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THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHALLENGE OF DIFFERENCE

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THE SPIRIT IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM:

“The Spirit in the New Millennium: The Duquesne University Annual Holy Spirit Lecture and Colloquium” was initiated in 2005 in fulfillment of Duquesne University's mission and charism. As a university founded by the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, it is hoped that this ongoing series of lectures and colloquia will encourage and promote significant as well as diverse scholarship on the theology of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, besides fostering scholarship on the Holy Spirit within an ecumenical context, this event is intended to heighten awareness of how pneumatology (the study of the Spirit) might be relevantly integrated into the various academic disciplines in general.

Past lectures, as well as the present text, may be accessed online at www.duq.edu/holyspirit. You can contact us at holyspirit@duq.edu. Marinus C. Iwuchukwu, served as the director of Holy Spirit Lecture and Colloquium, 2018.

2018 Colloquists

- Susan Abraham, Ph.D.
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- María Teresa Dávila, Ph.D.
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Spiritan International School of Theology
- Fr. Bienvenu Mayemba, SJ, Ph.D.
Jesuit Institute of Theology

BIOGRAPHY OF LECTURER

Dr. M. Shawn Copeland teaches graduate students preparing for the doctorate in Theology; undergraduate students in the Interdisciplinary Program in African and African Diaspora Studies (AADS); in the Faith, Peace and Justice Program; and in the PULSE Program. Since 2003, Copeland has been a tenured faculty member of the Theology Department at Boston College.

An award-winning writer, Copeland is the author and/or editor of six books, including *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being*; *The Subversive Power of Love: The Vision of Henriette Delille*, and 125 articles, book chapters, reviews and blog entries on spirituality, theological anthropology, political theology, social suffering, gender and race.

Copeland is a former convener of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium (BCTS), an interdisciplinary association of Black Catholic scholars, and she is widely recognized as one of the most important influences on theological studies in North America. She was the first African American and first African American woman to serve as president of the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA). She is the recipient of six honorary degrees as well as the Seton Medal and the Congar Award for excellence in theology. In June 2018, the Catholic Theological Society of America conferred upon her the John Courtney Murray Award.

ABSTRACT

The increasingly reckless, aggressive and even hostile style and content of contemporary societal encounters between human persons in their differentiated embodiment disrupts and disturbs the potential for realization of human community on a global scale. From the framework of political theology, the lecture considers the subtle and signifying capacity of the Spirit to lead human persons in their freedom to new discoveries and to unexpected experiences of grace, justice and wisdom.

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Political theology functions as the mode or framework for this reflection on the Holy Spirit. In this mode or framework, theology analyzes and critiques cultural meanings and social (i.e., political, economic, and technological) arrangements from the perspective of differing interpretations of God's dealings with the world.¹ Political theology is not new: Recall that Augustine "stripped imperial rhetoric of its divine pretensions;" Aquinas contested the "delirious [and totalizing] epistemology of empire;" and Luther "insisted that resistance to both ecclesial and political authorities [may stand as] a faithful response to God."² Scrutiny of the signs of current times uncovers social oppression of human persons in their embodied differences as an urgent and key priority of contemporary political theology.

Through apathy and silence, we sanction the social oppression of children, women, and men constructed as different from ourselves. This predicament constitutes a challenge not only to daily human living, but to Christian discipleship (and theology).³ We know that Christian living never occurs in a vacuum, but rather in particular times and places, in complicated and messy mixes of historical, cultural, and social (i.e., political, economic, technological) events and circumstances. At this historical moment, our global situation has become such that the dynamics and conflicts of neoliberal capitalism have thrown us together—we peoples of the world with our differing cultures, religions, practices, feelings, fears, hopes, and ordinary ways of daily living. We are pressed into a common space generated by neo-liberal capitalism "that both represses and homogenizes" us and too often sets us in opposition to one another.⁴ Further, the intensification of the ecological crisis radically clarifies humanity's fundamental unity *in* difference and raises the stakes for the ongoing survival and life of all species, including the human.⁵ "Perhaps, our age with all its divisions and hostilities," observes Anselm Min, "has special need to appreciate the Holy Spirit precisely as the Spirit of fellowship and solidarity."⁶

This lecture considers the mission of the Spirit in our time as affirming and embracing human embodied difference and as animating us in and through our own difference(s) and our freedom to affirm and embrace one another in active compassionate solidarity. The aim here is not to reconstruct the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but rather to explore a possibility evoked by a reading of French theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet. "The Spirit," writes Chauvet, "*is* God Different... [A]t the same time, [the Spirit] is God closest to humankind, to the point of inscribing God's

very self into our corporality in order to divinize it.” He continues: “A constant feature of ancient liturgies is their linking of the Spirit and the body. Furthermore, in the liturgy, pneumatology integrates not only the body of the Church and those of believers, but together with this body the matter of the universe as ‘world.’”⁷

If the Spirit is God Different, if the Spirit God Different inscribes the Divine Self into (or divinizes) our human corporality, if the Spirit integrates the body of the Church and those of all believers and those of all humankind with the matter of universe as world, then affirmation and embrace of embodied human difference is the mission of the Spirit.

I elaborate this in four parts: The first, sketches some of the alienations that shape our global material context; the second, analyzes the negative construction of difference and attends to social group differentiation, to conditions of social oppression, and to the role bias plays in that negative construction; the third, considers the mission of the Spirit with regard to the *Genesis* myth of Babel, to the theophany of Pentecost, and to the incident concerning Ananias and Sapphira in the Book of *Acts*; the fourth, suggests the mission of the Spirit in our broken and divided world.

THE GLOBAL MATERIAL CONTEXT

With alarming regularity and shocking cruelty, we humans assault, demean, impoverish, rape, torture, and murder one another simply because of socially produced difference. We meet embodied human difference with opposition and exclusion; we choose and decide to construct some different human persons as ‘other.’ Social scientists define ‘othering’ as that set of “dynamics, processes, and structures that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of a full range of human differences based upon group identities.”⁸ Group difference functions as a major source of violent conflict and repression. We alienate and persecute children, women, and men identified or suspected to be ‘other,’—Rohingya in Myanmar, female in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico,⁹ Muslim in the United States, Polish in ‘Brexit’ Britain, Christian in Syria, Zimbabwean in South Africa.

Each day around the world, armed conflict, violence, and forced conscription drive thousands of children, women, and men from their homes, villages, and towns. Research conducted by the United Nations and the World Bank indicate that in 2014, fifty-one percent of all refugees were children, and by the end of 2015, violent conflicts “related to group-based grievances arising from inequality, exclusion, and feelings of injustice”¹⁰ had forced twenty-million persons to seek safety outside their country or region of birth.¹¹ Poverty remains the scourge of our world and, along with war, the chief cause of hunger. By the year 2030 roughly forty-six percent of the world’s poor will live in fragile and conflict-affected situations stemming from their marginalization as different and, therefore, ‘other.’¹²

In 2013, the year of the latest comprehensive data on global poverty, 767 million people are estimated to have been living below the international poverty line of \$1.90 per person per day. Almost 11 people in every 100 in the world, or 10.7 percent of the global population, were poor by this standard, about 1.7 percentage points down from the global poverty headcount ratio in 2012.¹³

Moreover,

The 20% of the world's population that resides in the affluent Northern hemisphere receives 60% of the world's income, engages in 80% of the world's trade, four-fifths of the world's health spending, and consumes 86% of the world's goods. This group consumes 45% of the world's meat and fish, 58% of its energy, 84% of all paper, 85% of all water, and own 87% of all the world's vehicles.¹⁴

The persistence and virulent spread of HIV and AIDS along with increasing incidences of polio and tuberculosis have reawakened old plagues in new places.¹⁵

Four decades ago, Gustavo Gutiérrez declared that the main challenge to liberation theology, “comes not from the skeptic but from the non-person or the non-human... the human being who isn't recognized as such by the prevailing social order.”¹⁶ And Achille Mbembe puts it this way:

From the standpoint of colonialism, the colonized does not truly exist, as a person or as a subject. ...The colonized does not exist as a self; the colonized *is*, but in the same way as a rock *is*—that is, as nothing more. ...The colonized belongs to the *universe of immediate things*—useful things when needed, things that can be molded and are mortal, futile and superfluous things, if need be.¹⁷

We in the United States can no longer evade our particular historical, cultural, and social (i.e., political, economic, technological) problems with embodied human difference. Consider our uncritical surrender to the neoliberal market's vulgarization of individuality as license, our exploitation of poor and working people along with processes of dis-employment, market manipulation, and commercialization of desire,¹⁸ our criminalization of poverty and contempt for the working poor,¹⁹ our arrogant and casual misogyny that has given rise to ‘rape culture,’²⁰ our ineffective response to homelessness and disdain for homeless women and men,²¹ our dispossession and disregard of indigenous peoples,²² our obliviousness to environmental racism,²³ our condescension to differently-abled

women and men,²⁴ the privatization of our prisons along with massive rates of incarceration among black and brown men and youth and women,²⁵ our dismissive attitudes toward the deaths of black and brown youth and women and men while interacting with police or their agents,²⁶ our hate crimes against LGBTQI persons,²⁷ our religious chauvinism, our narrowed cultural horizon, our nativism and bigotry toward immigrants,²⁸ and our persistent racial animus.²⁹

The children, youth, women, and men to whom the above data refer quite literally are deprived of personhood. Because of their embodied difference, they are ostracized from the category of the human—neither their persons nor their needs matter at all in the manner in which the world’s resources are distributed. Our world has become a dumping ground, a “zone of social abandonment”³⁰ for the many whom we have made wretched.

SOCIAL OPPRESSION AND CONSTRUCTION OF DIFFERENCE

A basic definition of the notion of difference posits some quality or feature of *unlikeness* between two or more things, events, places, or persons. A thoroughly ordinary instance may be drawn from sports: the baseball differs from the football in obvious empirical features of size, shape, mass, color, and material composition. The football and the baseball have different uses and one cannot be substituted for the other in playing the sport particular to each. Both the football and the baseball differ from the hockey puck, even though the puck and the baseball are moved about with sticks. Still, there is no mistaking hockey for football or football for hockey.

Embodied human difference cannot be dealt with so easily. Coding difference of gender or race or sexual orientation or culture as negative or deficient embodiment in some individuals and groups illustrates how meanings of difference may be structured and reproduced through power relations. Political theorist Iris Marion Young deploys the term social oppression to designate “the disadvantage and injustice some people suffer not because a tyrannical power coerces them, but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal [or neo-liberal] society.”³¹ Social oppression denotes the “systemic constraints” placed on some individuals and groups by the choices, decisions, and policies made by a privileged few who hold power or wield influence in a given social order. The consequences of these choices, decisions, and policies are “embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules.”³² In other words, through the ordinary processes of everyday life, we participate in the social oppression of differently embodied human ‘others,’ making ourselves complicit in the reproduction, transmission, and institutionalization of their oppression through our major political, economic, cultural, and religious institutions.³³

Social Group Differentiation

A social group is an aggregate of people, but not an aggregate merely. From a commonsense perspective or in ordinary terms, we utilize the notion of group to classify and distinguish people by racial characteristic or cultural-ethnic attributes (browns from whites, Cubans from Castilians), religious groups (Orthodox Jews from Sikhs), age groups (baby boomers from millennials), or women from men. From a technical perspective, the notion of social group denotes “a specific kind of collectivity, with specific consequences for how people understand one another and themselves.” On Young’s analysis, three basic characteristics distinguish a social group: (1) differentiation from at least one other group by cultural forms, practices, or a way of life; (2) preferential group affinity and interaction among individual group members; and (3) “as an expression of social relations, a group exists only in relation to at least one other group.”³⁴

Group differentiation is not in itself “oppressive [and] not all social groups are oppressed.”³⁵ In this regard, two qualifications: First, although social processes of affinity and differentiation produce groups, this differentiation does not imply that individual persons or the social group as a group possess “a substantive essence”³⁶ or fixed or distinctive nature. Second, although a social group may undergo one or more condition of social oppression as a group, not every individual member of the group experiences such oppression. A social group may be designated as oppressed when that group experiences one or more of the following five conditions of oppression: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence.

Exploitation refers to the “oppression [that] occurs through a steady process of the transfer of the result of the labor of one social group to the benefit of another.” The injustice of class exploitation consists not only in gross inequities in the distribution of goods and services in a society, but also “enacts a [damaging] structural relation between social groups” and despoils human potential and affective relationships.³⁷ Through the condition and process of marginalization an entire group or category of people are barred from active, practical, and creative participation in the civic and cultural life of a given society or nation. Marginalization, then, is a particularly “dangerous form of oppression.”³⁸ In the extreme, marginalization potentially subjects an entire social group and its individual members not only to severe material deprivation and psychological abuse, but extermination—genocide, ethnic cleansing, apartheid represent such responses. Less extreme, but no less dangerous are efforts through legislation or coercion or propaganda to exclude socially marginalized, often highly visible and “minoritized,”³⁹ persons or groups (e.g., women, the elderly) from civic and political participation or to arbitrarily control these persons or groups through “suspens[ions] of basic rights to privacy, respect, and individual choice.”⁴⁰

In neoliberal and advanced capitalist societies like the United States, Britain, or Germany, dominant privileged social groups may withhold power

from ‘other’ different marginalized social groups by persuading civil authorities, including legislators, courts, and law enforcement, to surveil or limit or exclude the participation of marginalized groups in mechanisms of the social order, thus rendering these groups and their members powerless, even as power is exercised over them.⁴¹ The conditions of exploitation, marginalization, and powerlessness refer to the concrete exercise of power in relation to others; these categories denote “structural and institutional relations that delimit people’s material lives.”⁴²

Cultural imperialism involves control and dominance over the content and means of mediation, interpretation, representation, and communication within a society. This entails not only the “universalization of a dominant group’s experience and culture,” but the normalization and normativity of their experience and culture.⁴³ The cultural products of the dominant group reflect not only their own achievement, but function as the ideal representative of humanity as such. Further, Young argues, and quite perceptively so, that those who are “culturally dominated undergo a paradoxical oppression, in that they are both marked out by stereotypes and at the same time rendered invisible.”⁴⁴ These culturally dominated women and men “find themselves defined from the outside, positioned and placed by a network of dominant meanings they experience as arising from elsewhere, from those with whom they do not identify and who do not identify with them.”⁴⁵ Sadly, members of oppressed social groups too often internalize the dominant culture’s “stereotyped and inferiorized images” of themselves, at least insofar as they are forced to react to the behavior of others who are influenced by those images.⁴⁶

The fifth condition of social oppression is violence. Members of oppressed social groups live with the fear of random, unprovoked attacks on their persons or property. Consider that in many Western countries, women, Jews, Arabs, Muslims, Sikhs, gay and lesbian and transgender people live daily with the fear of physical violence. In dozens of countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia, Christians actually live in fear of their lives (the 2019 Easter Sunday bombing in Siri Lanka is indicative of the threat some Christians face in parts of the world). Recall that Saddam Hussein and ISIS sought to obliterate the Yazidis people, but their plight has gained the compassion and support of the world in the light of the persecution and oppression they have faced on grounds of their ethnic and religious difference in Iraq. Such irrational and unpredictable violence ought to neither be deemed merely aberrant nor exclusively be ascribed to extremists. When potential violators intentionally look for different ‘others’ to attack or assault, violence morphs into a “social practice.”⁴⁷ We tolerate violence. We blame the victim (‘she should have worn something more modest or’ ‘they do not belong here’); we rationalize the perpetrator’s violence (‘boys will be boys’ or ‘we have to protect our country’) and reward them with light judicial sentences, or no sentence at all. Through silence and failure to act, we endorse such violence, thus rendering it an acceptable social practice and lending it legitimacy. While we identify such violence to be an

individual moral wrong, individual sin, or minor crime (and violence is *all* those things), we have yet to understand it as an act of social injustice.⁴⁸

Interpreting the situations of various social groups through Young's framework of conditions of oppression permits comparison without reducing or ranking. At the same time, critically uncovering the particularities of any social group's history, culture, and religious orientation both complicate and deepen our understanding of their experience of difference and their responses to conditions of social oppression.

Bias: Dramatic, Individual, Group, and General

When we meet social 'others', too often we meet them not as human subjects to be encountered, engaged, respected, even cherished, but rather as objectified embodied difference to be confined and constrained—members of social groups who must be controlled and circumscribed. What accounts for our responses? Research by social scientists, psychologists, and educators suggests that our nearly instantaneous, immediate reactions of suspicion or rejection to embodied difference stem from "implicit bias" or "implicit social cognition."⁴⁹

Implicit bias or implicit cognition refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control.⁵⁰

Remarkably, insight into the cognitive dimension of bias was anticipated more than fifty years ago by Jesuit philosopher and theologian Bernard Lonergan.⁵¹ His formulation of bias may help us to clarify the cognitive and affective roots of our negative response to embodied difference and to 'social others.' At the outset, Lonergan distinguishes bias from the commonsense notion of bias as a particular, specific preference or as an inclination of temperament. Rather, bias is the more or less conscious and deliberate choice, in the face of what we perceive to be a potential threat to our well-being, to exclude further questions or data from consideration in our experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding and acting.⁵² All human beings are susceptible to bias, which interferes with our conscious performance in everyday living through distorting affect and blinding understanding. His proposal identifies four (4) principal ways in which such distortion may occur—dramatic, individual, group, and general bias.

Dramatic bias takes the form of the denial of affect in day-to-day living, cognitively it resists insight into the feeling-laden unconscious or psyche. When we feel fear or resentment at interpersonal or societal situations, we resist self-

examination and repress those feelings; that repression and denial interferes with our deliberation and choices, our decisions and actions. Individual bias reveals itself in egoism, cognitively it refuses insight into what might help others or benefit and promote the common good. Group bias takes the form of ethnocentrism, cognitively it refuses insight into what might be necessary or good for other groups. The general bias of common sense manifests itself in anti-intellectualism, cognitively it preempts further investigation of a question or issue with an immediate solution or short-term fix. General bias sacrifices long-term results, consequences, or possibilities to *ad hoc* measures.

Bias reinforces the conditions of social oppression: Consider that dramatic bias may manifest itself in interpersonal interactions between privileged and marginalized individuals and groups. The egoism of individual bias permits privileged individuals to project personal inadequacies on individuals of marginalized groups; this distorts not only the development of that privileged individual's intelligence, but the formation of her or his affective and experiential life as well. Members of marginalized groups harm themselves by internalizing self-doubt or self-hatred. The upshot of individual bias is a set of distorted experiences that become the foundation for distorted group understanding of social 'others' and their cultures.

To repeat, all individuals are susceptible to individual bias, but institutionalized social oppression cannot be attributed to individual bias alone. For example, when forms of media caricature members of disempowered groups (e.g., immigrants, women, racially minoritized people), these images instill derogatory ideas about those groups. In turn, those ideas and images are mapped on to all the members of that particular group and absolutized: "that is just how those people are."⁵³ These images encourage individuals of privileged social groups to propose policies and enact programs presented as putatively beneficial for the whole of society but, in fact, advantage their own group at the expense of the need or concerns of marginalized or disempowered others. Or consider how dramatic an individual bias coalesce in resentment as one man in re-feeling the anger at his own incompetence trumps up spurious reasons to reject women applicants for a position; through taunts and derision, he draws other men into agreement with him. Or consider that group bias as expressed in real estate patterns makes it easy for privileged social groups to avoid even casual contact with non-privileged members of society. With little or no person-to-person encounter with social others, privileged groups make decisions that reinforce the marginalization and powerlessness of others; because that privileged group possesses societal influence, their decisions are likely to be upheld and enforced through legislation. And in some especially egregious situations, marginalized racial groups may vent their frustration in acts of civil disobedience and rebellion.

I have been spelling out the underside or negative construction of embodied

human difference through social oppression and bias. Although, social group differentiation in itself is *not* negative, oppression of individual members of social groups or social groups themselves not only is negative, but immoral, unjust, and sinful. Theologically, social oppression insults the Triune God and obstructs God's glory from shining forth in human persons deprived of vital, full, and abundant life (anthropology). Theologically, social oppression disrupts the potential realization of communion between humans and between humans and creation (ethics). But, social oppression as perpetrated by those who wield cultural, political, economic, and technological power with brute force or subtle coercion may "betray their fear that another power, other than theirs and greater, has been unleashed."⁵⁴ For the Spirit, like the wind, "blows where [and when] it chooses" (John 3:8).

READING BIBLICAL TEXTS WITH CHAUVET IN ORDER TO DISCERN THE MISSION OF THE SPIRIT

The Hebrew word *ruah* is translated in the New Testament as the Greek *pneuma*, which means breath, air, wind or soul. In Hebrew, *ruah* denotes spirit, breath, or wind and is almost always connected with the life-giving attribute of God.⁵⁵ Spirit-*ruah*—paradoxical, elusive, uncontrollable, absolutely free—appears and re-appears throughout the Bible's narration of Divine and human encounter: from creating (Ps 104: 29-39; Gen 2:7) to engaging; from reproving to saving to blessing (Gen 6-9); from calling to covenanting (Gen 12ff); from liberating to forming, establishing, protecting (Ex 1-15; Ps 107: 39-43; 136: 23-26); reproving (1 and 2 Sam, Isa 61:1-12, Ezek 36-3, Joel 2: 28-29); loving and abiding continually with the people of the Covenant; from the conception to the birth of the Jew Jesus of Nazareth (Lk 1:26-38), his prophetic praxis and preaching of the reign of God (Lk 4:14ff) to his death, resurrection, and ascension; to Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-14). Repeatedly, the Spirit enters into human history—inspiring, exhorting, reproving (Acts 4:32-51-11), prompting, animating (Acts 2: 37-47ff), empowering, and sustaining human persons in active imaginative engagement with the Transcendent Triune God.⁵⁶

The Pauline texts have shaped rather decisively our understanding of the meaning of the Spirit's dynamic presence and action. Thus it is customary to accord serious attention to the Pauline corpus in theological reflection on the Spirit. Indeed, for Paul, the coming of the Spirit communicates the Divine will for our salvation, empowers the entire *ekklēsia* (community of believers), brings to it a diversity of gifts for the common good, and animates it for the sake of the reign of God. Those whom the Spirit empowers are endowed with the wisdom to see the world from God's perspective and to act accordingly. To experience, or to enjoy the Spirit in fullness, is to put on "the mind of Christ" (I Cor 2:16). However, in view of the

overall aim of this lecture, the complexity and far-reaching influence of those texts place engagement with Pauline teaching beyond the scope of this presentation. Three goals direct this section: reading the myth of Babel and the theophany of Pentecost with Chauvet, analyzing the deception of Ananias and Sapphira, and clarifying the mission of the Spirit in those instances.

From Undifferentiation to Differentiation:

Reading Babel and Pentecost with Chauvet

Chauvet opens his discussion of the event of Pentecost by interpreting Philo of Alexandria's commentary on the theophany at Sinai (Ex 19: 16-25).⁵⁷ Without mouth, tongue, or voice, Philo explains: God "decided to produce by a miracle an invisible noise in the air, a breath exhaled in words." The words are blown by and as the wind, are given form and are transformed into flames. From the middle of the fire "a resounding voice... descended from heaven" and struck all present with "bewilderment," for each person hears the message in their own language. And, what is more, the message "seemed to be seen rather than heard."⁵⁸

"The fire of the Spirit," Chauvet says, "makes visible what the *voice* of God (or rather, the voices of God, which are 'seen' by all the people) makes audible. And what the Spirit makes audible and visible is not only that God speaks every language (Acts 2: 9-10), but also... that God cannot be heard except through the intermediary of a variety of tongues."⁵⁹ The Spirit negotiates divine difference to communicate with various peoples (embodied human difference) and can only be heard in the plurality and diversity of languages. That word must bear fruit in every time and place, for the "word that goes out from the mouth [of God]... shall not return to [God] empty, but it shall accomplish that for which [God] purpose[s], and succeed in the thing for which [God] sent it" (NRSV Isa 55:10-11).

The story of Babel (Gen 11:1-9), Chauvet suggests, is humanity's refusal of and resistance to Divine difference. "At Babel," he reasons, "the dreamed of and sacrilegious undifferentiation which humans wish to establish between themselves and God is itself the expression of the undifferentiation that reigns among them."⁶⁰ The people of Babel hold fast to one and the same language, one and the same linguistic construction, the same words. They speak to one another in such a way that they and their words 'mirror' one another. Each one is an echo, a replica, a (photo)copy of the others; each one is indistinguishable from another. Uniformity not unity configures their living and their city. Chauvet continues:

Now, when the differences, between themselves and between themselves and God are abolished, there reigns the totalitarianism of a 'phallic' absolute power which, like the tower with its top in heaven, takes itself for the Truth of God's very self and... transforms official discourses into absolute knowledge. Each

person is thereafter summoned, under pain of death, to conform to the same ideology. But we know that beneath this regime of *uniform identity* and the parroting of official interpretations, there rumble violence and revolt. God prohibits this sort of undifferentiation. ...To the totalitarian reign of the Same, God opposes the symbolic reign of the Other.⁶¹

Through concocted sameness the people of Babel mask difference between themselves and attempt to erase difference between themselves and God. In impudence, they build a tower to breach the heavens. This is vanity: They chase the wind, but cannot and shall never master Divine *ruah* (NRSV AP Sirach 1: 14, 17).

Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth” (NRSV Gen 11:4).

Moreover, Wes Howard Brook points out the “numerous self-referential pronouns: ‘us,’ ‘ourselves’ (each twice) and ‘we’ that appear in the passage. No reference is made to God or to the rest of creation; the brick-building project would enclose humanity in work of its own hands.”⁶² Babel rises on idolatrous logic: The people seek to make a name for themselves, to make their city great. Wealth, status, and privilege supplant communal values. A people’s boast displaces the name of the Holy One, and the stench of their arrogance reaches the heavens. With superb irony, Howard-Brook comments:

The city and tower, which would be ‘skyscrapers,’ are so small that YHWH cannot see them from where YHWH lives without coming down for a look! YHWH’s response inverts the human goal. If YHWH does not act in the face of this human project, ‘nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.’⁶³

God comes down and disrupts their pretention to empire: God confuses their language, scatters the people. No longer can they rely on one language, one set of meanings through which to amass and hold power.⁶⁴

Beneath the drive for undifferentiation, homogeneity and sameness, mistrust of difference, discomfort at introspection, suspicion of ‘otherness’ simmers to a boil. At the same time, the drive for undifferentiation, homogeneity and sameness exposes fear—fear of scarcity, fear of want, fear of change. Chauvet concludes, “God prohibits this sort of undifferentiation. God... separates, thereby,

enabling all to breathe, to no longer be short of *ruah*, that is, to come to themselves as subjects in their difference.” Their scattering, their separation, their embodied difference becomes the “salvation of humankind.”⁶⁵

Pentecost parallels and fulfills (Peter says as much), the prophecy of Joel: “I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit” (Joel 2: 28-29).⁶⁶ Pentecost is the “*anti-Babel*,” reversal and remedy. “Pentecost makes clear that the salvation of humanity lies in respect for the difference. Respect for the difference-holiness of God.”⁶⁷

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were altogether in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ... We hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine” (NRSV Acts 2: 1-8, 11-12).

Once again, the Spirit manifests the Divine presence in “symbols of the unmasterable: wind and fire, while the ‘voice’ makes itself heard from within these theophanic elements.”⁶⁸ Whereas Babel’s desire for the totalitarian concealed fear, Pentecost revels in difference and demonstrates “respect for the difference between humans,” respect for God-Spirit, respect for God Different.⁶⁹

On the very memorial of the reception of the Tablets of the Covenant at Mount Sinai, the feast of *Shavu’ot*, the Spirit opened, filled, and released the disciples to act and to speak boldly, without fear—to preach to and to pray with the rulers of the people (4:31), to initiate new ministries (6-7), to commission Peter and John to Samaria (8:14-18), to baptize and eat with Gentiles (8: 28, 29; 10:1-48), to recognize and affirm Saul’s conversion (9:1-8), and to journey to far-flung places and peoples for the sake of the ‘good news’ (11:24-13).

Chauvet’s reading of Pentecost confirms the significance of humanity as

differentiated and individuated. At Pentecost, the Spirit publicly performs the Triune God's respect, affirmation, and embrace of embodied human difference.

By creating differences between humans the Spirit [God Different] sets up communication between them. By opening up a lack between them, it enables them not to fail to meet one another. Just as opening in each person the absence of God, it enables them not to fail to meet God. The Spirit is thus at the place of our desire.⁷⁰

Chauvet takes us further: The Spirit "is the *Openness* in God's very self, the Openness that is constitutive of God's very self, an Openness [the Spirit] inscribed between persons and within each person."⁷¹ The Spirit makes us for the Triune God and the Triune God has made us for one another; we are meant to encounter and engage one another, to be together in friendship, in peace, and in love.

The Spirit and the 'Sovereign Couple'

After the death of Jesus, the earliest followers of his 'Way' gathered together in small communities or assemblies (*ekklesia*) in private houses that permitted face-to-face encounter.⁷² This arrangement was not so much innovation as imitation: Given the size of the Jewish population in the Diaspora and the distinctiveness of their worship, Jews met for worship in private houses that eventually gave way to separate synagogue buildings. The synagogues functioned as places for wakes, meetings of the council, gatherings of friends, communal or personal discussions, transactions among business acquaintances, and so on, even as it remained a place of worship. Gerhard Lohfink describes the synagogue "as a community center belonging to a congregation that gathered regularly and shared a common life."⁷³

The women and men who were followers of the 'Way' adopted the synagogue model and met in private houses. They joined their lives to one another, devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles, to fellowship, to a common table for prayer and for the breaking of bread as well as to a community of goods (Acts 2: 32, 36, 37, 41-42, 44). The Spirit poured out a rich diversity of gifts (charisms) upon the *ekklesia*, animating women and men for the common good, for the sake of the reign of God.

In his description of the Jerusalem community, Luke calls our attention to the community of goods. This refers to a "common (poor) fund... established and maintained over a period of time by members of the community selling off possessions," then turning over part or all of the proceeds.⁷⁴ It is well to remember that Ananias and Sapphira were neither compelled to join the 'Way' nor forced to comply with the pattern of sale of property with donation of the proceeds to the

community. But, as Jesus taught: “You cannot serve God and wealth” (NRSV Lk 16: 14). The couple conspire to deceive the apostles and the community, they withhold a portion of the money for themselves—alone (v. 2). When questioned about the amount, Ananias insists that he has handed over the full amount of the sale. Peter catches him out: Not only has Ananias lied to the *ekklesia*, but to the Holy Spirit (vv. 3-5); he falls dead. Roughly, three hours later, ignorant of the cost of Ananias’s lie, Sapphira faces cross-examination. The wife corroborates the husband’s lie. Peter catches her out: Not only has Sapphira lied to the community, but to the Holy Spirit (vv. 7-10); she falls dead. The community roils in fear at this judgment of the Spirit.

The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira constitute one of the most disturbing events in the Book of *Acts*.⁷⁵ The core of this pericope instructs believers about right living of the ‘Way,’ about idolatry and sovereignty. The *ekklesia* seeks to live common life as authentically and practically as possible under the aegis of the Holy Spirit—a life of trust in the gracious care and providence of God who provides the future and prepares us for that future. Luke’s gospel, perhaps written for a community experiencing strained relations between social classes, aimed to encourage new and fruitful relationships among its members (Lk 6: 20-23; 10:25-37); active compassionate solidaristic response to the needs of the poor, infirm, and wounded (Lk 12: 32-34; 14: 12-14); rejection of avarice, greed, and covetousness (Lk 12: 15; 16: 13, 19-31).⁷⁶

The decisions and actions of Ananias and Sapphira run counter to the ‘Way’ that Jesus taught. The deception that the couple contrives mimics the enclosing construction of Babel. Just as the people of Babel brick themselves up within a totality of their own self-regarding self-aggrandizement, so too Ananias and Sapphira join together (couple) and enclose themselves, not in love but in pretense—mirroring in one another greed, fraud, and deceit. The people of Babel sought security in the tower/city; Ananias and Sapphira sought security not in community, but in control of community by regulating what was destined for community. The former seek to accomplish this through pride and labor, the latter through arrogance and deceit. The people of Babel placed their trust in sameness, oneness, and undifferentiation; Ananias and Sapphira placed their trust in coupling complicity and connivance.

The quest for fame drives the people of Babel in building their tower / city, the scattering mocks and humiliates them. Ananias and Sapphira withhold money, but the text does not tell us why. Perhaps, they simply wanted—something extra, unusual, or special; or perhaps they wanted fame and recognition for their service. We cannot know. But, we do know that Jesus found dishonesty and hypocrisy repugnant:⁷⁷ “All those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (NRSV Lk 18: 14). The Spirit is the Spirit of truth and “is intrinsically inimical to a person’s false public persona, to a public image created artificially to gain recognition that the person does not truly deserve.”⁷⁸

In his theological commentary on *Acts*, Willie James Jennings names Ananias and Sapphira a “sovereign couple.”⁷⁹ As such they oppose themselves to Sovereign Spirit. “The sovereign is he [sic] who decides on the exception.”⁸⁰ The sovereign may act without constraint of law, confirm norms, and willfully determine the exception.⁸¹ Ananias and Sapphira elevate and absolutize themselves; they make themselves the exception. In this, they seek to rival the Spirit. Their willful decision to withhold money violates the potential of distributive justice to bring about healing, to strengthen bonds of love and service, and to create new relationships among members of the community. The sovereign couple will not give the gift (i.e., the concretization of communal solidarity), thus they cannot receive the gift of “love-creating *koinonia*”⁸² between themselves, with others, and with the Triune God. Their action and behavior disclose the recrudescence of idolatry. In setting themselves apart from, above, and over ‘others’ and the Divine Other, the people of Babel and the sovereign couple make (*create*) themselves *as gods* (idols); they worship their own power and prowess, praise the greatness of their own names. The people of Babel and Ananias and Sapphira yearn to secure for themselves what no political arrangement, no economic system, no cultural practice can guarantee: immortality, eternal life.

THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN A BROKEN AND DIVIDED WORLD

In the stories of Babel, the theophany at Pentecost, and the pretension of Ananias and Sapphira to sovereignty, the mission of the Spirit /God Different takes form as affirmation and embrace of difference. The Spirit continues this mission in our fraught and fragmented global material context. Just as the Spirit opens the grace-laden potential of affirmation and embrace of difference to early believers, the Spirit opens and teaches us to live in and to live out in our own time the ‘Way’ to the Triune God.

1. Affirmation of Difference: The myth of Babel and the deception of Ananias and Sapphira constitute rejection of difference. Through their undifferentiation (false uniformity, *not* unity at all), the people of Babel set themselves apart from and over against the difference of the Transcendent Other. Through their tower/city, they vied for immortality and contended against Divine omnipotence. The sovereign couple set themselves apart from other and different believers, particularly those who may have been poor or needy and those who committed themselves to concrete solidarity as expressed in a community of goods. The couple pitted their will-to-power over against the empowering-will of the Spirit. These two narratives function as cautionary tales about the exercise of power and the itch of fame, about the opposition of exclusivity to openness.

On the other hand, the response of the people at Pentecost demonstrates the power and empowering gift of the Spirit in and through affirmation and embrace of

difference. The basic human orientation of openness empowers each one to hear and to respond to the saving message *in and through* individual and group difference; each and all are changed together. The experience of the Spirit forms “a constitutive element in the experience of the ‘Thou,’ in the experience of sociality, and in the experience nature.”⁸³ God’s spirit fills the world and... holds all things together [and] knows every sound’ (Wisdom 1:7).

In our global matrix, we have come to tolerate social oppression of children, women, and men in their difference. Daily, we witness the “alluring and annihilating force of totalitarianism” along with the collusion of cultural, philosophical, political, and religious ideologies “that subsume multiplicity under an all-encompassing ‘system,’” that rejects “*real* otherness.”⁸⁴ The Spirit invites us to life with *real others*. The Spirit cultivates in our hearts a yearning for the other; invites us to regard and love the stranger, the migrant, the refugee, the welfare recipient, the homeless person, and those who are impoverished. Through the Spirit, God’s love is poured into our hearts (Rom 5:5). The Spirit prompts, animates, and directs our natural desire for God and fulfills that desire by conferring divine friendship. Thus, caught up in divine friendship transformed by this gift of love, we perceive all creation from the perspective of God. “Everything which God loves, will also become an object of human love for God, simply because God loves it.”⁸⁵ Now because God loves, we too love our neighbor, our enemies, those who do wrong to us and who hurt us—they too are in the image of God and belong to God and live in the sphere of God’s love.

Jesus taught that love of neighbor can never be abstract, but rather is concretized in solidarity. Solidarity is no mere commonsense identification among members of the same group (e.g., nation, class, gender, race), although that identification may be beneficial, sometimes, even necessary. Nor is solidarity to be confused with mere identity politics, although it involves recognition of identity and of difference. As a theological category for social praxis, solidarity concerns the empathetic incarnation of Christian love. It is an intentional, moral and ethical task.

2. Body: In the theophany of Pentecost, Spirit /God Different embraces human difference and affirms its necessity for and in revelation. The Spirit enabled each individual person to hear Peter’s message in and through his (and her?) embodied difference—language, culture, history, religious practice, personal experience. This outpouring was but a continuation of the work of the Spirit, whose power has been effective everywhere and for all time, “cleansing hearts by faith and making no distinctions” among all those who gather together in confession of Jesus as Lord (Acts 15:8-9).

The Spirit celebrates human difference and calls us to acknowledge, recognize, affirm, and embrace human persons in their difference. The Spirit defies and resists, will not and cannot be confined by any socially constructed boundaries of age, gender, social condition, culture, custom, race, nation, or ecclesiastical

standing. The Spirit honors each human person “as an original and autonomous principle of sensitivity, experience, relationships, and initiatives.”⁸⁶ The Spirit inscribes the Divine into our human bodies, divinizes us, dwells within us: “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own” (NRSV 1 Cor 6: 19).

3. Love: Love grounds and reorients the praxis of our very being. Love (charity), enables us to love God and our neighbors with *agape*—self-transcending love. Love, Chela Sandoval, tells us enacts a “hermeneutics of social change, a decolonizing *movida*.”⁸⁷ Authentic love reveals itself concretely in option and action; it calls for the radical solidarity on behalf of and with the ‘other’—those whom society tolerates, despises, and excludes. In concrete practical action, love answers again and again the question, ‘Who is my neighbor?’ The neighbor is whoever is dissed, dismissed, and discarded because of age or infirmity or being differently-abled, because of religious or political affiliation, because of culture or race or ethnicity, because of gender or sex or sexual orientation, because of social class or economic impoverishment. Who is my neighbor? The neighbor is whoever is weak, repressed, forgotten, victimized, and excluded; whoever has been made to feel that her/his life is trivial, dispensable, and does not matter in the modern/neo-liberal/neo-colonial/global design. These are the little ones whom the Holy Three cherishes and embraces as God’s very own. These are the little ones whom the Holy Spirit comforts, refreshes.

CONCLUSION

This reflection took inspiration from Louis-Marie Chauvet’s proposal of the *Spirit as God Different* in order to consider the mission of the Spirit as opening us to affirm and embrace embodied human difference—to affirm and embrace one another *in* our difference. The starting point for understanding our need for this mission began with a review of the global material context in which we live (part one). This review was augmented by a discussion of social oppression and affective and cognitive bias (part two), illustrating how we create social ‘others,’ expelling them from the realm of the human simply because of the startling beauty and demand of their difference. That such action and behavior defy the very meaning of the Incarnation seems not to trouble those of us who call ourselves Christians. Through interpreting and reading a few scriptural texts along with Chauvet and a few other biblical commentators (part three), the mission of the Spirit in our global material context is clarified as affirmation and embrace of difference.

To participate in the mission of the Spirit entails openness, a certain docility, alertness to the unexpected and to what may be ‘beyond,’ free consent to and active cooperation with divine initiative, love and communion, prayer and service: thus, the Spirit may possess us and transfigure us into the image of the

Word (NRSV 2 Cor 3:18). The Spirit makes, molds, forms, and fills us with holy mysterious differentiating divine life as persons, as groups, as communities. Above all, the Spirit unites and differentiates us and our gifts in and for the common good of God's creation. The Spirit affirms us, embraces us, energizes us, liberates us, empowers us, makes us restless and eager to witness in active compassionate solidarity to the presence of God in humanity and in creation.

Endnotes

¹ See William T. Cavanaugh and Peter Scott, "Introduction," in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. William T. Cavanaugh and Peter Scott (Malden, MA/Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 1.

² Anthony J. Chvala-Smith, "Augustine of Hippo," in *Empire and The Christian Tradition: New Readings of Classical Theologians*, ed. Kwok Pui-lan, et al (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 91; Mark D. Jordan, "Thomas Aquinas," in *Empire and The Christian Tradition*, 165; Deanna A. Thompson, "Martin Luther," in *Empire and The Christian Tradition*, 199.

³ Johann Baptist Metz identifies "remembrance of the suffering of others as a basic category of Christian discourse about God," *A Passion for God: The Mystical-Political Dimensions of Christianity*, transl. by J. Matthew Ashley (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 5.

⁴ Anselm Min, *The Solidarity of Others in a Divided World: A Postmodern Theology after Postmodernism* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 93.

⁵ Since the 1980s, Sallie McFague has interrogated and revalorized the relation of human creatures to all creation: *Super, Natural Christians: How We Should Love Nature* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), *Blessed are the Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013); Ivone Gebara, *Longing for Running Water: Eco-feminism and Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), Denis Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2006), Alejandro García-Rivera, *The Garden of God: Theological Cosmology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009). More than three decades ago, essayist and feminist critic Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978) drew a connection between the patriarchy, misogyny, and racism in the nexus between matter, nature, female and dark bodies.

⁶ Min, *The Solidarity of Others in a Divided World*, 110.

⁷ Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, transl. by Patrick Madigan and Madeline Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1987/1995), 518, 522 (author's italics).

⁸ John A. Powell and Stephen Menendian, "The Problem of Othering: Towards Inclusiveness and Belonging," *The Journal of Othering and Belonging* 1, 1 (Summer 2016), <http://www.otheringandbelonging.org/the-problem-of-othering/>.

⁹ See Nancy Pineda-Madrid, *Suffering and Salvation in Cuidad Juárez* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011).

¹⁰ United Nations and World Bank, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2018), 109; <http://ida.worldbank.org/theme/conflict-and-fragility>.

¹¹ As a result of such forced displacement, by the end of that same year (2015), "65 million refugees were internally displaced, with 95% living in developing countries and over half of them displaced for more than four years" <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/overview>.

¹² <http://ida.worldbank.org/theme/conflict-and-fragility>

¹³ World Bank 2016, *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2016: Taking on Inequality* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-0958-3), 3.

¹⁴ This passage relies on Ivan Petrella, *Beyond Liberation Theology: A Polemic* (London: SCM Press, 2008), Loc 705-743, Kindle.

¹⁵ See Jacquineau Azetsop, ed. *HIV & AIDS in Africa: Christian Reflection, Public Health, Social Transformation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2016), Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005).

¹⁶ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Teología Desde del Reverso de la Historia*, Lima: Ed. CEP, 1977

cited in Petrella, *Beyond Liberation Theology*, Loc 777 of 5216, Kindle.

¹⁷ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 187 (author's italics).

¹⁸ See Steven High and David W. Lewis, *Corporate Wasteland: The Landscape and Memory of Deindustrialization* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2007), Jung Mo Sung, *Reclaiming Liberation Theology: Desire, Market, Religion* (London: SCM Press, 2007).

¹⁹ J. D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy: Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* (New York: HarperCollins, 2016), Sarah Smarsh, *Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018), Kathryn Edin, *\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015).

²⁰ Linda Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), Kate Harding, *Asking for It: The Alarming Rise of Rape Culture and What We Can Do about It* (Philadelphia: Perseus Press, 2015).

²¹ Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2016), Deborah Padgett et al, *Housing First: Ending Homelessness, Transforming Systems, Changing Lives* (New York: Oxford, 2016).

²² Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), Richard Grounds et al, *Native Voices: Indian Identity & Resistance* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2003).

²³ An editorial in *The Lancet Planetary Health Journal* states: "The issues around environmental racism show that environmental and social issues cannot be nearly separated from each other," Vol 1 (November 2018), 462. Consider the Flint, Michigan water crisis that began in 2014 when the city switched its water source from the Detroit Water and Sewage Department to the Flint River. Aging pipes (some that had been installed between 1901-1920) and insufficient treatment of the water source resulted in contamination of potable water. Early in the crisis, General Motor's Assembly plant discontinued using Flint River water because the high levels of chlorine corroded engine parts. Citizens complained of discolored, foul smelling water that caused rashes, fever, sore throats, etc. Two medical studies by Flint's Hurley Medical Center and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University exposed the dangerous effect of the water usage on children.

²⁴ Susan Burch and Michael Rembis, ed., *Disability Histories* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), Eli Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

²⁵ See Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010), William J. Stuntz, *The Collapse of American Criminal Justice* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2011), Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* (New York: Random House, 2015).

²⁶ Consider these senseless racially-motivated killings—in 1998 James Byrd; in 2012 Trayvon Martin and Rekia Boyd; in 2013 Andy Lopez; in 2014 Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and Tamir Rice; in 2015, Freddie Gray, Jr., Sandra Bland, and in Charleston, South Carolina at Mother Emanuel AME Church: Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, DePayne Middleton Doctor, Cynthia Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lance, Clementa Pinckney, Tywanza Sanders, Daniel Simmons, and Myra Thompson; in 2016, Alton Sterling and Philando Castile.

²⁷ Recall these senseless homophobically-motivated murders—in 1998 Matthew Shepherd; in 2003 Saskia Gunn, Shani Baraka and Rayshon Holmes; in 2008 Angie Zapata; in 2016 the 49 women and men in Orlando, Florida at the Pulse Night Club including Stanley Almodóvar, Amanda Alvear, Antonia Davon Brown, Luis Daniel Conde, Anthony Laureano Disla, Mercedes Marisol Flores, Eddie Justice, and Christopher Andrew Leinonen.

²⁸ Esther Yu His Lee, “Poll: Americans’ Anti-Immigrant Attitudes Are Fueled by Racism,” *Think Progress*, July 7, 2016, <http://www.thinkprogress.org/poll-americans-anti-immigrant-attitudes-are-fueled-by-racism-30968b83a908/>. For historical studies of nativism, see John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

²⁹ On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 authorizing the Secretary of War to identify and secure certain areas of the country as military zones, and, thus, incarcerating Japanese Americans, see Yoshiko Uchida, *Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese American Family* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982); consider the 2017 public gathering of avowed white supremacists and neo-Nazis in Charlottesville, Virginia, see Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map>.

³⁰ Petrella, *Beyond Liberation Theology*, Loc 104 of 5216, Kindle.

³¹ Iris Marion Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 41.

³² Iris Marion Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 41.

³³ Iris Marion Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 41. Through our unthinking observance of rules and acquiescence to authority, uncritical acceptance of cultural and media stereotypes, refusal to examine the status quo, and hesitancy to ask questions.

³⁴ Iris Marion Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 43.

³⁵ Iris Marion Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 47.

³⁶ Iris Marion Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 47. There is only (one) human nature—common to *all* human beings. There is *no* Chicano or Sioux or British or Scottish or French human nature—even though history, the ordering of a society, environment, human freedom, imagination, creativity, and chance may produce characteristics common to or representative of children, women, and men who live in New Mexico or California, Scotland, France or England.

³⁷ Iris Marion Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 49-50.

³⁸ Iris Marion Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 53.

³⁹ See John A. Powell, “‘Minority’ Is a Problem Concept,” *Poverty & Race* 17, 3 (May/June 2008): 7.

⁴⁰ Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*, 54; see Annette Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life* (Berkeley/London: University of California Press, 2003), Robert Putnam, *Our Kids: The America Dream in Crisis* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016).

⁴¹ Carol Anderson, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), esp. Chapter 5.

⁴² Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*, 58.

⁴³ Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*, 56.

⁴⁴ Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*, 59.

⁴⁵ Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*. Here Young echoes an argument (“double consciousness”) developed more than a century ago by sociologist W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folks* (New York: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1903/1961): “It is a peculiar sensation, this double- consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through

the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his [sic] twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.” 16-17.

⁴⁶ Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*, 59; David Theo Goldberg argues that a racist culture includes “ideas, attitudes, and dispositions, norms and rules, linguistic, literary, and artistic expressions, architectural forms and media representations, practices and institutions. These cultural expressions and objects embed meanings and values that frame articulations, undertakings, and projects, that constitute a way of life. In this sense, a culture is both, and interrelatedly, a signifying system and system of material production,” *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 8.

⁴⁷ Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*, 62.

⁴⁸ Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*, 62.

⁴⁹ “Implicit Bias,” <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/researchandstrategicinitiatives/>; see also Linda Hamilton Krieger, “The Content of Our Categories: A Cognitive Bias Approach to Discrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity,” *Stanford Law Review* 47, 6 (July 1995): 1161-1248.

⁵⁰ “The Definition of Implicit Bias,” <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/researchandstrategicinitiatives/> “Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness. Rather, implicit biases are not accessible through introspection. The implicit associations we harbor in our subconscious cause us to have feelings and attitudes about other people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, and appearance. These associations develop over the course of a lifetime beginning at a very early age through exposure to direct and indirect messages. In addition to early life experiences, the media and news programming are often-cited origins of implicit associations. At the Kirwan Institute researchers give special attention to the notion of implicit bias in analyzing expressions of racism and sexism as they impact every-day life.”

⁵¹ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight, A Study of Human Understanding*, 5th ed. Vol. 3, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957/1992), Chapters 6 and 7.

⁵² Lonergan provides an account of cognitional theory in *Insight* and in *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), Chapter 1.

⁵³ Traci C. West provides a good example of this in her *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives Matter* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 86-90.

⁵⁴ Bernard Cooke, *Power and the Spirit of God: Toward an Experience-Based Pneumatology* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2004), 26-27.

⁵⁵ Yves Congar points out that the word *pneuma* appears in Pauline texts 146 times, including 117 in the important early epistles, see his *The Holy Spirit in the 'Economy: Revelation and the Experience of the Spirit*. Vol. I. *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, transl. by David Smith (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1979-80/1983), 29.

⁵⁶ In his 2017 Holy Spirit Lecture, Jack Levinson stated quite pointedly: “Trying to understand pneumatology as if the word [*ruah*] did not occur 378 in the Jewish Bible makes no sense,”⁶ “The Jewish Origin of Pneumatology,” <https://www.duq.edu/events/holy-spirit-lecture-and-colloquium/2017/>.

⁵⁷ See also Deut 4: 11-12, 33-36; and 5: 14-19.

⁵⁸ Cited in Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 520-521; see Deut 4: 33-35: “Has any people ever heard the voice of a god speaking out of a fire, as you have heard, and lived?”

⁵⁹ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 520-521 (author's italics).

⁶⁰ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 521.

⁶¹ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 521-522.

⁶² Wes Howard-Brook, *“Come Out, My People!” God’s Call out of Empire in the Bible and Beyond* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2010), 49.

⁶³ Wes Howard-Brook, *“Come Out, My People!” God’s Call out of Empire in the Bible and Beyond*, 51.

⁶⁴ Howard-Brook points out the Hebrew wordplay in the entire passage: “YHWH’s response to our story is twofold: to ‘confuse’ (*venavelah*) their language and to scatter the people ‘from there’ (*misham*). The first response is described with a word that reverses the main consonants of the word used by humanity for ‘bricking.’ The scattering leads to another wordplay, the naming of the place as ‘Babel,’ punning (in Hebrew) on *balal*, ‘confused.’ But it is also an interlinguistic pun on the Akkadian for ‘Babylon,’ meaning ‘gate of the gods,’” (*“Come Out, My People!”*, 50).

⁶⁵ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 522.

⁶⁶ Willie James Jennings in his theological commentary of the Book of *Acts* comments: “The famous Joel passage . . . could never be fully captured with our conceptions of egalitarianism. It proclaims a new world order energized by the Holy Spirit, breaking through on all flesh and destroying social orders that find slavery useful, stable, capable of making fundamental differences of identity between would-be masters and would-be slaves. These slaves, men and women, prophesy. God speaks through them and they are to be obeyed. This new world order begins with collapse. God shakes foundations, especially ones that wrongly claim divine imprint,” *Acts* (Louisville: The Westminster Press, 2017), 35, Kindle.

⁶⁷ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 522 (author’s italics).

⁶⁸ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 522.

⁶⁹ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 522.

⁷⁰ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 522.

⁷¹ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 522.

⁷² Gerhard Lohfink, *No Irrelevant Jesus: On Jesus and the Church Today* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014), 170.

⁷³ Gerhard Lohfink, *No Irrelevant Jesus: On Jesus and the Church Today* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014), 170.

⁷⁴ James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 161.

⁷⁵ The Book of Joshua records an instance of ‘withholding’ (7:1-26) in which Achan coveted, took, and hid booty from Babylon. For this transgression, Achan and his family are stoned to death by the people of Israel.

⁷⁶ See, Sharon H. Ringe, “Luke’s Gospel: ‘Good News to the Poor’ for the Non-Poor,” in *The New Testament—Introducing the Way of Discipleship*, Wes Howard-Brook and Sharon H. Ringe, ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 65.

⁷⁷ Cooke, *Power and the Spirit of God*, 72.

⁷⁸ Cooke, *Power and the Spirit of God*, 72.

⁷⁹ Jennings deploys the word ‘sovereign’ to describe the couple, Ananias and Sapphira, see *Acts*, 52, Kindle.

⁸⁰ Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, transl. by George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933/1985), 5. The notion of sovereignty has surfaced in contemporary political theology, but genealogically it stems from the work of controversial philosopher and Nazi sympathizer Carl Schmitt.

⁸¹ Paul W. Kahn, *Political Theology: Four New Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 35.

⁸² Catherine LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 298-299, 362-363.

⁸³ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 34.

⁸⁴ Mayra Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence: A Postcolonial Theology of God* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 57 (my italics).

⁸⁵ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 249.

⁸⁶ Congar, *He Is Lord and Giver of Life*. Vol. II. *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 16.

⁸⁷ Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis/London: The University of Minnesota, 2000), 143.

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