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THE DISCIPLINES OF NEIGHBORLINESS

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

—Acts 20:35

The sacred texts have stood the test of time. The sieve that those stories have been sifted through for so long is what makes them valid. In community work, the sacred text has to be joined with the language of neighbor for it to have any power. Otherwise, neighborliness becomes a utilitarian project and the sacred texts become an intellectual exercise, spoken to near empty chapels. What good is it to be neighbors if what that means is to make life a little easier, lower cost, more convenient? The community work is to practice the neighborly disciplines, to celebrate the secular sacraments of neighborliness.

We are accustomed to the disciplines that belong to faith; there also are disciplines that belong to community. They are built by covenantal

language held together by vow rather than barter and honor the fact that community has a job to do and needs to be productive. They are the way to covenantal justice, the way we get people to participate or engage in a more just society and a more sustainable earth.

Some signposts of an alternative social order of a society organized around covenantal promises sustaining the common good are:

- *Time*. Space for relatedness and hospitality to be chosen as alternatives to speed, individualism, and like-mindedness.
- *Food*. Choosing to grow food locally, urban farms, food without chemical intervention, food as the sacred table around which culture and community are sustained and created.
- *Silence*. Quieting the noise of the automated, electronic, consumption-as-entertainment culture. Silence as a means of honoring mystery. Listening as an action step. An opening for the voice of nature and neighbor. Creating a place for thought and depth. A quality of Sabbath and reflection as an answer to restless productivity and advertising.

Time, food, and silence are three major disciplines for creating the conditions for neighborliness and producing social re-ordering. Those disciplines recognize the human condition, which the hubris of our market culture denies. They go against the grain of a culture of productivity, consumption, speed, entertainment, barter, and amnesia.

Each discipline is a manifestation of, and supported by, *covenant*, a belief in *abundance*, and *ritual*. Covenant is holding a relationship sacred. Traditionally, it meant with God or a higher power. Here it is about our relationships with neighbors and even strangers. It means holding community and the commons sacred; it requires honoring vows as an expression of both freedom and fidelity. Abundance faces the questions of our relationship to money, the right use of wealth, and the reconstruction of money and market, including forgiving our debts, reducing debt slavery, and limiting usury, making money on money. By *ritual* we mean the re-performance of a set of liturgy, memory, and story that brings into the present all that is held precious. Remembering ourselves, putting limbs and body together, through common practices born of knowledge of what it means to be human.

We offer in these neighborly disciplines a way to support the process of reconstructing our social order. They change the way we experience community and make space for the commons.

TIME

In the neighborly way, time is measured by depth and there is enough. No need to rush.

A TIME FOR ALL THINGS

Traditional societies are filled with rituals and celebrations that grow from the annual sequence of life and nature—Mexico has more than 150 days of celebration that trace the year's seasonal progression. Rituals and celebrations are signposts to say we live in this time of year, we are in a circle of time; they are ways for people to find their lives connected to the natural flow of life.

The biggest shift in consciousness is away from thinking, "I don't have time." So much of our traveling is still in the time-is-running-out world. Busyness, or lack of time, is the common argument against Democracy. Oscar Wilde said he was for Socialism, but it took too many evening meetings.

TIME IS THE DEVIL

In the high-tech world, speed is God and time is the devil. Speed becomes a value in itself, a measure of success, winning, and sophistication. Having time is always anti-system. The market engine does everything it can to overcome the time it takes for nature to make something grow: There is today such a thing as the twelve-day tomato.

People living outside the consumer ideology have a different relationship with time. It moves more slowly. The clock has no meaning to many people living on the margin, or in a subsistence culture or a more traditional society. Being on time is not the point. In west Africa, if the bus shows up within twenty-four hours, it is an on-time departure. In community work, you never know when someone is going to show up or not, and when they do, you say, "Welcome. You made it. Good."

Time, then, is a social construction. In an alternative construction of time, people bide their time. They have time on their hands. Like observing the Sabbath, their interpretation of time is an act of defiance against the dominant culture and its restless productivity. The Sabbath gave form to the fact that, no matter how busy I am, there is always time. The lesson from the margins is that there is enough time. In the consumer society time is a scarcity.

In the sacred texts, there is that famous idea in Ecclesiastes: a time to laugh and a time to cry, a time to live and a time to die. In other words, in the seasons there are rhythms that belong to the very structure of creation that cannot be violated with impunity. And they do not necessarily occur by the clock.

The common construction of time was a necessity of the British Navy—that's how the time zones were set up. Pope Gregory earlier, out of concern for stabilizing the date of Easter, solved the problem of how long a day and a year were. We lost enough minutes a year from this that they constructed the idea of the leap year, the extra day in February every four years. Now the Gregorian calendar is what we live by. It was invented for Easter, and became useful for commerce. But the reality is that it was made up.

When did Time become Money? You can say that the whole modern world of productivity required the regimentation of time. One example was establishing Greenwich Mean Time, so that ships of the British Navy could calculate their position anywhere on the water. And then there are the timelines for productivity and the quotas that come with that for the workforce—everything is regimented. As a communal discipline, it is unregimented time that allows for human possibility to emerge.

The usual argument against the neighborly way is that we don't have time for that. We have no time to be with our neighbor. Time has become the incarnation of scarcity. No time is always the argument against collaboration, collectivism, participation, democracy. "We don't have time for that" is the universal refusal, along with no money. Time and money are regimented and made scarce—and made up, and therefore amenable to transformation.

STANDING IN LINE

My times are in your hand.

—Psalm 31:15

Edd Conboy is the director of social services at the Broadway Ministry in Philadelphia. He noticed the people from the street coming to Broadway's food kitchen spent most of their time waiting in line. Soon he began to realize that their standing in line was a measure of the consumer culture's elitism and privilege. In the market world the privileged do not wait in line; they have priority access and reserved first-class seats. The poor and the homeless wait in line all the way around the block. The elite do not queue up. At fundraisers for not-for-profits, the donors never have to wait. They go to the front of the line, while the "normal" people wait in a line that wraps around the corner. Not at Edd's place.

Edd found a way to eliminate all waiting lines at his church. First, he set up round tables with cloth tablecloths and real silverware. Then, he invited everyone, as soon as they showed up, to be seated. The volunteers served the tables. Welcome to our restaurant, they said. Once you decide to restructure the social order, there are a thousand ways to do it: Rearranging the room or the space and finding ways to serve everyone at the same time are just the beginning.

KAIROS

Before farming became so scientific, good farmers were embedded in a culture and tradition that taught knowledge about the soil, the seasons, the way to plant. They developed a sense of when it was the right time to do anything. There was a time to care for the land, so you had a sense of the future. Part of the Old Testament Jubilee Year, the year of forgiveness, is to give the land a rest.

Time measured by depth is an enemy of the market. The market is sold on the basis of speed and convenience. There are some concessions; for example, for historic reasons the stock market closes on Good Friday.

In the New Testament a great deal is made out of an alternative word for time: *Kairos*. Jungian therapy talks about Kairos and Kronos, Kronos being tick-tock time and Kairos meaning time measured by depth. In the Bible Kairos is an explosive moment of extreme significance. In the struggle against Apartheid the churches of South Africa put together what is famously called the Kairos Document, a declaration of the faith community's stance: "This is the moment." More recently, there is a Kairos Document produced by the Palestinians that says: "This is the moment of grace and opportunity." Both are examples of time measured by significance.

Our work is to declare that this is the time to accelerate the conversation about alternatives to the market ideology. Even though there may not be demand for it for ten years or fifty years. This is the moment.

This is the right time. There is a time for certain things that you can't calendarize, which means you can't make them predictable. You can't control them. So time has its own way with us. This creates the necessity of rethinking time. Re-understanding time is a critical step to get onto the path.

FOOD

As a discipline of neighborliness, food is produced and prepared locally. Sharing and consuming food is a slow and sacred occasion.

The commodification by the market occurs most visibly in our food. It is fast, highly processed, and all vegetables are available all year long. Fast food replaces memory. It replaces affection. It has separated the family and marked the end of the family meal, the family dinner. Plus, it is unhealthy and not appetizing. We are willing to sacrifice our health and enjoyment for so-called convenience. For speed and to save time. Domino's Pizza, the originator of the thirty-minute delivery guarantee, holds an annual contest in which its pizza-making employees from all over the United States compete to see who can make the fastest pizza. Not the tastiest . . . the fastest.

The covenantal community relies on slow and sacred food: bread, wine. That's one reason why food is one of the neighborly disciplines. Food also signifies a space for table prayers. Giving thanks before you eat is an

acknowledgement that the food is a gift and not property or an achievement or a possession. As a discipline of neighborly covenant, food is a regular concrete re-performance of gratitude.

FOOD AND SACRED RE-PERFORMANCE

Extend hospitality to strangers.

—Romans 12:13

The potlatch of the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest was a way of gift-giving that “mimics how nature gives without expectation and with rich abundance flourishing” (Anielski, 2015). This is the basis of the communal dinners we call potlucks. Think also of wedding dinners. Thanksgiving. Harvest feasts. *We will eat together. Could you bring some food?* And singing and dancing. All communal disciplines. And all very much a form of sacramental activity.

These customs are examples of re-performance, a repeated act of the normative narrative that is done with great imaginative generativity. The Super Bowl is a re-performance of market ideology: It inculcates us into consumerism. Another example is the evening news, which socializes us into the danger around us and thus the need for protection and caution. It reminds us that no one is safe without the protection of Pharaoh, empire, and public safety. Table prayers before we share food at the table are a re-performance of original gratitude. Re-performance is always an act of socialization.

The Church says the Last Supper was its founding institutionalizing event. It was part of Christ’s constructing an alternative future. Constructing the Church and the religious institutions. Constructing His legacy. Whether or not Christ saw it that way, that’s what the Church says, so it is the meal that we continue to re-perform and replicate. Every time we do that, we can re-imagine ourselves back on that Thursday in that dangerous room, except that now we’ve got so many layers of stuff on top of its significance that it’s hard to notice that re-performance is what we are doing.

The Last Supper is certainly in continuity with the Jewish practice of the Passover Seder, the annual ritual by which Jewish families or communities retell the story of the Israelites’ Exodus from slavery in Egypt. The

Last Supper in the Christian tradition becomes the way of re-performing that meal of intimacy. And in the Gospel of Luke, when Jesus makes a Resurrection appearance to the two disciples who don't know who he is, the text says Jesus was known to them in the breaking of the bread, which is an allusion to the Eucharist, the Body of Christ. So it was the meal itself that made present the neighbor they most valued.

This calls us to reinstitute the family dinner, which the market has reduced to takeout, pre-prepared meals, eating in motion, eating according to the schedule of restless productivity. A great New York preacher, George Buttrick, once said that, in Manhattan, the Church is the only place where the great estate owners and their butlers met together at a table. Every food table, festival, community gathering has that possibility.

One of the best neighborhood organizations I have known over the years was in Chicago. It had meetings once a month, but they weren't really meetings; they were potluck suppers where people talked about their issues and their possibilities. From the meal emerged the dialogue, and the vision. Compared to the meetings of most neighborhood groups, this was a transforming reality: the movement from potluck to dialogue to vision.

—John

A different kind of sacred food is the soul food that your mother fixed. At some point in time, a crisis of being newly married is when you discover that your spouse doesn't fix the food that your mother fixed. And so that has to be negotiated. But soul food from home feels like you are in the place where you belong. In the Christian tradition, the bread and the wine are the very particular soul food that is embedded in a particular narrative. And so every priest and minister recites the same narrative for the night that Jesus was betrayed. You cannot homogenize or universalize that. It belongs to a remembered place, in a ritual that can be re-performed. It cannot occur quickly, or at the mall, or while driving.

THE LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT

Fast food and supermarket processed food are foundational to the market ideology. There is an awakening to this. Every city is now proud of its community gardens, of its co-ops, of its small farms and ranches nearby. Restaurants now brand themselves by using local suppliers. Another sign the transformation is occurring.

The co-operative movement is at the center, especially with food. Co-ops are a major form of production returning to the community. When we shop for vegetables that are locally grown many of them are ugly. They are not all cleaned up and polished and packaged. This is a prime example of a handmade and local economy at work. Not perfect-looking carrots, but just right.

What is important in the local food movement is that we are experiencing practices that support community. When we imagine a future that nurtures aliveness, it comes in the form of the producer and consumer having an intimate relationship with each other. What is appealing about any local market is not just the local circulation of money, but also the relationship of mutual accountability that says, “We are creating this community and the commons together.”

FOOD AND CULTURE

A culture is language, food, faith, art, all intertwined. Food is always a critical component. Food that grows with culture is food that is local. So that people like the Inuit developed a food that was their communal food. The Mayans did the same, but developed a foodway based on what was around them, in their world. Through time their ability to produce their own food from what was local also provided them with healthful ways of eating and living, learned from their past.

Think of the Mediterranean diet that has been designated as a life-producing or heart-attack-diminishing diet. The Mediterranean diet isn't a diet that somebody thought up; it was eating what grows in the Mediterranean region. It was a way to use the things that grew there and prepare them in a proliferation of tasty ways. What the empire has done is, first, to break us from a foodway that comes from our place and is healthful and, then, substitute a completely artificial way

of feeding ourselves. And one of the results of that has a name: obesity. It is the mark of a people broken from the food of their place.

The commodified system world is powerfully embodied in food. When misfortune occurs, it becomes a marketing opportunity. Drought, pestilence, crop-loss—none of it matters. From the agri-business point of view, those events are localized and there's plenty of production somewhere else to supply the fast-food purveyors and fill the supermarkets. Cost goes up, but profits are intact, and customers are not inconvenienced.

That's how the supermarket offers you more choice at a lower cost. Its low-cost food gives the illusion of freedom, and that may be why the commitment to growing and eating local food makes such a difference.

In a market economy, a food company is only interested in food that they can process, food to which they can add ingredients for appearance and shelf life. You can't make money off lettuce. You can't make money from a pork chop. You can't make money off milk. When you go into a supermarket all of the commodities we all need—the dairy, the meat, the produce—are on the perimeter and at the back of the store to draw you through the aisles of processed food, where all the profit margin is. Agri-business almost gives away the lettuce and the tomatoes. And they will fight each other over space for the processed food and the non-food items.

The supermarket is the construction, and the epicenter, of the commodity world. The food movement tells you to be healthy. It tells you to only eat what your grandmother would have cooked. Food that rots. But supermarket food dominates the landscape. Processed food produces shelf life and appearance. It's all about economics, and the only way you can make money is by adding value. The food companies would argue that they are adding value with their processing methods. They claim to have good ingredients, but they modify them to add sweetness, prolong shelf life, and lower costs. Saying processed food is healthy food is right up there with dentists claiming that electrifying a toothbrush to move up and down faster is adding value.

We hold similar beliefs about our bodies. We think that the path to health is diet and exercise; that's market discipline applied to our bodies, our health. The documentary *Fed Up* exposes the most colonizing idea that ever existed: that the goal of the diet industry is marketing the belief

that fewer calories and more exercise are somehow related to your health. The documentary's assertion is that diet and exercise have little to do with your health, or obesity. The major factor affecting health and obesity, it says, is the amount of sugar you take in every day. And if you look on any label at the percentages of daily dietary requirements a product provides, you will see that the percentage for sugar is never listed. The food processing industry has lobbied Congress and the FDA to leave that detail blank because it would tell you that this little candy bar or that can of soda has 700 percent more sugar than you need in a day.

In its focus on diet and exercise, the health care industry is promising immortality. An answer to mystery. In a market world, selling diet and exercise as the keys to the kingdom promotes the idea that I have the capacity to live forever. Simply trust our products.

What is our alternative? You might say that one is the Mediterranean diet. But the Mediterranean diet is a part of a culture. It represents stuff in a place that people have learned to use through time, in a very appetizing way. So don't eat processed food. Eat only those things that rot. Processed food is immortal, despite the fact that it carries an expiration date. It's always a year ahead of time, so you're eating something that's going to sit on that shelf for a year.

To participate in a communal world and covenantal culture is to be conscious about food. The alternative is for us, in the place where we are, to construct life practices and work practices that embody this thing called exercise and diet. The communal culture will embody it. Your body will be engaged in a way that it won't grow fat. And the food you eat will similarly be enhancing your body. This is a cultural discipline. It has low profit margins, but you can sell your food-related stocks as a beginning ritual.

SILENCE

But about that day or hour no one knows.

—Matt. 24:36

Silence is a companion of mystery, and listening is its fellow traveler. The first thing to say is that the central word of Judaism is *Shema*: Hear, O, Israel. So Israel is a listening people, and when it does not listen it

ceases to be Israel because it falls out of Covenant. Listening puts you in a receptive mode. Being receptive requires you to celebrate Sabbath. Sabbath is a season of receptivity. The commodity system wants you never to be in a receptive mode. It wants you to be in an assertive mode. To sell or acquire. To listen is really to retreat from the commodity system, to retreat from productivity. A form of Sabbath.

LISTENING

On the election of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio as Pope, the conventional wisdom was that in choosing the last two Popes the electors had picked the smartest guy in the room. The question for the 2013 conclave became: Can they pick a guy who will listen to the other people in the room?

Think of how the market culture keeps us from listening to the slow food and local living movement: They are continually relegated to anomalies in the free market consumer ideology. The result is that we can't easily hear the neighborly story. It is a human interest story, told once. Just as an addicted person can't hear the world of sobriety, the neighborly story is there, but we can't hear it. And so neighborliness could be an opening of the ears. How do we come to hear that call? What are the attractors? We see the seduction that leads to the addiction, but it's more useful to ask what we have in common that could be called to so that people would finally hear.

We have ancient stories that tell us about the value of silence. We have modern stories that come out of our lives and our experience that tell us the value of quiet. There are cultures that embody it. The Catholic Church has its contemplative orders like the Trappist monks and the cloistered nuns of the Visitation Order who exemplify the virtue of silence in performing their work and expressing their relationship with God. In Buddhism and other meditative traditions, silence is essential to transforming the mind and using it to explore itself and other phenomena.

QUAKERS AND TIME AND LISTENING

Historically, the Quakers were people who had a culture in which time and silence and welcome were embodied in their communal experience. They are a good example of a people with a culture that manifests a

different use of time and silence. Their most notable public presence is their activism around peace. If we started out with a question like “How do we achieve peace?” we could look to the Quakers, observe the culture they come from, and see that it includes a large space for quiet time to be together and to welcome all. The welcoming spirit, the quiet, the space to be together—these things combine to build a community with characteristics that evoke peace. The Reverend A.J. Muste, the great pacifist, said there is no way to peace, peace is the way. When we ask “What is the culture that evokes kindness?” we are not looking for kind people in a community, we are looking for a community that calls for kindness. So in talking about the Quakers we are talking about a community that calls for peace, which comes from the practice of time together and silence and listening.

That’s an example of the difference between us being in a room together and being on the phone together. On the phone, it’s almost impossible to allow silence: *Hello, are you there? Can you hear me now?* “Can you hear me now?” expresses our anxiety about silence, our fear that there’s nobody out there. That there’s no God.

Silence is also an act of useful unemployment. Silence is made obsolete in a plugged-in world. Plugging in is a form of privatization. It is a substitute for silence. It claims to promote connection. When young people in the midst of a conversation with you are texting with a phone in each hand, who are they talking to?

SACRAMENTS OF SILENCE

The practice of listening brings people together. It reminds us that we are not alone. When people gather, the right questions bring the sacred into the room—questions of connections, not opinions. If you bring questions of depth, questions that are personal, the experience of being together shifts. When we ask questions that are an invitation to hear each other, something is created. The Quakers understand this.

How do you construct ways to listen to each other? One is to present questions that evoke profound speech versus just talk. Any time you ask a question that results in a list, nothing is going to happen. Questions of analysis are interesting but not powerful. The questions you ask have

to take you into conversations of doubt, fallibility, confession, mystery, and apology. For example, you ask people, “What’s the crossroad you are at in this stage of your life?” Every time you do that—you can do it in a group of a thousand—the room changes.

It doesn’t even matter if they don’t answer the question. The question itself has force, spiritual force. It creates a clearing. It enables people to hold open the space for listening and depth. A good question always initiates this. Good questions can be considered as sacraments of silence.

COVENANT: A VOW OF FREEDOM AND FAITHFULNESS

God stands as someone who would make a Covenant. Covenant is not required in the market world. It is central to the language of the community and commons. The neighborly world understands this. It becomes an underpinning for an alternative economy. A covenant is a vow. A contract tries to capture and define everything. Every word and every possibility. But a covenant has much more meaning. It’s open-ended. It is a continuing exercise of freedom in faithfulness. It is so hard to hold faithfulness and freedom together, because freedom without faithfulness becomes autonomy. And faithfulness without freedom becomes an obligation, a legalism. To have both is the point.

The sixteenth century Anabaptists chose to live outside the codes of dominant culture, which is why they were endlessly persecuted. They were an extraordinary social countermovement in that they did not adhere to the norms of the empire or the nation state.

The Anabaptists believed in adult baptism rather than infant baptism. In the sixteenth century, infant baptism was essentially the pathway to membership in the state. And adult baptism had to do with being old enough to decide that you would be under the disciplines of Christ and not under the disciplines of state—adult baptism was a dissenting activity, an incredible act of defiant freedom.

But it also was a move to say that in this community you have to be conscious of your choice, and infant baptism does not allow that. It is the choice of the parents. The choice made for you. The unforgettable

lesson from the Anabaptists is this: Freedom—from an economic system and the dominant culture—is a choice available to all. When that choice is supported by a religious community . . . powerful and rare.

COVENANT AND RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

The market ideology demands uncovenantal justice. The sanctity of private property and contracts require retributive justice: eye for an eye, three strikes and you're out, failure is not an option. The alternative is restorative justice, which is covenantal, not contractual.

Retributive means you get what's coming to you. Retribution. Contrast this with covenantal justice. The widely used term is “distributive justice,” as contrasted to retributive justice. Not restorative, but distributive. Distributive means the wealth of the community is distributed equitably across the community, wealth in this case being justice based on all being members of the community, members by the fact of their being human beings. Distributive justice is designed with and according to the requirements of the commons, the common good.

ABUNDANCE AND THE RIGHT USE OF MONEY

Money has utility, and we need disciplines that encourage the economy but embody covenant. This means we need to change our relationship with money. It is not the source of all evil; we have just constructed it so. It is not money, but the abuse of money that is the problem.

The neighborhood or community needs its connection to the larger world, and money is the language for this connection. This point of view is not about being self-sufficient. It does mean we do what we can locally. We can grow our own food, in urban and rural communities, and keep much of the production and exchange local.

There are inventions that support a covenantal neighborhood. One example is local currencies. BerkShares are one kind of currency that gives a five percent discount at local merchants who have agreed to accept them. Local citizens exchange ninety-five Federal dollars for one hundred BerkShares at participating banks, then spend them at full value at participating businesses. Businesses can recirculate them

with other local businesses at full value or take them back to any of the eight branches of the banks and exchange them back into Federal dollars at a five percent discount. The merchants can afford to do this because they know that if they keep this money local they are going to thrive.

The inspiration for later local currency initiatives was the “Constant,” issued by Ralph Borsodi in 1972 in Exeter, New Hampshire. The Constant was tied in value to a standard basket of commodities, so it held a steady purchasing value, contrary to national currencies. And contrary to myth, Borsodi was never arrested by Federal agents. In fact, when a reporter asked the FBI if the Constant was illegal, the response was, “We don’t care if he is issuing acorns as long as they do not look like Federal dollars.” Counterfeiting is illegal—but not the local issue of currency.

Borsodi wanted something behind his currency that was stable in value so that the huge inflationary pressure and variation of the stock market could be avoided. This is what communities need. They need a currency that frees them from the complete control of the banking system. We need Federal currency to deal with the outside world, but we want to balance that dependency.

North Dakota is the only state with a state bank, and they have dampened the major swings of recession and inflation because that state controls and issues its own debt; it controls the issue of money. In hard times, the Bank of North Dakota pours money in, and it doesn’t incur any interest expense because private banking is out of the equation. It doesn’t pay interest. This is important. What weighs most heavily on the national economy is the interest on the national debt, not the principal. Forty percent of the deficit in the United States is pure interest on the debt (Brown, 2012). And we owe it to the private sector because we are afraid to turn banks into utilities. The Federal Reserve is owned by the private sector. North Dakota, since 1919, has avoided this.

In addition to these local ventures, we still will have to deal with the larger economic and credit systems. Student loans are a clear example of being out of balance with money. The private sector got into this business and, in the name of free enterprise, has saddled our youth

with huge debt. When you borrow from the government for a student loan, you can do things to have it forgiven. You can give two years of your life to public service, for example, and the debt is forgiven. You borrow from the private bank and there is no forgiveness.

MONEY AND OUR AFFECTION FOR PLACE

In the modern world, the idea of the “free” economy has falsely associated freedom with going where the money dictates. Covenant and community rely on an affection for what is local and near, a regard for “this place.” Residents who stay for a while, associational life, street life, a memory, children who can walk more than a block from their house are things every neighborhood needs.

Central to all of this is some form of a nearby business district. Nearby companies to find work. Community is not just thinking of our block and neighbors; a community can’t perform its functions without a local economy. You will not have a local economy unless people care about the place. Unless we have some affection for our community, we are not going to shop, nearby or not, to keep the money at home.

A LITURGY FOR THE COMMON GOOD

A liturgy is a regularly performed script that in performance promises to transform. It is more powerful than a map because a map pretends that there’s a destination that we can know about it. In Christian tradition, some liturgical elements are praise, confession, thanksgiving, dedication. Thanksgiving includes collecting money. Then dedication, at the end of the liturgy, means you’re supposed to commit again. This is the construction of the worship service.

Neighborliness is the opportunity to be aware every day that we are performing an alternative liturgy. To know that my life is either the performance of a deathly liturgy, or the possibility of something alive. A liturgy of aliveness. A liturgy in favor of the common good. The people who write in liturgy are always fond of beginning by saying that, etymologically speaking, the meaning of the word *liturgy* is work. They say that liturgy is the work of the people. So is the work of generating the common good.

PROPHETIC POSSIBILITIES

The practice of memory of a narrative in a place generates prophecy. Prophets are artistic voices that arise out of communal practice and speak to the possibilities and to the distortions. It is always easier to talk about the distortions than it is to talk about the possibilities, but the prophets always talk about both. The way the Hebrew Bible is put together, when the prophets appear, they arise out of the Torah. So the Torah is that liturgical practice of the memory out of which these peculiar artistic personalities arise.

The liturgy holds the prophecy over time. It becomes the order of service. It is a network of symbols that yield a world. In neighborliness, it is a counter-world because in the market world the liturgy is a commodity liturgy. The orgies of the Super Bowl and Black Friday are concrete re-performances of scarcity (winning is everything), violence (at the line of scrimmage), acquisition (I shop, therefore I am), and reverence for the market ideology (both are the lead news stories of the day).

I went to a Reds game a while back, and before the game sixteen couples were married. In the ballpark. They had a podium and a minister. Some of them were dressed conventionally for a wedding, but some of them had baseball uniforms on. Maybe they get married in a ballpark because they love baseball. But it's clear they also wanted something showy and modern. It's an expression of the Super Bowl mentality.

—Walter

Required in the face of the market liturgy are subversive liturgies to say that the dominant culture is not as all-powerful as it is. This is not a new idea. All of the religions of the Book have counter-liturgies that call to a different order of communal resistance.

At that Thursday dinner before the Crucifixion, Jesus said, "Now I'm going to tell you the final thing I need to tell you. You are no

longer servants. You are friends.” The problem the Church has had was defined by that sentence. That’s the institutional nexus. The prior message had been “servants,” and service is a value not to be placed equal to friendship. Service can be commoditized and friendship cannot. The commons and a neighborly culture value friends.

STORY AS LITURGY AND RE-PERFORMANCE

Community is built on the power of story. Story evokes a memory, an affection for place and one another. A group of people with a story has continuity, and their story gives them a sense of uniqueness. At the center of the neighborly liturgy is constantly remembering where we came from. You see this in the efforts at collecting oral history, in the lobbies of libraries and museums, in public spaces, in large city murals.

You know you are in a place that is living the neighborly way when it’s explicit about its story. The Hopi Indians in the Black Mesa area of Arizona are the most isolated of all the indigenous tribes; they were forced up there by the Navajo. Each of their eleven villages has a different creation story. Perhaps it is because the Navajo invaded all their lands and forced them together on the Mesa. They didn’t come from the same place in the literal sense, and now there they are with eleven stories. The Bible is a story of the whole people together. We rarely have a narrative about our place in most neighborhoods. But when you go to a neighborhood organization meeting and you hear people say, “Do you remember when we did this?” understand that they are building their story.

THE RE-PERFORMING POWER OF LITURGY

In ancient Israel the way they sustained Covenant was to fashion liturgies in which they kept re-performing the founding events and the community’s founding memories. In the Church today, the reiteration of the Eucharist is always to perform again Christ’s instruction: Do this in remembrance of Me. And of course the Passover observance is the re-performance of the Exodus narrative. Both those liturgies feed the imagination and the identity of the community so that we don’t forget the direction we intended to be walking.