

CH582 Christian Spirituality
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Class - Notes by
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1. Introduction

"God is the reason for loving God." (Bernhard of Clairvaux)

"I am plagued by doubt. What if nothing really exists? In that case I definitely overpaid for my carpet." (Woody Allen)

"If in fact you are a Christian why is it that your uncle is sick and dying? Why are people starving to death in a war torn land? Tell the stones to become bread!"

There is the power and glory factor. In what degree do we compromise reality to get something better and bigger?

"What no person has the right to do is to delude others into the feeling that faith is something of no great significance, or that it is an easy matter, whereas it is the greatest or most difficult thing." (S. Kierkegaard)

"A human being hardly ever thinks about other people. He contemplates phantasms which resembles them and which he has deuced out for his own purposes." Luis Murdoch.

"A friendship is a great and difficult thing" Sattler

2. What is Christian Spirituality

George Saner "A particular style of approach to union of God" "A way to holiness"

"Man possession by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit"

To be able to immerse yourself in life of God is to believe those things about God.

- God is for us, known to us through Christ Jesus, presented to us in the Holy Spirit. In a manner of speaking. God does not say "I am here for them". It means God is never against us! This does not mean he will never be upset, angry, etc.
- Romans 8:38-39 God is always present for us.
- To know God. Not simply to know about God is of the essence of Christian spirituality.
- God interacts with us as persons and human beings

Christian spirituality is intentional and life-embracing. Christian spirituality embraces the faith that we have, the faith by which we believe, and faith in line of relationship.

Spiritual disciplines are simply ways, technology of deepening out relationship with God. They are not law nor are they burdens, but ways in which the relationship has to be tended. They serve as a whole people and they have to happen in a community of faith.

3. Prayer

"Talking of God. Good gauge for us because it lets us know who we think God is. If we do not pray, we think God is not interested at all. How we pray is a very nice barometer and mirror about who you think God is".

Christian prayer is based on the assumption that God is alive, he cares, and he responds. It is also a very simplistic prayer that God's "No" is better than our yes.

3.1. What it is not

Most of us stand out here.

- I. It is not magic. Magic is a way in which people try to manipulate something that is normally out of control. This can focus also on God (the most dangerous thing). The phrase "In Jesus name" depends on how that person is using it. It could be used as a magic formula.
- II. Prayer is not a payment.
- III. It is not bargaining. "If" and "then".
- IV. It is not experimental or a test. "To use prayer as a test of God is to depersonalize God." (C.S. Lewis *Screwtape Letters*).
- V. It is not mindless babbling. Nor is it legalistic repetition. "Us" is a crucial element in prayer.
- VI. It is not getting our head together. Not self-talk for spiritual progress.
- VII. It is not self-abasement. Let's not revel in our own theology. This slips easily into self-abuse.
- VIII. Not wishful thinking in pious daydreams.
- IX. Not talking to other people in the room.
- X. Not giving up responsibility.
- XI. Not spiritual discipline

3.2. What it is

Back to pray after saying all those things that prayer is not. I want to negate much of what I said because prayer is much like those things.

Prayer is not like magic. What about those bozos that prayed certain ways and God answered?

3.2.1. Bargaining

Abraham bargained for example. What we came up with is that this is not a statement about faith but an attempt to show that this is the relationship we should begin with. Nothing in life is personal but always interpersonal. There is no isolated creature. Everything we do is always in the context of others, be they real others like you and me or be they real others like God. The point is not to make a dogmatic statement but to show that we should be working for an intimate relationship with God so that we can bicker with him.

3.2.2. Magic

Prayer is like magic because it is an attempt to control something we cannot control. We tend to pray only about those things for which we have no answer or no control. Most people here do not pray or about their car unless it breaks down. Most people have not prayed about gasoline or a gas pump. Most people have not thought about praying when having a headache but got an aspirin. When we are confronted with forces that are too much for us then we enlist the aid of God. So you can see that it is somehow like magic. We are reminded constantly that we are not in control. When the delusion of our lives is broken we need him.

3.2.3. Control

We try to control things with prayer. It is like a payment and God responds. If God is a responsive God then prayer is like an activator. If I want God to be involved I will pray and expect God to intervene. It is interaction and it is like bargaining. God can do and create things and opportunities that we cannot.

3.2.4. Discernment

It boils down to discernment of our motive. There will be no pure prayer ever. Some will be purer than others. If God has called you to some task or ministry and you are ill equipped then it is logical that you would call on God to open up possibilities.

3.2.5. Testing

Prayer is a little bit as a test. It is a natural human way of relating to the world. It is built into us to be a little bit cautious. This is a normal kind of behavior. So it is like testing in that when we do pray we do keep our eyes open for an answer. This is very close to testing.

3.2.6. Babbling

Prayer is sometimes like mindless babbling. Actually we need to be part of the prayer, on the other hand it is like babbling since we need to release the nonrational in prayer. We need to bring all of who we are. You cannot measure your words all the time. It is like getting your head together. Archiving psychological and emotional integration.

3.2.7. Self-abasement

Prayer is also like self-abasement. In that in prayer we draw closer to God who is holy we become aware of our unholiness.

3.2.8. Wishful thinking

Prayer is a little bit like wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is a revelation of who we really are. Just relax and let this wishful thinking come. We let ourselves surface in front of God. May they even be nasty things like imagining revenge.

3.2.9. Talking to others

Prayer is like talking to others in the room. You need to be aware of them. You need to have a sensitive awareness of them. You do not pray about private jokes.

3.2.10. Giving up Responsibility

Prayer is like giving up your responsibility. The burden is no longer yours but the burden is God's. You are not responsible for the salvation of the world or the salvation of your neighbor. God will save them. Your responsibility is to love and follow the leading of God. The ultimate result is in God's hand. That makes it hard to be a Christian. You are never sure if what you are doing will have the proper results.

3.2.11. Spiritual Discipline

Prayer is like a spiritual discipline since you have to do it regularly. Normally prayer is a choice. It requires discipline especially in graduate school. Sometimes it will feel like a burden, but if it becomes a burden then it will become a deadly burden. It is also like a discipline in that you are trying to understand it. The practice of spirituality. Some people do not feel that they are praying unless they are zealous. Some people are more laid back.

Measure it in what degree prayers are your prayer. To what degree are they appropriate to your understanding of God? To what degree do you think you would be satisfied if you would be God? That is not a bad way to look at it. Put yourself in God's place and see if it is boring or uninteresting.

3.3. It is more

Prayer is like all those things but prayer is more. I think that all of the spiritual disciplines are all done in the service of prayer. Prayer is intentional life with God. If I am fasting because it is helping me pray. As I am involved in certain types of community activities they are there in the service of prayer. So I think that is crucial. Prayer needs to be intentional, honest, yours. That may mean giving up airy fairy ideas of prayer. Let ourselves be who we are and actually believe that we have a deep relationship with God.

In the Middle ages the Pope was sitting on his papal chair. Some merchant came in: "Ill papa we have a big problem here". Pope: "Well, what is the problem?". "There are Jewish merchants that are putting us out of business." Pope: "That is business, that is life".

"You have to drive them out of Rome."

"I cannot do that they are also members of God".

[Story continues could not follow typing] Ends in a contest between the Pope and one Jewish guy. It is a quiet contest and everyone has to communicate by gesticulation theology. Pope loses. Both interpret the signs differently.

Point is that people speak most easily without a lot of preconceived notions. Without assumptions.

This might mean giving up the idea that if you want to be spiritual you have to look like a monk or go into a monastery for some day.

Remember that as a Christian we pray through and in the name of Jesus. Sometimes this is a ritual. Praying in the name of Jesus is to remember that for us God has been incarnate. In a real person to person sense we can never say to God: "You just do not understand" like we say to our parents. Parents forget but God has a good memory. Jesus did experience all things that we did. Fear and betrayal hope and joy. So much on prayer.

4. Mysticism

This has come to pervade much about what we think. Then we can think about Old Testament spirituality.

The traditional mystical approach like Teresa has normally followed ascetic practices. Asceticism means discipline or training. This is what the old Olympians used to do to prepare for game or war. Fasting and so on.

There is a pattern of ascent or development. Which is by no means rigid. Because we tend to have a cause and effect mind we tend to think of development as ascent. Development brings with itself all internal stuff from the past.

Two patterns of prayer:

- ◆ Kataphatic With words and objects.
- ◆ Apophatic Without words and objects.

The ascetic practices are usually found in monastic vows of chastity obedience and poorness and so on.

4.1. Renunciation

Normally this entails the renunciation of wealth to the point of being poor. The renunciation of self through fasting prayer vigils (long times of meditation and contemplation) and a life of service to others. That service could be in physical things like medical care or hospitality. Or in spiritual matter like teaching, preaching and evangelism.

Renounce yourself through a life of service, celibacy and through the willingness to place yourself under the authority of someone else. This is the standard monastic look. In some cases as for the Franciscans it meant being a wanderer and not having a home base. We get into a lot of detail later.

In any case in asceticism the point is not to destroy yourself. There certainly are people who do that. The point is not to do that.

One often hears just the bizarre things of the past. One has to be reminded that there are also bizarre things in our culture (like Madonna).

You are taming your desires in monasticism. I am talking about it in the best sense of it. It is to recognize what controls you and then to be able to give that over to God so that there is more of you that you can give to God. The point of it is simply to experience God and let God be God and do whatever God is willing in your being. In that sense it is much more Grace oriented trusting Christianity than our Protestantism. There is a radical trust that God will come. We tend to want to teach and teach and trust our own particular interpretation of scripture.

The grace of God comes as Grace but there are other aspects that come as the result of hard work. Spiritual disciplines as I supposed are done by people who are saved.

Remember in medieval Christianity you were not assured of salvation. Just as what tends to be there nowadays in certain branches of Protestantism.

In the end the point is to let God do the work. Asceticism is to give up what would limit God. If it is the desires. Give up even what you want from God so that if God wants something else he can give it to you. It is a broader way of being open to God than many of our books about mature Christians.

Ascetic practices are an introduction to

4.2. Purgation / Illumination / Union

The usual pattern is a growth process. These are experiences in prayer. Perfection. You can see that even as evangelicals we can resonate with it a little bit. Evangelicalism sees life as a journey. There is a sense of a journey in this too. You are moving from one thing to another thing. These experiences can figure like a landmark.

4.2.1. Purgation

One normally practices asceticism to overcome the desires of the flesh and the effects of the devil.

The ascetic practices go on all the time. This is the normal pattern. You are never perfect. In this the person is simply taking the instruction of Christ: "Deny yourself and follow me".

The mystics did not see that as an option but saw it as Jesus meaning it when he says this. Jesus wanted them to do it. The task of purgation is where you have your sins burned away. You learn to give up all those things that compete with Christ for our total submission.

4.2.2. Detachment

We give up our desires. This can lead into an unhealthy kind of detachment. You are detached from those things that would ruin you by your desiring them.

4.2.3. Mortification

The art of dying. We kill ourselves. Ideally this is the part of self that competes with Christ. In mortification we are deliberately doing things that we do not want to do.

4.2.4. Passive Purgation

These are things that are laid upon you by God. You need discernment for this. You do not have the right to see that someone else is in this situation. A passive purgation would be where God seems to withdraw. A barren dry time in life. Of course the withdrawal of God plunges you into pain. This increases it. God does it in order that the person may learn to persist in faith even in the face of fear and despair. Effects may be similar to depressions.

Characteristic of the purgatory states are Renunciation, Confession, Contrition, Penthos, Asceticism, Dying to self and so on Often accompanied by tears or crying.

Saint John of the Cross said in the 15th century: "In order to arrive at possessing everything desire nothing." These are neoplatonic strands of thought. Giving up all desire.

He wrote this: "Nothing burns in hell, but the self-will. For so long as one is seeking his own good he is not seeking what is best for him." As long as you are interested in yourself you are in big trouble.

4.2.5. Illumination

The person becomes aware of God's presence. God is present even more than we are aware of each other present in this room. Even more that you are aware of your beloved. The presence transcends the normal awareness. There is intuition, vision and intense feelings recognized as the presence of God. Often in reading mystics it is characterized by a profound ignorance in life being existent. All that is comes to a total mystery, but this is not important.

It is that you are aware that God is present. Nothing makes sense, but who cares. There is no blessed range for order that we all live with. There are still things but these are things through which one somehow knows, you just know God is present. After that:

4.2.6. Union

Or ecstasy (to be taken out of). In which one experiences self and God as one. The border seems to disappear. There is no sense of distinction. Two interpretations in the writing of the mystics:

4.2.6.1. Self and God actually merge

This is sort of like a drop of water returning to the sea image. There is a solution. Dissolved in God. This makes us nervous because it is so eastern. This comes with the radical Platonism of middle ages.

4.2.6.2. Sexual intercourse

In which experiential one loses oneself in the other. Yet the boundaries remain clearly intact. This connects God and sex and makes us nervous too.

It is in union that the mystic would say I and the Father are one. That is how mystics interpret Jesus saying that.

There is only unreflected experience. We can also see how important our presuppositions are.

4.3. Mystical experience

Hymn: "Let all mortal flesh keep silence." How do you sing the rest of it?

The mystics experience is an ineffable experience. It cannot be put into words. It is like poetry or any of the arts. The artist is limited by the medium. The medium sets free to express but also limits. The artist needs to be in a certain state of mind to express the message. I am talking about something that cannot be talked about.

There is a limitation that the mystic hopes to transcend in the experience. Working at life with God is like art like poetry like dance. Something that requires intensity and intentionality. One of the great foolishness of us is that we think that we can read six books and go to a class on spirituality and then we know everything. It takes a tree a long time to grow.

It is a process of growing of life with God. It requires the fundamentals first. That is a given of the mystical life. There is the practice and intentionality and the letting go. Who if you are looking to musical artist, are you playing? The music or is the music playing? This sounds ridiculous unless you have experienced it.

4.4. Evelyn Underhill

I saw a bumper sticker yesterday. Bumper stickers take effort to fix on a car and thereby reveal a lot about a person. This was a really good one. "Practice random kindness and senseless acts of beauty".

Yesterday I left off in the mystical experience. I want to go briefly through Evelyn Underhill. She writes and gives some characteristics of mysticism. This is the way a mystic tends to experience himself.

Underhill writes about Mysticism:

4.4.1. It is active and practical.

It is like the difference between Systematics and being on a retreat. One is a very clear attempt to delineate and think and organize and intellectually grasp and experience. The other is an emergence of the personal. Mysticism is more like doing.

Only allow raw experience to inform us is as heretical as allow only rationalism to inform us. Each leaves out a chunk of our humanity. To live purely on experience is being its slave.

Virtually every religion has both an individual practical element and every one has common gathering, Adoration and worship and Meals eating their God. In the practice there is virtually no difference and the experience per se is very common. Dialogues with other religion usually take part around experience. Our interpretations of it that makes a difference. In that sense this is absolutely no difference to others religion.

4.4.2. It is wholly spiritual and transcendental

In mystical intend is not there to explore the universe or to add to our knowledge or to improve anything. It is there to become one with God. This will inadvertently produce some sort of change but this is not the point. Because then you see this is using God to an end.

4.4.3. A living object of love

One (the one that is all) is not simply the reality but also a living and personal object of love. Here is where presuppositions come into play. There are religions which are content to leave the one to be, the one the all being itself. Not a personal being.

Christian presupposition leads us away from this. God is also a living object of love. Not an object of exploration. This one draws the self of the mystic but always under the guidance of the mystic's heart. Living union with this one ends us in a state of enhanced life. Idealistically you do not enter into this so that you have an enhanced life. Evidence is that is where you end up. And it is not a matter of intellect or emotion or intellectual work or desire. Things are just different.

What if Plato instead of using sight as an ideal for a relationship with God would have used hearing? It would be like you had blurred vision and then you got glasses. The world would be just different.

The reason for loving God is God. You do not love God for an enhanced life or any other purpose. We do not love a friend because they make us a better person.

We are meant for deepest possible relationship with God. That is why this is raw experimental sort of stuff. There is the need for community. All of these lived in community and had confessors and stuff like that. We tend to only know that they had decent lives and keep their noses clean. These folks in their lifetime were called heretics and called before Papal authorities. This was worked out in the community both the nearer and the more far away.

5. Forms of Prayer

People tend to progress from petitionary intercessory prayer and adorational prayer. We tend to think that the later are better.

5.1. Kataphatic prayer

This is what we normally think of as meditation. That is when we use images or words or scripture passages or whatever. Sometimes called **via positiva** (positive way). And at this one is attempting to arrive at an intimate knowledge of God his attributes, his beauty his love. For example for me when I was reading the *Chronicles of Narnia* I would meditate on Aslan. I would sit down and spent time with Aslan. Aslan is a lion that is the representative of Christ. It was a very helpful experience for me to understand the raw power but yet the mercy that is embodied in Christ. Eventually you move through these images to God himself.

5.2. Apophatic prayer

Or **via negativa**. One believes that one can know absolutely nothing. The person has to strip himself of all ideas about God. To me apophatic prayer is not necessary scriptural. It is a very Hellenistic and extra Judeo-Christian way of praying. That does not make it bad. This is what Thomas Aquinas and all the others talked about. We all say that God is love, but God is not love as I know love. I have to give up all those notions.

It is difficult to think of nothing. It is even more difficult to think about God preconceptionless.

The experience of God as unmediated by our conception is the aim. The struggle to transcend your consciousness.

5.3. Not for everyone

This is a discipline and a way of life. Not intended for everyone. Some feel called to be monks to pray to offer their monastery to pilgrims. That is their calling. Not everyone is called to be a contemplative. Some people go crazy.

Two different mystics to show that there are different way of approaching it.

5.3.1. Meister Eckhart

Meister Eckhart in 13th century was primarily interested in going into the deepest part of his person and with God. The "Urgrund" or "Abgrund". Like Platonism God and self meet.

5.3.2. Jan Ruysbroeck

He was interested in getting to the same place. But he began with the Trinity. Ruysbroeck began from a more orthodox position. Anyone who enters into the very heart and soul of God will himself be active in love. If God is active and God is being then you are being like God. He even scoffed at those who wanted to rest in God. This is called personalistic Platonism.

5.4. Discernment

The issue throughout is *DISCERNMENT*. And we are doing it all the time but we are not realizing that we are doing it. People leave the Presbyterians and become Methodist. Because they discern something about where they are and where they ought to be. But discernment is the red thread that has to run through everything. Jesus was very discerning. A lot of his prayer had to do with it.

There is a distinction between discernment and criticism. We question the interpretation of experience. You have the right to question the interpretation of experiences. That is where push comes to shove. I think skepticism is fine. I think cynicism is the flipside of faith.

A person pointed out during the break that problem with visions of Mary. There are these basic ways of assessing them. But I also want to point out that this holds for anytime when someone says "God came to me and said". We need discernment. We often tend to do in hyper-religions a baptizing of our passions. I tend to work with pastors and churches that have blown up. My experience over the years working with pastors with churches that have exploded. is that it takes a lot of gall from people to go up and speak on behalf of the problem.

There is some distortion that would lead us into thinking that we are able to do these things. We are also in it for control issues, for to be loved, to be adored, to be idolized, Missionaries tend to be lightening rods for peoples fantasies. It is very important that there be discernment in "God has told me to do this". This is more complex for many than "Jude said me to do this". We really need to be rigorous because it could be our own delusions or it could be us. Even about scripture.

Whenever God shows up we need to apply these categories of discernment.

6. Old Testament Spirituality (Or Hebrew Spirituality)

Because I think to understand Christian Spirituality we need to understand Hebrew Spirituality starting with Genesis. These are the assumptions that are not spelled out in the New Testament.

Genesis begins with God. It is not by accident that the Old Testament starts out "in the beginning God created". Right from the bat.

The Old Testament is a collection of books arranged in a certain way for good reasons. If something other than "in the beginning" was the most important then the ones who arranged the Old Testament would have given it another order. The starting point of Jewish faith is the creating God who remains in relationship with his creation although it is strained. This is to be remembered. The creation story informs both the New Testament and Old Testament understanding of the nature and value of things including us. We put value on all sorts of things. We react to things with indignation. So the creation story lies at the root of is all and tells us about the value.

Creatio ex nihilo. The first stuff seems to be chaotic and God brings it into order. This kind of goes without saying but in a polytheistic world in that this was written this was very important. This was competing with other creation stories of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian cultures (*Enuma Elish*). The Old Testament Creation story is that we are not an accident but an element of God's own creative being. There is purpose and connectedness in creation. I think that also might be important to remember now. We tend to live more from the Epistles in **regulations**. Now we have again a very polytheistic way and scientific ways to explain meaning and purpose. We are here for a purpose and connectedness. And in response to the New Agers, who say that we are all God, a pantheistic way of thinking.

The Bible says that we are not God but intimately connected to God. We are creatures. We are not coeternally existent with God. This means we are not the product of blind forces, but we have finitude and we face death. New Age should be very comfortable since you do not die but turn in to a different being.

We are trusting another to make things right. We will die and wait for the resurrection. Two basic elements in the creation story that provides a way for the Hebrews.

6.1. We are basically good

And not basically evil. We are fallen. But this is different than being made evil. God did not make us evil. God said "This is very good" and thus we have been created and designated as being the image of God. More recent exegesis on Genesis believes that we are not created in the image of God but as the image of God which has more a stewardship than a functional view. If it is correct then that has more to do with our purpose of being.

We are created basically good but we have to take seriously the fall.

6.2. Connection with Creator

We are connected in relationship one way or the other with the creator. The relationship must be there because we are still here. If we would be utterly corrupt then we could not be here.

These assumptions found in the Old Testament make sense. This starting point enables the Israelites to call themselves back again and again to the God that is their origin. People without roots have no place to go. Jewish Spirituality is very much a memory spirituality. Jewish identity is always rooted back in this. The Old Testament is a recording of the feasts of God in the history of God's people Israel. Because this is the God that created all there is no way to mess around with. No one may see his face without dying. *I am who I am*.

The feasts of God's people are reenactments. God is present in the people of God. These reenactments are not simply remind themselves but they participate again in what was going on in that time and the meaning of that incident. Re-Member means brought back together. This is what they are doing when they are remembering. We have this God who is connected to us. And we are functioning as the image of God. In that time and place and image was more than simply a picture. To bear the image of the ruler was to be that ruler. For example: Let's say I am wearing a picture of R. Mouw, I come in wearing the presidential seal and I say "No more tuition".

This is binding because I have authority by that seal. What would happen in the ancient east is that the king would send someone and that one made the rules. Think of the incredible responsibility that this places on you and me. It is not too far off to say. You folks are here on God's behalf. You are God until God gets here. That what it means to function as the image of God. You understand now why they had such a messianic understanding. This corporate self-identify is slopping over into the New Testament. What do we mean by being the body of Christ? This is a powerful categorical statement. Words for us do not carry the weight it carry in primitive older societies. We function as the image of God. Very important understanding. It also means that we are in constant relationship with God.

For the Hebrews what you see is what you get. I am not a soul imprisoned in this face and body (Platonism). I am of one piece integrated unity. What that means is that flesh and blood is good. It might be fallen but it is good. Means that sexuality etc. are all positive. Tainted by the Fall but in an by themselves positive.

6.3. God Essential in all

The Implication of the creation story for the way that the Hebrew people worked out their life. Remember that in that culture and that day God was in a real way more a present reality in their everyday life than today. We kind of live and drag God into our lives. Then God was an essential factor in all sorts of things. What it means is that humanity is always in some sort of relationship to God. Either in potential or firmly there.

6.4. Stewards

As stewards people have a role to play. We think of it as responsibility as imposed on us. Here it is more understood as how one is supposed to live out their life. Using it in that sense humans are responsible to God as God's creature.

The essence of their being is a responsibility. Part is to remember who God is and that they are not God but creatures.

6.5. Share in blessing and curse

Second element is that as creatures of God we share in the blessings and in the curse. We are responsible to each other. The Ten Commandments are all about life together. If we did not do those things imagine how wonderful the world would be. Laws have less to do with life per se but making possible life as God intended it to be. Like the instruction to harvest in a circle so that the poor can collect from the borders. Included is our self. We are human beings too.

6.6. Motives determine reality

Third: Motives, intentions and behavior determined reality. Bible is a very moral book. Judaeo-Christian heritage is a moral heritage. Moral intentions and behavior define sins. Things are unclean but not because their are certain kinds of things. Creation itself because it is God's creation is neutral.

As Stewards we are responsible to the creation. We must interact with God's world which is also ours. Because from the very beginning we are created in the image of God and have dominion over the world. This means that stewardship is not an option and build into who we are. I think that in our culture we take that as an option. In fact it is build into the fabric of our being. It is an inescapable part of being. This gets worked out in the context of covenant.

6.7. Covenant

This covenant is one that is an agreement between a personal God and a people and a people within a people. The Bible is very very anthropomorphic in its way of talking about God. We are limited by language. On the other hand we want to look at the language and see who God is. God is a present personalistic reality with whom the people of Israel interact. We have a tension how one does live with the creator of the universe and at the same time walks in the Garden of Eden or has a chat with Moses. Is in the smoke of the tent. There are real tension in honoring those things.

We are in a covenant with that God. It is not a contract but a relationship in which two sides enter making a commitment to hash out a relationship. I think that Old Testament spirituality is the working out of the divine human relationship by being in that relationship. You work out the relationship by being in that relationship. This covenant is one which very much is God honoring his commitment to the people more than people honoring their end.

It is like a child to the parent. The child is free to kick and bite and be angry. We see a God who gets very angry but in the end always comes back. In the end it is like God saying you did it again you slept with other Gods, but how can I stay angry with them. In the end we have a God who cannot stop but at the end always says it is OK. In a sense we see a God who will let himself be taking advantage of. Who is strong enough to contain the betrayal and hostility and mistakes and wandering. This does not mean that they do not have consequences. In the end we always see God's willingness to stay open to reconciliation. Israel had this stormy relationship with this God who does not want to let go.

We have this God of incredible might and justice and also of tenderness and mercy. Covenant is were it gets worked out. One way of working it out is keeping the law. We see it degenerating and we overstating the case by looking at the Pharisees. The Law is there not as something to crush the people but as ways of pleasing God. We have to handle this with a very light touch. You do not do them because you have to do them, but because it makes God happy and life is going the way it is supposed to go.

It facilitates a relationship. It creates a situation where the relationship is more likely to go well. It has standards and morals, but at the same time holiness is also being in a right relationship. Understanding is most sensible in a form of relationship. Holiness is crucial to the Israelite. To be in right relationship is to be holy.

6.8. Hebrew piety or spirituality.

Is not only reading but invest himself completely into the things of God. With the mystics we would say it touches upon what the self is. Ps 119 "I will obey your decrees". They mean something to me, not something I grind out. Hebrews delight in understanding the Law. They memorized it. They talk about eating the Torah. It is a very powerful all embracing understanding of God's gifts of scripture to the people. Of course it can easily degenerate into hard-core legalism like Christianity can too. But that is not the point of it. The point is to encounter and please God. In our churches we do not spend enough time going on in a relationship with God.

6.8.1. Hebrew Sects

Within the Old Testament community in the intertestamental period there were people that considered knowing God as so essential that they separated them selves. Like the Essenes who were very devoted to ritual. A group in Egypt (Therapeuts). Even within the Hebrew community there were those monastic tendencies. Some because of the time influenced by Hellenism.

6.8.2. Apocalypse

So that brings us to the final intertestamental part that is also forward looking. We do not have to look to other religions to give us the idea of apocalypse. There is a lot of Jewish apocalyptic thinking. History will be fulfilled by them (Jews). That might be snobbish, but we think the same of us.

There is an anticipation. Judaism is even for the most mystical there is for the most part a linear understanding of history. There is a beginning, the working out of the purpose of God and there is an end somehow or another through the Jewish people. There is a longing for that. There is this sense that God is in charge of the whole bowl of fact. We are not idly repeating ourselves like we would think in Greek religions. Life sort of repeats itself.

6.8.3. Suffering

Old Testament Spirituality has these seeds in it of the centrality of suffering. It is very interesting to me that we see a development from a prosperity Gospel (Abraham) to a more "being close to God is the Gospel". A developing of understanding. Wealth blessed with association with God. By and by we have Isaiah saying "Woe to the rich..". The Prophets said you are trusting in the wrong thing. An Old Testament Professor of mine said that an element of Judaism is undeserved suffering that can lead to blessing. We should be willing to sacrifice on behalf of God. We find in Old Testament Spirituality a taking into account of the harsh realities of God. You are given ways of understanding of working out.

6.9. Summary

The crucial element is that the essence of Old Testament Spirituality is the presence of God as creator rescuer, angry friend, forgiver.

Old Testament Spirituality is the working out of what to do with that fact. The feasts and all the other things were their attempt of dealing with that. It is a spirituality of prayer of praying to a personality and not to a cosmic backdrop. One who hears and responds. It is a participation in the community. Understanding oneself as an individual but linked with others in the community of faith. There are no individuals but only individuals in community.

7. Meditation

This is a form of prayer. Lessons learned here apply to many other disciplines. Some are afraid because it is eastern. It also comes out of our Christian history.

7.1. Meaning of the Word

Linguistic gymnastics are interesting. Language is dynamic. I think that the English word comes from meditare (reflect, think about). There are a number of words for meditation in the Bible.

7.1.1. Old Testament

"ChaGaG" ggj to murmur or to muttering in the heart. Not memorizing but talking about it within ourselves. Su'aCH to muse upon. The word is often translated ponder. Weigh mentally.

7.1.2. New Testament

Clearly meditative meditaw. 1 Tim. sumbalw throw together. Mary after the annunciation pondered these things in her hearts. She throws them together to consider them.

Meditation is nothing something to have anxiety about unless it is not being done for a good reason.

7.2. Acts 10

In Acts 10 Peter has a vision and it is the vision on the roof of Simon Tanner. It is hot and he is hungry. He is about to pray and laps into a trance like state. A big sheet comes down. We try often to be more pious than Jesus is. The point is that in this story he contemplates what is going on. He does not dismiss it but interacts with it. This changes attitude to the gentiles. Peter argues with the circumcision advocates on the basis of this vision.

Peter contemplated on it. Greek Verb suggest a consideration. Meditation is part of our heritage. Not foreign to us.

Do not accept everything in a dream or so. But these are biblical. Meditation is fine for us.

7.3. It is Prayer

Meditation is kataphatic prayer, where we are participants in the experience and where we use something like a passage from scripture. So here is sort of the process on it. I will spend the longest on this discipline because the processes are largely the same.

7.4. Recollection

The primary function is recollection. If you call something it comes to you. In recollection you are recollecting your scattered self. You lost chunks of yourself when the alarm went off. We loose chunks of ourselves. If you drove over here and heard a joke you lost something of yourself. It is as if pieces of ourselves are falling off all of the time. We always need to recollect a little bit.

Search through the garbage of the day. Realize that you are scattered and pull the pieces back to yourself. Like a stamp collector arranges his stamp collection. That is what we are doing with ourselves. This becomes easier the more you do it. But Meditation is not something that you just jump in like a swimming pool. It is giving oneself over to God and that is probably worth some time.

So we bring ourselves together. It is the examining of our experiences and our ideas and we can say: Yes this is I.

7.5. How to meditate

Meditation is not to meditate on yourself though it is helpful sometimes. It is also then recollecting or bringing to yourself what will be the springboard for the meditation. Peter for example was on the roof. There are all sorts of things that you might bring into this mix. When you are meditating yourself meditation is at the same time relaxation and concentration. During the process of recollection you might do some physical exercise to relax yourself. You ought to be comfortable. But it is normally best to be sitting up straight and let your body tighten up and relax (Progressive Muscle Relaxation).

Breathing exercise were discussed in the middle ages about monitoring your breathing. One guy wrote a treatise how it could drive you mad. All my concern is that you keep breathing. It is like relaxing and concentration. There is a decreased awareness of distraction. There is a heightened awareness of what you are meditating upon. Same thing as in sports.

That is were we encounter the problems. Because it is difficult to concentrate for us since this kind of exercise is not highly prized in our culture. Some are just more kinetic than other. You need to work into your own rhythm of what is necessary.

Q: How does this compare with self-hypnosis?

A: What sense of self-hypnosis? I guess that there are certain elements of self-hypnosis but you do not get lost as in self-hypnosis.

Q: Equivalent from a psychological standpoint?

A: I think there are studies but I do not know. It is worth thinking about.

For meditation is best if you are quite still. The Indian guru describes the minds as filled with moving branches of trees with monkey. We need to get rid of the wild monkeys and get to whispering monkeys.

It is not a very easy thing. It is like other things in life. You have to work at it.

To get at it posture is important. Body contact with a chair maybe important. Then you relax and get ready to move into the meditative process or experience.

Because this is where it gets frustrating some rules:

- I. Be realistic. See how much time you can and will spent on the exercise. Not how much you want to spent. Unrealistic aims are the most common reasons for people giving up.
- II. Do not expect dramatic results. Everybody you read gives these warning but one always notices only the great experiences that they tell. It is not likely that you immediately have a vision of Jesus or something like that. This should be something that you do over the long haul.
- III. Expect difficulty and obstacles. Do not be surprised. Between your own sin and frailty and the devil and daily distractions. There are more than enough obstacles. These obstacles provide more things for you to be in meditation about.
- IV. Do not blab to much about it about what is going on in this intimate time with God. Many lovely things loose their beauty when you blab (crattle, chatter) about it.

You need to talk about it with a friend that understands. For your own protection to keep not baptizing our own thoughts. Those are some concerns.

Some things more. There are dangers in moving into being a regular meditative person. Some of it I picked up from a secular book:

- I. Linguistic confusion. As we become more and more interior we run the risk of absolutizing our experience. We make it normative for the world or for ourselves. There is something bad if the experience does not happen again. Who has sin in the room and is blocking this? These sorts of activities are not measurable scientific experiences. Religious and experiential language is a language of its own but it is not scientific.
- II. Withdrawal from the world. Lure yourself into a escapist naval kind of being. You need to talk about your religious life with other people. But also escaping is not bad. Escaping and escapism are different. Drinking to avoid things is escapism but escaping in danger makes sense. One has to discern if it is unhealthy.
- III. Preoccupation with experience related to 2. Everyone who had a vision or a good experience is immediately at risk of wanting more. Philipp Nery told some students the next time Mary appeared they should spit at her. So seeking experience, these things again, is using God as a feel good friend. If you just want a good experience take LSD. If you want experience overload yourself with coffee. It is faster, requires no work. If you want a closer experience of God then I am afraid that you have to do it this way.
- IV. A closed spiritual worldview. You get trapped into spiritualizing everything. Not everything has grand spiritual reasons. We need to think about what we are doing. If you spiritualizing this experience right now. Why? It might mean that what I am saying is interpreted differently than intended.

V. Danger of comparing experiences. My experience is better or worse than your experience. Ultimately God gives. Experience says nothing on how good we are in meditation. If God gives us some wopping experience then there are different ways of looking at it. One is you are such a wretched creature that God had to give it to you. Another view is that God moved you into a different area of ministry. The danger is to compare them to other experiences. You are who you are. C.S. Lewis made the comparison that you cannot become like somebody else.

This class is an excellent example of how to plan a retreat. From the noise level as the week has gone on the breaks have become longer and longer. One a retreat if you plan it too tightly people will loose a lot of the fun. People will enjoy being with each other especially in a situation like here. It would be good to offer a two unit class on conversing. You just need a beverage and show up.

7.6. Ignatian structure

I want to use the Ignatian outline as a way of introducing the process. There is something very lovely about Ignatius Loyola. He was wounded in a war and gave his life to Jesus and began to develop spiritual exercises.

7.6.1. Preparation

Prayer and Meditation as a way to prepare for life. Ignatius saw life as a time of preparation for prayer. We make our day be in such a way that our time with God will be richer. That is a phenomenal way of understanding prayer.

7.6.1.1. Remote

Remembering to be in touch with God all the time. Being aware of God all the time.

7.6.1.1.1. Mortification / Self Denial

A lifestyle that is conducive of bringing a Christian into this.

7.6.1.1.2. Habitual recollection

Leading a life of remembering God and being whole.

7.6.1.1.3. Humility

You remember your creatureliness. This is the way you be.

7.6.1.2. Proximate

This is setup for meditating in the morning. You can make adjustment in this. When you decide the subject of the meditation.

7.6.1.2.1. Object of meditation

The evening before you consider the scripture to meditate upon. The lectionary. Your mind can work on it overnight. So that God and You can roll it around in who you are.

7.6.1.2.2. Recall the subject

As you wake up you bring it back to your mind.

7.6.1.2.3. Consecrate yourself

You give yourself over to God.

Notice that in every area this is crucial. A very real awareness of self and God is a part of the whole thing.

7.6.1.3. Immediate preparation

7.6.1.3.1. Presence of God

The first thing before entering the meditative moment is thinking of God alone.

7.6.1.3.2. Humble ourselves

Confessing of sins

7.6.2. Meditation

7.6.2.1. Prelude

7.6.2.1.1. Composition of place

This is the act of imagination by which we compose and construct the scene. For example crowds around Jesus and the women with a hemorrhage. Then you ask God that we will find in this meditation a fruit that is pleasing to God.

7.6.2.1.2. Find a fruit pleasing to God.

7.6.2.2. Exercising the powers of the Soul

7.6.2.2.1. Memory

here you enter into the subject of the meditation. There are tons of ways of entering. You could be any person there, yourself watching etc.

7.6.2.2.2. Intellect

Where you have entered fully and now having lived it and being there you begin to reflect on it. And now beginning to reflect you becoming more aware of yourself. You are asking what does this mean to me. How does this apply to me? It is not what is the theological truth. How am I like this women. I feel unclean sometimes. What does Jesus treatment mean to me. For myself and my life.

7.6.2.2.3. Give Self to God Resolution

It is not good enough to leave it there understood. The me transformed or being transformed makes a step of giving myself over to God on the basis of this. A resolution which is very concrete. I will to this and that to so and so. It is a very life touching kind of thing. I will try specifically this, this and this.

7.6.3. Conclusion

Then for an quarter of an hour I will examine how it has gone with me in the mediation. Then one reflects on the experience itself. Was I distracted? Interesting experience.

A buddy has a spiritual nosegay (a little flower back then when they stunk). Remember that Europe from 1348 from the next several hundred years had the bourbonic plague.

Spiritual nosegame. In this meditation we realize the incredible love of Jesus. That is the fruit. We pluck it and carry it with us trough the day and a few times during the day we remember the experience. (Salles)

7.7. Sulpician Method

A group in Paris in 1400. Especially good for affective types. Three elements.

7.7.1. Jesus before the eyes

Adoration. We look to Jesus and adore him in one of his virtues. We may want to see Jesus standing before Pilate. Adoration and we just look at him and try to love him. Like we are looking at a friend.

7.7.2. Jesus in the heart

Communion. We draw into ourselves the virtue or attribute seen in the Lord. For example, here we pull the integrity of Jesus into our selves. Whatever it is we draw into our own self.

7.7.3. Jesus in the hands

We make a resolution how we are going to implement that today. For example, for a difficult meeting I will draw this strength from Jesus. Application of this virtue.

7.8. Literature

These are just some methods that people use. In this we put it to work.

Some nice books:

Thomas a Kampas *Invitation of Christ*

Thomas Cousbiselee? *The Spiritual Exercises of S. Ignatius of Loyola*

Three books (evangelical area) different exercises for a 3 week retreat. Nice format. Real examples asks questions on which to respond in reflection.

Remember that spiritual exercises are not intended for one just done for the fun of it alone but under the guidance of someone else. Not lone rangers in Christianity but for regular community with systems of accountability.

8. Biblical Framework

Today New Testament as with Old Testament I think what we find is really still more of a framework. We live in 20th century. We think that our spirituality is a technology to be important into our daily. That is not the case in Old Testament and New Testament. If we fast now maybe one of the reasons was to enhance their spiritual life. In Old Testament and New Testament people are not necessarily fasting as an exercise but as an expression of their relationship with Christ. Shift in understanding of the Universe. We sitting here with some idea of what the universe is like. Again the New Testament is really more a framework than it does give us in a sense spiritual technique.

I believe that the New Testament and Old Testament form in many ways an unbroken line of thought and understanding. In that God is an aloof and distant God and dangerous God but talking to Moses (Old Testament). God wrestles with Jacob.

This carries over into the New Testament Community. The basic community was the Jewish community. What Jesus brings to that is the idea of friendship. Some 2000 years down the road. God as our buddy s not that big of a deal. But to those who were friends of Jesus it had a powerful impact. In John 15 Jesus calls them friends and not servants. Friendship is in Old Testament (Jonathan and David honesty faithfulness and willingness to sacrifice, knowledge knowing each other, there is revealing)

Now we have a genuine friendship and these are quite powerful and rather large demands and characteristic for a friendship to God. What we do not do well in friendship is wound each other well. A friend is one who is honest and straightforward.

Friendship is no small deal. Jesus comes along and says you are now my friends. A reshaping of the relationship. God humbling themselves. I think that this a crucial Old Testament concept that comes into play for us.

The other was the idea of covenant. We think in term of covenant in terms of contract. When in fact the covenant is slightly different. People do make commitments but there are difference. In a covenant there is no small print or hidden agenda. We do not enter into this with anxiety because we can read the large print right there. The second things that there are no up front guarantees or collaterals required. Ultimately our lives are the gifts of God anyhow. It is for everybody, no one has to put up anything anyhow. The covenant is unbreakable. God makes the covenant and God is unbreakable. In that sense covenant is more like a relationship than a contract. A covenant would be a basketball game. Basketball court Sign no street shoes. You cant play because it ruins the game. The covenant is like a game. If you do not take off your street shoes you cannot play. The covenant is revealed in the story of the prodigal son.

Covenant is entered understanding that it is unbreakable. I think that is the covenant that applies in the Old Testament and it does not get broken. The covenant envelopes us as an atmosphere. Then we are not so anxious about falling out of it. We see ourselves doing that all of the time. We all have lousy relationship with God all the time.

We sometimes believe that we are in a contract with God and not in a covenant. It has more to do with relationship then with salvation. Most of what goes on in the bible has to do with what is going on with us now. This is where we are and have our problems. So our spiritual life are very much a present existential concern. Even if you did not believe in heaven I could still see being a missionary because of the joy of knowing God in the present. That is what the covenant is all about. In the New Testament I believe that our relationship with God can be as complex as we are. We find Jesus that is diversely presented to us. We will find very different presentations of Jesus. That is what we find in the Gospel it means that Jesus was a real person that was interpreted and misinterpreted by different people. It is not phony of us to be different with one and with another. Because Jesus comes to us in different ways does not mean that there is something wrong about Jesus.

I think that is crucial it means that we can interact with Jesus like with anybody else. He sometimes has a hard word for us. Jesus who receives us again and again. At the same time if we are a total immoral dork. He will not say this is no problem. But he will refer to the problem. Jesus needs to be in that moment consonant with who he is. That is important for our spiritual life it is always through Jesus that we pray. The New Testament works out who Jesus is in the same way that life in the Old Testament who God is.

New Testament God is seen and interpreted through the person of Jesus. Jesus is the focus of New Testament spirituality. We need to work very hard at who Jesus is. We cannot glean over passages of scripture. Some people have a fixed opinion and are not able to view passages.

Do we spent all our times in the epistles? They tell us how to do everything. The Gospels are much looses. We like to avoid those because that challenges us in the area of making mistakes and so on. The disciples worked through who Jesus is. It is like the idea of the virgin birth. That is worth thinking through is but there is much more worth thinking through. Every local prince and so on was born from a virgin. They were all over the place. But we can do one of two things. Virgin means just a hot shot? Or we can say well there was one special one.

This means that Jesus was with God or like God from the very beginning. When we affirm the virgin birth what are we saying? Do we understand all the implication for Jesus life and his ministry.

Part of our spirituality is coming to grips who Jesus is and his nature.

Encounter with John the Baptist. John the Baptist is the eschatological forerunner of Jesus. There is still the sect that believes that John the Baptist is the messiah in Egypt or Israel. There is a very important statement "I must decrease while he must increase". The New Testament is a working out of what it means to let Jesus be on the increase for us. It is almost like a throw off sentence. That is a very powerful thing. Many people of the early church would take these parts and live these out.

Back then people were lucky when they had chunks in their memory. Of course we will find people with skewed emphasis, like us today with skewed emphasis. What we have then is the centrality of Christ in working that out. We take a break and get back to the meaning of incarnation.

One of the important elements of New Testament is Jesus solidarity with humanity. The incarnation is worked over time and time again. It is an underlying assumption and so we have the God person before our very eyes. The virgin birth and the Johannine birth. They are all assertions that this is God and flesh. Neither can be devalued. Part of the stress of the New Testament is what you do with a God who is so much enfleshed. Greek Gods would temporarily take one human forms. Docetism: Jesus only appeared to be human.

What is the meaning of Jesus as person. Jesus was in a sense a child conceived out of wedlock. What does this say about God? We are worshipping a child conceived out of wedlock. This is a stunning thing to think about.

No one is so rejectable that God will reject them. Jesus ministry begins with his baptism. If anyone would not need to be baptized then it would be Jesus who is fully God. Yet Jesus in obedience with God gets baptized and gets tempted. Is the temptation bogus? What does it mean for Jesus being sinless and fully God to be tempted? This is the struggle that we have to deal with. Jesus subconscious is so dearly interject that Jesus functions as Jesus superego. Jesus consciousness is tempt table. Jesus has the opportunity to sin but just cannot bring himself to. I am just playing with it. Nonetheless when he is tempted is he really tempted or is he lying to us. Garden of Gethsemane. Is he acting when he asks God to take it away from it. The sense I get is that he is in agony that he is praying to get out of it.

Hebrews says that Jesus was tempted in all ways, he was therefore capable to sin.

Luther: Reason is the devil's work. Reason can take us to a place where only faith can take us.

Reason can only take us so far. The creeds for example explain the experience. It just cannot by itself get us where we intend to go.

A crucial element in the New Testament is the cross. Some say the Gospels are just a prologue to the cross. But certainly afterwards everything is concerned about the cross.

All the writers of the New Testament try to come to terms with the finality of the death of Jesus which leaves the believer of living in a visibly untransformed world.

Ro 9-11 Paul raises the question if God is unjust.

Jesus comes and in a sense puts us in a terrible bond. We get stuck with the cross because in the cross we are confronted with who we are not only with who God is. Not only you and I are in a real sense behind the crucifixion.

This is the ultimate graceful moment. The friend sacrificing himself on our behalf. Part of our Christian life is working out of what we do about that reality. Unfortunately some go into denial and some into remarkable guilt-producing systems. So that we see only our guilt. We do not see it as God challenging us into the same life that Christ lived. Some see it only as revealing how bad we are and our self-destruction religious behavior.

Crucifixion is in that culture, remember it happens in Jerusalem in a cosmopolitan city, every cultures view about the crucifixion was a bad. Practiced by Romans, Persians, Greeks, northern Africa. Part of the beauty and sorrow that this is just one more things in a crape of things he has to go through. Crucifixion. was reserved for the lower classes. Normally the most common punishment for highway robbers. It was to keep the peace. It was bad because it disrupted the system. Jesus disrupted the system.

Most commonly for traitors and insurrectionists. To pacify and occupied territory. Particularly in Roman territories for disobedient slaves. Jesus challenged the law all the time.

In Phil Jesus takes on the form of a slave. This is a totally incomprehensible behavior of God for any of those cultures. The Jews used crucifixion although it was considered a scandal since adopted from other cultures. They used it ruthlessly though. For all these culture it is a low class punishment. For the Jews it is a scandal and offense. It was seen as a racist offense since used by Romans before against Jews. It had every kind of negative overtone to it. Jesus gets dumped on even at the very end. So now we have a savior who appears in all sort of churches. The lord of savior of all that is conceived out of wedlock, small town, constantly in trouble with everybody. Troublemaker, he makes culturally inappropriate comments and behavior. Is this the person you wish to exult as your lord and savior.

This is he person to whom we wish to get closer. Who represents God to us. The cross reveals who God is insofar as what God is willing to do for us. And that we need this sort of treatment from God. That is the point of greatest grace.

9. The Spirit

We have to grapple with the reality of the spirit. The church understood itself as a pneumatic spiritual body. A body that is captivated by and filled with and united with the Spirit of God. There is an interesting tension between a very high value of individuals but there is an equally great emphasis on the individual in community.

9.1. In the Bible

Gathered communities of believers came together because of Christ present in the Holy Spirit. They are empowered and given a foretaste of heaven. Because of God's Spirit we live with our toes in heaven already. Remember the Spirit of God himself is a gift to us that is normally it is perceived at repentance and baptism. We are possessors of the Holy Spirit out of dam luck. We are fortunate, not because of our nature or work but because God loves us.

Linguistically we are confronted with a number of concepts. To tie down the Spirit is a very dangerous thing.

The Spirit is given at repentance. The Spirit is given to individuals and groups at particular moments for particular occasions although we live constantly with the Spirit.

Spiritual gifts are to be prayed for by fasting. All this stuff is Spirit language. I think it is a kind of attempt to speak about experience with God in us and with us. We are in danger of making a thing out of the spirit. In any case the spirit is not something but someone who is presented to us. So our task is to know what it means to live in the spirit in Christ. In the New Testament there are much more references of us being in Christ than Christ being in us.

We in a sense because of the empowerment become secondary. Ultimately that is what we here for. We are God's friends who say yes we want to be part of what you are doing.

I think it is important to realize that it both paved the way for the monastic movement but also is different. Basically it is the same structure as of Jewish life. Fasting etc.

9.2. Monasticism

With the monastic movement fasting is not part of the ongoing life of faith but done as an exercise to deepen ones relationship with Christ. Flowing out of New Testament we can understanding monasticism to have Christ as a model. They see Christ going into the wilderness, alone to pray. Acts 2 describes the early Christian community. They looked like monastic communities. Holding things in common. Prayer together. The whole idea of the centrality of the cross is crucial for the monastic movement. Some ideas of reward and punishment are in New Testament. The idea of the charismatic person and community. The assumption of the hermit is that he or she is a graced person who is indwelled by the holy spirit. The assumption of being a charismatic. We can see that the monastic movement is not a radical disjuncture but some very logical movement. Some attempts to understand life itself. Be aware of our culture and become aware of our unassumed assumptions of things.

10. Journalizing

Journal keeping precipitates change. Simply to record our behavior is to interfere with it. "It is to see ourselves from a new viewpoint. It is to adjust with it to give rise to new priorities in our habitual ways of acting" F. Simons *Keeping Your Spiritual Journal*

Journaling is simply the churchy hip-word for keeping a diary. A journal is a diary, a book of our day. A record of what happens to us from day to day because it is in the things of everyday life that we and God live. In this class the emphasize is on intentional spirituality. But we cannot spend all of our time on it. But God's being is in most of what we do. The reflecting on what we do becomes an important place to be looking for it. We can record dreams in it, reflect on everyday life, write letters to God. Letters are a written kind of praying. Elizabeth O'Connor: "The quality of life is depending on how we appreciate the ordinary." A diary as a way of recollecting the day. Part of Journaling enables us to see what we otherwise would have missed in a conversation and such.

People have always done this. Augustine's confessions were a journey. The psalmist was Journaling, pouring herself [sic] out on the paper. These are very often things that your can say in a different language. The Bible is God's journal. It is a recording of God's life with us. As also the journal of the people.

Like the others it is intentional, calls for honesty, "coram deo" is done before God with God in mind in the presence of God. Like all other disciplines this should not become a new God. Not just hastily decide to journal each day for an hour a day. It needs to be a discipline and not a burden. The minute they become a new God they are idols.

This is a disciplined way of praying like interior prayer. Journaling provides a place to be honest. It makes that honesty take concrete form keeping the honesty in front of us and facilitates deeper reflection. I have for the longest time praying in the shower. Rarely have I journaled this day was this conversation with so and so. It concretized what we are praying about. So that we do not become people like in James seeing in a mirror and forgetting.

Our lives with God are a lot like gravity. It concretizes things. Also unlike interior prayer to some degree it make us concretize our priorities. If I am Journaling I can just write on one thing at a time. It makes us concretize our priorities. I have to decide what I am going to reflect upon. This also says things about me and my relationship to God. In the very act of being specific it opens up whole things about ourselves.

It can become a springboard for giving ourselves up to God.

10.1. How to do it

The main rule is just get on with it. Do it and do it now. Get started. What do you use? Everything. Also change those things to stay fresh. Try Journaling in a circle not on lines.

What do you write: Words, Picture, Psalms, Songs. You pour your heart down there. Write about God your life, your friends, a letter to God, a letter to life, a letter to a long lost friend. Free association. Somebody found it freeing and to drift into praying (Student comment).

The important thing is that it is you that gets played out. Very concrete before God. On a piece of paper it is very concrete. Whatever works best do it. What was the significant thing in the day. What made this day unique? How did you feel today? Any anxieties today? What did you accomplish? What do you feel like doing. Any old thing like that. You can also journal things that is coming towards you like commencement, a visit from family.

But if there are a couple of basic it is:

- I. Get at the feeling level. Feelings tend to be where we live.
- II. Be as honest as you can. Never censor yourself. If there is anger or hostility that is normal embarrassing put it down. Try to not censor or censure yourself. This is where you are alone with God. This is in a contact with God who loves you.
- III. Bring God into it in reflecting on it.
- IV. Share the stuff of your journal with someone else. That does not mean exactly what you write unless you will start writing for them.

Problems:

- I. It sounds like a stupid thing to you. Do not do it. You may want to try just for an experience.
- II. A waste of time that there are better things to do like helping the poor. Maybe you should or maybe you should be doing both or writing might help you helping the poor.
- III. It takes too much time. Write in short burst or write in a schedule. Some would like to journal but get caught up in it. Use Alarm clock. Do not write as often.
- IV. Guilt. Because you know that you will not keep up with it. For most people that is a guaranteed fact. See it as an experiment. Or just do not do it.
- V. One loses interest. You may need to quit or getting close to something. Change format.
- VI. Privacy. There are a number of different things. If you live in a household where people are trustworthy tell them not to look at it. Let people know that you are doing it but keep it out of the way. Other way keep it locked. John Wesley wrote in code. Use code for certain things or people. For example somebody would use a codename for masturbation relaxation.

Also remember to keep God in it. Believe it or not people are sometimes anxious about God reading the journal. We are sometimes anxious if we are really honest God would get upset. God already knows. Share anxieties with a friend. All of these are things that help on our primary relationships.

11. The Desert

"Do not trust in your own righteousness; do not grieve about a sin that is past and gone and keep your tongue and your belly under control" Abba Anthony.

It was not until the third century that the development of spirituality as a conscious pursuit resulted. From early on there was intentional spirituality. This is the development of a system. That first emerged in the third century around two hundred. The only sense of being in the last part of history had faded. People were realizing that may be this is not the end time. Christ has not returned. The Church was no longer unblemished. It hardly looked like Acts 2. Until monasteries began to form the initial impulse was - monasteries means coming together of monoids, people alone - it was primarily an movement of individuals seeking sanctification and growth.

"So within this movement specialized institutions developed". People were thinking of ways of being a Christian, contrary to the early thought of just to be a Christian. Despite the separation, the monastic movement was a concrete expression of New Testament Christianity. Key phrases are found in Luke 9:23. In this there are two basic elements of Christian life for them.

I. Renunciation of self. Which is what Jesus said "Deny yourself".

II. Following or imitation of Christ.

To renounce self meant not simply fasting, alms, and time in prayer but to escape from all temptations and luxuries.

The Desert was the place for asceticism and escape. Escape from and to. And it was a place to go work.

There is a distinction between asceticism laid upon us by God and asceticism laid upon us by Satan. Self-destruction was seen as evil. There were warnings against extremes of fasting. This is sort of a better understanding of what was going on in the desert. It was not extremist. While monasticism is primarily of men, women not only responded but also functioned as leaders.

But the early monastics felt in the desert that they had come as far to paradise as one could come on earth.

The idea of living in ways that are like and pleasing to God.

11.1.Struggle

Not everyone went to the desert. It is a matter of figuring out what God wants. Battles:

- Within where the flesh battles with the spirit. This is interpreted existentially or hellenistically interpreted. The war that goes on inside. Interior lusts and desires etc.
- World. Struggle with wicked ways of the world.
- Satan / Spirits. They provoke those desires in us and tempt us with images of this world.

It is a very introspective view. We see monasticism as one who draws nearer to God and are involved in spiritual warfare. This is a very evangelical understanding of the world.

We need to know God and God's will and do warfare with God's enemies. The spiritualizing of everything is the result in evangelism.

11.2.Historic Forces

External constraints are the forces of history in that time. The rise of monasticism coincided with churches accommodation to the world. Monasticism is a leaving of the corrupted church behind.

Nowadays we are constantly taking our spiritual temperature to know when to split up and form a new church.

Initially the church was a revolutionary movement at odds with the culture. But as Christ did not come back people began to adapt to the world-order.

Now the church begins to reflect the values of the culture around it. The age of martyrdom was over. The martyrs saw themselves suffering for Christ. This is by no means unique to Christianity. 4 Makk claims the same for Jews. It was considered a person's second baptism. Martyrs were commemorated with special services.

The era of blanket Christianity began with demise of the martyrs. The church owned everything of the world and expects its God. The church begins to take on the characteristics of society.

Ideals are now found outside of the church. There is no more the sense of the world as a place where we are going on with our life. The world is a bad place. This is not uncommon to us.

11.3. Hellenistic Influences

Hellenistic influence expressed the thought that Matter is bad. Our very existence is inferior. The Gnostics saw this as caused by demiurges. The more existentialist position of Jews was waning and Hellenistic influence was raising. This makes it easy for people to go out and inflict harm to themselves since flesh is bad.

11.4. Summary

Monastic movement is a Protest Movement. It is a flight from an to and an affirmation of old-time religion.

The monastics thought that the only way to go back was to leave society. They saw themselves as members of the churches being hampered by the institutions.

Within a century this movement was integrated into the church though.

It was a movement of lay persons not of priests. They frequently were illiterate. Do not be fooled by literary convention. I was forced to write.

This was not only anti-church feeling but a strong individualistic movement. They responded to Jesus word that the kingdom of God is within. Then you go to the wilderness and you have the wild experience and it is confirmed.

As I said simply to withdraw from society was not the primary aim of a hermit but to experience unity with God.

The New Testament and the dualistic understanding of the Greeks came together in Alexandria, Egypt. Where these come together you have a remarkable conceptual amount that spurs these developments.

12. St. Anthony (251-356)

He was a Egyptian Christian from a town named Coma. He was a regular church goer and then one day he heard the word "Sell all you have ..." and that was good enough for him. He took care of his relatives and gave everything else away. He moved near another monk. Later he moved further out. We have to remember when we talk about hermits that they do not live totally isolated life. They lived near water. They bumped into each other when getting water.

St. Anthony was tempted in the desert by his own second thought and worries about his sister and things like that. He moved to some tombs outside of town and then into the desert into an abandoned fort for 20 years. He was simply recreating the experience of Christ who went into the desert to be tempted. It was to go out and reclaim parts of the world for Jesus since evil spirits were living in the desert. So in his solitude Anthony encountered those psychological and real demons. (monastics tried to discern between emotional reactions and demons) a model for all Christians. Up to the reformation monks were the model for Christians. They were very helpful.

St. Anthony's life intended to serve as a paradigm for the Christian life in general. He escapes the temptations of the world and realizes that God is with him. In the tomb he experiences the dark night of the soul and is attacked by the devil but God was nowhere around.

It is not surprising that he experiences this in the tomb since death is absence of God. Anthony rides out this sense of despair and loneliness but at the end Christ came in a consolidating vision.

This is an experience that all people go through. See again he gives us hope since he rides it out. Finally he takes out for 20 years to the fort. Basically he chose a life of radical solitude dealing with the demons within and without.

After 20 years some people broke down his door and pleaded him to take disciples. Antony appears as the perfect human being. He is initiated in divine mysteries and represents an equilibrium praised by the Greeks.

Antony fully equipped goes back to the world. He does healing, casting out of demons. He is the perfect charismatic in a perfect sense. Finally he gets old and goes back into the desert. He supports Athanasius.

His life was a renunciation now of what ultimately everyone has to give up. You can not take it with you. The monk sees it as a life affirming decision. The other stuff clutters his life. They are getting rid of the gunk.

This is a life led completely in the presence of God. There is not one instance were the presence of God is not there. The sense of going into the desert is that the heart may turn more and more toward God.

Life is seen as a struggle with demons and their illusion. Once they are forced to reveal themselves they can be destroyed by the power of faith. Thus the need of the real person to emerge.

Service in and love for the world is a crucial element. It is not enough just to simply go away. So Anthony spends a lot time giving counsel praying and casting out demons.

The tremendous psychologizing that is going on in the mystics. Same in Protestant world. There is a constant wrestling with all of these things. Because people are basically gregarious we cannot live without each other. The hermitic lifestyle did not live long and groups began to form. Coenobitic Monasticism. First major person Pachomius (c. 290-346). What happened were that gradually groups called laurists developed. On weekends all these hermits came down the paths to worship together. Laure=path streets. Gradually they realized that they should start communities.

Pachomius is an Egyptian Soldier turned Christian. Being a hermit is the way to do it and he did it but he came to a part of scripture that talks about the community the body of Christ and so he decides to form a community. He adds obedience to chastity and poverty of the hermits. Besides regular times of prayer and study there was manual labor. He wrote something like a monastic rule. All the monks had to do their own life and contribute to the monastery. The authority of the Abbot and the idea of living in a regular community becomes established part of Christianity. This does not eradicate the solitary movement. They claimed that the coenobites had sold out and had replaced freedom to act with obedience and being stuck in one place. They had received rather than abandoned. They begin to get comparatively wealthy. They had given up the pilgrim image for a settler image. So we see that poverty chastity and obedience were institutionalized elements of Christian spirituality. Then will come another biblical virtue that is difficult for the hermit and that is love.

13. Basil of Caesarea (330-379)

Monasticism had developed alongside the church. Basil had been a monk. He left the monastery to become a bishop. As a hermit his life was so exemplary that he attracted followers. That is why he became appointed to bishop.

He felt that monastic life was a valid Christian lifestyle and that monastic life could have its contribution to the church.

He also felt that in supporting this separated community was love in community and service to the church. He is aware of the human need for each other. He stressed prayer, education and acts of love. He saw life together of simply a way to be.

Man is a sociable being. He did not require miracles or prodigies of his disciples. Known as disciples by the love that they have for another. For him community life was so normative. He once said to a monk that wanted to love: This is self-love and foreign to God's love.

Cooperation rather than competition was emphasized. Chastity and obedience was still the norm. Each monastery was self-sufficient but there were different tasks for the monks. Again this is not unlike like certain large churches. Because Basil emphasized community of faith and service monasteries should remain small. Smallness forces interactions in way that large communities cannot do. Small around 25 monks?

Simplicity and maintenance of the personal nature. The key thing was to reconnect the monastic movement to the church. It protected the solitude of the monks while at the same time enabling them to participate in the church. A monk could have the best of both world.

14. St. Benedict (480-550)

St. Benedict (480-550) traveled with Saintess celestica.

He is generally considered the father of western monasticism. By this time the monastic movement was present throughout the west. His importance is his rule. The **Benedictine Rule** became dominant for western monasticism. His monasteries were a lot like Basil's. Theologically it embraced the Augustinian emphasis of Grace but at the same time also emphasized the rigorous ascetic ideas. Benedict took a bunch that were floating around "*The rule of the master*" and brought them all together in his rule. He was born in Italy in Mercilla. He studied in Rome and found it disheartening. He left to become a monk and because of his devotion he began to attract a following and when he tried to organizing them they tried to poison him. He ended up with his sister founding monasteries. Most famous "Monte Cassino" where he developed his rule. He was very sensitive to the fact that people are different. Part of the rules takes into account different personality types. The Abbot must deal differently with them. The Abbot has the final authority, but he would allow people to become hermit, but only through permission of Abbot. This is contrary to Basil.

These hermits tended to have more time for rigorous prayer. Not uncommon to find monastic communities with some single hermits.

Benedictine Monasteries are characterized by:

- I. Life in community. A sense of living as the Gospels intend. Life of prayer and sanctity. The spiritual idea is the perfecting of the soul. Retains that "I want to be holy"-idea. The individual can become what he wants to be only in community.
- II. Life according to the rule thought to be based on scripture. This prevented some eccentric behavior of the early hermits. Everybody was equal.
- III. Stability. The monks would vow to live in one monastery for all of their life. You live and die in the same community. You cannot be fickle. If we are going to live together we gonna work together. There was also the repudiation of the wandering monks. They were often eating the more stable monasteries into trouble.
- IV. Obedience to Abbot. He took his place for life or until unable to govern. Seen often in terms of a home or household. Benedictine communities thought of themselves as families.

Life in community:

- I. Liturgical Prayer. Chanting of the divine office. Chanting of the Psalms. According to canonical hours. Community gathers for structural liturgy.
- II. Manual Labor. Benedict: Farming. Avoids idleness. Involved in the life of the world. Monasteries have different tasks.
- III. Lectio Divina. Quiet prayerful reading of scripture in a meditative fashion. For Benedict meditation is in community.

15. Later Developments

A turn occurred around the 6th century when Gregory the Great asked monks to send people to evangelize England. These were the best educated people. Pope sent them as evangelists. That caused them to reassess their tasks and some monasteries became schools for priest. Barring all these other things we will now leap from the 6 to the 13th century. Monasteries were monasteries basically. Around 13th century change in the monastic movement this was the Mendicant orders or begging orders. Dominican 1206. Franciscans 1233. This was serving Christ in the world. They were reacting to need in the world and secularization of the church. Church and Monasteries had become too wealthy for their own good.

These wandering Dominicans saw themselves to go out into the world to combat evil and to save souls. They were evangelists and teachers. They maintained all monastic stuff but saw themselves as reaching out into the world. The Franciscans saw themselves as rebuilding the church even literally. They took a vow of poverty. Some would not even touch money. They ended up though while being radical producing some of the greatest scholars of the middle ages. Big names who came to influence us greatly like Thomas Aquinas. In this crowd we see characteristics of the middle ages and influence the Protestant reformers. They tried to maintain the tension between the stability of the rule and wandering priest. Tension between the Greek to see the body as bad to the other as seeing the body as good and to be redeemed.

Again the tension that they brought are tension with whom we live. We have to buy into everything they say.

We need to work with what we have at hand accepting that all knowledge is limited.

16. Luther

"It is a scandal to rush into the pulpit like a pig to the trough," -a contemporary of Martin Luther

"You should not believe your conscience or your feelings more than the word which the Lord who receives sinner preaches to you." - M. Luther

A more existential view comes with Calvin. This will create a tension in Western Society. This is beginning a process where we end up not trusting our feelings at all. The rise of psychology schools in seminary precisely occurs because much of Christian Christianity have sort of forsaken this. This is a significant historical term.

16.1. Historical background

To get some background for Luther and his spirituality. The Protestant Reformation was both a reaction to and continuation of Roman Catholic Theology and practice. In the 16th century there were three mainstream Protestant faiths: Lutheranism, Reformed(Calvinism, started by Zwingli) and Anabaptism (originally from the Reformed). Later in Great Britain came Anglicanism. The Reformation did not appear out of thin air. Luther like most of the early reformers was a monk. Change was already in the air as it has always been. There were several things beside social factors.

16.1.1. Humanism

Luther's stress on scripture is simply in many ways a continuation of the humanist call to return to the original traditions. A response to criticism of the Bible. Even historical criticism.

Erasmus in 1516 comes out with diaglott Greek and Latin. The humanist wanted a more holistic faith. They were challenging dry scholasticism. There is already within Roman Catholicism a move for renewal. Humanism tended to satirize church and society to keep the church lively. And this happened because of the printing press in 1540 in Mainz by Gutenberg. Immeasurable number of tracts and scripts were floating Europe. Western culture has now access to itself. Now there are mirrors into which we can look. Much has to do with humanism. Luther is a scholar at this time. A champion for the humanists.

16.1.2. Reform per se

This was not unknown to the church. Wycliff some centuries earlier. He embraced almost all doctrines that Luther embraced. Jon Hus in Bohemia. He asserted supremacy of scripture over pope and priests.

The church sometimes crushed reform and sometimes embraced it repeatedly in history. Luther identified with Jan Hus. There were spiritual reformers the friends of God. A group called the brethren of the common life with whom Luther once lived as a youngster. In a very real sense the Roman Catholic church created its own Frankenstein in what it taught Martin Luther.

16.1.3. Popular Piety

One Roman priest reported over the good piety of the Germans. Northern Europe was an interesting mix of local Christianity and pagan customs. Most towns were visited by a priest occasionally. Most large towns had educated priest.

Model sermon were spread through the printing press.

16.2. Augustinian Monk

Luther comes as a bit of a mystery, he comes as an Augustinian monk. He has a foot in the former area because of his studies.

The power of Luther himself is reflected in that his followers named themselves after him and most of his opponents named anyone opposing them Lutherans. More has been written about Luther than anyone else except Jesus.

Europe was inhabited by demons, angels, extracoporal beings who exerted influence over people. There was the belief in trolls. Germany was a loose net of political alliances. They were near to nature worship. People believed in witches. Superstition and folk religion mingled freely with Christian belief. Some of Roman Catholics - Luther's opponents - spread the rumor that Luther's mother conceived by a demon. It sort of a very opposite of the virgin birth. The fact is when it was disputed it was disputed as a rumor and not that it could not be true. That is the milieu in which he grew up. He also grew up in an atmosphere where there was one church. There was no option. So it was one big church. The idea of splits was widely unknown. And one had to order ones life by this church. No salvation outside of the church. In any case Luther started out in the monastery and even in his rejection of monasticism he retained a lot of his heritage. He did not give up his monk-garment until very late.

Mystical writings that Luther liked were for example *Theologia Germania*. He published several editions. He was not just roaming against Roman Catholicism. We find in Luther a meditative bent. Was always in Roman Catholicism. Luther being a monk would participate in affective meditation. He never gave it up. This calls for more involvement to the text but no scholarism.

Luther was a professor of theology and was aquatinted with criticism of the bible. He was aware that prayer was a key element. It is more an emotional involvement with the living God. Luther then stresses the interior life. His 95 thesis in which he attacks indulgences. He starts out with the Christian life with the suffering of Christ. He attacks indulgences on the basis of Christian beliefs.

What we see developing in Luther is the idea of the word beginning to take on a life of its own apart from the individual involved with it. This is were Protestantism begins to look like us. Typical for an evangelical seminary.

One of the things that he encountered was the subjection of the word of God to the whims of the Pope.

Schwärmer: Took the bible had experience and the Bible lost relevance. Two extremes the Pope and the Schwärmer. He in reaction to this stresses the power of the word as word.

What has this to do with spirituality? This determines how we understand things. It is the word as something in the case of scripture and or someone in the case of the living Christ with an existence of its own. An autonomous being. So in scripture the word is not dependent on the existence of the believer. Of course then Luther would bring in the preached word. He gives primacy to preaching above scripture.

The word is:

- living Christ
- written - Scripture
- preaching

All of these are events apart from the believer. Christ has his own existence. The written word has his own existence not dependent upon our own emotion. The necessity of inner ascent to the Lord. The living God is word who lives utterly unto itself etc. He is trying to stand in between these two. The promises of God not our emotions are the essential points here.

If you think about his experience as a incredibly guilty being. Because if I can only trust my feeling and if I am ridden with guilt and that characterizes much of modern Christianity. Where will I find comfort? Not in my feelings but there is somebody who transcends those feelings. I can find comfort in that.

Take a statement like this and look to it in context clearly I believe that what he is saying is that we should not be dominated by feelings that we cannot escape. Many feel guilty because of the churches. Rather than see our feelings of guilt might be helpful springboards to God we live with that and see that as a reflection of reality.

Despite what you feel you are feeling that is what is happening with Luther. Faith for him is both internalization and perception. It is both devotion and rational understanding.

- ◆ Internalization - perception
- ◆ devotion - rational understanding
- ◆ experience - belief "in"

The experience of God and belief in those things that we cannot necessarily experience. Living as if. Even though I might be depressed by guilt. Spirituality much of what we do is work out the fact that Christ died and was resurrected but the world does not look much different. With Luther we have a person who is spanning two areas of our history. The Middle Ages and the beginning of the new era.

"While Philipp [Melachton] practices Astrology I have a drink of beer when having grave thoughts"

Luther likes Paul and Augustine. He was a troubled man and troubled soul and working out this trouble. Also in the beginning of the later editions of the book about Luther's younger days, he talks about working with kids and how it is when finally the kid stops being a case and becomes a face. Same for pastors: When they stop being members and become humans. It is a phenomenal thing to remember.

Meditative life focusing on a person which is Christ. This is the historic shift the emphasis that gets picked up on. All of the sudden it crystallizes when it can have a changing impact. Shift from Platonism. What he does is he demythologizes the platonistic understanding of the world. He stopped believing the way a Platonist would and became an existentialist. But he took Platonic ideas that made them and reframed them into an existentialist frameview.

The majority of mystics felt that you reached reality by going in, Luther said you read it by going out. You hit what you received by God by going in. Going out through ourselves.

Mystics experience God and I as union. Luther experiences God and I separate but united in Christ.

In any case now life comes to us "extra nos" (outside of ourselves). But this sort of understanding is close to typical Protestantism.

We tend to overprize reason. Francis Schaeffer thinks his way into faith. Luther also prizes reason but there are also some anti-intellectual streams of thought. Experience is crucial but experience of someone not oneself. We find all things in Luther that we find in the Mystics.

16.3. Anfechtung

Affective meditation is one of the processes to work through this. Anfechtung may have been more a personality trait. Everyone talks about Anfechtung who writes about their interior life.

Apophatic prayer goes away for Protestants.

What is the difference to clinical depression. Clinical Depression is a combination of affective and chemical processes. The "Dark night of the soul" might be depressive. Is going on between that person and God.

Idea of a natural theology. Grace is a fulfillment of a intend of nature (Roman Catholic). Grace makes up what is lost to nature (Protestant).

What we see for Luther and subsequently for many is tension of the personal and impersonal. Not connected to us. He stresses again and again, he sees the potential danger. Repentance by meditation about sins is lying stinking hypocrisy. We need first to look into the work of Christ and sees him torn because of us. Because of detestation of our sin in light of the wounds of Christ, God's love to us. So we start with just in the bible. God is the starting point and then bring in the human element. What we bring must be acted out.

Not only inward repentance. Inward repentance is outward effective. So he sorts of stands in this tension of being and doing. Central to his thinking is the cross. One cannot talk about Luther without bringing the cross into it. This he also picked up in the monastery.

"Nothing is more useful and more powerful for the healing of live than meditating on the wounds of Christ".

16.4. Prayer

All of religious experience is an affective emotional imitation of the suffering Christ. Christ's cross and our cross are brought together in a redeeming kind of way. Because of the cross we can pray. Prayer is important in Luther's life. Prayer has to be learned by experience. And very interactive he says: Prayer is made vigorous by supplication.

What comes across primarily is that what we have here is a man that has experienced interaction with God. This is what happens when we speak out of personal experience. "I finally won God over in prayer".

Luther also talks about the simplicity of faith in prayer. Luther and Calvin loved Bernard of Clarevaux. He says Prayer is a special exercise of faith. Faith makes prayer so acceptable that it will be granted or something better will be granted instead. To a skeptic this sounds like a sleazy way out.

We can pray about anything. Even though the word has power in itself it is through the interaction with us that the power works.

16.5. Summary

With Luther we see a bent in the road from something that is primarily interior to something that is simultaneously interior and a creature thing. A different interpretation of experience. A different framework to organize that experience.

A Campaign for literacy flowed out of the development of the Reformation.

Joke: Platonism is naval gazing. Are mystics innies and Lutherans outies.

17. Fasting

Easy to define: Refraining from eating or drinking. Clearly a biblical phenomenon. In the Old Testament meaning of mc (SuM) to fast. The Old Testament sees it in different circumstances and reasons. That is why it is dangerous to make rule about what is going on.

- ◆ In Jona 3 the king of Niniveh responds to Jonas preaching with a command for fasting.
- ◆ Ezra 10 Mourning over faithlessness
- ◆ Ester 10 fast on Esters behalf

Ordinarily feasts lasted from morning to evening. As it is still the case with the Muslim month of Ramadan. Jom Kippur went 24 later 26 hours. Normally a fast was from sunup to sundown.

It was used in times of distress for penance. This seems to be very childish or human. It is us expressing us ourselves. Even if later we see that we are drawn into it. Our action.

In supplication as in Ezra and Neh. Fasting and humbling are connected in the Old Testament. In Joel 2 it reflects inner authenticity. Fasting was used to convince God to do something. Bribe or extra strong plea. 2 Sam David is lamenting the death of his son. David fasted for his son. When the son is dead he continues to eat.

Sometimes fasting is out of the wrong motives. Isa 58:1-5. Basically "I condemn your fasts. I desire that you not trample on the face of the poor". Fasting was a common element in Jewish practice when Jesus was born. Other religions practiced it too.

In New Testament *nesthiw* (not eat). Of course Jesus fasted in the wilderness. Ministry was begun with prayer and fasting.

Tertullian around 200 wrote that there is no better way of understanding way of Christ as by regular fasting. Also in Matt 6 fasting is connected with helping the needy. It is an assumption that there is fasting. But there is no command to fast anywhere in New Testament. Saint Peter Chrysologos wrote: Prayer, helping the needy and fasting are really one. Helping the needy is the lifeblood of fasting. Fasting the Soul of prayer, and helping the needy is the lifeblood of fasting."

Augustine: To fast without giving to the poor is an expression of mourning. Again remember in the Didache fasting was institutionalized for Christians. Jewish Monday and Thursday. Didache Wednesdays and Fridays.

Like the other disciplines it is a consciously chosen fast. You may be a super spiritual person without fasting. It is a symbolic and actual gesture that says that we depend more on God than other things and that we want to be close to God.

It is a way of going into the wilderness since it is a departure from the usual. Praying in familiar surroundings. Fasting changes physical things. You have a different feeling in your stomach. You get a headache normally. The habit of grabbing things to eat you become very aware of. Fasting helps reveal all our addictions. You may fast from television or certain kind of people.

It may be a particular TV period. Anything that dominates our lives or in an unconscious kind of way are things that need to bring into the light of our relationship with God.

Fasting is like a change of scene for us. Things happen physically for us reminding us that we are fasting and why we are fasting. There is something more there than praying without ceasing.

Why would we fast, why have people fasted:

- Humility (Ps110:10) I have relied on myself to much and too long. That includes all the usual ways in which I rely on myself
- Focus
- Sincerity
- Clarity
- Reaction to something. For example mourning.
- Solidarity
- Ignorance. Often I do not know what is going on and want to experience God. There is a need for it.

18. Calvin

Calvin give us example of what we in the west end up contending with and looking like. The heir of Calvin is what this part of the world has been breathing for centuries.

"True and substantial wisdom consists of two parts knowledge of God and knowledge of man. What brings forth the other is not clear. Quite clearly the mighty gifts of ourselves are not from ourselves" Calvin, *Institutes*.

We rarely get past our sin, our dreadful self-knowledge. This is not very holistic and spiritual.

The point of this quote is that Calvin is always starting with God and predestination (Augustine, Thomas of Aquinas) He also starts in some ways with us. He starts with God but the interaction also feels as if it comes from us. Wherever we start out we have to draw in the other.

We have not idea what we are looking for until we encounter God. The underlying assumption is Augustine: "You have made us for yourselves and our hearts are restless until they find peace in you." We end up in the hands of God. If we help people on that journey we can believe that they will end up before their creator.

Even in Calvinism you will find the involvement of the person. The attitude of Calvin is to know God through trust and reverence. Those are crucial because it is only as we are involve with God that trust and reverence can come about. Only because of grace in the holy spirit that this can come about. All people have some idea of God but such knowledge does not automatically result in piety (Cicero).

Calvin talks a lot about the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. He does rely on the Holy Spirit as the interpreter of scripture and life. The Holy Spirit makes scripture authoritative for us. That is the mystical moment. With Luther he says that Scripture is in itself authoritative. But it is not authoritative for me until the Holy Spirit makes it alive for me. It is sort of like being a citizen of another country visiting. In a manner of speaking the laws here apply but have no meaning for you. If you become a citizen it takes on meaning. Same what the Holy Spirit does.

Calvin works more than Luther with the idea of the Holy Spirit. Again there is both a clear distinction between me and God, me and the word but at the same time there is an emphasis of bringing them together in an existential experience. That is a turn in the understanding of the makeup of the world. Calvin says that the world itself has not much validity for us unless validated by the Holy Spirit so that the real faith can abide in us.

The word which is Christ and scripture are the concrete image. The assumption is that the spirit of God will never tell you something that runs counter to scripture.

Here the concept for Calvin of illumination comes into play. We are wandering around. With God holding everything together common grace. Then we are illuminated through the Holy Spirit and everything becomes real and we are moved to a conviction that we are saved.

Calvin agrees with Luther that reason only can take us so far and beyond is only grace. Here is the Protestant turn knowledge of God begins with revelation rather than speculation. You cannot speculate into a real knowledge of God.

Maybe a good way to think about the term is it basically in Platonism knowledge is memory. In Aristotelism knowledge is experience.

Plato and Platonists base knowledge on the straight line. There is no straight line in reality we know what a straight line is. It comes from our knowledge. Meditation sets free this innate knowledge.

In Protestantism we have this distinct thing that we only can have revealed to us. It is a distinct creature that we do not know but beginning to know.

There is a continuum between Platonism and Protestant understanding. Both are a little bit fuzzy. Ancient Hebrew would be more existentialist. God is there outside of us.

People in religious writings and specially those who try to bring some order. They tend to take an experience and make some order in it. For example tension between predestination and arminianism.

Both are clearly a part of scripture. May be the theologies we are embrace are just a version of ourselves. That is something to think about.

Again the Gospel again for calvin as with the best of the mystic life changes because of the Gospel coming alive. (Book *The Golden Booklet of the true Christian life* New perspective on Calvin). He says that the Gospel is not a doctrine of the tongue but life. It penetrates to the inner recessed of life. It is useless if it does not transform us. He distinguishes between justification and sanctification. That is the double mindedness of the American society striving for sanctification. So sanctification is crucial for him. Going on in the Christian.

Sanctification is what Christ does in us. Justification is what Christ has done for us. It is like the analogy of a family. Like being adopted. You are adopted into a family. Only as you are nurtured you become part of that family. Christ our savior and our model. With Zwingli Christ moves us to participate in all aspects of society. Sanctification is seen in all areas of life that would be seen as meddling in political affairs.

Calvin emphasized that it was the duty of the Christian to resist an unjust ruler. The Christian life especially for the reformed life gets worked out in every area of what we are doing. Every area is criticized by the Gospel. We are moving into some area of perfection. Secular positions are a high Christian calling.

Part of this is because of the change in human self-understanding. In the Middle Age a person was who they are. Society is not going to change. Now all of the sudden, a shift to a monetary society. More interaction with other cultures. Life itself changes. The possibility of democracy begins to arise. Now people begin to see that there are other ways of thinking about society. People see themselves more as players not just as receiver.

In this society you can dump a priest and vote in another party which does the same things.

There was a shift in society and personal understanding. The same Gospel that had to be a contender for oppressed people but now it is a perspective. Revolution does not occur when people are totally oppressed but when they get a little hope. A shift in society was doing that to people.

19. Pietism

Pietism showed up after the Reformers. It is both a reaction to and a continuation of. Reaction to - later 1500s - against the church. Reaction against confessionalism. Reaction to the Lutherans who say that their creeds were crucial and the Calvinists say the same. There was hard credalism. If there is a characteristic basic in pietism it is this:

A Christian lives for "God's glory and neighbor's good". There is a great awareness of majesty and love of God. In this sense it is a 17th century movement like the monastic movement. Life of awareness of God's presence. Normally people think of Spenser as the progenitor of Pietism. Pietism crossed confessional boundaries. That is why it was a movement, a transdenominational movement. More of a way of seeing things. This can cross boundaries that other things cannot.

I will talk about Pietism that developed on the continent in the 17th century.

19.1. Charges against

19.1.1. Subjectivism

What I think and feel is right! Many pietists were very emotional. That is the fringe rather than the center.

Affective/Holistic. This was the center of the movement. To preserve the experiential elements in all the reformers. Very much conditioned by their understanding of scripture.

19.1.2. Emotionalism

Some crank charged them with "being concerned with feeling and enjoyment of religion". Again the charge is sometimes true. For example some prosperity gospels. Feel-good-ism.

The Pietists believed in the emotional aspects of faith. They did not need this dry university style preaching from the pulpits.

19.1.3. Asceticism

World-denying and world-hating. Rigorous morally faith could very easily lapse into legalism and world-hating. Pietists felt that they were simply carrying out in practice sound theology. Right living and orthodoxy are inseparable. It just does not make sense to believe the right thing and not to do it. Remember that this movement blossomed after the 30-year war. Corruption and societal destruction.

19.1.4. Fanaticism / Extremism

In the sense of virulent evangelism. Violent Evangelism that so much was concerned with separating the sheep from the goat so that it became mindless.

We can see every one of those things in modern evangelicalism. We all know somebody who has one of these tendencies.

Pietists term was first used as a derogatory terms to refer to these guys. You attempt to go through heaven through what you believe and do.

19.2. Characteristics

19.2.1. Personal experience

Again if you are thinking historical you will find this as a transmutation of many renewals in the church.

"Essence of Christianity is to be found in the personal meaningful relationship to Christ" Not just an experience. An experience that carries weight. We all have momentarily strong experiences but they do not necessarily shape our life. Personally meaningful in that it is an ongoing transformation of your life.

To the Pietists and external or formal Christianity was only slightly better than no Christianity at all. Many works are in Pietism that have to do with feelings. Not so many descriptions in which we can enter. A lot of classic mystical language used by pietists. It is a very image oriented one. Faith is something that must be experienced and made ones own. an element in this is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. All who have and life out of this experience are connected in the mystical body of the church.

That is why Fuller has such a diverse background here. For a most part one here is connected by common experience. This is a school based on common perception than on common doctrine. It transcends confessional lines.

Again they see the experience as a gift not as a innate gift to bubble out of us. Dangers are too much of a reliance on feeling. There are dangers in everything.

19.2.2. Idealism

A lot of the use of language "the whole Christian, true Christian, true Christianity". Because the striving is to be as whole as possible. "Professors and Believers". People who just profess faith but do not live it out. "Almost a son is a bastard". God will spew them out. "Almost a Christian is not a Christian". There is this delineation here. We need to be whole Christians.

Heinrich Müller yet pointed out that a weak Christian is still a Christian. But there is still that distinction being made. The Pietists lived in this tension between status quo and how things ought to be. They were not satisfied with status quo. There is this idealistic tendency. Pietistic preaching is full of calls to repentance and sanctification. Preaching is evangelistic and edifying to the same congregation.

"Among the Christians there is a difference like among the Jews. Some where Pharisees. There are disciples but also Pharisees in Christianity" Hermann Franke.

The anxiety to categorize are what we did not see in the monastic movement. The dangers of this are of course works-righteousness.

19.2.3. Biblical emphasis

This is possible to them in ways that was not possible in the medieval church since there were no books available like now.

The experience and religious idealism is based on understanding of what scripture has to say about it. There is bringing together of experience life lived in the world and scripture forming those things. The pietists ask the question: How are the insights of scriptures be applied to daily living? How does the Bible apply to my everyday life? That is a question of Pietism. They stressed the Christian life in small group. Franke stressed the learning of Greek and Hebrew so that you know the bible.

It is true that a school like this would require Hebrew and Greek because of the emphasis on the Bible.

19.2.4. Opposite element

You contrast yourself. Pietism is an -ism because it defines itself over against others like monasticism. Pietism defines itself over against the world. It is "this is we are not". Basically while we can say that Pietism has its root in the Protestant movement but it draws heavily from the mystics. It sees itself as a movement that is constantly reforming the church. It was an incredible movement and started the missionary movement. This movement in a sense set the stage for the evangelical movement aspects of the holiness movement. These are the characters that spun Fuller seminary. We go back to there in a very real sense.

20. Dreams

"A dream unexamined is the like of a letter unopened" - Talmud.

Write down dreams in outlines to later remember it. A radio alarm can help you not to wake up too suddenly so that you might forget the dream. Choose to wake up and write your dreams down. Work at it over time. Keep a dream journal. Dreams are part of our tradition. They were a valid form of communication in the Old Testament and New Testament. Remember that to the Hebrew a dream and vision are almost the same. Abraham received visions in dreams. Jacob's dream of a stairway in Bethel. 1 Sam Saul is breaking his own laws because God did not answer. God uses dreams for the good even nightmares (Job). In the New Testament we have lots of dreams. At the end of Matthew Pilate's wife warns him because of a dream. There a visions throughout the New Testament and dreams are things that had to be dealt with.

Early Christianity believed in this but skepticism developed very fast.

Once you do record your dreams then they can looked at and understood. One is sort of "free association" kind of method. That you go through the dream and list the major elements of it.

Another way is to be a little more analytic. Take the obvious elements and ask: Why this?

Gestalt technique. You run through the dream and become each element. And through each element you speak to yourself.

Universal Symbols. Which I think is the least appealing and valuable because it can constrict you and constrict God. Freud and Jung talk about avoid universalizing things and then they come up with a list of what things can be. Do not get stuck in those. I would not place absolute trust in those things.

Analogy of experience / emotions. This may be the easiest one to do. Recapture the feelings in the dream and the contexts. And ask When have I felt like this and when do I feel like this? In a dream you are sitting at home with your feet up and you are terrified. This is unusual. When do I tend to feel like that in my everyday life. It could be God communicating to you about circumstances in your life that need a little bit of examination.

Ministers often have a dream of going naked before the congregation. No doubt certain people will have certain kinds of dreams in certain situation. A recurring dream may also be an urgent message.

Recurring dreams are like somebody ringing a bell. Violent feelings in a dream is also ringing a bell. This is something to be intended to.

All this interior stuff screams for discernment.

Sometimes dreams are experienced like a word of knowledge. Danger is that if you have a dream and it turns out in reality that then you live with the idea that all your dreams are like that.

21. Pentecostalism

"God is the answer to the question implicit in human finitude." -Paul Tillich

"Too much of a good thing can be wonderful." Mae West

Arts., Herwig. *With your whole Soul* 1987 by a Belgian Jesuit Priest translated by Franciscan. Stunning book. Trying to wrestle in disciplinary way with the way of doing our spirituality.

Like most groups the Pentecostal movement which is different from the Charismatic movement traces itself back to New Testament times.

Pentecostals point out that in the first time there were gifts with man also speaking in tongues like on the day of Pentecost.

We think it started in Topeka, Kansas. I think it is a route that comes out of the New Testament. Pentecost was the feast of week, 50th day after Passover when the first fruit of the corn harvest was presented. In later Judaism it was also the commemoration of the giving of the Law. You see what happened on Pentecost. It was believed that when God gave the Law the Law was spoken in all languages. On Pentecost we have the giving of the new law the law of love.

Some people think that Pentecostalism has its origin in the Wesleyan holiness movement stressing perfection and experience.

Modern Methodists are not normally aware that Wesley's meetings were very emotional. People would fall on the ground shout and Wesley would have to get down and pray with them. It is not that Wesley looked like a modern Methodist preacher in Pasadena. Wesley interpreted these as a direct intervention of God. Flowing out of this are the revival movements which is also seen by some Pentecostals as their origin.

The emotionalism in these revivals has been described as the smiting of the Holy Spirit. The sense of the need to manifest it in signs. That gave rise to Pentecostalism.

Very often by mainline groups Pentecostal and Charismatic groups are often seen as schismatic. These were frequently formed because they were pushed out of their denominations. I think it was around 1888 that a Methodist Conference called holiness a novelty and a departure from original Wesleyan spirituality.

Pentecostal churches eventually saw them moving beyond the holiness movement. Holiness is a way to Pentecostalism. It is a tasting of the gifts of the spirit. Pentecostalism the full enjoyment.

The Pentecostal movement got rolling in Topeka, Kansas. Agnes Osman began to speak in tongues. There was a wild eruption in Azusa Street in Los Angeles. The Pentecostal movement took fire. Initially it was an interracial thing with African-Americans. This was a pointed and powerful moment that we blew. Pentecostalism met then and was established around 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

A General Council which became the Assembly of God was formed. One of the conferees said that God has brought us out of old denominationalism out of Babel.

J. Due Plessey who lived here for a while down the street. Wrote this of the Pentecostal. Was Mr. Pentecostal, but was thrown out because he was friendly to Roman Catholics. Pentecostalism was an ideal combination of strength of other denominations. Pentecostals have it all take the best of everything and embody it. Some differences between Pentecostal and charismatic.

Pentecostalism: Time here is a time of probation on the way of eternity. That is why they have never been involved in social action. They are on the way to a better world.

Pentecostalism: This is a world populated with bad things where we have to get through. This will affect how you relate to God. Some characteristics: Salvation is a free gift apart from work or church. This is an intensely personalistic religion although group behavior is important too.

Spirit's guidance to be sought in all decisions. Some people pray before getting a cup of coffee. Believers should be separated from the world. This is beginning to change a bit. Probably under the charismatic influence. There is a strong sense of the imminent return of Christ to set up a 1000 year reign. There is no sense in doing things that will be destroyed by the coming anyway.

21.1. Two essentials of Pentecostalism

21.1.1. Tongues

In Pentecostalism speaking a tongue is a requirement as evidence or sign to make it evident that the holy spirit has been given. *THE* sign that you have received the spirit. There are pentecostal churches where you can manifest all sorts of signs but without the gift of tongues you cannot become a member.

Tongues are

- Compensation for lack of knowledge patience. Overcomes deficits.
- Power to witness
- Sign to Unbelievers

Tongues is seen as the beginning of the religious experience and the walk of faith.

21.1.2. Deliverance from illness

Second essential has been deliverance from illness. It is part of the **Full Gospel**. Part of the atonement and privilege of all believers. Here they are taking Mark 16 literally and also James 5. Sometimes Acts 19:12 is taken seriously. People will pray over aprons or handkerchiefs, Prayer cloth.

Again this creates a tremendous tension.

Early on in Pentecostalism these are two essentials of faith.

22. Charismatic Movement

The charismatic movement began to blossom twenty years ago. There have been outburst of it for a long time since the two world wars. It began to blossom as it moved into middle class America twenty years ago.

The Charismatic movement was traditionally less institutionalized. Now we see the forming of denominations again. They are less separatistic. Some charismatics understand themselves like the mystic understood themselves. They have a special experience which they would like to make available. In an evangelistic sense they remain in their denominations. They reach into their own congregations and denominations.

As a pastor in such a situation you should be concerned about the unity and not focus on the polarization.

This is another renewal movement within the church. Only now the charismatic movement is more concerned with social action. Earlier it was a more experimental thing. Before it was folk who would gather. Now folks are raising their own leaders to lead their denomination kind of thing.

Charismatic is different in that it seems to have taken hold among the middle and upper class. Charismatics are much more comfortable with psychology than Pentecostals. Charismatic adjustment to things otherwise seen as worldly changed also the Pentecostals.

Charismatics crossed over all denominations. Even into Roman Catholicism. The Charismatic movement I see as "Young Life" for the upper and middle class. There is a very entertaining element to the worship. There is a meet you were you are. Not much of a demand in terms of ethics and that sort of thing. It is "come on let us go together". Very often it happens at a powerful emotional level and other issues remain unadvised.

Theologically the movement has tended to focus on the Holy Spirit. Jesus tends to be the focus for conversion but then fades from the picture. Baptism of the Holy Spirit and subsequent manifestation of gifts are emphasized. In a sense Jesus is the servant of God.

The Charismatic movement is characterized by the number of young people and women involved. Still women do not tend to rise to leadership in a vast majority of time. The authority of the spirit rather than the written word is emphasized. The spirit leads us into an experience of God. The experience is evaluated in Bible studies. It is the experience of the spirit of God that allows one to be a member of the church rather than a theology. That is why Catholics and Presbyterians and so on can pray together as Charismatics. There are both good and bad sides to that.

Accommodation of holiness to the middle class. Holiness is being a Christian where I am. It is a danger of simply baptizing social customs and norms. With the advent of the middle class a lively and somewhat subdued kind of worship appeared. Pentecostals jump in their benches. In charismatic movement less shrieking or jumping occurs. It really reflects the people sitting in the bench. That sort of is the characteristics of the movement.

I personally am glad that it is around like many other thing. The question that it raises are the same that were raised by the monastic movement. To what degree can it contribute to the church. To what degree should it be part of the world. A critique of culture per se? Pentecostalism was very much a critique of American culture. What are the charismatics? To what degree will the charismatic movement because it is so powerful (TV) necessarily coalesce into the more self aware movement.

Lines begins to blur between Pentecostals and Charismatics. The TBN (TV-Channel) is an example of propagating this stuff. The Pentecostal movement was very anti-intellectual but Charismatics go to seminaries.

Roman Catholics are generally less afraid of bizarre behavior. The monastics and mystics always thought that God would do what he wants. The two are very much in kinship.

23. Liberal Spirituality

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) is seen as the father of liberalism since he broke with Orthodoxy and Pietism.

23.1. Religion for Liberals

- ♣ Self-consciousness. People come to know who they really are. They do not exist from themselves. They are aware of themselves.
- ♣ Intuition. They know that there is something else.
- ♣ Feeling of absolute dependence. This is the result of the above.

This feeling is common to all people and all cultures, but Christianity is the highest of all religions. Liberal spirituality seems to be localized in understanding the value of the religion.

Reason for the highest because we like Christianity better. Schleiermacher happened to like Christianity so it is the truest. He uses scripture and everything else. Most of us are just slightly blurry versions of others.

By 1800 Christianity in Western Europe had been liberated from its connection with creeds and with rational thought. Schleiermacher dismissed it as abstract. Means that he places more stress on experience and feeling than thinking your way into reality. 1914 "The working faith of a liberal Theologian". This characterizes liberal thinking.

The world is widely open. God will do what God will do. That is the framework. T. Rondo Williams "Liberal theology will endeavor to explain this truth that the spirit is everywhere and present in all things in such a way as not to conflict with modern knowledge. To be stated in terms of the modern mind." This is a crucial statement. An embracing of culture and the understanding of the cosmos. That is why liberal theology is so much like New Age today since it is embracing culture. It is conscientiously accepting these frameworks.

We evangelicals are almost doing the same. If we find something in science that supports our view we use it. We drag science in but liberals start there as a frame for scripture. They state their ideas which are consonant with modern times.

They embrace science but not necessarily rationalism. Liberals tend to be universalists.

What we have then what we have in most religions. Liberals praying and assembling in congregations. We have to see the foundation. The key phrase is not to conflict with modern knowledge.

A series of lectures in the 40s at Yale *Conversations with an unrepentant Liberal*.

Liberalism springs from the people who are educated and wealthy. Clean people and pressing their own values on religion." Religion is devoted and loyal commitment to the best that reason and insight can discover". Anybody here would find it problematic to worship a God that tells Israelites to brutally slaughter people. God must talk in terms that are reasonable and make sense to us. The liberal believes that there is a only route to salvation but it is much wider. Entry based on moral conditions and not on acceptance of creeds.

This reflects one strand of liberal tradition. In which God is in all things. God of all people.

Faith is primarily an ethical enterprise where we live right. The spirit is active in us and we in the spirit. Because God is right civilization will progress. It is strange that there are liberals after Hiroshima and the decay of the cities. Liberalism is cute and inspiring but where is your head?

Unitarians: spiritualistic liberal group.

Another strand anthropozending. more secular and existential. The point of prayer is not mythical union but existential decision. At all times we choose to obey or disobey what we know from tradition. Abrecht Ritschl's faith is based on value-judgments not on facts from scripture. Scripture does not contain facts but tells a story.

23.2. Rudolf Bultmann.

His whole idea of demythologizing. He basically said that the bible has an obsolete worldview which is no longer accepted. So what is the kerygma and what really matters in it? We know resurrections do not occur. No one has seen a resurrection. What is it trying to say? We know that healings do not happen. What does it say? What is the current meaning. He is starting where they are. So the point then is to take the mission of Jesus which is calling people to decision and continue that in his own life. He ended a lot of sermons calling for a decision. That is the existential approach.

23.3. Paul Tillich

Mediating trend between hyper-spiritual and more anthropocentric. God is ultimate reality is being itself. With the existential group that persons must respond and make the God of scripture their ultimate concern. He stands between the two. God is on the march in history at the same time we have the persons need to incorporate himself personal in this process. He classified himself as an apostle to the intellectuals. That is the atmosphere in which liberal thought seems best to function. Liberals found their strength in the upper class of society.

23.4. Progress

In any case we see with in liberal theology a framework that is very much the modern mind set. We bring our way of seeing things to bear on ancient texts on a culture that did not have all the advantages that we have. We are stuck with this particular lens that only allows this view.

Liberal spirituality is very forward moving of its essence it is progress. There could not be a liberal spirituality until the economic and social forces were working. The working out of the spirit in history and reflecting this progress. It began when western society had the technology and could expand in ways that other cultures could not. It is easy to get caught up in this. God is just making the world better, God is making the whole world American. No more poverty. Everybody will be happy, all capitalists like we are.

We have hitched our wagon to economical progress. Liberal spirituality is a very worldly spirituality. Williams says "The most hopeful thing is a new emergence of a mystic spirit of action, realization not renunciation. It is inconceivable that our sense are a mere snare and that the powers of reason and mentality are to be discarded." They prize the arena of the world. The task is to live a very normal existence in the world with a deepened awareness of the spirit working.

The Liberal wants to be in the world and of the world. Tiny difference to evangelicals. There is also a very strong spiritualizing of certain aspects of scripture. That do not make sense otherwise. Shepherds watching over the flock. Angels come. The shepherds go and watch the child and then come back. Williams interprets this: The angels are the spiritual awakening. Leaving the sheep is typical of all inferior religions. Flocks are untended and the worlds work is still to be done. But there is a saving clause since the shepherds return. And he assumes that they did their job even better than before. This is the spirituality what the world wants and gives us the idea of the spiritual man not as one who turns his back but accepts all things. This is spirituality in the fuller sense.

Williams was comforted that many women of business are endeavoring to live the life of faith. There is much there that we need to be aware of. God calling us to be active in this world. God does not call us into total renunciation.

All of the renewals in the church end up coming back to the world. Like Saint Anthony.

23.5. Renunciation

But because renunciation is indeed found in scripture it has to be dealt with somewhere. "The old claim for renunciation was often a false claim resulting in mutilated religious life. But truth from things as discontinuous parts must be renounced." Renouncing your fragmented view of reality. So there is renunciation but not of the kind that hurts the flesh. It is a worldview that we choose to adopt.

23.6. Solving the Liberal Problem

A problem for liberal spirituality is this. Suer Hiltner the progenitor of pastoral theology says: "The liberal being preoccupied with the active search for remedies is at a loss in the face of irremediable tragedy". This could also happen in evangelicalism where we think that we do not have enough faith or prayer.

If you believe in the inevitability of progress then you break down in face of Hiroshima and such. Somebody has come up with the solution to doldrums of liberality. First is that liberals should pray although again Hiltner comes from a particular framework saying that prayer should be spoken as if God is personal. We cannot prove it. God personality is secondary anyway. Prayer keeps us from being arrogant and mentally healthy.

Second more use of the Bible. Using the Bible as a collection of normative images. He says the Bible like other religions writings reflects those things about which we stumble and reflect. We go to the Bible since we are Christians. Same way as Jung who says: People function best in their own beliefs.

Christianity does not have rules but normative images. So while proof texting is bad, scripture provides a forest of images which come to mind in moral dilemmas. It is the images not the historicity that makes it important. There is a image in scripture that can come to us.

Finally he suggest that liberals to find support have community with each other. Christians should have some sort of distinctive mark. I do not think that our life should bear distinctive marks, but our life has distinctive marks determined by your faithfulness to the biblical witness. Our life may look alike but the Christian characteristics are different. In groups moral ideas can be formulated. Morality runs through Liberal tradition. Morality runs through conservatives but not so clearly spelled out.

He summons that the Bible can be meaningful although it is not necessarily true. There is a identity needed. Any ideology that we cannot see in the very nature of things should not be supported for a long time. Whatever the recent discovery is for the ultimate nature of things we take as a starting point.

23.7. Characteristics

I think what we see in Liberal spirituality is a person trying to live a transcended life within the transcendence of nontranscendent categories. The categories are defined by non-transcended concepts. Somehow we are called to transcend those nevertheless.

Jesus is the human aspect and Christ is the divine aspect of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the best teacher that there is.

They accept God and Jesus in their framework. There is a differentiation from New Age through pantheism. They would not identify with pantheism. Jesus has a special role. They accept Jesus as son of God in a less mythic kind of way.

I think Jesus was a myth of God incarnate. Myth as a reflection in reality of something that is beyond concretization in a sense since God is bigger.

For them Jesus is the human face of God, but Jesus is not God in substance.

I will finish some quotes from Carl Gustav Jung. It speaks to Liberalism and Evangelicalism alike.

"There is no trick to throwing out the baby with the bath water. Our descendent will rarely thank us if we leave a devastated rule-dominated church"

"Naturally it is easier to turn a church into something amusing. To joke about rules fought about with blood. It is easier to do that than to teach things that must be learned by hard work".