

Re-Enchanting the Text

DISCOVERING THE BIBLE AS SACRED,
DANGEROUS, AND MYSTERIOUS

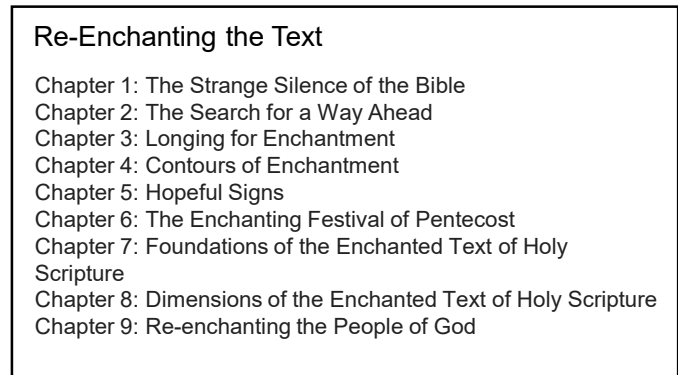
CHERYL BRIDGES JOHNS

CHAPTER 9

Re-enchanting the People of God

Much of the material in this presentation was taken verbatim or almost verbatim from *Re-Enchanting the Text* by Cheryl Bridges Johns.

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Re-Enchanting the Text

Chapter 1: The Strange Silence of the Bible

Chapter 2: The Search for a Way Ahead

Chapter 3: Longing for Enchantment

Chapter 4: Contours of Enchantment

Chapter 5: Hopeful Signs

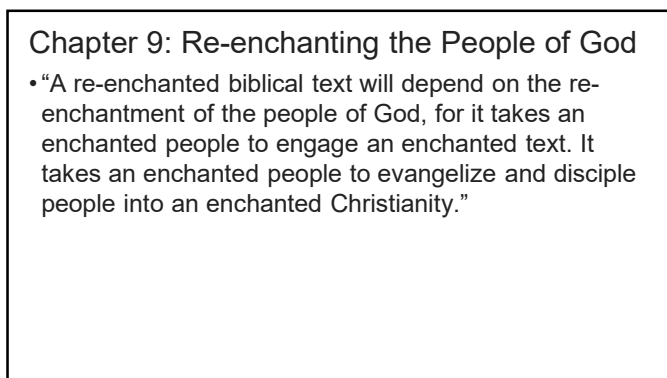
Chapter 6: The Enchanting Festival of Pentecost

Chapter 7: Foundations of the Enchanted Text of Holy Scripture

Chapter 8: Dimensions of the Enchanted Text of Holy Scripture

Chapter 9: Re-enchanting the People of God

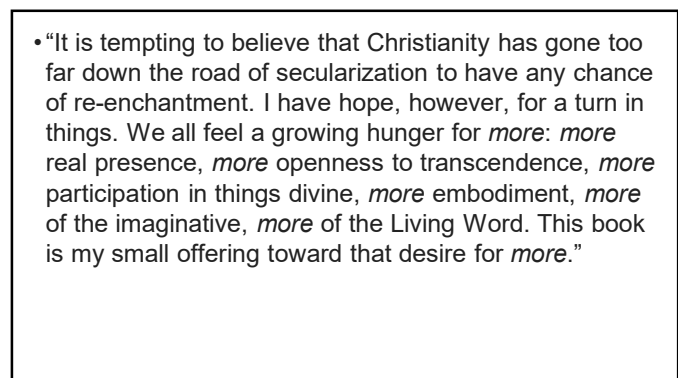
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Chapter 9: Re-enchanting the People of God

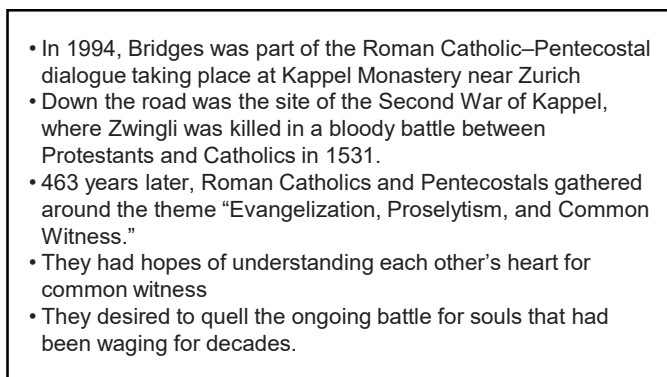
- “A re-enchanted biblical text will depend on the re-enchancement of the people of God, for it takes an enchanted people to engage an enchanted text. It takes an enchanted people to evangelize and disciple people into an enchanted Christianity.”

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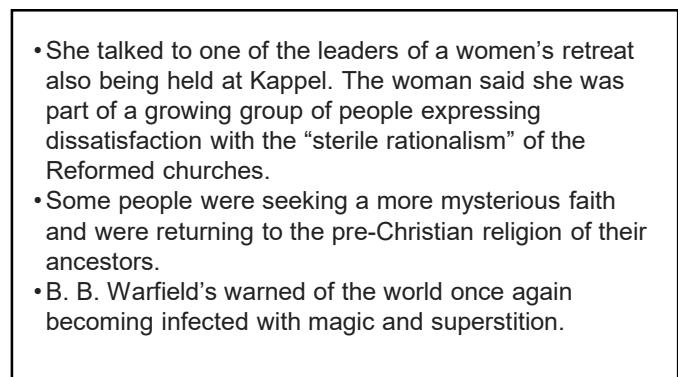
- “It is tempting to believe that Christianity has gone too far down the road of secularization to have any chance of re-enchancement. I have hope, however, for a turn in things. We all feel a growing hunger for *more*: *more* real presence, *more* openness to transcendence, *more* participation in things divine, *more* embodiment, *more* of the imaginative, *more* of the Living Word. This book is my small offering toward that desire for *more*.”

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- In 1994, Bridges was part of the Roman Catholic–Pentecostal dialogue taking place at Kappel Monastery near Zurich
- Down the road was the site of the Second War of Kappel, where Zwingli was killed in a bloody battle between Protestants and Catholics in 1531.
- 463 years later, Roman Catholics and Pentecostals gathered around the theme “Evangelization, Proselytism, and Common Witness.”
- They had hopes of understanding each other’s heart for common witness
- They desired to quell the ongoing battle for souls that had been waging for decades.

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- She talked to one of the leaders of a women’s retreat also being held at Kappel. The woman said she was part of a growing group of people expressing dissatisfaction with the “sterile rationalism” of the Reformed churches.
- Some people were seeking a more mysterious faith and were returning to the pre-Christian religion of their ancestors.
- B. B. Warfield’s warned of the world once again becoming infected with magic and superstition.

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- For Warfield, Roman Catholics were the “old magic.” Pentecostals were the “new magic.” The neo-pagans were the “very old magic.”
- Bridges now sees how it was a harbinger of the landscape of religion in the twenty-first century
- For the most part, Roman Catholics and Pentecostals are no longer enemies. In fact, they are the two dominant forms of Christianity, often intermingling to the degree that it is hard to tell them apart.

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- In their hunger for re-enchantment, these women were ripe for what may be called “re-evangelization.”
- Re-enchanting God’s people calls for a vision of humans as beings made in the image of a relational God and as those who, by the Holy Spirit, are capacitated to live in communion with God and others.
- “The Spirit deifies human beings, makes them holy, sets them free from sin, free from the conditions of the biological hypostasis, conforms them to the person of Christ.” - LaCugna

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- Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not absorption; rather, it fulfills the promise that the human spirit can exist in relational harmony and delight with the divine Spirit. Indeed, the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, and we cry, “Abba! Father!” (Rom. 8:15).
- This kind of relationship with the Spirit was very reminiscent for me as I recalled by baptism.
- As a teenager and a young adult, I experienced several powerful sermons from Rev 2

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- Rev 2:2-5 ²I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.
- ³You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.
- ⁴Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first.
- ⁵Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

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- Could re-enchanted people simply be doing the things they did at first?
- Very much of what Bridges shared in this chapter caused me to reflect on “how far I have fallen” and how I need to “do the things I did at first”
- I remembered how I read the Bible in those days and months after my Spirit baptism. The text was very much enchanted!
- Bridges has a favorite childhood memory of people saying, as they left a church service, “Did we not sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus?”

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