

**Uprising Today: Session 3**  
**“Paradox or Progressive Activism:  
How much Dialectic Tension Can We Stand?”**  
**Sunday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004 | 3:30-5pm | IDF**  
**Led by Rev. Jim Holiman**

**Notes**

**Attendance:** Jim, Jen, Harry, Amy, Anat, Sally, Chris, Mike B., Justine, Jan, Kay, Claire, Jane, Ben, Rev. Mulberry, Janet, Durl, Robert

**Handout:** “Authentic Transformation” (analysis of Neibuhr’s Christ and Culture, book is worth buying because it is going to be used in analysis of Church for a long time)

**Comments/questions on Carroll book:**

*Sally:* Would like to stick to the book. I need this and it’s a really important work, I think we should try to focus on it.

One of the things we ended on last session:

The need to locate our social site in society and talking about class structure and the class war.

Three questions to ask as you analyze materials:

Who make the decisions in this social construct?  
Who benefits?  
Who bares the cost?

When you analyze a problem or social issue and ask those three questions, you will discover the evil and how to work with it.

We can take a look at the two mediating strategies from Neibuhr (we should find ourselves in one of those two camps):

- Christ of culture
- Christ above culture

One of my favorite authors: Lessing (18<sup>th</sup> Century)—German Dramatist and Critic, best known for his plea to the modern age in Germany for religious tolerance

Accidental truths of history [like crucifixion] can never become the proof of necessary truths of reasons.

*“That is the ugly broad ditch which I can never get across...If anyone can help me over it, I beg him” --Lessing*

An important memory of Jim’s childhood (defining moment):

- On August 6, 1945, US bombed Hiroshima

- Listened to the radio broadcast of the Enola Gay bombing Hiroshima and the copilot said: “My god, what have we done?”
- This shook my world---the moment when my atheism began to grow and I encountered the ugly broad ditch.
- I couldn’t make the leap and there were no truths on this side.

1944-48: largest number of people went into the priesthood (due to WWII)

Jim’s boss’ advice: Hit first and hard, so they can never get up.

### **Jesus of Nazareth Movement**

Christ and Culture: figuring out relation between Christians and their culture and how to navigate.

Not the case for Jesus of Nazareth (JNM), JNM believe “Jesus Christ is Lord”

Who believes this is religious language?

*Class:* Sounds religious.

*Jim:* It is social to the core (here’s why)

“Christos” (where we get ‘Christ’) is the Greek translation of the word “Messiah”

Christos/Messiah: liberator, political leader, king (esp. one who is victorious)

At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century these two terms became spiritualized, so that they have lost their social and political significance by current times.

If you try to understand them in this religious way, you will miss the point of the Jesus of Nazareth movement.

Left Wing people may engage in religious practices/ceremonies, but the Jesus of Nazareth movement is social/political.

The Jesus of Nazareth movement was produced materially by the conditions in which Jesus and his Disciples had to work.

The universality of the general truths of reason is an illusion created by Western society—Romans, etc.

Jesus presented himself as a Jewish peasant, liberator, prophet who is anti-imperialist and anti-royalist.

1. Committed to broadcasting the presence of good here and now (peace with justice), so that people can live in that good news here and now
2. Subvert the Roman money exchange system by setting up a communal system of sharing what they had with one another (good for the poor, bad for the rich who don’t want to share; this is taken very seriously—people were killed if they didn’t share; this became a characteristic of the second generation of Christians)

3. Adopt a nonviolent resistance strategy to Roman colonial rule by forcing it to show its malevolence (Romans couldn't believe that anybody would not love them)

The Jesus of Nazareth Movement was internationalism---crossing all geopolitical boundaries

Neither Roman imperialism nor kings were able to stop the subversion of the *pax romana* (even after they've cut off it's head).

We all want for the universalities but our reality is that we live in a world that is more particular----and each of us comes up with a world view that is particular, even if shared by a group—and we become enmeshed in that particularity and it becomes enmeshed in our society (in racism and classism and many other -isms)

Levels	Local	State	Nation	Region	Global
Ideological	Temples Military Chaplains Apathy Carroll's mother (an agent of the structure)	Military Chaplain			Church Triumphant
Political	Rome attacked the capitol (Jews)				
Economic					

It's important to analyze where you are **before** you make a decision.

Left Wing is largely an *ad hoc* group— doesn't work from a particular institution, rather it forms to solve particular problems.

It's important that we are going to have to do this critical analysis and sometimes it will be good for us, and sometimes it will be bad for us (hard, uncomfortable work).

As Carroll became "pro-Jewish," he also had to realize that the State of Israel is not as victimless and pure as we would like to believe

**"Whose side are you on?" becomes the Left Wing question:**

*Durl:* Not a religious question—brings us back to the political/social nature of the Jesus of Nazareth movement. The transformation that occurred: how did this become a

spiritual experience? Is there any religious tradition that started from a purely religious place or did they all have foundations in a social construct?

*Jim:* We are material critters, so we have to answer that question materialistically. The two are not mutually exclusive---when you look at something being spiritual, it's still going to be physical.

*Rev. Mulberry:* The two are connected—which makes the “Jesus is Lord” become much more polemic

It's one and the same....

**Announcements:**

- Next session is on Sunday, July 18<sup>th</sup> 3:30-5:00 pm at the IDF
- Read through page 471 in Carroll's *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews* for the next session