



THE PROPHETIC IMAGINATION 1ST ED., 1978; 2ND ED., 2001)

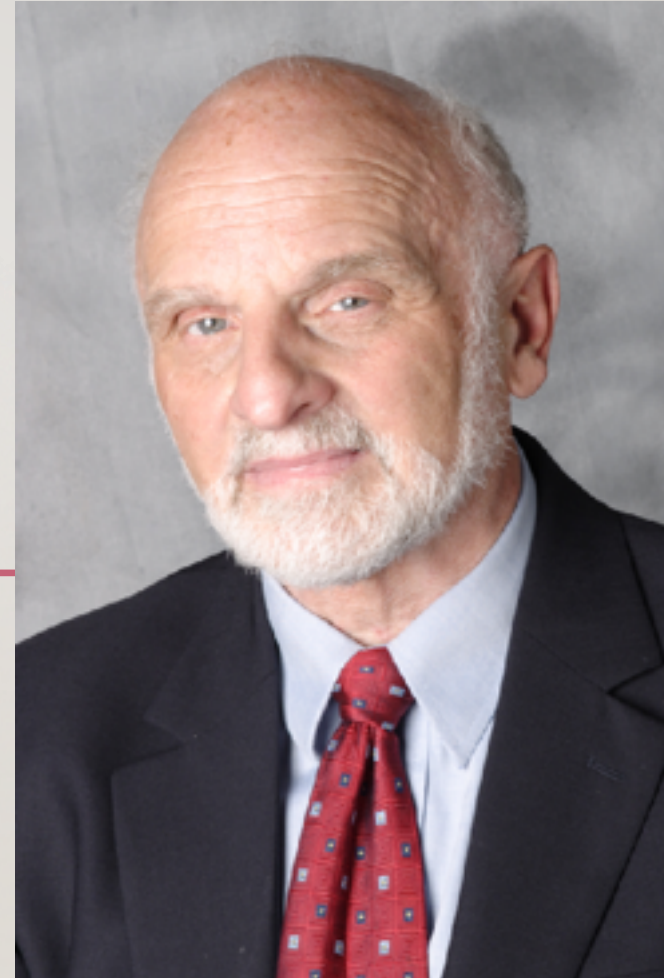
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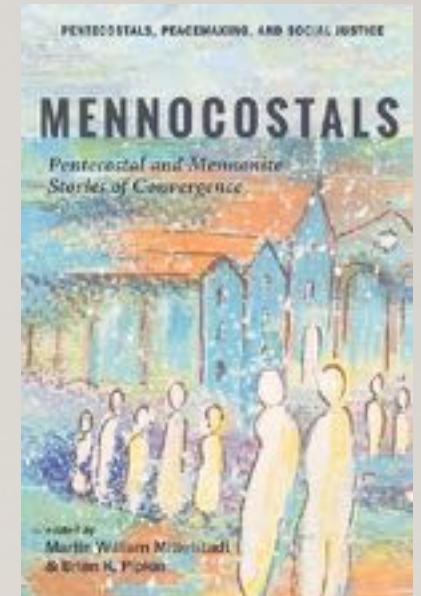
ABOUT BRUEGGEMANN

[HTTP://WWW.THEWORDS.COM/
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MARK THIESSEN NATION ON BRUEGGEMAN

"A famous American preacher once declared, at a conference on preaching, that if there was only one book that every preacher should have in his or her possession, it should be Walter Brueggemann's *The Message of the Psalms*. I would go so far as to say that if there is any one author every preacher should have in his or her library, it should be Walter Brueggemann. Any preacher who does not use Brueggemann as a companion in preparation of sermons is cheating himself or herself and their respected congregations!"



THE NATURE OF PROPHETIC SPEECH?

"So what is this prophet up to? Why all this grief? Surely, he is not like the 'tearjerker' minister who believes that a good cry makes a fine funeral. Nor shall we be professional funeral attenders to whom tears come automatically with one verse of 'Rock of Ages.'"

(55-56)

FLANNERY
O'CONNOR: THE
IMAGINATION OF
EXTREMITY
(ATHENS, GA:
UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA PRESS,
1982, 223).

"Concrete, passionate, and imaginative, prophetic in its form, prophetic speech is nonetheless a 'sharp sword,' conveying a vision 'designed to shock rather than edify... Moderation is a delusion... only extremists are in touch with reality.'"¹

LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVE S

"Liberals are good at criticism but often have no word of promise to speak; conservatives tend to future well and invite to alternative visions, but a germane criticism by the prophet is often not forthcoming. For those of us personally charged with this ministry, we may observe that to be called where this dialectic is maintained is an awesome call. And each of us is likely to fall to one side or the other." (4-5)

"The hypothesis I will explore here is this: *The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.*" (3)

NUMBNESS

"The prophet is not addressing behavioral problems. He is not even pressing for repentance. He has only the hope that the *ache* of God could penetrate the *numbness* of history. He engages not in scare or threat but only in a yearning that grows with and out of pain."

THE
PROTOTYPE
AND
THE PARADIGM

MOSES

"Here it is enough to insist that Moses, a paradigm for prophet, carried the alternative in both directions: a religion of God's freedom as alternative to the static imperial religion of order and triumph and a politics of justice and compassion as alternative to the imperial politics of oppression."

(8-9)

"George Mendenhall has rightly characterized the Solomonic achievement as the "paganization of Israel," that is, a return to the religious and political presuppositions of the pre-Mosaic imperial situation... In any case, it is clear that Solomon had a social vision contradictory to that of Moses. The possibility of an alternative consciousness or an alternative community was quite removed from Israel in Solomon's time." (24-25)

"The entire program of Solomon now appears to have been a self-serving achievement with its sole purpose the self-securing of the king and dynasty. It consists of what Alberto Soggin calls a program of state-sponsored syncretism, which of course means the steady abandonment of the radicalness of the Mosaic vision. It includes:

1. A harem, which, in addition to serving as a way of facilitating political marriage, likely reflects a concern for self-generated fertility.
2. A system of tax districts in which the displacement of clans and tribes made state control more effective.
3. An elaborate bureaucracy which... served to institutionalize technical reason... immune to questions of justice and compassion.
4. A standing army so that armaments no longer depended on public opinion and authentic national interest (1 Kgs 4:4; 9:22), not to mention the old notion of the tush of God's Spirit.
5. A fascination with wisdom, which, in addition to imitating the great regimes, represented an effort to rationalize reality, that is, to package it in manageable portions (1 Kgs 4:29-34; 10:1-5; 23-25; Prov 1:1; 10:1).
6. Conscripted labor from the villages to support massive building projects (palace, temple, royal cities), quarrying, mining, logging, and shipbuilding (1 Kgs 5:13-19; 6:1—7:51; 9:15-19, 26). (23-24)

2. Walter Brueggemann, "The Social Significance of Solomon as Patron of Wisdom," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 117-32/

AMOS

WITH
GOD
ON
OUR
SIDE

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5y2FuDY6Q4M>



AMOS AND SOLOMONIC KINGDOM

"Israel had no doubt that the Solomonic achievement [of] royal prosperity was increasingly closed to large numbers of the Israelites. That indeed is a key point in the polemics of Amos."

(60)

"What I propose is this: *The royal consciousness leads people to numbness, especially to numbness about death. It is the task of the prophetic ministry and imagination to bring people to engage their experiences of suffering to death.*"

(41)

PROPHETS, POLIS, AND POLITICS

"The task of prophetic imagination and ministry is *to bring to public expression those very hopes and yearnings* that have been denied so long."

"Speech about hope cannot be explanatory and scientifically argumentative; rather, it must be lyrical in the sense that it touches the hopeless person at many different points."

(65)

FINDING / LOSING A VOICE

"Of course prophetic hope easily lends itself to distortion. It can be made so grandiose that it does not touch reality; it can be trivialized so that it does not impact reality; it can be 'bread and circuses' so that it only supports and abets the general despair."

THE VOICE
FROM THE
MARGINS

"it is precisely those who know
death most painfully who can
speak hope most vigorously."

(67)

BOTH SIDES OF A COIN

*"The prophet must speak metaphorically about hope but concretely about the real newness that comes to us and redefines our situation. **The prophet must speak not only about the abandonment of Israel by its God but about the specificity of Babylon.**" (67)*

READING BACKWARDS

JESUS AND GOD'S PEOPLE AS PROPHETIC COMMUNITY

- JESUS AND THE
PROPHETHOOD OF
ALL BELIEVERS

- ROGER STRONSTAD

- PROPHETIC JESUS;
PROPHETIC
CHURCH

- LUKE TIMOTHY
JOHNSON

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Lk 24

Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" Num 11

THE PROPHET LIKE MOSES

"Clearly Jesus cannot be understood simply as a prophet, for that designation, like every other, is inadequate for the historical reality of Jesus. Nonetheless, among his other functions it is clear that Jesus functioned as a prophet."

(81)

BRUEGGEMANN'S PROPHETIC JESUS

"It is the crucifixion of Jesus that is the decisive criticism of the royal consciousness. The crucifixion of Jesus is not to be understood simply in a good liberal fashion as the sacrifice of a noble man, nor should we too quickly assign a cultic, priestly theory of atonement to the event. Rather, we might see in the crucifixion of Jesus the ultimate act of prophetic criticism in which Jesus announces the end of a world of death... The contrast is stark and total: this *passionate* man set in the midst of *numbed* Jerusalem. And only the *passion* can finally penetrate the *numbness*." (94-95)

SOUND
FAMILIAR?

SHOULD WE
THINK STATE
AND/OR
CHURCH?

"The old history of Pharaoh is continued in the monarchy of Israel. The monarchy, with its interest in self-securing, is effective in *silencing the criticism and denying the energizing*; **but the kings never seem able to silence the prophets for long.**"

(115)

PROPHETIC MINISTRY FOR THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

"1. The task of prophetic ministry is to evoke an alternative community.

2. The practice of prophetic ministry is not some special thing done two days a week. Rather, it is done in, with, and under all the acts of ministry—as much in counseling as in preaching, as much in liturgy as in education. It concerns a stance and posture or a hermeneutic about the world of death and the word of life that can be brought to light in every context.

3. Prophetic ministry seeks to penetrate the numbness in order to face the body of death in which we are caught.

4. Prophetic ministry seeks to penetrate despair so that new futures can be believed in and embraced by us." (117)