# Proclaiming the Name
# Cultic Narrative and Eucharistic Proclamation in First Corinthians

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## The cultic setting of 1 Corinthians

In interpreting the Corinthian correspondence of Paul, we no longer look behind each verse for a lurking Gnostic perversion of the gospel; the theories of Walter Schmithals can no longer be maintained. We need to place the history of the Christian community at Corinth, and of Paul's dealings with it, on the much broader canvas of social, cultural, cultic, and rhetorical conventions in the Graeco-Roman world of that day. Recent sociological analyses of the Corinthian situation by such scholars as Gerd Theissen and Wayne Meeks, and studies of benefaction, patronage, and clientism in the hellenistic world by Frederick Danker and Peter Marshall, have helped to fill out the total picture.

Our immediate concern is to relate what Paul writes in First Corinthians to what we know of cultic life in Corinth of the first century. That the apostle could presuppose familiarity with contemporary hellenistic cults is first of all suggested by the external evidence, in the form of literary texts and archaeological data, assembled by Murphy-O'Connor. Internal evidence from First Corinthians leads to the same conclusion – quite apart from his discussion of idol-meat in chapters 8 and 10. In 1:18 Paul states, as the rhetorical *propositio* of the letter, that 'the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God'. In 11:26 he adds his own commentary to the words of institution: 'For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes'. In both cases we find reference to a message, to proclamation. But what, precisely, is meant by *ho logos gar ho staurou* ('the word, the one of the cross') with its repetition of the article, and what is the force of the verb *katangellein* ('proclaim') in the second text?

It is worth exploring the suggestion that each text refers to a cultic narrative, to what is called a *hieros logos* ('a sacred story') in the hellenistic cults. If this is indeed the case, those who knew the function of cultic narrative (whether they were former Jews or Gentiles) would have seen a specific point in Paul's words, one that is not immediately apparent to modern readers.

Our purpose is not to explore the function of cult-narrative in general, that is, to pursue a phenomenological and religio-historical study of how narrative functions in cultic settings. We will look only at certain texts in one letter of Paul which suggest that cultic narrative lay at the heart of early Christian worship. Our purpose is to assemble data from the Old Testament as well as the hellenistic cults to throw further light on the anamnetic function of the eucharist in worship.

There is no worship without remembering, and there is no liturgical remembering without proclamatory narrative. Cultic narrative lies at the heart of every system of belief and worship. The Ugaritic texts document the sacred myth of the marriage of Anath and her lover Baal as cultic story. In the Old Testament there are the cultic narrative/creeds which recite the acts of God for his chosen people (Deut 6,26; Josh 24). The *hieroi Iogoi* of the ancient hellenistic mysteries have their counterpart in the

dreamings of Australian Aborigines, and the *stori* of Melanesian cults – where *stori* means as much as liturgy. It would be very strange if early Christianity did not have its own cultic story!

## The liturgical *inclusio* of 1 Corinthians

That 1 Corinthians was meant to be read in worship is quite clear from the *inclusio* formed by 1:1-3 and 16:19-24. Paul writes to saints gathered for worship, and concludes with greetings from other saints as expressions of fellowship in worship. As saints (*hagioi*), they are to greet one another with a holy kiss (*hagion phiema*) – linking 1:2 with 16:23. Further, the christological titles employed at the beginning and end of the letter are *Kyrios* and *Iesous Christos* (1:1-3; 16:22-24).

Some commentators have seen 1:2b as a 'catholicising insertion' into the text by the editor(s) of the Pauline corpus. Yet Paul's reminder that his readers have been 'called together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours' belongs to the liturgical framework of the letter. It is a gentle reaction to the tendency in Corinth to absolutise possession of the Spirit (see Paul's rhetorical question in 14:36: 'What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?' as well as his rejoinder in 7:40: 'And I think I have the Spirit of God'). What interests us most at this point is the phrase 'to call on the name of the Lord' in a 'place'. Paul's use of the word *topos*, place, followed by the greeting 'grace and peace', suggests a Christian adaptation of a Jewish synagogal formula: 'Peace be in this place and in all the places of Israel'. Paul echoes Jewish liturgical custom by pronouncing *shalom* not only on the believers in Corinth, but on all who are gathered in a place (*maqom*) of worship. The common call of God finds visible expression wherever people call on the name of the Lord in a 'place' of worship.

'To call on the name of the Lord' has its parallel at the end of the letter in the Aramaic eucharistic acclamation, *Maranatha* (16:22). Here it is unimportant whether the verb in the Aramaic formula is indicative or imperative — has come' or come'! (Rev 22:20 with its Greek rendering has the imperative). For our purposes, it is important to note that calling on the name of the Lord has its *Sitz im Leben*, its context, in eucharistic worship, an observation supported by the appearance of *Maranatha* in Didache 10:6.

## Calling on the name of the Lord

D. Preman Nile's fine study on *The Name of God in Israel's Worship* has shown that the Hebrew phrase *qara' beshem yhwh (= epikalousthai to onoma tou kyriou*) has different meanings according to the context, though the latter is always cultic. To call on the Lord's name in petition is to **invoke** the Name as saving help or presence (Niles: 80-84). To call on the name in thanksgiving, on the other hand, does not simply mean to pronounce or vocalise the holy name, but to **proclaim** it, to make the name of the Lord renowned, to sing his praise as the one who delivers. Here proclamation includes recounting God's mighty deeds, as well as celebrating his holy presence (Niles: 86-92). Another group of texts uses the phrase as a designation for **worship** in the more general sense. Finally, there are two texts in which Yahweh **proclaims** his own name (Exod 33:29; 34:5).

The obvious question is this: Does 'calling on the name of the Lord' in the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, imply something like cultic narrative or hymnic recital as Gods people celebrate his saving presence? That this is so is

suggested even where *qara' beshem yhwh* is something like a formula for worship. The end of primeval history in Genesis 4:26 is marked by the statement: 'At that time people began to call on the name of the Lord'. Neither here, nor in 12:8 or 13:4 where Abram calls on the name of the Lord after moving into Canaan, is there a suggestion of proclamatory recitation. Yet that can be implied in 21:33 where Abraham calls on the name of the Lord at Beersheba. Here the Lord is further identified as *el olam*, the everlasting God. It is worth suggesting that Abraham's covenant with Abimelech on this occasion was made in the presence of a local deity known by that name. An identification of the deity could take place only by a recitation of his past deeds and presence in that place. Is it chance that the next calling on the name of the Lord comes in 26:25 where Isaac, again at Beersheba, builds an altar and worships the Lord? This time the 'naming' takes place after God has first appeared to the patriarch and proclaimed himself to Isaac, reciting the old covenant promise made to his father.

Naming and reciting belong together at the Sinaitic covenant. The episode of the golden calf in Exodus 32 shows how the Lord is **not** present among his people. By contrast, in 33:19 we have God himself proclaiming his name as the gracious and merciful Lord (the MT has, literally, 'I [sc. God] will call on the name of the Lord before you'). In calling on his own name he reveals his glory and saving presence in the form of a solemn recitation. That is also the case in 34:5 where God calls on (= proclaims) his own name with the following recitation:

> *The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, to the third and fourth generation.*

At this proclamation, Moses bows his head and worships. When God's people call on his name in worship, they do more than invoke a divine presence. As the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 shows, proclamation of the name (v 3) means remembering (v 7) what he has done in a narrative of praise. Thus, the song of thanksgiving in Isaiah 12:4 calls on God's people to:

> *Give thanks to the Lord,*
> *call upon his name;*
> *make known his deeds among the nations,*
> *proclaim that his name is exalted.*

Calling on the name (*qara'*) has its parallel in a remembering proclamation (*hizkir*; the LXX uses *anangellein*). Psalm 105:1-5 combines calling on the name of the Lord, proclaiming his deeds, and remembering his wonderful works. That such proclamation is equivalent to narration is clear from Isaiah 41:25-27, where calling on the name means proclamation by narrative (*qara' beshem* has its complement in the verb *haggid* which the LXX again translates with *anangellein*).

Cultic narrative confession is not merely a recital of God's deeds in the past; it is a celebration of a holy presence. Zechariah 13:9 shows that calling on the name of the Lord means confessing: 'The Lord is my God'. There can be no calling on the name of the Lord where there is no knowledge of his saving deeds in the past or of his holy presence (see the complaints in Ps 79:6; Isa 64:7; Jer 10:25). On the other hand, those who know the Lord's bounty 'lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord', offering sacrifices and paying vows to the Lord 'in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the Lord' (Ps 116:12-19).

The contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mt Carmel is not a prayer-contest. It is a question of who can proclaim the truth. The Baalites call on their god with a simple formula: 'O Baal, answer us!' Elijah calls on Yahweh with a naming-recital (1 Kgs 18:24-26, 36,37).

The phrase *epika/ousthai to onoma kyriou* occurs only a few times in the New Testament. In two instances it recalls an Old Testament text in the LXX version: 'Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved' (Acts 2:21 and Rom 10:13, citing LXX Joel 2:32). What is meant is a confessing of Jesus as Lord and Saviour (see also Acts 9:14, 21; 2 Tim 2:22). Acts 22:16 suggests an act of confession involving a recital of who the Lord is: 'Rise, and be baptised and wash away your sins, calling on his name'. Romans 10:9-14 certainly shows that Paul thought of calling on the Lord's name as confessing a truth that has been proclaimed, one that can be encapsulated in a recitation of God's act of raising his Son from the dead (v 9).

It is highly probable that 1 Corinthians 1:2 also refers to a calling on the name of the Lord (= Christ) which involves proclamation and anamnetic recitation. The cultic cry, *Maranatha*, would then be liturgical shorthand for all that the confession of Christ in worship entails: the confession of the Lord who has come, comes in the eucharist, and will come again at the end.

**The narrative of the cross**

Are there hints in 1 Corinthians of a full cultic narrative? Before looking at the Words of Institution, we return to 1:18 with its reference to 'the word of the cross'. Why the repeated article, and what is meant by *ho logos*?

The recurring article is not uncommon in the New Testament. In each case a precise identification is made: 'the resurrection, **the one which is from the dead**' — not just a spiritual resurrection (Phil 3:11); 'the redemption **which is in Christ Jesus**' — not any other so-called redemption (Rom 3:24); 'the faith, **the one which comes through him**' — Christ, and no one else (Acts 3:1 6). Thus, Paul is referring to a definite, definable, and readily identifiable *logos* in 1:18. But what is it?

Conzelmann simply sees it as 'an exhaustive statement on the content of the gospel' (41). That it refers to the gospel is obvious, for Paul has spoken of it in the previous verse. However, *logos* in 1:5,17 and 2:1 has a more specific meaning: the form in which the gospel is communicated. Barrett is also content with the usual solution: 'Paul means nothing other than the Gospel' (51). Other commentators rightly stress Paul's desire to focus on the cross to counteract the Corinthian theology of glory (Robertson and Plummer: 17; Fee: 68). Harrisville tries to identify a specific *logos*, and suggests that the reference is to Deuteronomy 21:22, 23 ('a hanged man is accursed by God'), a text which once belonged to the arsenal of the anti-Christian Paul in his attacks on the Christians. It was 'the word' which spoke of a hanged man on a cross to which he once took offence.

The 'word of the cross' probably has a precise meaning: the cultic narrative of the crucified Christ, a proclamation in the form of recital. Every Graeco-Roman cult had its *logos* or founding myth to symbolise its essence for devotees. There is adequate literary evidence for the existence of such cult-narratives in antiquity.

A famous edict of Ptolemny IV Philopator, from about 210 BC, ordered those who perform initiations in the cult of Dionysos to hand in a sealed copy of their *hieros logos* after registering with an official in Alexandria. Obviously, these cult-narratives must have had some fixed form, since those registering were to declare 'from whom they received the sacred things, up to three generations' (Burkert: 33; Reitzenstein: 121,200). Such 'sacred words' could contain whole books; at least, there is evidence for such extensive 'sacred stories' in the cults of Isis and Mithras, and in Orphism (Burkert: 70, 71). Yet the *logos* could also be handed down orally, without being written down. Thus it could be elaborated on, amplified, restated in the form of a personal confession. While the philosophers had their own *exoteric logoi* about the gods, it was in the mysteries that the myth as esoteric *logos* flourished (Burkert: 72, 73).

Each divinity of a mystery cult had its own specific myth or sacred story. The Eleusinian myth of Demeter Persephone is best known from the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*. The Bacchae of Euripides reflects the holy myth of the Dionysos cult. Outlines, at least, of other cultic narratives are also known to us, though elements of the story were kept secret, to be revealed only to the initiated (Meyer: 10, 20, 66).

Within the Eleusinian mysteries of Demeter and Persephone, and presumably also in other cults, there were three forms of cultic observance: the *legomena* or 'things recited', the *deiknymena* or 'things displayed', and the *dromena* or 'things enacted' (Burkert: 10). The first were probably recitations of the sacred account which provided the mythological foundations for the celebration of the mystery. The things displayed involved dreams and sacred objects, while the last observance involved ritual enactment. In short, cultic worship was a liturgical drama in which the *hieros logos* came to life for the participants.

**History versus myth**

Without suggesting that early Christianity could be viewed simply as another mystery cult, it is not hard to imagine how converts from the hellenistic world would have drawn parallels between what went on in the cults and in Christian worship. Paul suggests in 1 Corinthians 14:23 that 'outsiders' could feel quite at home where people were speaking in tongues (Pfitzner: 225). The formulation, 'word of the cross', suggests something characteristic of the Christian *hieros logos*. It is a cultic proclamation of history, not of myth.

'Story of the cross' is, of course, Paul's own formulation. Traditional formulations relating to Christ's death, cited by Paul, do not mention the cross, but only that 'Christ died for our sins', or 'gave himself' (1 Cor 15:3; Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 11:23). The highlighting of the cross is the apostle's own imprint on the tradition. As Lohmeyer suggested long ago, Paul inserts a reference to the cross in the *Carmen Christi* of Philippians 2:5-11 (at v 8), and (if we may grant that that letter is authentic) also in the hymn of Colossians 1:15-20. The two additions, 'even death on a cross' and 'making peace by the blood of the cross', are something like Pauline signatures added to traditional formulations.

For the early kerygma, the manner of Jesus' death seems to have been either unimportant, or something not to be highlighted. In Acts, the verb 'crucify' appears only twice (2:36 and 4:10), both times in the form of an accusation against the Jews; otherwise, Luke speaks only of the *xylon*, *the wood,* on which Jesus was hanged (5:30

and 13:29). The direct citation of Deuteronomy 21:23 in Galatians 3:13 suggests that it was this passage which prompted Christians to speak of a 'tree' rather than a 'cross', a symbol of shame.

In only two letters does Paul speak repeatedly of the cross of Christ – in Galatians and in 1 Corinthians. In both cases, the cross stands for the offence of the gospel; it marks the one on the cross as an object of shame, characterised by weakness. In 1 Corinthians, especially, the cross stands for the *skandalon*, the stumbling block, of God's action in history. Greek thinking, whether seen in the *logoi* of the philosophers or of the hierophants in the mysteries, could tell of truth only in the form of the timeless myth. Final reality belonged to the supra-mundane. Paul insists that the sacred narrative of the Christians is not a myth, but a piece of history, the story of a man hanging on a cross. That history must be interpreted, of course, as an act of God (1 Cor 15:2; Acts 2:11), but it is still told as story. Paradoxically, the wisdom of this world wants to turn the Jesus of history, the Jesus on a cross, into a cult figure who represents timeless truth beyond this world. The theology of the cross accentuates, on the other hand, that divine reality and action must be seen not on an otherworldly plane, but precisely in this world. What is at stake is the particularity of God's action in history. The gospel must continue to be told as story.

**Eucharistic narrative**

We get to the substance of this cultic story in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. The eucharistic narrative is framed by Paul's reference to tradition and by his own interpretative addition in v 26: 'For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes'. This conclusion raises a number of questions. How does the act of eating and drinking involve proclamation? What is the precise meaning of *katangellein* in this context? Why the reference only to the Lord's death, when the Lord's supper is obviously a communion with the risen and exalted Lord as well? How are the words of institution as cultic narrative, and actual meal, and proclamation connected?

Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich tells us that *katangellein* has the basic meaning of declaring solemnly, of proclaiming with authority. In this context, however, proclamation takes place by celebrating the sacrament, by eating and drinking, rather than with words. The obvious question is: Why should proclamation here be non-verbal, when *katangellein* elsewhere in Paul means verbal communication? In Romans 1:8 he thanks God that the faith of the readers is 'proclaimed in all the world'. That must surely mean that the story of the church in Rome is well known among Christian communities in the East ('in all the world' is legitimate hyperbole). In 1 Corinthians 2:1, 2 Paul reminds the Corinthians how he first preached Christ to them. His proclamation was not according to the axioms of hellenistic rhetoric, but the story of Christ as the crucified. Other texts which speak of proclaiming Christ or the gospel also clearly imply verbal communication (1 Cor 9:14; Phil 1:17, 18; Col 1:28). The ten occurrences of *katangellein* in Acts lead to the same conclusion.

It is thus difficult to accept the conclusion of older commentators that Paul regards the actions of eating and drinking in themselves as proclamation. Robertson and Plummer (249) remark that 'the Eucharist is an acted sermon, an acted proclamation of the death which it commemorates', though adding that there is possibly some reference to an expression of belief in the atoning death of Christ as a usual element in the service. More recent commentators think that a specific message lies behind Paul's reference

to proclamation. Conzelmann (201) thinks that the apostle is alluding to explicit proclamation accompanying the sacramental meal. Barrett (270) is even more explicit: 'When Christians held a common meal, they recalled aloud the event on which their existence was based. This recalling (which closely resembles the narrative of the exodus from Egypt in the Jewish Passover) must have had some narrative content, and this fact helps to explain the relative continuity and fixed form of the Passion Narrative in the gospels.' Whether Barrett is right in suggesting that a complete passion narrative formed the proclamation at the eucharist is doubtful for a number of reasons which need not be discussed here. But he is surely right in insisting that the celebration of the eucharist involved proclamation in the form of a cultic narrative. Fee also remarks that, despite arguments to the contrary, the meal by itself was not an act of proclamation. Rather, 'during the meal, there is a verbal proclamation of Christ's death. That seems to be exactly how Paul now understands the two sayings over the bread and the cup, and thus why he has repeated the words of institution' (557).

Cultic narrative (*legomena*) and liturgical action (*dromena*) belong together to form anamnetic celebration. There is recitation of the sacred story of God's action in history through his Christ, there is present celebration, and there is waiting for the consummation; past, present, and future meet in the one moment. That the celebration is anchored in history by the story prevents the church from celebrating the meal as a false anticipation of the eschaton (that may have been one of the problems of the enthusiasts at Corinth).

We are unable to reconstruct anything like a fixed form of the cultic narrative that belonged to the celebration of the eucharist at Corinth, or anywhere in early Christianity. But we need not doubt that it existed. In Corinth it probably did not have any fixed or formalised shape, though it must have included some details of the passion narrative ('you proclaim the Lord's **death**') as well as the confession to Christ as the risen, ascended and returning Lord – 'until he comes' is surely an echo of the *maranatha.*

**Eucharistic Haggadah**

We have drawn comparisons with hellenistic cults which proclaimed their own cultic *kyrioi,* their lords. But another parallel to what Paul means by *katangellein* in 1 Corinthians 11:26 is to be found in the *seder* of the Jewish Passover meal. Without wanting to open up another discussion on whether the Last supper was held within the framework of a Passover meal, I would suggest that Paul at least saw an analogy between the two. 1 Corinthians 10 develops a Christian midrash of the exodus event in order to warn the readers against presuming on God's sacramental grace. In 10:16 he calls the eucharistic cup, the 'cup of blessing', the Christian parallel to the *cos berakah* of the Passover meal. At the heart of the Passover meal lies the Haggadah, the recital of the sacred story (the Jewish *hieros logos*) of deliverance from Egypt. The whole meal is a *zikaron,* a memorial feast in which past deliverance is appropriated in the present. Thus, when Paul speaks about proclaiming the Lord's death in the context of the sacred meal, he is saying that Christians have their own Haggadah. As in the Passover meal, the whole drama of recitation and meal means that the past is present reality. The crucified Christ himself is the present reality.

**The sung narrative**

One further tentative suggestion may be made. Our brief study of calling on the name of the Lord in the Old Testament suggested that it meant, in the context of thanksgiving, proclaiming God in hymnic praise.

Martin Hengel (78-96) has admirably shown that the origins of New Testament Christology lie in worship. The Spirit led the church to confess Christ in song. Striking is the fact that the early Christ-hymns are narratives, covering the Lord's pre-existence, humiliation, and exaltation (Phil 2:5-11; Col 1:15-20; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:3; 5:8-10). Also the 'Christ-psalms' are narratives of his death, resurrection, and exaltation (1 Pet 3:1 8-22; Eph 1:20-22; Rom 8:34). It is not difficult to imagine how eucharistic proclamation and hymnic confession complemented each other as two forms of cultic narrative in the setting of the meal of thanksgiving (*eucharistia*).

Certainly, calling on the name of the Lord in his supper points us to the day of the Lord's return (1 Cor 11:26) when 'in the name of Jesus' (not just at the mention of it) 'every knee shall bow … and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Phil 2:10, 11).

**Conclusions**

We leave it to the liturgical experts to ascertain to what extent the early liturgies of the church retain or reflect eucharistic narratives handed down from primitive Christianity. Our immediate concern is to draw some conclusions. We have argued that the anamnetic character of the eucharist includes the whole drama of the sacrament, the unity of *legomena* and *dromena*, to use the language of the mysteries (one could even suggest that it included *deiknymena* on the basis of Paul's words in Galatians 3:1: Paul publicly 'portrayed' Christ as the crucified before the eyes of the Galatians). If this is so, two things are impossible. Remembering the Lord in the sacrament is no mere psychological process which takes place in the actions of eating and drinking, without any narrative or recital. Sacramental celebration of Christ's presence involves both narrative and action – eating and drinking on the one hand, and proclaiming on the other.

Then again, an exclusive concentration on the real presence leads to a disruption of word (narrative) and liturgical action. Anamnesis, remembrance, involves both; that is the force of the *gar* in 1 Corinthians 11:26. I am not denying the centrality of eating and drinking, of participating in the body and blood of the Lord via the consecrated elements. I am saying again that narrative and action belong together in the total eucharistic drama. We are familiar with the statement that word and element constitute the sacrament. But this does not mean that the words of institution are seen as something like a magical formula. They are word of promise, which belong to the fuller narrative of God's presence in Jesus Christ. The words of institution are the quintessential form of the entire cultic narrative.

This implies a task for the liturgist, better, the liturgiologists and the constructor of modern forms of worship. Our eucharistic liturgies cannot contain entire Passion and Easter narratives, but the eucharistic prayer should contain more than the words of institution alone. There must be some reflection of the fact that they are part of a broader recital – of all that Paul hints at with the words 'on the night when he was betrayed'.

There are repercussions also for Christian faith education. Narrative lies at the heart of worship. Living the divine narrative in worship is the place where faith education

begins. There God's story becomes our story, leading to confession and praise, to *homologia* and *eucharistia*. This experience of God is not communicated via catechetical propositions and profound doctrinal formulations. We are experientially drawn into the sacred drama, become part of the divine story itself, when we call on the Lord's name. By calling on the name, we ourselves are 'named'.

This leads to a final thought. Christian theology has spent much time and effort in locating and defining the divine presence in the sacraments, particularly in the eucharist. That is how it should be. There must be one place where believers can know with certainty that they are one with the Lord, that his saving gifts are theirs. The *hieros logos* in the sacrament becomes a transforming word so that transcendence is found in immanence. A sacred story and a meal combine to communicate a divine presence, to transform what appears to be a very human activity into an experience of the divine.

I fear that what we have done is to reduce the experience of God to a cultic event, instead of teaching our people how that central experience can lead to new eyes which seek to discern the presence and activity of God in the everyday. We spend little effort at teaching people to call on God outside of corporate worship. But the one whose story we recite, proclaim, and confess is also out there in the world of experiences which need to be read, to be interpreted.

We teach our people to call **to** God in prayer, but do little to encourage them to call on the name of the Lord in confessing his presence in joy and sorrow, in wealth and poverty, in all the contradictions of life. The divine story should lead to the construction of our own story, in which we discern God's power and presence where hopes are dashed, dreams frustrated, where injustice seems to triumph over poverty. Christian cultic narrative as 'word of the cross' is the starting-point for this hermeneutic of Christian experience – indeed, of a Christian hermeneutic of human experience as a whole. In the theology of the cross, transcendence continues to transform immanence into an experience of the Saviour God.

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