

"The Prophetic Imagination"

by

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KEYWORDS

- Royal Consciousness
- Satiation
- Doxology and Energising and Amazement
- Criticism and Pathos
- Grief and Numbness
- Dismantling

CHAPTER HEADINGS

1. The Alternative Community of Moses
2. Royal Consciousness: Countering the Counterculture
3. Prophetic Criticising and the Embrace of Pathos
4. Prophetic Energising and the Emergence of Amazement
5. Criticism and Pathos in Jesus of Nazareth
6. Energising and Amazement in Jesus of Nazareth
7. A Note on the Practise of Ministry

1. Moses sets up a counter culture against Pharaoh.

This counter culture is both critical of the regime and it's oppression, and energising for the Israelites. He is quite polemical, quite partisan, and does not seem concerned to "see both sides of the argument." He doesn't waste much time trying to explain his position to Pharaoh (who doesn't listen), before he takes the Israelites off to a new life.

Liberal Christianity tends to concentrate on being **critical** and therefore heavily involved in social action, whereas Conservative Christianity tends to concentrate on an **energising** vision for the future without addressing the present realities.

Brueggeman argues that to be truly prophetic requires both the **critical** and the **energising** together.

2. Solomon institutionalises God, and sets up an oppressive regime with strong parallels to the set-up that Pharaoh used to oppress the Israelites in Moses' time. Brueggeman calls Solomon's (and Pharaoh's) outlook on life and systems of oppression a "royal consciousness." Solomon limits access to God via the temple in Jerusalem.

There is also a sense of "numbness", where people are fed (literally and figuratively) just enough to keep them contented with their lot.

3. Jeremiah's prophecies are extremely critical of Solomon's rule of Israel. He uses the technique employed by Moses of grieving for the death of Solomon's "royal consciousness". A powerful tool for dismantling a regime

that does not have the well-being (spiritual or otherwise) of the population as its main focus.

4. Isaiah's prophecies define a new, positive counter-culture, based on old stories and symbols, but at the same time creating a new language, vision and hope for the Israelites.

5. Jesus displays criticism and pathos.

- King Herod hears of a "new king" and butchers all the new-born male children - The desperate act of a regime attempting to hold on to its power, when threatened by newness and dismantling.
- Jesus worshipped by Shepherds at birth (i.e.. the marginalised in society). He continues to associate with the marginalised throughout his life.
- Jesus attitudes and actions (forgiveness, the Sabbath, associating with women, the Temple, taxes and debts) effectively "dismantle" the dominant views of his day.
- Jesus grieves over the death of Lazarus and others.
- Jesus shows that victory comes through death and suffering, rather than contemporary concepts of victory.
- A criminal is welcomed into paradise.

6. Jesus displays energising and amazement.

- Birth - new beginnings, joy of Elizabeth, Mary, Zechariah, and shepherds.
- Magnificat
- Various healings and exorcisms. (p. 107 in Brueggeman is interesting here)
- Jesus' contrasting uses of woes (pathos) and blessings (energising). The Beatitudes.
- Jesus resurrection.

7. These emotions and sensibilities can only be gifted by God rather than "worked up" by ourselves.

Various questions for discussion

- Do you think a "royal consciousness" of sorts operates today? Why or why not? How does it operate?
- Who do you think "the marginalised" are in contemporary life? Are you "marginalised"? What would it mean to grieve and identify with them?
- What energises you?
- Do you struggle with the idea of being "energised" by any kind of Christian or God-related vision of the future? Why or why not?