the context of becoming an effective community leader, the book presents all of these without using religious language or terms. It is laid out in four parts: relation to life, to self, to the world, and to society. Each of the four parts includes three stances for a leader. The twelve stances are: everyday care, disciplined lucidity, continual affirmation, secular depth, self-reflectiveness, radical vocationedness, historical involvement, comprehensive perspective, inclusive responsibility, social pioneer, transestablishment style, and signal presence. For those who share this history and for anyone interested in social change and depth encounter with life, this book will certainly be a gift.

Trauma and Recovery
The aftermath of violence--
from domestic abuse to political terror
by Judith Herman, M.D.
Basic Books, 1992 & 1997

Judith Herman's classic volume has changed the

way we think about and treat traumatic events and trauma victims. In a new introduction to the 1997 edition, Herman explains how the issues surrounding trauma and recovery have shifted within the clinical community and the culture at large. In the past we have considered these problems individually, but Herman weaves common ground for survivors of incest, rape, torture, war, captivity, and the holocaust. Her work, meticulously documented, frequently uses the victims' own words. This book is particularly valuable in understanding the long-term and complex aftereffects of ongoing, repetitive childhood abuse/captivity. She says, "Even PTSD as it is currently defined, does not fit accurately enough for survivors of prolonged trauma." She has given a new diagnosis: "complex post-traumatic stress disorder" for people who have grown up in a terroristic household. She explains that there is always a backlash when the "unspeakable" is spoken, and she offers encouragement to remain standing against repeated abuses. Herman not only describes various forms of trauma and their effects, she lays out the road to recovery. The book is credible and compassionate.

reviews by Gene Marshall

Supercapitalism
The Transformation of Business,
Democracy, and Everyday Life
Robert Reich
Alfred A. Knopf: 2008



This book has changed me. It has given me a deeper grasp of the importance of a thoroughgoing citizen revival. In this excellent book, Reich points out how the role of citizenship in the United States has been deeply eroded since the time of Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal. After World War II we had a period of balance between the power of the citizenry and the power of the economic managers and big investors. Reich calls this "The Not Quite Golden Age." Without idealizing that also troubled period, Reich makes his case that democracy in that period still had the power to restrain the economic institutions and create positive outcomes of a relatively balanced nature. But in the following decades the power of the citizenry and therefore of democratic governments has deteriorated. Indeed, the population has been reduced to being individualistic consumers and individualistic investors with almost no power except what they do with their money. The voting booth is almost entirely ordered by the big money forces of the society. We vote among the lesser of bad choices provided for us by powers seemingly beyond our control.

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By providing a detailed account of the economic history of the last several decades, Reich unwinds a lot of misunderstandings and false pet theories. Like James K. Galbraith in *The Predator State*, he takes an empirical approach to proving his assertions. Reich also illuminates the way we must move to get out of this mess. Many current books are good at illuminating the depth of our problems, but lousy at indicating a solution.

Reich shows how the primary contradiction for progressive change is a thoroughgoing citizen revival. He describes how the U.S. population is well informed and well practiced in being consumers of corporation products and in being investors in these corporations. We are not unintelligent people, but we have lost our hold on being informed citizens. We fail to notice that the managers of these huge corporations use our expenditures and our investment money to shape the policies of our government in favor of such narrow issues as company profits and market share. Huge amounts of corporate money overwhelm our votes and buy our "representatives." Our true interests, our healthcare, our living environments, and the long-range well being of our grandchildren are being neglected by this pattern. We have let corporation managers get away with the murder of our most sacred human values as well as the functionality of our entire economy. We the citizenry are not only part of the problem, we are the core of the problem.

We need to mobilize an aroused U.S. citizenry for detailed intellectual and political victories over the leadership of the large for-profit corporations and their governmental patsies. **We are called to battle the ideology of a supercapitalism that claims that every value can be monetized and traded on the world market.** We are called to battle with the notion that unregulated markets will make everything work out fine. We are called to battle with the notion that corporations are basically providing what we need. We are called to support the truth that corporations are dangerous institutions that must be carefully watched and restrained by coercive democratic governments that are truly responsive to citizen needs and planet-wide crises. We are called to support the truth that huge transnational corporations can in many instances be replaced by better institutions. Economic institutions that are too big to fail are too big to exist. Such institutions are not friendly giants of free-enterprise creativity but reckless tyrants.

Life Inc.

*How the World Became a Corporation
and How to Take it Back*

Douglas Rushkoff

Random House 2009

The great value of this book is its detailed description of how our personal lives are being detrimentally affected (estranged from reality) by living in our taken-for-granted systems of society.

With vivid personal illustrations Rushkoff shows how we the citizenry have been disconnected from our lives. Our lives have been incorporated, and we have been disconnected from reality by this incorporation. We have been disconnected not only from our democratic governments and from the functioning of our economy, but also from our sense of place and our meaning of home. We have become disconnected from one another, losing our communal groundedness in excessive individualism. We have become disconnected from our true freedom and from the power of our choices.

In the last chapter, Rushkoff discusses the second half of his subtitle "How to Take it Back." He explains how we cannot take it back if we depend too heavily on our charity for far-away causes. We cannot take it back if we delegate all our hopes to our elected officials. And we will certainly not take it back if we think we can do so by merely promoting better behavior from the corporations. Rather, we the citizenry need to get fully engaged in transforming society from the bottom up, community by community. To escape from "Life Incorporated," we have to reconstruct everything, beginning in our most local, everyday, everyplace, everyplace lives.

My impression is that we need another book or two on how local changes build up toward national and planetary transformations. I also want more on the role of national governments and the role of international institutions in bringing about the overall transformation. I have been enriched, however, by Rushkoff's clarity about the necessity of local community transformation. I appreciate his closing words "Happiness doesn't come from the top down, but from the bottom up. . . . real people doing real things for one another – without expectations – is the very activity that has been systematically extracted from our society over the past four hundred years through the spectacular triumph of corporatism. And this local, day-to-day, mundane pleasure is what makes us human in the first place."

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- * new experiments in Christian community life
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- * publication of nurture methods and materials
- * research of a wide range of relevant subjects
- * innovative educational programming
- * EcoTheater & other grassroots artistic creation
- * local and continental bioregional organizing
- * the publication of social-change materials

Years ago we adopted as our philosophy of benevolence these thoughts from an *Utne Reader* which outlined **principles for the art of philanthropy** for people of ordinary means as well as the wealthy. Here are some of those principles:

- Support really good people who have a total commitment to doing good in the world and who are willing to put their asses on the line to do it.
- Seek out originality and imagination.
- Support unpopular truths.
- Fund players with a long view.
- Support people no one else is supporting.
- Support people whose work is their passion in life, not a day job.
- Fund those attacking root causes and trying to change the system.
- Trust what inspires you.

Order *Jacob's Dream*

A Christian Inquiry into Spirit Realization.

This book explores our Spirit Nature (Trust, Love, and Freedom) and uses the enneagram analysis of personalities to assist us in our Spirit Journey.

Send \$21 to Gene Marshall.

See RealisticLiving.org
for more information.

In terms of such principles, we are willing for you to evaluate our work for its appropriate place in your benevolent budget. And we invite you to consider yourselves partners in promoting these religious and social directions.

Realistic Living

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