

THE LAST ISSUE OF 2009!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those individuals who have contributed to the ETC... over the last few months. The discussions that have resulted from your articles have been edifying and valuable to many people inside and outside of the college. I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage everyone to write for the ETC... We all have a few weeks off from classes over the holidays, so why not spend some time flexing your writing muscles and get an article written on a topic that you have been wanting to spend some time with for a while. This is your paper...write.

Bryn Stephenson, ETC... Editor

History, Meaning and Resurrection

By David Arndt

Well! I'm glad that we've gotten some good discussion going on a central affirmation of our faith, the resurrection of Jesus. I appreciate the responses I've received both in the recent Et Cetera issues and in person. I'm glad to hear that my article has stimulated some good questions about the meaning of Jesus' resurrection, which is valuable whether people end up agreeing with me or not.

I particularly appreciate the response of Josh Coutts last week, so let me focus on the important issues to which he has called attention. (Josh has acknowledged that he mistakenly characterized my reading as "mythological," rather than metaphorical—both terms have strengths and weaknesses).

Josh has rightly pointed out that John Dominic Crossan's metaphorical understanding of Jesus' resurrection is influenced by Rudolf Bultmann's program of "demythologization." But am I, like Bultmann, excluding the possibility of

the miraculous? No, I don't, and I don't think Crossan's approach is that simple either. I think the real issue has to do with the genre of the biblical material and the kind of discourse we find there. I do not exclude historical explanations that appeal to the "miraculous," but I know that it is very common for humans to use imaginative language to express their religious convictions. So I prefer explanations in terms of normal causes; but maybe someone can sharpen my thinking on this.

There are various considerations involving the form of the stories, sources and redaction, and so forth. For instance, it has been proposed that John created the story of Jesus' appearance to Thomas as part of his effort to counteract a theology like that in the Gospel of Thomas.

Josh wonders if I'm reacting against an approach that places too much emphasis on history as "bruta facta" at the expense of Kingdom living and the meaning for

us today. Not exactly, though this problem can sometimes arise. In my experience, it is the insistence on a literal interpretation that has been a stumbling block, and I've ended up spending a lot more time asking, "Can I believe all this crazy stuff?" than, "Do I want to follow this Jesus?"

I do not want to completely separate history and meaning. But do we get at that history through reading the surface of a text, or by reading deeper? I suggested previously that the story of Emmaus in Luke 24:13-35 points to a real historical process of how Jesus' followers continued live out God's kingdom.

Certainly some biblical authors look to Jesus' past resurrection as a basis for action, but I see a variety of approaches in the texts. Mark, for instance, has the centurion confess Jesus as Son of God not because he has witnessed his resurrec-

See: History, p. 2

Quotable

"If you want to be a complimentarian, compliment me!"

-Sarah Steele

History

continued from page 1

tion, but because he has seen how Jesus faced his death (Mark 15:39). Mark even omits any resurrection appearance story, and ends his Gospel quite surprisingly in 16:8 with the women fleeing the tomb without saying anything to anyone. It is difficult to interpret what Mark is trying to say, but let me offer a possibility. The young man at the tomb tells the women, "He is not here," suggesting they are looking in the wrong place. He tells them to go tell the disciples in Galilee. This may be a narrative pointer for us to recall the beginning of Mark's Gospel: "Go back to Galilee! Live the life of the kingdom! That's where you'll find him."

And what is noteworthy among the early Christians is not so much how they looked to the past, but how they looked to the present. The Pharisees looked to God's mighty activity in the past, but then demanded signs of Jesus. They

should have recognized God's activity in Jesus' work quite apart from any signs or wonders. (And can we do the same?)

We need to remember that resurrection is not just about personal survival, but is consistently tied to the coming of God's justice to heal and restore the world. As I touched on previously, the raising of the girl in Mark 5:21-43 is not, as apologists often claim, simply a resuscitation. It is painted in the full theological colors of resurrection: "Resurrection is happening now! Israel is being restored!"

And while many Jews were waiting and wondering when God would again intervene to rescue his people, Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom of God was already breaking into the present. It is then striking that Jesus' followers did not, like Martha in John 11:24, simply wait for his resurrection when all the dead would eventually be raised at the end of the age.

Preambles From the Regent Olympic Committee

In less than nine weeks, the opening ceremonies will begin, and several hundred thousand visitors, athletes, coaches, security personnel, and volunteers from across the world will arrive in the greater Vancouver area. For the past few years, many people have been thinking through and living out their responses to the coming of the Vancouver-Whistler 2010 Olympic Games: advocating for the bid; protesting the Olympic movement; challenging City by-laws that seem unjustly directed towards lower-income and homeless persons; hosting visitors; volunteering; educating about negative impacts of the Olympics; and trying to coordinate the response of the church, to name a few.

Located just a few blocks away from the Doug Mitchell Thunderbird stadium, the Olympic and Paralympic venue for ice hockey, Regent College is the main accessible public space between the bus loop and the venue. We can expect upwards of 30,000 spectators and participants to be, quite literally, in our backyard. A committee of staff and students has been assembled to discuss and work out the details of Regent's response to the very real impact of such an influx of people and activity.

As an international Christian graduate school of theological studies, we are committed to: providing an environment for conversation, deliberation, and the exchange of ideas; the development of critical thought and lived-out response; and to safeguarding space for students and staff needing to carry on with their ordinary tasks and rhythms of life, with as few disruptions as possible.

We will be partnering with More Than Gold (MTG) in some capacity, and are also looking to draw attention to voices that are often unheard. MTG is a non-profit organization seeking to connect and coordinate the Christian community in working together on initiatives before, during and after the 2010 Games. Their vision is to mobilize the Christian community "for a collective witness of good works" and to create spaces to extend the radical hospitality of Christ. MTG represents many, but not all denominations, organizations, and Christian points of view. We recognize that both inside and outside the Christian community there are a wide variety of ways to think through and respond to the Olympics. Stay posted for more details about Regent's and your possible response to the Olympics.

They proclaimed that Jesus had been raised and that the general resurrection had already begun. Maybe they meant it literally; but if they meant it metaphorically, it's an expression of the same theology that Jesus proclaimed.

Poems

Bare Branches

By Heidi Rist

The branches are bare now,
and previously hidden things
visible before our eyes.

A nest - naked - rests
at the slender oak's peak.
Peelings of birch bark fray,
disclosing the pale peach of her trunk's belly.

A chickadee comes.
And another. Seeking
shelter, a perch, a place
to call home. She discovers,
refuge finds family.

The gold globe filters,
unfettered from its path.
Spilling splendor on the
frozen earth, dispelling
gloom, and wonder's back.

Dark Places are Holy Places

By Hannah Coyne

Dark places are holy places

a mother's dark womb
ten fingers, ten toes

Joseph's black cave
holy scarred carpenter, unfettered savior

rough furrows in autumn
seeds waiting for spring rains

shadowy cover of the unknown god
creatures feeling their way toward him, and
finding Him

"what therefore you worship as unknown,
this I proclaim to you... I have determined
allotted periods and the boundaries of their
dwelling place, that they should seek God,
in the hope that they might feel their way
toward him and find him."

Father, Son and Holy...

By Eduardo Sasso

Idea. Holy item in the creed. Holy gas. Holy concept. Holy book. Or, in Paul's own words, Holy skubalon: Holy s _____. We've missed Him, and keep on missing Him. God. The Person. The Presence within us, and among us. The One who cannot be bound by dogmatic propositions, nor doctrinal straitjackets. The One who fills it all. The Spirit. The living God. The Unsearchable. The Almighty, Giver of Life.

Professing ourselves to be wise, we became fools, and changed the doxa of the incorruptible God into paper-dead assertions that have little to do with doxa but very much with doxos... orthodoxos. We've handcuffed him and duck-taped his mouth, and duped ourselves by worshiping a Binitarian idol: a lesser and crippled god.

Wherefore God gave us up in the pride of our own minds to senselessness, to the degrading of ourselves, because we exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the two rather than the Three, who's forever blessed!

For this reason, God gave us up to dry discussions, to split-level reality. We exchanged the natural intercourse between mind and heart, between faith and action, and became finger-pointers against each other. And we've received in ourselves the due penalty for our error.

And since we did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave us up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. We're filled with all sorts of glowing academic recognitions, with full-on argumentative capabilities, with well-disguised hypocrisy. Full of orthodoxy, drained of orthopraxy; confessing lips lovers of scripture, lives still found-wanting. Slanders, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Yet... we all know God's decree: those who practice such things deserve to live. And to Lord it over Him!

People of God: so much for theology without ethics. So much for ethics without theology. So much for fancy shirts, juicy wallets, and full-blown laughs. So much for

pneumatology, ecclesiology, and all the comfortably bookish -ologies.

Yet so little, so nothing, for regarding everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus, the Lord. So little for suffering the loss of all things for his sake. So little for regarding them as rubbish. So little for gaining Christ and being found in him. So little for knowing Christ and the power of his resurrection. So little for sharing in his sufferings. So little for becoming like him in his death. So little for surrendering to the Spirit who raised him from the dead.

Almighty Spirit of the living God, don't you dare have mercy upon us. Leave us alone! Don't make us people of temperance, of joy, of peace, of long-suffering, of gentleness, of goodness, of faith, of meekness, of love. Forsake us! Keep off! Don't disturb us, but surrender to the straitjacket where you belong. Back to where we've kept you. Lest you into our darkness, bring light; or into our s _____ breathe Life.

I Can't Feel My Butt

By Christine Hammill

I Cannot Feel My Butt

I am freezing in Regent, and I do not think I am alone. All I want for Christmas is warm socks and fingerless gloves to wear inside. Maybe this is okay. Maybe this is the way that Regent is trying to be environmentally conscious, but it is very hard to concentrate on the exegesis lecture when I cannot feel my toes. I am wearing long underwear and a thick sweater and still have yet to take my coat off since I got here 3 hours ago.

I know what you are going to say: "It's just because you are from San Diego."

True, I did grow up in the land of perpetual sunshine, but I also lived in (or near) Chicago for 6 years, and let me tell you the warming lamps at the El stations in the winter were at least comparable to the daily temperature of Regent-- and they were outside! I have sat in the library this semester in coat, hat, scarf and a blanket trying to get research done. And yes, maybe I am just a bit more naturally cold than most but the amount of students I see similarly garbed while studying would suggest differently.

So what's to be done? If

the College cannot afford to properly heat the classrooms I can understand that. Times are hard. Or if it is some sort of creation care issue, well I'm not always the best at that stuff, but I will try to get on board with gusto. I'd just like to know the why and wherefore of this condition as I blow on my fingers mid-lecture to keep them warm enough to feel my keyboard. Until then I will invest in a puffy prairie-worthy coat, wool socks and those little hand warmer thingies. I'll be the one in the library - with my toque on.

Submission Guidelines

Who Can Submit: Current students, faculty, staff and spouses are preferred (though exceptions can be made).

Articles: Maximum Length for all unsolicited articles is 800 words, though shorter articles are welcomed.

Book, movie, and CD reviews should be no longer than 500 words.

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 200 words.

All submissions are subject to editing for both clarity and length.

Visual Art: Works submitted in digital format are preferred. No promises can be made about the quality of the printing, however: black and white photographs and line art will reproduce best.

Fiction and Poetry: Et Cetera welcomes submissions of fiction and poetry. The word limit for such submissions is 800 words. However, because editorial revision is more difficult with these submissions, longer poems and stories may not be printed the same week they are received.

Anonymous Articles: Approval of anonymous publication will be granted on a case-by-case basis.

How to Submit:

For the Et Cetera: etcetera@regent-college.edu.

The Green Sheet: greensheet@regent-college.edu

Submissions in Word format are preferred; RTF works as well. No guarantees are made that a submission will be printed.

Deadline for submissions is noon Sunday of each week.

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The Et Cetera can be viewed on-line at:
<http://www2.regent-college.edu/etcetera>.



Some Thoughts on Suffering and Aesthetics

By Abigail Woolley

corner on

the arts

Yes, beautiful paintings have been made on the subject of Christ's passion. And yes, many writers have been prompted to their greatest work through painful personal experiences. Here, though, I'm not going to talk about art's content or its amazing story-telling ability. Let's talk, instead, about organic and geometric shapes.

Geometric shapes are regular, even, and repeatable. If you know a lot of math, you can write nice equations for them. You've probably tried to draw geometric shapes on graph paper. You probably failed at drawing them, though, since your hand is not designed to manufacture something that predictable. Geometric shapes are ideals, and--like Paul Teel tells CTC--as soon as it is drawn, the form of a true geometric circle is a failure. Machines do a pretty good job, though, creating identical, repeating plasticware.

If you tried to write out an equation for the contour of a leaf, on the other hand, you'd have to know a whole lot of calculus--and still, you'd have trouble. A leaf, a mountain, and your thumbnail are all organic shapes. They are unpredictable, irregular, and never quite symmetrical. These are the shapes that occur naturally in the visible world. (For shapes on the molecular level, you have to go ask Robyn, and she will tell you about protein aesthetics. She will probably agree that those highly geometric marshmallow-and-toothpick models are, after all, only "ideal" estimations of a more mysterious reality.)

Now, answer me something. Which do you consider more "beautiful:" a mountain or a skyscraper? When you are listening to a lecture, are you more distracted by the contour of the blackboard or your professor's

ear? Are geometric shapes or organic shapes more "beautiful?"

I'm sure various ones of you will have different answers, as have the various eras of history. Neoclassical landscaping would put hedges in rows, neatly arranged around a fountain in the center, whereas the Romanticism that followed it longed for the wild look of willows with unkempt contours. Remember that Romanticism wasn't just a new fad: it was actually a desperate, nostalgic attempt to fight back the effects of the industrial revolution. The Romantics resisted geometric, factory-produced shapes because they could see something lovely in a dangerous, untamed nature. The "beauty" they were looking for did not require a human presumption to control.

If I were to plot my life experiences on a graph, there would be some symmetry, some parallelism, and some poetic justice. There would also be parabolas missing arms and segments stranded out at (213.2, -97). Don't you think broken line segments bleed?

Good art pays attention to balance. The positive space may be very asymmetrical, but some sense of balance is always present. In the midst of an experience, however, the balance of the artwork (visually speaking) or the narrative arc of a story is not visible. In itself, the glob of paint should not exist. It throws everything off balance. This point is unjustifiable.

Is it possible, maybe, to train your aesthetic sensibilities to prefer organic shapes? To see a bittersweet beauty in the flaws? Then is it also possible to wait precariously in the imbalance, until the fulcrum of the balance--the origin of the graph--is revealed?