

Part II

Resources for Unit One

Readings for Year A: Faithful Living in Your World

Week	Unit	Year One Collins	Year Two Powell	Year Three MacCulloch	Year Four Allen, Sedgwick, Peace
1	Introductory Meeting	Norms, Books, Housekeeping, Orientation & Planning	Norms, Books, Housekeeping, Orientation & Planning	Norms, Books, Housekeeping, Orientation & Planning	Norms, Books, Housekeeping, Orientation & Planning
2	Unit One Listening and Spiritual Autobiographies	Common Readings: Listening as Ministry Spiritual Autobiography	Common Readings: Listening as Ministry Spiritual Autobiography	Common Readings: Listening as Ministry Spiritual Autobiography	Common Readings: Listening as Ministry Spiritual Autobiography
3		Preface, Introduction 1 Near Eastern Context 2 Nature of the Pentateuchal Narrative	Preface 1 New Testament World 2 New Testament Writings	Acknowledgements, Introduction 1 Greece and Rome	Allen Preface Introduction: What is Theology?
4		* Genesis 1 -11 3 Primeval History	3 Jesus 4 Gospels	2 Israel	Allen 1 Holy One of Israel
5		The Priestly Creation Story	* Matthew	3 A Crucified Messiah	Allen 2 Holiness for Today
6		* Genesis 12-50 4 The Patriarchs	5 Matthew	4 Boundaries Defined	Allen 3 The Maker of Heaven and Earth 4 Limits of Science
7		* Exodus 1-15 5 Exodus from Egypt	* Mark 6 Mark	5 The Prince: Ally or Enemy?	Allen 5 What is Meant by "God"
8	Unit Two Reflecting Theologically	Common Reading: Theological Reflection as a Life Skill	Common Reading: Theological Reflection as a Life Skill	Common Reading: Theological Reflection as a Life Skill	Common Reading: Theological Reflection as a Life Skill
9		* Exodus 16-40 6 Revelation at Sinai	* Luke	6 The Imperial Church	Allen 6 Nature as Witness and Innocent Suffering

10		* Leviticus * Numbers 7 Priestly Theology: Exodus 25-40, Leviticus & Numbers	7 Luke	7 Defying Chalcedon: Asia and Africa	Allen 7 Innocent Suffering and Life beyond Death
11		* Deuteronomy 8 Deuteronomy	* John	8 Islam: The Great Realignment	Allen 8 Suffering from Nature and Extreme Human Cruelty
12		* Joshua * Judges	8 John	9 The Making of Latin Christianity	Allen 9 The Sacrifice in Creation Essay: DuBose on the Trinity
13		9 Joshua 10 Judges	* Acts of the Apostles 9 Acts	10 Latin Christendom: New Frontiers	Allen 10 The Incarnation as Sacrifice
14	Interlude	Common Reading: Bryan, Part I	Common Reading: Bryan, Part I	Common Reading: Bryan, Part I	Common Reading: Bryan, Part I
15	Interlude	Common Reading: Bryan, Part II	Common Reading: Bryan, Part II	Common Reading: Bryan, Part II	Common Reading: Bryan, Part II
16	Unit Three Developing a Sustaining Spirituality	Common Readings: The Spiritual Person The Sanctification of Time & Life	Common Readings: The Spiritual Person The Sanctification of Time & Life	Common Readings: The Spiritual Person The Sanctification of Time & Life	Common Readings: The Spiritual Person The Sanctification of Time & Life
17		* Psalms	10 New Testament Letters 11 Paul	11 The West: Universal Emperor or Universal Pope?	Allen 11 The Temptation in the Wilderness
18		* Song of Songs 23 Psalms & Song of Songs	* Romans	12 A Church for All People?	Allen 12 The Sacrifice of the Cross
19		* Proverbs 24 Proverbs	12 Romans	13 Faith in a New Rome	Allen 13 The Resurrection of Jesus and Eternal Life
20		* Job * Ecclesiastes (Qoheleh) 25 Job & Qoheleh	* Hebrews 23 Hebrews	14 Orthodoxy: More Than an Empire	Allen 14 Jesus as Lord and Jesus as Servant

21		*Ruth * Jonah * Esther 26 The Hebrew Short Story	* 1 Peter * 2 Peter 25 1 Peter 26 2 Peter	15 Russia: The Third Rome	Allen 15 Revelation and Faith
22	Unit Four Integrating Belief & Behavior	Common Reading: Building a Theology: Integrating Belief, Behavior, and Doctrine in Everyday Life	Common Reading: Building a Theology: Integrating Belief, Behavior, and Doctrine in Everyday Life	Common Reading: Building a Theology: Integrating Belief, Behavior, and Doctrine in Everyday Life	Common Reading: Building a Theology: Integrating Belief, Behavior, and Doctrine in Everyday Life
23		* 1 Samuel * 2 Samuel 11 First Samuel 12 Second Samuel	* Philemon * Jude 22 Philemon 28 Jude	16 Perspectives on the True Church	Allen 16 The Holy Spirit, the Church, and the Sacraments
24		* 1 Kings * 2 Kings 13 First Kings 1-16 14 First Kings 17-2 Kings 25	* Philippians * Colossians 17 Philippians 18 Colossians	17 A House Divided	Allen 17 Sin, Evil, and Hope for the Future Epilogue
25		* Ezra * Nehemiah 21 Ezra & Nehemiah	* 1 Timothy * 2 Timothy * Titus 21 Pastoral Letters	18 Rome's Renewal	Sedgwick Preface, Introduction 1 Describing the Christian Life 2 An Anglican Perspective
26		* 1 Chronicles * 2 Chronicles 22 The Books of Chronicles	* 1 Thessalonians * 2 Thessalonians 19 1 Thessalonians 20 2 Thessalonians	19 A Worldwide Faith	Sedgwick 3 Incarnate Love 4 Love and Justice
27		* Amos * Hosea 15 Amos & Hosea	* James 24 James	20 Protestant Awakenings	Sedgwick 5 The Practices of Faith 6 The Call of God Appendix
28	Interlude	Common Reading: Countryman, Part I	Common Reading: Countryman, Part I	Common Reading: Countryman, Part I	Common Reading: Countryman, Part I

29	Interlude	Common Reading: Countryman, Part II	Common Reading: Countryman, Part II	Common Reading: Countryman, Part II	Common Reading: Countryman, Part II
30	Unit Five Hearing & Responding to God's Call	Common Reading: Mission, Vocation, & Gifts	Common Reading: Mission, Vocation, & Gifts	Common Reading: Vocation: Hearing and Responding to God's Call	Common Reading: Mission, Vocation, & Gifts
31		* Micah * Isaiah 1-39 Excerpt: Collins on Micah 16 Isaiah	* Galatians 15 Galatians	21 Enlightenment: Ally or Enemy?	Peace, Rose, Mobley Foreword Introduction 1 Encountering the Neighbor
32		* Isaiah 40-66 19 Additions to Isaiah	* 1 Corinthians * 2 Corinthians 13 1 Corinthians 14 2 Corinthians	22 Europe Re-enchanted or Disenchanted?	Peace, Rose, Mobley 2 Viewing Home Anew 3 Redrawing Our Maps
33		* Jeremiah * Lamentations 17 The Babylonian Era	* Ephesians 16 Ephesians	23 To Make the World Protestant	Peace, Rose, Mobley 4 Unpacking Our Belongings 5 Stepping Across the Line
34		* Ezekiel 18 Ezekiel	* 1 John * 2 John * 3 John 27 Johannine Letters	24 Not Peace but a Sword	Peace, Rose, Mobley 6 Finding Fellow Travelers
35		20 Postexilic Prophecy 29 From Tradition to Canon	* The Revelation to John 29 Revelation	25 Culture Wars	Peace, Rose, Mobley 7 Repairing Our Shared World
36	Final Meeting	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration

Notes

1. Common readings at the beginning of each unit are read by all years.
2. Assignments for years one and two marked with an asterisk are readings in the Bible. Chapters in the readings text are numbered. Please note that chapters are sometimes read out of sequence.
3. Readings in the each of the three texts for year four are indicated by name of the author(s).

Provocative Word Method of TR

SELECT THE WORD

Choose a word remarkable for its ability to call up vibrant emotion (scorned, ecstatic, lost, astonished, etc.), and post it on the board for all to reflect on in silence. Then share any revelations on the meaning of the word, anything it denotes or connotes.

ASK THE QUESTIONS

Next, ask the six “journalist’s questions” about the feeling the word conveys:

WHO was involved when you were feeling _____?
(Action...tell the stories from our live)

WHAT image comes to mind about feeling _____?
(Image...explore the metaphor)

WHERE does this come from and WHERE is it found in society?
(Source/Culture)

WHEN does this come up in the Bible, lives of saints, hymns, etc?
(Tradition...explore the world of tradition)

WHY is this manifest in our lives? (Position)

HOW might God redeem any negatives in this (Hope in Christ)

CONSIDER INSIGHTS AND IMPLICATIONS

What have we learned for the next time we feel _____?

WRITE A COLLECT

Use the outline:

Dear God... (naming of God’s aspects)
You... (connect situation of the image to that aspect)
We pray that... (petition of our hearts)
So that... (result we desire)
Amen.

-Method provided by Patricia Bleicher

Session Five, Reading Assignment for Year One

The Priestly Creation Story

The Priestly creation story in Gen. 1-2:4a is one of the shortest and yet most tightly packed theological statements in the Bible. In its present form it dates from the time of the Restoration in the fifth century BCE. It had developed, however, over a much longer period and had been polished smooth by the time P gave it its final working. We must study it line by line in order to unpack the many levels of meaning in it.

Let us go over the main points.

First read **Gen. 1-2:4a**.

Then read again the biblical reference for each point in conjunction with the discussion.

1. God alone is the creator of all, with no divine helpers. The world is not simply shaped by God. (1:1)
2. God creates by speaking; God simply says, “Let there be . . .,” and what is spoken comes to be. (1:3, 6, 9, etc.)
3. God creates light; it is not the gift of the sun, which shines only with the light God has given it. (1:3)
4. God keeps the waters of chaos in their place by calling for a firm dome to keep out the waters that are above and by gathering the waters below into the seas so that the dry land appears. (1:6<N>10)
5. The heavenly bodies—sun, moon, planets, and stars—which were thought to be gods by many cultures in the ancient Near East, are only creatures of God. (1:14-18)
6. The earth shares in the task of creation, though only at God’s command: the earth brings forth vegetation. The waters also bring forth sea creatures and the earth, animal life, but not in the same way as the earth brings forth vegetation. God creates the higher forms of life. (1:11, 20-21, 24-25)
7. God creates humankind in God’s own image and gives it dominion over all the creation. (1:26)
8. God creates humankind male and female, and this fact is connected closely with humankind’s creation in the divine image. (1:27)
9. God blesses humankind with sexuality and the gift of children. (1:28)
10. The final work of creation is God’s rest on the seventh day. (2:2)

Even from this brief outline we can see some of the things that were on the mind of the author. First, one important aspect of this story cannot be seen in most English translations. Grammatically, the Hebrew begins in the middle of a sentence. What could this mean? Is it a mistake? Was the first corner of a manuscript lost? No, there is a theological meaning. Beginning a sentence in the middle is a way of saying, “We do not know what God was doing before our world came into being. Our knowledge cannot pry before the beginning of our world; God’s beginning is unknowable to us.”

Next, it is important to say, above all else, that God is completely different from everything else. Other religions may have said that there were all sorts of divine beings: animal monsters, heavenly bodies, the seas, storms—anything that seemed powerful or mysterious. For the P writer, nothing in the world is divine. Rather, the whole universe is God’s creation. Some religions may have thought of at least part of the universe as being made out of the substance

of the divine, flowing forth out of the god. For P, nothing of God flows into the universe; God is God, and all else that exists is not God and is not divine.

Third, there is no need to look to lesser gods for the fertility of the earth. Vegetable crops and animals are included in God's design for the world, and the earth brings forth her increase at God's command. The worship of Baals (fertility gods), with all the gross practices that went with it, is not necessary; indeed to worship them would be to deny the power of the one Creator.

Fourth, the whole creation leads up to the creation of humanity. Life has not been created in order to provide playthings for the gods nor to act as slave-servants to the gods. Humanity, man and woman, is created to be God's representative in governing creation. It is a position of great dignity and worth.

Each of these points was important in the life of Israel. She had been chosen to be God's people; God had made a covenant with her and had promised that, through Israel, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. The covenant was the basis for all of Israel's religious faith. After the Israelites had settled in Canaan, they were tempted and led away from God to the worship of the Baals and the *astral deities*—the sun, moon, planets, and stars—which the other nations worshiped. The prophets constantly tried to overcome the worship of these false gods so that Israel would be faithful to the covenant. When the northern kingdom was destroyed and the leaders of Judah (the southern kingdom) were carried into exile, the warnings of the prophets were shown to have been correct. Thus we can see the P writer—in the circumstance of exile—expressing in this story the true dignity of humankind and the complete sovereignty of God as these facts had been learned in Israel's life and taught by the prophets. All of what Israel stood for was expressed by the covenant. This was how Israel knew God; God was the God who had made the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and who had sealed it at Sinai through Moses. This God, and this God alone, had created the nation of Israel, and this God alone had created the heavens and the earth and all things.

The creation story expresses the faith of Israel learned by her experience as the people of God's covenant. Just as God had made Israel God's people at Sinai, so also God had made all of humanity in God's own image at creation. Both the covenant story and the creation story say the same thing: God has given humanity dignity and worth and dominion; therefore, the creation story reaches its climax in the creation of humankind.

The P author does not end the story with the creation of humanity. The final day of creation is not the sixth, on which human beings are created, but the seventh, on which God rests. This rest does not mean only a mere recuperation from the exhaustion of creation. Rather it is a cessation of regular work in order to enjoy the fruits of that labor. God rests in order to enjoy creation. The P author, with special interest in the *cult*—the practices of worship—leads us to the practice of the Sabbath. This is not, however, a contradiction of what we have just said about the creation of humanity as the climax. The covenant, the basis of Israel's faith in the dignity of all people, is what the Sabbath is all about. The Sabbath is the celebration of the covenant. Therefore, the story leads to two ends, both of which refer to the same central point of Israel's faith: (1) God's gift of life and authority—a people under God—and (2) the Sabbath, which is the celebration of this people under God through the covenant.

You are not expected at this point in your studies to be able to feel all that is involved in the covenant. The point you should be able to grasp at this stage is that the P creation story sums up the experience of Israel and is not a simple childish story. You will come back to this story again and again, and the more you become familiar with the rest of the Old Testament, the more you will feel the power of it. Now look back again to the beginning of the story, and we will go over it more closely.

This verse, which looks so simple in the English translation, is very strange in the Hebrew because it begins mid-sentence. The text can be translated, carrying it on through verse three, in several ways. (1) "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness. . . ." (2) "When God began to create the heavens and the earth, the earth was without form and void, and darkness. . . ." (3) "In the beginning of God's creating of the heavens and the earth (when) the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the wind of God was moving over the face of the waters—God said, 'Let there be. . ..'" None of these translations really fits the text as we have it, but each one is possible. Somewhat closer might be to start with an ellipsis ". . ." and then use the wording of option 3 above.

What difference would it make which translation we pick? Some people have argued that if we use the first one, there is nothing before God creates. God creates the heavens and the earth, and they are formless and empty until God then shapes and fills them. While it is fine theology to believe God created from nothing—*ex nihilo* is the Latin phrase which is used—Genesis 1 does not make such a claim. If we take the second or third translation, there is already a formless empty abyss and God begins to create; God shapes and fills a chaos that already existed.

Later theology, especially Christian theology, has insisted that God created out of nothing not simply as a way of choosing one of these translations over the other. Theologians have been trying to oppose a point of view which was very common in the world of the first few centuries of the Christian era and is still very much with us. This point of view is called *dualism*. It says that there are two aspects of the world: the material and the nonmaterial, sometimes called the "spiritual." The material is usually regarded as less good, sometimes evil. Theologians have not wanted to say that there was something, anything, already existing when God began creation, because this already existing something, chaos, could be used by the dualists to refer to matter, the material stuff, which God shaped. They could then say that this matter is the source of evil. So the theologians said that God created *ex nihilo*, out of nothing; anything and everything that is, matter included, is created by God and is good. You can begin to see here that many beliefs, many truths, are not stated explicitly by every biblical passage on a similar theme.

Dualism had a great effect on the thinking of the early church. It came from eastern roots. In Persia the religion of Zoroastrianism taught that there were two gods, one evil and one good. The good god was the god of light; the evil god, the god of darkness. (The name of the god of light, Mazda, is known to many people although they may not know where it originated.) A man named Mani, who was greatly influenced by Zoroastrianism, developed a religion, dualistic in nature, which prescribed ways of combating the power of the material world and escaping into the world of spirit and light. His religion, called usually *Manichaeism*, flourished in the third and fourth centuries, especially in North Africa, and influenced many Christians. St. Augustine, one of the greatest theologians of the church, was a Manichee before he converted to Christianity.

The teachings of the great pre-Christian philosopher Plato have also led to dualistic conclusions. Plato taught that, although individual things in this world come and go—they are born and they die, they come into being and they decay—there lie behind the individual things the *ideas* of them. There are many individual trees, each different to some degree from the others and each destined to die and decay, but each is a partial representation of the idea Tree. The idea contains all that it is possible for a tree to be; it is complete and single, not needing many separate examples of itself to express its completeness; it lasts forever, eternally existing while the individual representations of it come and go. Why Plato said this, what problems he was trying to understand, we shall look at later. The fact that he said it, however, allowed people of a later time—during the third through the fifth centuries CE—to develop a religion that was dualistic in a much more subtle and sophisticated way than was Manichaeism. The *Neo-Platonists* taught that the ultimate *One* lies beyond all things, and it is impossible to speak of that One at all. The *via negativa* is all that is possible. From the One all the rest of the universe emanates as light emanates, flows, or shines from a light bulb or a candle. The farther away from the source, the less like the One a thing becomes, until finally, at the farthest remove, there is matter. A human being, according to Neo-Platonism, is really spirit, akin to the One, but the spirit is trapped in a material body. Below humanity there is no spirit; all is merely material. Only by mystical exercises can humankind rise above the material body and reach union with the One. This point of view has influenced much of Christian piety. Augustine was also a Neo-Platonist before becoming a Christian.

Whatever the correct translation of this verse may be, theologians were right in thinking that the Old Testament opposed dualism. The Hebrews did *not* make a distinction between matter and “spirit.” As we shall see in the JE creation story, the first human being is made from the dust of the earth and has life breathed into him so that he becomes “a living being.” The entire creature, without division into body and spirit, is a living being. When the Christian church said that Jesus is the word of God made flesh, it also spoke against any kind of dualism.

This is why many theologians prefer the reading of verse one which says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” But there is no way to decide on the basis of the text itself. The P writer has other ways of dealing with the problem of dualism.

Whichever way you translate the first verse, when the earth appears it is without form and void—that is, it is chaotic, empty of all form, design, or meaning—and darkness is upon the face of “the deep.” “The deep” is a translation of the Hebrew word *tehom*. Behind this word there lies a whole mythic tradition. In the ancient world of the Mesopotamian basin there existed a story of the creation of the world by means of a great battle between a warrior god and a dragon, a sea-monster, who represented watery *chaos*. To many peoples who lived in desert lands far from the sea, the sea was fearsome. Its great storms were powerful and destroyed ships and houses built close to the shores. Stories of sea monsters were told by returning sailors. So “the deep,” the waters of the sea with its monsters, was a symbol of chaos to the ancient people.

The Babylonian creation myth is a long story about the birth of various gods and about the eventual conflict between the god Marduk and the goddess Tiamat. In the course of the conflict, Tiamat is slain, and it is from her body that the firmament, the great dome of heaven, is made. It is worth noting here that the name Tiamat is closely related linguistically to *tehom*. By slaying

Tiamat, the chaos monster, the monster of the deep, Marduk makes it possible for order to reign.

Much has been made of the common background out of which the Babylonian and the Hebrew creation stories come. The differences between the stories are more important—and more instructive—than their similarities. The Babylonian myth is an involved story of the birth of the gods and of the struggles among them for supremacy. Human beings are created almost as an afterthought, to serve as slaves for the gods, tending the earth so that the gods might have leisure. In the P story, the reference to “the deep” is virtually the sole remnant of this older myth. There is no birth of God; God is there before the story begins. Only by taking a broad meaning of myth as we have done can the P story be called a myth at all. P has stripped the narrative of all features of a “story about the gods” and has reduced it to a statement of doctrine, using the older myth as a framework only. By using an older framework with which people were familiar, the writer is also able to “start where they are” and show them greater truth.¹²

¹² *Education for Ministry* <M> *Year One: Old Testament*, 4th edition, ed. Patricia Bays (Sewanee, Tennessee: The University of the South, 2006), 29-46.

Tips for First Storytelling

➤ ***Tell a story about why you do what you do, love what you love, care about what you care about.***

Be Specific

Talk about what actually happened. It helps to begin stories with “One time...” or “I remember a time when...”

Be Descriptive

Use images, feelings and places to provide texture, color, and thick description to your story. Use the 5Ws: who, what, when, where and why

Be Self Reflective

What was the occasion of your discovering that *this* was what you loved, cared about, or loved doing?

Was there anyone with whom you shared this discovery?

How did it feel to know this about yourself?

Tips for First Hearing of Another’s Story

Undivided Attention

Make eye contact with the storyteller and give him or her your full attention as if there was nothing else more important than listening to his/her story.

Holy Listening

Listen reverently as if you were in the presence of the Holy and witness the truth of this sacred story. Hold the space with your presence and receive the precious gift in this story. Imagine you are listening with God’s ears.

Journaling

As you journal: What images, key words, or phrases stand out as meaningful to you? Is there a question you might ask your partner that would move the conversation deeper into “the heart of the matter?” What did you enjoy or find yourself wondering about?

Tips for Second Storytelling

☞ Tell a story about a time when you found a note to sing that was unique and God-given, a time when you heard the echo of the Word in your life.

Be Specific

Talk about what actually happened. It helps to begin stories with “One time...” or “I remember a time when...”

Be Descriptive

Use words, images, feelings and places to provide texture and color to your story description. Cover the 5Ws: Who, what when, where and why

Be Self Reflective

Where was I? What was I doing?

What happened? Was there any risk or challenge in claiming this inner harmony?

Were there any companions in this discovery? Anyone you could share this joy with you?

Tips for Second Hearing of Another’s Story

Undivided Attention

Make eye contact with the storyteller and give him or her your full attention as if there was nothing else more important than listening to his/her story.

Holy Listening

Listen reverently as if you were in the presence of the Holy and witness the truth of this sacred story. Hold the space with your presence and receive the precious gift in this story. Imagine you are listening with God’s ears.

Journaling

As you journal: What images, key words, or phrases stand out as meaningful to you? Is there a question you might ask your partner that would move the conversation deeper into “the heart of the matter?” What did you enjoy or find yourself wondering about?

Adapted from Fund for Theological Education’s FTE Guide to VocationCARE © 2012, pp. 18-19

RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

R = take RESPONSIBILITY for what you say and feel without blaming others

E = use EMPATHETIC listening

S = be SENSITIVE to differences in communication styles

P = PONDER what you hear and feel before you speak

E = EXAMINE your own assumptions and perceptions

C = keep CONFIDENTIALITY

T = TRUST ambiguity because we are *not* here to debate who is right or wrong

(from The Bush Was Blazing but Not Consumed by Eric H. F. Law)

I agree to uphold these guidelines for the time we have together.

SIGNATURE

DATE

Modules 3–7 • Summer 2010 • PAGE 3

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