

Exodus: A Journey into the Hebraic Roots Movement through HIStory, Music,  
and Auto/Ethnography

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Master of Arts in Liberal Arts  
by Sharon Barrett  
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Author's Note

I dedicate this project with love to my parents, John and Juleanne Barrett. You guided me from childhood in the fear of the Most High, which is the beginning of wisdom. Thank you for supporting me on my journey through school and life.

All text, music, lyrics, and arrangements are the property of Sharon Barrett, 2015, unless otherwise noted. The contents of *Exodus*, unless otherwise noted, may be freely shared and given away as long as credit is given to the author(s), but may not be sold, nor reproduced or distributed in any way that violates applicable laws of the United States or other countries.

To download music or to learn more about my academic work, you are invited to visit <https://sharonbarrettsoprano.wordpress.com>.

All Scripture quotations and paraphrases, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the King James Bible (public domain).

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*I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. Ps. 119:32*

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Reader's Note<sup>1</sup>

As you explore *Exodus*, you will notice that I write, speak, and sing in a mixture of styles (“speech registers”), from a high scholarly tone to an informal first-person tone. By mixing registers, I seek to show how I have been influenced by a variety of people, ideas, literature, and scholarly methods. This effect is called “interpenetration of voices” (Hamera, 2006, p. 14). I also use some words in unique ways; when that happens, I draw attention to the word by giving it an unusual spelling or dividing it in an unusual place. (For instance, in the title, the word “HIStory” emphasizes my belief that we understand history best by seeing it from God’s point of view.)

On this site, *Exodus* is posted as a [blog series](#) and a [downloadable .pdf](#) (please respect copyright laws). If you are interested in the history or music of the Hebraic Roots Movement, start with Movement II: “[Hemshechiyut: Continuity.](#)” If you are interested in my first-person experiences in the HRM, skip to Movement IV: “[Shuv: Change.](#)” If you just want to listen to my music, you can browse [elsewhere on this site](#) or visit my [music site](#)<sup>2</sup>, my [YouTube channel](#)<sup>3</sup>, or my [PsalmPlace page](#)<sup>4</sup>. Or keep reading, and you’ll find links to songs within each blog post.

Enjoy!

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<sup>1</sup> This explanatory note will be displayed on my website, <https://sharonbarrettsoprano.wordpress.com/>, where *Exodus* will be uploaded (with adjustments to content and format) as a series of richly hyperlinked blog posts and music videos. Throughout *Exodus*, I am conscious of the challenge of creating discourse that bridges the chasm between scholarly and popular audiences, in keeping with Conquergood’s (2002) “travel between two different domains of knowledge” (p. 145).

<sup>2</sup> <https://teshuvahmusic.wordpress.com/music/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCb7Q7Bo\\_gF04c9vc5QA6n5g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCb7Q7Bo_gF04c9vc5QA6n5g)

<sup>4</sup> <https://psalmplace.com/teshuvahmusic>

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## First Blessing

*Bris: Covenant*שמע<sup>5</sup>

*Exodus* is a performed prayer in five movements, framed by two additional “blessings” for a total of seven sections.<sup>6</sup> It explores the social, emotional, and spiritual processes of a religious conversion, as I account for my journey from evangelical Christian, to Hebraic Roots follower of the Messiah, to...what am I now? We will find out when we get there. For now, my aim is this: to remember.<sup>7</sup>

BERRY (2008, Proem): *Heavenly Muse, Spirit who brooded on  
The world and raised it shapely out of nothing,  
Touch my lips with fire and burn away  
All dross of speech, so that I keep in mind  
The truth and end to which my words now move  
In hope....  
.....  
...And in my exile's journey far  
From home, be with me, so I may return.*

Along this road, I interact with history and historiography, musicology and liturgical studies, theology, performance studies, and ethnography, weaving together “concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 209) into an intimate portrayal of the Hebraic Roots Movement(s) (HRM) and my relationship to it/them. An exodus is a coming “out” of one way of life (or *lifeway*) and “in” to another. By inter/acting with the identities I have “tried on” during this process, I illustrate the self-dispossession that occurs when one is *liminal* (floating “in between” identities or standing “outside” a cultural insider group) and “on the way” (for indeed, I have not yet arrived).

<sup>5</sup> Each of the seven sections is “inscribed” with one word from the central affirmation of Jewish/Hebraic faith: *Sh'ma, Yisra'el, YHWH (Adonai) Elohenu, YHWH (Adonai) echad* (“Hear, O Israel, the LORD your God, the LORD is one”). To *sh'ma* (“listen,” “guard,” or “keep”) is also to “remember.”

<sup>6</sup> the number of completion or perfection, as in the Genesis creation week

<sup>7</sup> See Wendell Berry, *Remembering: A Novel* (2008).

## Reading *Exodus*

*Exodus* is constructed in a seven-part chiasm or “menorah pattern” (Moody, 2014, p. 4). Each movement also has its own internal chiastic structure.<sup>8</sup> This design, based on a mnemonic device used in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, serves several purposes. It tells a story with overlapping musical and textual motives. It also modifies the traditional five-part research study into a unique artistic form. It illustrates the nature of the conversion narrative as a series of concentric circles, spiraling toward a common center. Finally, it shows how the Messiah problem (“*Who do you say I AM?*”) is central to Hebraic Roots identity and my identity.

The text features an “interpenetration of voices” (Hamera, 2006, p. 14) from historians, communication scholars, music artists, theologians, leaders and lay critics of the HRM, and co-participants. It also features conflicting speech registers as I come to terms with multiple identities, attempting to establish my unique “voice” as Barrett, S., *scholar*, and as Sharon, *person*. Frequently, I “break through the fourth wall”<sup>9</sup> and speak directly to the reader. As I explore the dialogic and artistic possibilities of reflexive writing, I speak sometimes to you; sometimes to myself; and sometimes to God.<sup>10</sup>

*Your life is hid with Christ in God  
Therefore place your mind on heavenly things  
Where Yeshua is seated at the Father's right hand  
And has given us all spiritual blessings*<sup>11</sup>

## Remembrances

<sup>8</sup> The order of the parts is shaped by the steps of the conversion journey. The whole can be summed up in the word *yakach*, “conviction” (to prove, convince, “reason together,” Isa. 1:18).

<sup>9</sup> This theatre term refers to moments when the performer disregards the imaginary separation between actor and audience.

<sup>10</sup> I refer variously to “God,” “G-d,” “YHWH,” “Father,” “Abba,” and more. This illustrates my (current) ambiguity and the multiple voices from my spiritual past and present.

<sup>11</sup> Every fragment of music in *Exodus* will be published in audio/video recording and/or sheet music form on my website, <https://sharonbarrettsoprano.wordpress.com/exodus/>. For music/lyric credits, see my website.

In Hebrew, “to bless” is *barak*, literally “to kneel.” “When we bless God or others, we are in essence, bringing a gift on bended ‘knee’” (Jeff A. Benner, [http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/12\\_blessing.html](http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/12_blessing.html); see also Werner, 1959). *Exodus*, then, is my gift (*berakah*, “blessing”) to others, as they have given to me. To all who have provided academic, musical, or technical help; prayed for me; or otherwise supported my journey, I offer profoundest thanks.<sup>12</sup>

In particular:

Dr. Mark Saka suffered long with me, believing I could finish this project;

Dr. Donald Freed helped me find my voice again;

Dr. Joseph Velasco taught me by example to listen with loving attention;

Dr. Daniel Sundahl allowed me to go off the reservation;

Dr. Nathan Schlueter introduced me to the “economy of giftedness”;

Prof. Renee Clark encouraged me to study the ballads of the Sephardim;

Dr. Richard Gamble introduced me to the “spiral” view of history;

Dr. Stephen Smith taught me that stories lead the soul, for good or ill;

Prof. Don Westblade encouraged me not to give up on the knotty theological questions (even when they caused me tears and sleepless nights);

Lisa Melton, Sean Bell, Debi Wyse, Amy C. Ley, Melissa Osmond, Prof. Jim Holleman, and Dr. Mathew Fuerst invested (each in his/her own way) in my growth as a musician;

Rick Haymaker, Samantha Gobba (*née* Gilman), Gabby Denham (*née* Nussbaum), Prof. Bret Scott, and the late Arthur Thomas assisted with sound and video recording;

Kenna McKenzie and T. Elliot Gaiser assisted me musically;

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<sup>12</sup> The elevated repetition of this “blessing” is patterned after a liturgy or responsive prayer. It names the “gift” that each individual brought to *Exodus* or to the process leading up to it.

Paul and Julie Wiseman contributed research suggestions and hosted me on an ethnographic trip;

Dr. Pete Blum permitted me to quote from “Traditions in Sociological Research”;

Dr. Darryl G. Hart taught me to examine evangelicalism from a critical perspective;

Dr. Bob Blackstock explored with me how our Western, Judeo-Christian heritage affirms the social justice;

Rev. Carolyn Metzler invited me to share music from *Exodus* during Holy Week 2015;

The late Dr. Dennis Kinlaw impacted my life immeasurably by serving as my father’s seminary advisor and shaping him in the Wesleyan Holiness tradition.

I also owe a great debt to the following people:

My co-participants in the Mayim Hayim, Beit HaMidrash, and Beit HaDerekh congregations;

Jeff Blake (piano fixer extraordinaire!), Barbara Bigard, Amanda Calhoun, Dr. Larry Guerrero, Dr. Michael Jordan, Dr. Dedra Birzer, Dr. Esther Rumsey, Prof. Judith Parsons, Dr. Pat Fagan, Prof. Chris Dobbins, Mrs. LaRae Adams, Carol Greer, Sandy Bogus, and Barbara Williams;

Innumerable friends at churches across the United States, including Hillsdale Free Methodist Church, Pecos First United Methodist Church, Toyah Methodist Church, Center Street United Methodist Church, and St. James Episcopal Church;

Loved ones and prayer partners, including Paul and Rachel (“R.C.”) Griebenow, John and Juleanne Barrett, Gary and Judy Hubbard, Charles and Margaret DeMaris, Bob and Carol Haviland, Heather Olson, Clarah Black, Georgia Whitfield, Margaret Freeland, Amanda



Rogozinski (*née* Johnson), Antonina Kerner, Les and Oralee Robbins, Jeramie Medrano, Rob and Carol Jacoby, Irvaleen Ogiltrie, and Marilyn Gibbons;

and Ryan Jacoby, who chose to be my “vulnerable, willing partner” in life and music.

*Your life is hid with Christ in God  
Therefore place your mind on heavenly things  
Where Yeshua is seated at the Father's right hand  
And has given us all spiritual blessings*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The text of *Exodus* is meant to be *experienced*, not just read. In an effort to press the boundaries of format, it is designed for multiple venues: concert recital, social media, impromptu song session, religious service, dramatic rendering, teaching presentation, soundtrack, and more. Like the *Amidah*, Judaism's ancient “standing” prayer, it may be abbreviated or adapted for future performance and publication.

Finally, *Exodus* does not end here. Just as we construct our identities throughout our lives, I am continually re/constructing my story by adding and revising music and text(s).<sup>13</sup> To see this evidence of a life in process, visit my blog:

<https://sharonbarrettsoprano.wordpress.com/exodus-the-ongoing-journey/>.<sup>14</sup>

*Keywords:* identity, social construction, religious conversions, Hebraic Roots Movement, Messianic Judaism, Christianity, performance studies, autoethnography, narrative, monotheism, sacred music, liturgy, reflexive writing, spirituality

<sup>13</sup> “Autoethnographies connect ethnography, culture, and performance and ought to be ‘thought of as processes, as events, in short, as acts rather than artifacts’ (Lockford, 2002, p. 91)” (Pensoneau-Conway, S.L., & Toyosaki, S., 2011, p. 386).

<sup>14</sup> This web address is current as of April 6, 2015.

## Movement I

### *Sichah: Conversation*

ישראל<sup>15</sup>

*Why is this night  
Different from all others  
Why do we celebrate?*

*My child, this night  
Is when the plague passed over  
For deliverance we'd prayed---*

*We hid inside  
With blood our doorposts covered  
By YHWH's chosen Lamb we're saved*

### Story

***Listen!** far and near throughout the world we have heard worthies tell of the decrees of Moses and of exilic promises to the generations of mortals – of the reward of life in heaven for each of the blessed after the hazardous journey, and of everlasting profit for each living soul. Here I am, I have come to do Your will, O My God. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. **Shema**, Yisrael, your Redeemer liveth, and in the flesh shall you see your God. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hands of the Egyptians. And they will look on the One they have pierced – the Author and Pioneer of our salvation. Here am I, with the children You have given me. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. “Let him who will, give heed.” **Shema**...listen! (Psalm 40:7; Exodus 14:22, 30; Exodus, Bradley, 1982, p. 51; Job 19:26; Heb. 2:13, 12:2; Isa. 8:18; Zech. 12:10; John 19:37; Rev. 15:3).*

<sup>15</sup> *Sh'ma, Yisra'el*. Another sense of *sichah*, in the form *sekhocheakh*, is “to have a chat” (<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:http://ktzat-ivrit.ulpan.com/2011/07/another-way-of-saying-to-talk-in-hebrew.html>). Imagine you are pulling up a chair on my porch.

In the closing meditation of his epic *Constantine's Sword* (2001), novelist James Carroll writes, "Human history is a story told by God" (p. 615). Stories surround us. We tell stories to comfort, to inspire, to instill moral values and impart knowledge. Clifford Geertz (Hamera, 2006, p. 13) defined culture as an "ensemble of texts" that we read like a storybook. Ellis and Bochner (2003) write that we use story "to achieve a coherent sense of ourselves," resting everything we are "so tenderly and fallibly on the story we use to link birth to life to death (MacIntyre, 1981)" (p. 220). When we know another person's story, we gain a fuller sense of self by attaching our own life's thread to that peg...and another...and another. We find ourselves (re)telling our stories even to ourselves, seeking a reminder of our identity, something solid that will not be moved in our ever-moving world of fluid loyalties and fragile hearts.

**Teaching.** Since "a[.]utoethnographies attempt to make social science something more than an end in itself" (Bochner, 2012, p. 155), a conversion narrative has a didactic purpose (Barrett, 2014a): for the convert, who reinforces his/her identity; for the catechumen, who learns his/her new identity; and for the curious (the "seeker," Webber, 1999). The "Seventh-day Men" of seventeenth-century England believed Sabbath-keeping was "a 'preservative against atheism'" (Ball, 2009, p. 16). Today, is it not equally important to recall the story of a people whom God "called out" into relationship with Himself?<sup>16</sup> With the "postmodern turn" away from impersonal objectivity, rationalism, and the modern scientific method in favor of subjective, individual values, Western thought "re/turned" to the power of narrative and the connection between emotions and the body, but also "went astray" from acknowledging any reference point for

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<sup>16</sup> Here I speak in the voice of a believer/cholar. Throughout, I avoid awkward conventions such as "Godself," as I have a responsibility to be faithful to the Text with which I am interacting, which invariably employs "He" and "His." Use of the masculine personal pronoun is not meant to imply that the Creator of heaven and earth is male.

t/Truth outside the individual, emotional body. In telling my story, I attempt to bridge this gap. Can a conversion narrative *lead the soul* (Sharon,<sup>17</sup> quoting Stephen Smith, 2007) to T/ruth?<sup>18</sup>

*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope (Rom. 15:4). Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the LORD (Ps. 102:18).*

**Telling.** In simplest terms, a story is a “telling.”<sup>19</sup> My story is not mine alone. It is the story of a people, and the story of their God. It is the telling of how they have struggled to make sense of His claims on their corporate and individual lives, and of the “sojourners” who have found a home with them. If you have an interest in religion and spirituality, or if you want to learn more about the emerging disciplines of auto/ethnography and performance studies, you likely will find material here that relates to you. Writers of personal narratives seek to illuminate “some aspect of life...connect to other participants as co-researchers, and invite readers to enter the world of the writer” in order to use “what they learn there to reflect on, understand and cope with their own lives” (Ellis, 2004, p. 46, in Morrow, 2012, p. 8). Regardless of your background, you may find a nugget here that helps you answer a question in your own life or even gives you strength to make a needed change (see Bochner, 2012). If you have ears, I invite you to “hear” (Matthew 11:15)!

*Avram avinu, padre querido  
Padre bendicho, luz de Israel  
Our father Abraham, beloved patriarch  
Our blessed father, the light of Israel*

<sup>17</sup> I am “Sharon” when quoting a journal entry, a personal conversation, or class notes; I cite myself as “Barrett” when quoting a course paper that I hope to prepare for publication.

<sup>18</sup> See *Artist’s Statement I* (pp. 16-17), where I explain my multiple renderings of this word.

<sup>19</sup> Zemer Levav, “The Telling: Official Version,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCPpl6ZKvD8>. Throughout, when alluding to YouTube videos and similar material, I cite the link in a footnote.

At the same time, many questions I address in the course of my telling have primary relevance to an audience of Christians, Jews, and other Abrahamic monotheists; if you consider yourself one of the above, I direct the results of my inquiry to you, in case you are asking the same questions I have asked. The Hebraic Roots Movement(s)<sup>20</sup> have/has electrified evangelical Christians<sup>21</sup> over the past two decades with a narrative that allows non-Jewish believers to “join with Israel” not merely by professing faith in Israel’s God, but by adopting the identity markers of the Chosen People. Is the basis of the HRM faulty scholarship, destined to crumble like chaff in the wind? When Gentile believers attempt to worship Yeshua in a “Hebraic” manner, are they/we<sup>22</sup> usurpers, pretenders, who threaten to steal Jewish identity via reverse assimilation? Are they/we heretics, Judaizers, who threaten the Church by introducing *another gospel* (Gal. 1:6) of “law” rather than “grace”? On the other hand, if the arguments for Torah observance on the part of “grafted-in” Gentiles<sup>23</sup> are solidly based in historical fact and biblical criticism, they deserve the scrutiny of every person who claims Moses as his/her Teacher or Jesus as his/her Messiah. *What shall we do then?* (Luke 3:10, Acts 2:37).

*Shema...listen.*

Listen...to the unmusical clash of scholarly dialects.<sup>24</sup> To the gaping silence when the authorities I trust run out of answers and so do I. To what historian Lionel Trilling (1950, p. 206-207) calls “a culture’s hum and buzz of implication”:

[the] half-uttered or unuttered or unutterable expressions of value. They are hinted at by small actions, sometimes by the arts of dress or decoration, sometimes by tone, gesture,

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<sup>20</sup> hereafter, HRM

<sup>21</sup> See p. 74 and 113 for a definition of E/evangelical that relies on Warner-Colaner (n.d.).

<sup>22</sup> I use both “we” and “they” to signify (1) the fact that I seek to understand the HRM from both inside (subjective) and outside (objective) and (2) my role uncertainty as a complete(?)-member researcher.

<sup>23</sup> E.g. as presented at <http://www.answeringchristianobjections.com/>.

<sup>24</sup> This extends even to citation styles. I maintain the conventions of APA style (in-text parenthetical citations), while employing footnotes for detailed explanations and ironic asides to the reader.

emphasis, or rhythm, sometimes by the words that are used with a special frequency or a special meaning.

Perhaps, somewhere in the midst, we will hear.

***Dueling disciplines.*** I take a risk by addressing theological-historical questions via auto/ethnography, reflexive-evocative writing, and sung-composed musical performance. Mixing the objective with the subjective? Ordinarily such mixture is taboo. *How can these things be?* (Luke 1:34).

Trilling (1950, p. 206) gives us a hint:

Some of the charm of the past consists of the quiet – the great distracting buzz of implication has stopped and we are left only with what has been fully phrased and precisely stated. And part of the melancholy of the past comes from our knowledge that the huge, unrecorded hum of implication was once there and left no trace.

The historian analyzes the past using written records: letters, census records, royal decrees. What is missing from the archives, however, is the feel of a linen tunic or haircloth shirt; the savor of incense wafting up from an altar; the pitch of a master's voice to a slave; the way men and women looked at each other (or dared not look), in the street or in the house.

From letters and diaries, from the remote, unconscious corners of the great works themselves, we try to guess what the sound of the multifarious implication was and what it meant (p. 206).

Sensory details and social cues are equally missing from the Biblical Text. The writers did not bother to record them because, to their ears, the “hum and buzz of implication” was so close as to

go unnoticed. In other words, it was *familiar*. Likewise, when we “listen” to the Text, we may hear it through our own familiar “hum,” rather than as they intended it to be heard.<sup>25</sup>

Environment is everything. “Remember: ‘A fish doesn’t know what water is!’” (Sharon, quoting Joseph Velasco, 2014). Doing auto/ethnography is teaching me to *defamiliarize the familiar*: to observe my own environment with such attentiveness that I begin to perceive those unstated implications, then to bring that same loving attention to another culture or another time, straining every sense to imagine the environment as it was, the lived experience that was context to the Text. Mixing disciplines allows me to tell a richer story, “buzzing” with the implications of lived experience.

***Communication: inscribing experience.*** Autoethnography is a “highly personalized account that draws upon the experience of the author or researcher for the purpose of extending sociological understanding” (Sparkes, 2000, p. 21, in Morrow, 2012, p. 6). In keeping with the impetus of the postmodern (and “post-postmodern,” Krüger, 2010, p. 68) turn toward finding truth in cultural norms rather than propositional claims, I explore the ways in which the T/ruth I have found is embodied in the “lived experiences” of the “others” I encounter – whether our beliefs and practices match or not – and in my interior life as I reflect on what I see embodied in others’ lives and what I hear in the stories they tell.

### ***Artist’s Statement I***

*I render the word “truth” in multiple ways throughout this telling. truth signifies a generic proposition or value system (one that may be culturally constructed). t/Truth refers to a proposition/value system that has moral implications for the individual who adopts it (and that may carry the connotation of “universal t/Truth”). Finally, T/ruth*

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<sup>25</sup> I speak here in the voice of a religious believer, not just a historian.

*represents the personal/experiential and simultaneously universal/ontological reality that I embrace in the Person of Yeshua haMashiach/Jesus the Christ, visible “face” of the Invisible God (Parsons, M., 2005), who is blessed forever, amen (Rom. 1:25), and which I affirm as superior to all propositions and value systems...just as to experience John sitting across from you is better than to say, “I believe John is in the other room,” or to say, “I like John,” while he is in the other room (see Kinlaw, 2005, and Moen, 2008). I divide the word as T/**ruth** in order to highlight the relational activity of the Creator as He intersects our lives: **ruth**, in Hebrew, means “friendship.”*

In this work, auto/ethnography is a means of narrating my experiential encounter with p/Personal T/ruth; it is also a means of gaining access to the stories of others, by reflexively analyzing the cultural norms I have encountered via ethnographic observation. Ellis, Adams, & Bochner (2010) present auto/ethnography as a form of writing that attempts to “systematically analyze (*graphy*) personal experience (*auto*) in order to understand cultural experience (*ethno*)” (cited in Morrow, 2012, p. 6, emphasis added). I have used the techniques of auto/ethnography for precisely this purpose here. In my narration of the Hebraic Roots Movement(s), which relies on previous research papers (Barrett 2011, Barrett 2012, Barrett 2013, Barrett 2014a, Barrett 2014b) and exhaustive searches of HRM-related internet materials, I seek to illustrate two things: how a diversified culture has grown up around the “roots” of the HRM narrative, and how I live in relationship (often in dialectical tension) with that culture, resulting in conflicting identities and a state of *liminality*<sup>26</sup> that I am learning to accept and to name out loud. Throughout, I render the term as “auto/ethnography” to signify that the self can never be fully divided from his/her environment, but that every glance inward is a reflection – even a commentary – on how the outward context has shaped, and continues to shape, the self (compare Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

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<sup>26</sup> best described as “in-betweenness”



*Avram avinu, padre querido  
Padre bendicho, luz de Israel*

**Music: inscribing culture.** Auto/ethnographic texts can take almost any form. My text weaves together several genres, including “photographic [in this case, video] essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing [in this case, song texts and dialogue similar to a film script], and social science prose” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 209), as well as liturgy, devotional poetry, Scripture, and spontaneous prayer.<sup>27</sup> Mixing genres in this way enables me to “show, not just tell” (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p. 200).

The text includes a medley of written, spoken, visual, clothed, gestured, improvised, sung, and instrumental motives. Some were composed alone or in concert with others; some were adapted from the “ensemble of texts” that has been passed down to me; some were drawn directly from HRM identity markers. As a whole, they express my relationship to the Biblical narrative. Music is my primary medium; my musical ensemble of texts ranges from evangelical hymns and praise choruses to Sephardic ballads, Jewish and Gregorian chant, contemporary Messianic worship songs, and beyond.

*In the beauty of holiness  
Worship the LORD  
Enter with thanksgiving  
And come with one accord  
Bring your gifts and offerings  
And sacrifices near  
Worship and praise Him  
The LORD is dwelling here*

---

<sup>27</sup> I take inspiration from existing works, such as Alexander’s (2004) “series of individually labeled autopoetic movements” (p.12); Ellis & Bochner (1992); and Kogut (2005). Without writing a full performance script, I explore the possibilities of dialogue (in the text, through scripted prayer and song texts) and even improvisation (in the music videos, through ad libitum prayer and moments of reflection). I draw further inspiration from Anglo-Saxon devotional poetry (Bradley, 1982). Finally, if you are familiar with Augustine’s *Confessions* and *City of God*, you will note my (conscious and unconscious) homage to these masterworks.

Every line of “text” I incorporate becomes, in one way or another, inscribed into my memory and identity. Even if I disclaim a text as an identity marker, even if I eschew it as a norm because the Text<sup>28</sup> does not sanction it, it is mine in that another follower of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has claimed it. By coming under the “tent” of the same Text, I am, in some way, linked to all of them. Whether this creates a blessed family resemblance, or leads to guilt by association, I am not sure.

*In the beauty of holiness  
Worship the LORD  
In the body of believers  
His Temple is restored  
To stand upon His holy ground  
And see Him face to face  
Bring clean hearts and clean hands  
Into His chosen place*

**History: inscribing a witness.** If I am “showing” you a cultural expression that people create by joining themselves to this narrative, *what is it you have come out to see?* (Matt. 11:7). Deep down, is it what Lowry (1982) calls a myth? That is, does the narrative “embody a people’s perception of the deepest truths, those truths that give purpose, direction, *meaning* to that people’s life” (p. 3), by depicting archetypes from the collective unconscious? Or does it embody truth by portraying events that real people experienced?

Nicholls (1995) claims that Judaism<sup>29</sup> “is rooted in history and cannot be subsumed in timeless myth” (p. 429). It is a historic faith because it makes absolute claims that are grounded in *physical* reality. The Hebraic perspective (as articulated by Moen, 2008; Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz, 1996; Brad Scott, “Hebrew Mind vs. Greek Mind”; and others) has an intriguing affinity to the post-/postmodern emphasis on concrete over abstract, relationship over ownership;

<sup>28</sup> *Text* refers to the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, while *text* refers generically to written, oral, and material messages passed down by a given culture, including the Jewish *Halacha* and major Christian theological traditions.

<sup>29</sup> and, by extension, other traditions that claim the Hebrew Scriptures as Text

even to what Pollock (2006, p. 325) calls the “kinetic values” of ethnographic research, which may require “putting one’s body on the line” either to conduct research or to stand with a marginalized group. “I am not interested in what you *know*. I am interested in what you *do*” (Moen, 2008, p. 45). Faith is a verb; following Abraham’s God is a process that involves the whole body and may require “coming out” of my comfort zone.<sup>30</sup> Where the Hebraic perspective departs from the post-/postmodern is in affirming that what we “do” is based on what God *has done*: “If we are going to hear and obey, we must first understand the absolute reliability of God” (Moen, 2008, p. 56). Rather than rejecting history on the basis that experience alone can deliver truth, the Hebraic mind affirms that historical T/ruth is the basis on which I experientially faith-act.

Nicholls (1995) agrees: “History cannot deliver faith, but it provides the basis for it” (p. 425). Without the foundation of history, what good is the narrative that provides me with an identity? “We look to the *past record of God* to determine His unwavering trustworthiness. That is why the Biblical record constantly reminds us that this is the God Who rescued Israel out of Egypt, the God Who parted the Red Sea and the Jordan” (Moen, 2008, p. 56).

*In the beauty of holiness  
Worship the LORD  
Prophesy and praise Him  
Proclaiming His Word  
By His acts of power He’s proven  
He is mighty to save  
Who led His people out of bondage and  
Redeems you from the grave*

The deepest purpose of telling is to witness to reality: reality as one has experienced it, and as one knows it to be. I assume, with Nicholls (1995), “that history has something to do with faith and therefore with theology” (p. 425). I have an identity because I have a history. I have a

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<sup>30</sup> “So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram *was* seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran” (Gen. 12:4).

history because those who have gone before me have recorded the “happenings” of their experiences with God and preserved them in a written Text. Their “happenings” give substance to my “telling” as the “performative ‘becomes a site of memory’” (Fassett & Morella, n.d., p. 141, quoting Giroux & Shannon, n.d.). My “retellings and ongoing re-creations” (Pollock, 2006, p. 325) are rooted in memory, not archetype. Sinai – the locus of memory – lies between the Land of Bondage and the Land of Promise.

**Talking.** Therefore, as a prelude to telling the story of the HRM, I ground that story in two historical narratives: the Text of Scripture, and the “texts” of western Judeo-Christianity and post/modern American culture. These narratives make up Movement II: “*Hemshechiyut*: Continuity.” Likewise, as a prelude to telling how my identity intersects with the HRM, I ground myself in scholarly methods and in my own strongly rooted beliefs about reality (my *cognitive schema*). This grounding comprises Movement III: “*Yada*’: Confession.” In these preludes, conflicting scholarly views and fragments of my autobiography emerge, foreshadowing the inner conflicts and layered writing of Movements IV (“*Shuv*: Change”) and V (“*Ger*: Conversion”). Talking to/with/against myself helps me see *why* I made certain choices and evaluate which path to follow in the future; thus, my telling is for my own sake.

At the same time, I am mindful of you, my reader. Goodall (2000) asserts that the “new ethnographic writing is constructed out of a writer’s ability to hold an interesting *conversation* with readers” (p. 13, emphasis in original). Recent developments in the field of performance studies make it possible, even desirable, to have a “conversation” via the performing arts, since performance is more and more conceived of as “a way of *creation* and *being* as opposed to the

long held notion of performance as entertainment” (Madison & Hamera, 2005, n.p.). My telling is for your sake.<sup>31</sup>

**Looking backward.** *It is very profitable for Christians to be often calling to mind the very beginnings of Grace with their souls* (John Bunyan, “Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners,” quoted in Bradley, 1982, p. 322). When I tell my story to witness to history, to “show” my culture, or to embody my experience with T/ruth, these are all external goals. Yet the internal goal may be the most valuable of all, and the most intrinsic to the auto/ethnographic endeavor. *Often the man on his own experiences grace, the mercy of the ordaining Lord* (Exodus, Bradley, p. 322). “As [auto/ethnographers] zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and culture become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003a, p. 209, in Morrow, 2012, p. 7) – and, I assert, distinctions between memory and the present become blurred as well. Past experience shapes my outlook on the future, for good or ill. Therefore, my telling is also for my sake. It is a “spiritual exercise” (Bradley, 1982, p. 320) of harkening to memory in order to strengthen the soul. *He bore them and carried them all the days of old, and the angel of His presence saved them* (Isa. 63:9).

**Listening.** “*Here I am, O LORD...ears you have dug for me*” (Ps. 40:6). Listening is one of the primary functions of relationship. In the new ethnography, the attitude toward the reader is “one of love rather than domination and control” (Goodall, 2000, citing Wayne Brockriede, 1972) (p. 14, emphasis in original).<sup>32</sup> This means allowing the co-participant (formerly the

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<sup>31</sup> If you have comments, questions, research, or music you wish to share with me and other readers, I invite you to post at my blog. I take inspiration here from Spencer Burke in *Making Sense of Church: Eavesdropping on Emerging Conversations about God, Community, and Culture* (2003), who tells readers, “This book is not an argument about theology. It’s not even a philosophical discussion. It’s simply a conversation. It’s a conversation about church—The Church” (p. 30). “Listen in—and then let me know what you think. You can post...[at] [www.MakingSenseofChurch.com](http://www.MakingSenseofChurch.com)” (p. 30, in Barrett, 2011, p. 3). I will seek to respond in a timely way and, where appropriate, incorporate your response into future reflections on *Exodus*.

<sup>32</sup> Ellis (2007) writes, “There is a care-giving function to autoethnography” (n.p., in Morrow, 2012, p. 5). This care-giving function has many dimensions. For the scholar who makes, as I do, *spiritual reality* (I prefer this term to the

subject) to play an equal role with the researcher in determining knowledge outcomes and discovering new truths. Auto/ethnography has the capacity to go further, since it situates its investigation within the self, who is both researcher and subject/co-subject, and who shares his/her findings with the reader/listener in order to invite him/her as an “other” into the process of discovery, taking the researcher’s findings and mapping them onto his/her own life and experiences. I invite you to take my findings, compare them to your life, and see what you discover. The practice of listening applies equally to the realm of self-awareness. Sometimes, I reflect on my lived experience and realize I have work to do in developing empathy – for myself. I have had enough of the “domination and control” of being a perfectionist. Other times, my past speaks to my present, telling me clearly I have work to do to become the person I want to be.

**Looking forward.** Last, my telling is for His sake, who allowed the narrative of our sins to be inscribed on His back. Telling carries hints of *oración*...prayer. And what is prayer, but “telling” my story back to Him? Judson Cornwall (1979) writes that God “delights in discussing the everyday events of our lives. He is an expert in all areas of human experience” (p. 9).

### Whose story?

*Who is this Man  
Unlike any other?*

So... *Here I am, LORD* (Psalm 40). Trying to keep the “wheels between the ditches.”<sup>33</sup> Trying to navigate the “messy antics” (Barrett 2014a) and “churchianity” (journal excerpt) of the Hebraic Roots Movement(s). This “hazardous journey” (*Exodus*, p. 51) that You’ve taken me on

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more nebulous *spirituality*) the center of his/her life and work, it extends beyond the giving and receiving of one another’s stories – a sharing of “common grace,” if you will – to the preaching of *Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles* (1 Cor. 1:23). I take a risk in exposing this detail of private life to the “public scrutiny” (Ellis & Bochner, 1992, p. 79) of academia, a culture in which open expression of Judeo-Christian faith is either “foolish” or taboo. To hide my most important subjectivity, however, would be not only dishonest, but quite impossible. My faith colors everything I do and say.

<sup>33</sup> I heard this colloquial saying from my father many times while learning to drive (“keep the wheels between the ditches, and the shiny side up”).

over the past few years has so turned upside-down my perceptions and preconceptions that, frankly, I'm scared. Not to mention I'm scared to be "making intricate details of [my private] life accessible to others in public discourse" (Ellis & Bochner, 1992, p. 79). *Why do you stand there crying to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward* (Moses). *You have engraved me on the palm of Your hands* to show that You are "a God of promises kept" (Moen, 2008, p. 56). I guess I can trust You to help me tell my story...Your story.

***Shema! ...Listen.***

## Movement II

### *Hemshechiyut: Continuity*

<sup>34</sup>יהרה

*Cuando el rey Nimrod al compo salía  
Mirava en el cielo y en la estretería  
Vido una luz santa en la giudería  
Que havia de nacer Avraham avinu  
When King Nimrod went out to the country  
He looked at the sky and the constellations  
He saw a holy light above the Jewish quarters  
That Abraham, our father, will be born  
Avram avinu, padre querido  
Padre bendicho, luz de Israel  
Our father, Abraham, beloved father,  
Blessed Father, light of Israel*

*Saludemos agora al señor parido,  
Que le sea besiman-tov este nacido  
Eliahu hanavi mos sea aparecido  
Y daremos loares al verdadero  
Let us greet now the newborn father  
May he be blessed, this newborn one  
The prophet Elijah has appeared to us  
And we shall give praises to the true one  
Avram avinu, padre querido  
Padre bendicho, luz de Israel  
Our father, Abraham, beloved father,  
Blessed Father, light of Israel*

Sinai, the locus of memory, brought the gift of identity through naming; the “mixed multitude” of Hebrews, sons of a *perishing Syrian* (Deut. 26:5)<sup>35</sup>, became a nation “called/-out” as Israel. In a moment of fire and quake (Heb. 12:18), they “passed over”<sup>36</sup> from namelessness to status, from virginity to wifhood, “from death into life” (1 John 3:14). To those who were “not a

<sup>34</sup> *Sh'ma, Yisrael, YHWH*. The noun *hemshechiyut* suggests the verb *lehamshech* (“to continue doing something”) (<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:http://ktzat-ivrit.ulpan.com/2011/05/how-to-say-continuity-in-hebrew.html>). *May they/we ever continue to “listen, O Israel, to YHWH.”*

<sup>35</sup> The KJV has Moses commanding the children of Israel: “And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish *was* my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous” (Deut. 26:5); other versions render it as “a wandering Aramean.”

<sup>36</sup> Heb. *Abar*, commonly supposed to be the root from which “Hebrew” is derived



people” (Hosea 1:9), Sinai gave both a history and a corporate personhood. To sojourners “in-between” bondage and promise, it offered a way of life.<sup>37</sup> All this was possible because our father, Abraham, walked out of his comfort zone by faith.<sup>38</sup> When God said, “Arise, get out of your father’s house,” Abraham arose and got out.<sup>39</sup>

### **The Israel of God**

Jews and Christians of all denominations<sup>40</sup> claim Abraham as their father. Whether or not they claim Moses as their teacher, they consider themselves the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16) and Abraham’s seed (Gal. 3:29) and display identity markers that embody their claims of faithfulness to the Biblical text. And so the theologian must become a historiographer-ethnographer, in order to answer the question: Who are God’s people now? Where are they, and how did they get *there* from Sinai three thousand years ago? And...most important...am I one of them?<sup>41</sup>

**The same, but different.** Let me ask the question(s) another way: Do God’s people define themselves by difference, or by sameness? Asking the question this way allows us to look at physical evidence – that is, how people “flesh out” their identity claims via faith-acts – before we interrogate the spiritual-experiential basis for those claims. For now, therefore, I speak in the voice of a historian and musicologist (rather than reflexive writer or auto/ethnographer). In the process, I remain mindful of the injunction laid upon me in a seminar on comparative religion: “We will use an orthodox interpretation – which means let each religion interpret itself” (Sharon, quoting Mark Saka, 2014). Although my role as an auto/ethnographer requires that I bring my

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<sup>37</sup> or “life-way”

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o38D3Up0Y7Q>

<sup>39</sup> “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee....So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him” (Gen. 12:1-4).

<sup>40</sup> I leave Islam out of the discussion for now because it does not consider the same Text as authoritative.

<sup>41</sup> As we will see, this question gets extrapolated into, “Are we on the right side of history?” by dispensationalists, dominionists, and Zionists.

subjectivities to bear on the Text, in my role as a historian I remain conscious of my subjectivities in order to minimize their effect.

What about the sameness that results when an old symbol is appropriated for a new purpose, as when Christianity took the Jewish *mikveh* (a ritual act of ceremonial cleansing) and re/instituted it as a one-time, defining act of conversion? What of things that are similar, but not the same, such as the liturgical year of Christian “feasts” that gradually replaced the agricultural cycle of levitical “appointments”?<sup>42</sup> What of the difference when the Text is translated into a new language and loses or gains a margin of meaning thereby? Does a *midrash* or an allegorical rendering of the text count as continuity or change? Let’s look at ethnic sameness/difference. Can a person of “an/other” people *enter the assembly* (Deut. 23:2-3) on equal footing with those who are indigenous to the tradition? (Remember, a Jew is “other” to a Gentile, just as a *goy* is *tamei* [unclean] to a Jew.) In entering, must s/he “put away” the “ensemble of texts” from his/her culture of birth, or can any culture be a God-sanctioned embodiment of holy living? Who gets to decide?

**Looking backward (again).** Over the centuries since Sinai, followers of the Text have answered these questions in a variety of ways, usually in response to the surrounding culture. For instance, Talmudic Judaism developed in response to the culture of the Babylonian Empire where the Jews lived in exile after 586 B.C.<sup>43</sup> As a daughter of the evangelical Protestant context, I naturally tend to look at questions first in that light. Most Protestant responses to culture have been future-focused rather than history-focused, and even “twentieth-century fundamentalism rejected any traditions but its own” (Barrett, 2011, p. 7), locked itself into an ahistorical universe.

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<sup>42</sup> They are commonly called “Feasts” in the HR literature, but many HRs use the Hebrew word *mo’edim*, which means “appointments.”

<sup>43</sup> I use B.C. (“Before Christ”) and A.D. (*Anno Domini*), rather than B.C.E. (“Before Common Era”) and C.E. (“Common Era”), as these designations witness that Jesus Christ’s birth was and is a liminal event (dividing line) in history. It is fitting to keep continuity with generations of scholars who have acknowledged that fact in their dating.

Historian Karen Armstrong (2001) argues that fundamentalism is modern, because it employs the modern worldview structure as a paradigm for reality.<sup>44</sup>

*Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged (Isaiah 51:1).*

More and more, however, Christians are starting to answer these questions by looking backward to history, rather than forward to where the surrounding culture is headed. In a post-Protestant milieu<sup>45</sup>, many are choosing to turn in a “pre-Protestant” direction. Protestants who convert to Roman Catholicism or the HRM are two examples (Barrett, 2014a). The pendulum swing back to history was already starting in the 1970s (the same decade as the “hippie” Jesus Movement). Webber (1999, p. 35) writes that “*the recovery of the ancient tradition*” was inaugurated in “The Chicago Call” (1977), a “manifesto that urged evangelicals to ‘look beyond the present limitations of [evangelicalism] toward a more inclusive and ultimately historic Christianity’” (in Barrett, 2011, p. 7). Fittingly, the postmodern turn inclined people’s hearts in a premodern direction. Webber titled his (1999) call to history *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World*. In it, he “exhorts the people of God to relinquish the confessions of the Reformation era in favor of the classical church creeds” (Barrett, 2011, p. 9). This call to history is not as ancient as Webber (1999) and others would have us believe, since the emerging church’s concept of “historic Christianity” draws not from the apostolic records but from the third- and fourth-century Church “fathers” who developed the Christian tradition into a

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<sup>44</sup> Richard Hofstadter (1966) believed there was an anti-intellectual current in American society that owed a great deal to an anti-intellectual bias at the foundation of American evangelical/fundamentalist religion. This bias, he suggested, pervaded American culture because the nation was founded on the principle of “breaking away” from the social stratification of Europe.

<sup>45</sup>Jody Bottum (2014), *Anxious Age: The Post-Protestant Ethic and Spirit of America*, [http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/3065/an\\_anxious\\_ageand\\_an\\_antagonistic\\_future.aspx](http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/3065/an_anxious_ageand_an_antagonistic_future.aspx).

full body of texts. This is, perhaps, the key to God's Controversy with New Israel<sup>46</sup>: who has the authority, and where did it come from? Did Christendom of the third century and later have a genuine continuity with the apostolic age?

### **A controversial people**

*The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah...And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people....For the LORD has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel....I will bless him that blesses you, and curse him that curses you....Judgment begins at the house of God....This is the burden of history (Hos. 2:12; Zech. 12:2-3; Micah 6:2; Gen. 12:3; 1 Pet. 4:17; Warren, 1946).*

Who is Judah? Who is Israel? Many people, it would seem, love to be counted with the seed of Jacob when blessings are promised, but pitch their tents far away from the curses of the covenant. No one wants to be the subject of the LORD's controversy. Our<sup>47</sup> wrangling over the birthright (see Isaac vs. Ishmael; Jacob vs. Esau; Joseph vs. his half-brothers) makes us a "burden" to each other and to the world. It seems the "rivalry between Jacob's sons ha[s] never truly died" (Barrett, 2013b, p. 7). We trace our family feud back beyond Jacob's tribes, however, to his grandfather's fractured household. "The putative unity of family and faith, located in the man Abraham, spawn[s] disunity and disparity between his two wives and their respective children" (Trible & Russell, 2006, p. 3).<sup>48</sup> Again...who gets to decide? Does my ethnicity, my belief system, my religious practice, or my spirituality qualify me as the "seed of Israel"?

**Judaism(s).** Are you picturing a black-robed Chasidic rabbi swaying in front of the Western (Wailing) Wall, *peyot* peeping out from under his hat? That's the "Judaism" we're all

<sup>46</sup> The irony here is that the Puritan minister who wrote *God's Controversy with New England* (1662) believed his church was part of a literal New Jerusalem in the New World

<sup>47</sup> my usage

<sup>48</sup> Again, I exclude Islam from this discussion of Abrahamic faith traditions because it relies on a different text, one that did not exist until the seventh century.

familiar with, since the Jewish state (where Chasidic Orthodox Jews are a ruling minority) has a large media footprint. But that is only one version of *Ashkenazi* Judaism, which marked the European diaspora (e.g. Russian, eastern European, or German Jews) and predominates in the United States due to immigration. Take a moment to plug in the search terms *Mizrahi* (e.g. the *Lemba* tribe, Ethiopian *falashas*, or Jews in Arab-Islamic nations) and *Sephardi* (Jews from the Mediterranean Basin: Turkey, Greece, North Africa, and Spain), or *Jewish diaspora in China* (see Stark, 2003). Each diaspora group has developed its own distinct practices for worship and daily life. “Judaism is not a monolith, but a mosaic” (Sharon, quoting Mark Saka, 2014).

Diverse as they are, all Judaisms have a relatively unbroken lineage to Sinai; Ezra’s team of scribes compiled the canon of Hebrew Scripture (the Torah, Prophets, and Writings) when they returned from exile around 500 B.C. and rebuilt the First Temple in Jerusalem (Christensen, 2002). In Babylon and the Hellenistic world, the Pharisees (the dominant sect) successfully “create[d] a portable, diaspora religion” (Derek Leman’s response to Linda, comment at <http://rachelheldevans.com/blog/ask-a-messianic-jew-response>, accessed October 30, 2014) that outlasted the first century and the destruction of the Second Temple (A.D. 70). It is a religion of “shared collective memory...a religion of the book (the Tanakh...as well as a broad range of other literature), [and] a religion of the calendar, rites, and life passages” (Sharon, quoting Mark Saka, 2014). Its reliance on Textual authority rather than oral myth, with lifelong ethical behavior lifetime taking priority over intense mystical experiences, qualifies Judaism as a *dogmatic religion* (see Barrett, 2014a, citing Douglas, 2006, for a fuller discussion). As the mother tradition, Judaism is something of a yardstick for those that followed. Christendom, the Christianiti/es, the Hebraic Roots Movement(s), and Messianic Judaism (which is not a Judaism,

since it departs from the collective voice of the Judaisms that Jesus of Nazareth is not Messiah and certainly is not G-d) all define themselves against it, either by comparison or by contrast.

**Christendom.**<sup>49</sup> I make a distinction between “Christendom” and “Christianity” to highlight the divergence between the “high-church” traditions (as I heard them called when I was a little girl) and the “low-church” traditions. The “high” churches, which include the Roman Catholic Church (hereafter RCC), the Orthodox Churches, the Anglican Communion, and most confessional Reformed churches, rely on central authority: not just Text, but an oral-written-scholastic tradition parallel to the Text.<sup>50</sup> These Churches<sup>51</sup> trace their Text to the apostles and their tradition to the “Church fathers” who succeeded the apostles. They inhabit their tradition via creedal forms and liturgical time – conventions that form a “fence” to keep the individual from straying into heresy. They are collectivistic, rather than individualistic; the Church has plenary authority to discipline its erring members. Historically, they have emphasized church and state as partners in God’s government.<sup>52</sup> Despite the recent fractures in some Churches (e.g. the Episcopal split over ordination of homosexuals), Christendom is essentially a premodern faith.

**Christianiti/es.**<sup>53</sup> By contrast, the “low-church” tradition in which I was raised is essentially modern and/or postmodern. Historian Mark Noll, commenting on his book, *Protestantism: A Very Short Introduction* (2011), describes how Protestantism brought the Christian tradition into the modern era when it “added a voluntary form exemplified best by the constitutional separation of church and state in American experience”

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<sup>49</sup> my designation

<sup>50</sup> “Unity in diversity” might describe the Catholic and Protestant “high” churches. Take Darryl G. Hart, editor of the *Nicotine Theological Journal* (<http://oldlife.org/about/>). As an Orthodox Presbyterian, Dr. Hart is firmly *sola scriptura*; yet, in order to hold to an “orthodox” interpretation of that Scripture, he must rely on creeds and councils that stand in the post-apostolic tradition. As a professor, Dr. Hart helped stretch my evangelical “paradigm.”

<sup>51</sup> as distinct from “churches”

<sup>52</sup> This legacy has lived in places as diverse as Calvin’s Geneva, the Puritans’ Salem, and today, multinational liberation theologies.

<sup>53</sup> my designation

([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-noll/protestantism-today\\_b\\_1024374.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-noll/protestantism-today_b_1024374.html)). A variety of churches (as distinct from Churches; a “church” emphasizes the local congregation and the individual conscience over corporate body and universal creed) fall within this category. The Anabaptist and pietistic<sup>54</sup> strains of the Reformation (which, ironically, had their origins in reform movements within medieval Catholicism) gave rise to evangelical, fundamentalist, and Pentecostal/charismatic strains. I group together churches that have “a multitude of doctrinal differences, differing musical forms, different political attitudes and huge differences in wealth and social power” (Noll, 2014) because of what they have in common: an emphasis on local knowledge and personal experiential faith. Think of it this way: Christen-“dom” is a “domain,” like the land belonging to a king. As long as you live on his land, you are safe from the robber barons, but you are also his vassal. Christian-“it”-y is more like a group of exclusive clubs; if you don’t have “it,” you’re out, but you can always go and see if another club will let you in.

**Sabbatarian sects.** Christendom was the religion of Europe until the seventeenth-century Enlightenment (when deism became fashionable). Its hegemony<sup>55</sup> was so absolute that it nearly erased non-mainstream groups, including Jews and “Judaizers” – Christians who maintained “Jewish customs” such as the seventh-day Sabbath.

**Seventh-Day Adventists.** Today, the most prominent Sabbatarian group is the Seventh-day Adventist Church founded by Ellen G. White in the 1850s. White and her husband were disciples of William Miller, a former Baptist who became a Sabbath-keeper in the 1830s and then, after studying prophecies in the book of Daniel, became convinced that Jesus Christ would return in April of 1844. After Miller and the “Millerite” movement passed away, the Whites and

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<sup>54</sup> emphasizing personal piety and devotion

<sup>55</sup> dominance or power

gathered his “scattered bands” (Jordan, 1988) of Adventists into a formal denomination that featured Bible conferences, radio broadcasts, ministerial training, and social ministries.

*Churches of God (Armstrong).*<sup>56</sup> The SDA denomination has no direct link to any Sabbatarian churches of the past; however, other Sabbatarian organizations claim a more direct lineage. Having only begun to study the World Wide Church of God, founded by Herbert W. Armstrong in the 1930s, and its daughter churches (such as Philadelphia Church of God, or PCG), with two days total of ethnographic observations and interviews, I have little to report – except that, at first glance, the music used by the COG sects could have been influenced by Protestant hymns. The WWCOG has its own hymnal, with almost all selections written by Herbert W. Armstrong or one of his relatives. There are precious few written resources on the history and sociology of the WWCOG and its recent split...but plenty of websites where daughter and granddaughter sects explain why they are the “only true church” of the end times.

**Ethnic Israelites, secret Jews.** What if, in addition to being the true “remnant church” (as members of the PCG assembly I visited assured me they are), Sabbath-keepers represent the missing half of the seed of Jacob? These churches rest their identity on a doctrine promulgated by Armstrong (but apparently based on nineteenth-century sources) known as “British Israelism,” which teaches that persons of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic descent are the the Lost Tribes of Israel (better known as Ephraim). Since the mid-twentieth century, other groups have arisen, encouraging African-Americans to claim their roots in Hebrew tribes commanded by a black Moses, Hispanic-Latinos of North and South America to identify with their (hypothetical) crypto-Jew/*converso* ancestors (see Sanchez, 2001), and Native Americans to trace their lineage to Israelites who migrated to the New World prior to the diaspora. Rhetorical affinity to the

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<sup>56</sup> Not to be confused with the Protestant (Sunday-keeping) Church of God, Church of God in Christ (COGIC), COG-Cleveland, etc.



Black Identity, Chicano, and American Indian creationism movements is too close to be coincidental.

**British Israelites.** British Israelite teaching is associated with the Armstrong movement<sup>57</sup>, but not limited to those churches. It appeals to those who want a concept of Israel not steeped in Messianic Jewish and Christian Zionist thought...possibly because their racist Anglo-Saxon patriotism carries (under the surface) anti-Semitic undertones; possibly just because they desperately want the U.S. and other English-speaking former Commonwealth nations to have a role in Biblical prophecy.<sup>58</sup> Although I have not yet traced an explicit connection, similar ideas seem to crop up among certain gun-toting, KJV-waving backyard preppers.<sup>59</sup> The link may lie with the Puritans, avid believers in “Bible prophecy” who were among the first to foresee a “gathering” of Jews to Palestine, yet also conceived of themselves as a literal “new Israel” (first, recalling the triumph of the Maccabees when they overthrew Charles I and established the Puritan commonwealth under Cromwell; second, reenacting Joshua’s entry into Canaan when they settled in the New World). A recognizable identity marker is the display of the Union Jack, often alongside the Israeli flag.<sup>60</sup> (Note: British Israelism and the HRM **are not the same**. Ironically, while many British Israelists claim the British royal family descends from King David, some HR teachers claim Prince Charles is the antichrist<sup>61</sup>.)

**Black Hebrews.** Sacred Name beliefs (pp. 45-47) seem common among these groups, not all of which are based in the United States. Unlike British Israelists, Black Hebrews claim to represent the whole “true” Hebrew people, not one tribe or the Lost Ten Tribes.

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<sup>57</sup> See, for instance, <http://www.uhcg.org/Lost-10-Tribes/chapter-06.html> and <http://www.uhcg.org/Lost-10-Tribes/Diff-Jews&Israel.html>.

<sup>58</sup> A role, that is, which is *not* Babylon the Great – “mother of harlots and the abominations of the earth” (Rev. 17:5).

<sup>59</sup> No offense is intended with this graphic characterization of apocalyptic-minded fundamentalists!

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, <http://jahtruth.net/christfg.htm>.

<sup>61</sup> See Monte Judah at <http://lionlamb.net/yavoh/2001/11>.

***Native American t/Tribes.*** The site Jerusalem Torah Voice in Exile (<http://www.torah-voice.org/>), authored by mixed Cherokee Maggid ben Yoseif (a.k.a. Tohokwahu), is one example among few, as the Native American Hebrew movement is small and dominated by those concerned with end-times prophecy.<sup>62</sup> ben Yoseif articulates a vision for reconciliation between “Judah” and “Ephraim” based on co-observance of Torah and mutual respect, which would allow the “Ten Tribes” to re-enter the Holy Land under Halacha as determined by an Israeli Jewish Sanhedrin. His vision is similar to that articulated by organizations such as Kol haTor<sup>63</sup> as well as local congregations like Mayim-Chayim (a post-HR congregation where I did fieldwork), but with the distinction of including Native American nations (e.g. Apache, Hopi, Cherokee) and the Chinese among the dispersed sons of “*Menashe*” or Manasseh. (By contrast, Sacred Name teacher (and Chickamauga Cherokee) QuietBuck asserts, “No truth comes from the land of Israel aka Redshild aka land of Rothschild”<sup>64</sup>). The Native-Ephraimite movement seems smaller and more scattered than other “Hebrew” movements. Most Natives may have little desire to affiliate with a religion associated with the people that committed genocide against their ancestors, even if a new version of that religion offers them a special identity and elite place.<sup>65</sup>

***Sephardim in the New World.*** This is the only “ethnic Israelite” group for which (to my knowledge) sufficient documentation exists to assume plausibility for the identity claims made about them. Rather than “ethnic Israelites,” they are technically “secret Jews.” Sephardic (also known as *Ladino*) Jews were the first Jews in the New World. Many arrived from Holland

<sup>62</sup> For musical examples, see the following links: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpztvjBhbb4> and [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPpox70YteU&list=PLH0feEvPXchTDdJa\\_JP6I4Q1wxeD7J\\_cb](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPpox70YteU&list=PLH0feEvPXchTDdJa_JP6I4Q1wxeD7J_cb).

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.kolhator.org.il/vision.php>

<sup>64</sup> <http://quietbuck.wordpress.com/2013/05/02/meat-in-the-mouth/>

<sup>65</sup> Strangely, there are few Native theologians – other than Cherokee Randy Woodley, 2012, who is not associated with the HRM(s) – calling for an examination of the resonance between Torah and Native ethical formulations. Even ben Yoseif only touches on ethics, being more concerned with ritual practices of various Native American nations. Likewise, Maria Merola, a Messianic Jew of Italian descent, who promotes the Cherokee-Israelite narrative ([http://doubleportioninheritance.blogspot.com/2014/12/the-name-yahuwah-preserved-by-lost\\_16.html](http://doubleportioninheritance.blogspot.com/2014/12/the-name-yahuwah-preserved-by-lost_16.html)), focuses on ritual practices, like calling the Creator “Yehowah,” rather than ethics that resemble ancient Hebrew culture.

(where they had lived since being expelled from Spain) in the 1600s, but others migrated directly from Spain around 1492. Unlike their distant cousins in Holland, they were not publicly known as Jews; in the preceding century or so, they had converted to Catholicism, taking the surnames of their Spanish patrons at conversion. Those who converted voluntarily were called *conversos* (Spanish, “converts”), while those who resisted until threatened with torture or death were called *anusim* (Hebrew, “forced ones”). Columbus set sail on August 2, 1492, the day after Ferdinand and Isabella ordered the Jews to leave Spain. On this basis, Latino authors like Dell Sanchez (20-) “have suggested that Columbus’s voyages prepared the way for *conversos* and *anusim* to flee the Inquisition, and that a number of them arrived in the parties of the earliest *conquistadores*” (Barrett, 2013b, p. 3)

*Avram avinu, padre querido  
Padre bendicho, luz de Israel*

**Two Houses.** At first glance, the “Two-House” or “Ephraimite” teaching looks like a variant of British Israelism. It is not, however, identical. I discovered Two-House teaching ca. 2012 via the extensive website [jewsandjoes.com](http://jewsandjoes.com), authored by J. Franklin (formerly Hanok ben Isaac).<sup>66</sup> A few other HRS have adopted the catchy “Jew” and “Joe” (for Joseph, whose son Ephraim was considered the firstborn and leader of the Ten Tribes) terms. For the most part, they simply refer to “Judah” and “Ephraim.” Keep in mind the theme of “two” divided groups with parallel destinies, which we will explore in detail later. And remember this: everyone wants to be Israel<sup>67</sup>, but no one wants the curses of the covenant.

**The Zionist state.** With all these ethnic arguments being made on potentially specious bases, is there any way to determine who is the real “Israel of God”? What about a more obvious

<sup>66</sup> Franklin’s website, at <http://jewsandjoes.com/>, is no longer available as of April 13, 2015.

<sup>67</sup> e.g., appropriate Israel’s covenant promises and identity

candidate? After all, there is a nation-state in the Middle East that calls itself Israel.<sup>68</sup> Many Jews (not all) consider it their homeland; virtually every Jewish diaspora group has been represented among the *olim* (immigrants) between the 1880s and the 2010s (see Barrett, 2013b). In the Christian world, support for the nation-state is mixed. American Evangelicals tend to lean heavily on the side of political support, for theological reasons. This is due in part to the tradition of Christian Zionism that they/we<sup>69</sup> inherited from the Puritans. Leading Puritan pastor Increase Mather (1669) believed “the Jews would turn to Christ and then be ‘brought into their own land again’ as ‘the most glorious nation in the whole world’” (*The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation Explained and Applied*, Boyer, 2012, p. 183).

*Kol ode balevav p'nimah  
Nefesh Yehudi homiyah  
Ulfa'atey mizrach kadimah  
Ayin l'tzion tzofiyah  
Ode lo avdah tikvatenu  
Hatikvah bat shnot alpayim  
L'hiyot am chofshi b'artzenu  
Eretz Tzion v'Yerushalayim*

*As long as the Jewish spirit is yearning deep in the heart,  
With eyes turned toward the East, looking toward Zion,  
Then our hope - the two-thousand-year-old hope - will not be lost:  
To be a free people in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem.<sup>70</sup>*

Starting in the 1940s, evangelical prophecy teachers quoted statements like Mather’s to prove that the new nation-state was the fulfillment of Scriptural promises. (On the other hand, many Christians criticize the state for committing “genocide” against Palestinians and “apartheid” against non-European Jews.) Today, high-profile Christian Zionists include John

<sup>68</sup> You will notice that I do not refer to it as “Israel” in this paper, except when quoting Zionist sources.

<sup>69</sup> I am still an evangelical...sort of.

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.stateofisrael.com/anthem/>

Hagee (founder of Christians United for Israel) and Jan Markell (founder of Olive Tree Ministries), who influence millions via prophecy conferences and social media alerts.<sup>71</sup>

**Messianic Jews.** What CZs (Christian Zionists) ignore is that Jewish Zionists don't really like them that much (see, for instance, complaints about supposed Christian infiltration of the Jewish state at <http://jewishisrael.ning.com/>). Messianic Judaism is the only Judaism that actually likes Christians.

I hope you noticed that I contradicted myself there. I said above (p. 31) that Messianic Judaism is **not** a Judaism, since it “departs from the collective voice of the Judaisms” regarding Jesus of Nazareth. I'm glad you were paying attention. This is a purposeful contradiction, meant to highlight the liminal place of Messianic Jews. I mean, what are they? Are they Christians or Jews? From the Jewish perspective: Do they worship the G-d of Israel or a god-man who died before he could fulfill the messianic mission? From the Christian perspective: Do they live under the Old Covenant (where Jewish traditions were, you know, relevant<sup>72</sup>) or the New Covenant (where Paul has a panic attack if we “observe seasons, and times, and months, and years”<sup>73</sup>)?

Frankly, I'm not sure either. The Messianic Jewish Movement did not exist until around the same time as the Jesus Movement (e.g., the 1970s), and it got off the ground thanks to pioneers like Moshe Rosen, founder of Jews for Jesus; Keith Green, rock-star-turned-Messianic-evangelical; and Joel Chernoff, recording artist who pioneered the Messianic worship genre. As early as the 1880s, when immigrants began to flow in from central and eastern Europe, American evangelicals were working to evangelize Jews, and a precious few converts assimilated into evangelical churches as “Hebrew Christians.” They were expected to adopt a “Gentile” lifestyle (Zwern & Owen, 1986). By 1915, however, those who wanted to retain their Jewish heritage

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<sup>71</sup> <http://www.jhm.org/> and <http://www.olivetreeviews.org/>

<sup>72</sup> The understanding reader will pardon my sarcasm.

<sup>73</sup> Gal. 4:10

were numerous enough to form the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America (HCAA) (<http://www.thekingsforum.com/index.php?topic=2789.0>). After the Holocaust, Judaism's center shifted to the United States, preparing the way for Messianic Jews to assert their identity via formal association into congregational networks with statements of faith. The first of these, the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA), created in 1972 from the old HCAA, made the historic step of urging Messianic Jews to form separate congregations. Within ten years, associations like the MJAA multiplied, although most Messianic Jews continued to worship in evangelical churches. Today, Messianic congregations worldwide have the option to affiliate with any of a half dozen associations, one of which is Southern Baptist-affiliated, while another recognizes church plants from the Church of the Nazarene (a Holiness denomination).

The Messianics I have known seem comfortable holding their dual identities in tension. Some are willing to be identified as "Hebrew Christians" (see Crystal Lutton's response to Hilary at <http://rachelheldevans.com/blog/ask-a-messianic-jew-response>, accessed October 30, 2014), although "Messianic Jew" is the name they use for themselves. For all intents and purposes, "Hebrew Christian" seems accurate, since all Messianic congregations that affiliate with a network must subscribe to a statement of faith that is orthodox, Trinitarian, and evangelical. The only substantial<sup>74</sup> difference from historic mainline Christendom/-ianity is the concession that persons of Jewish descent may (possibly should<sup>75</sup>) observe Jewish customs to acknowledge their unique identity. In a quintessentially Jewish way, Messianics take their lifestyle seriously while not asking anyone else to join it.

At the same time, this "live-and-let-live" approach to other Christians translates into MJM defensiveness against non-Jews who want to worship as Jews or adopt a Torah-based

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<sup>74</sup> e.g. in substance

<sup>75</sup> This "should" has become more insistent of late, judging from Stern (2007).

lifestyle. If the Judaism(s) reject Christianity because the re-reading of the Text through Gentile eyes threatens Jewish existence (see Nicholls, 1995)<sup>76</sup>, the MJM rejects the HRM because the re-enacting of the Text by Gentile bodies threatens MJ uniqueness.

**Hebraic Roots.** Thanks to modern times, which brought us voluntary association and the freedom of conscience, I have the option to choose Hebraic Roots...and, just as easily, “un-check” the HR box if I decide that identity is not for me. It’s a bit easier to change my religion than my race or sex, but these days every identity is subject to the wearer’s preference.

The HRM’s vivid diversity makes it nearly impossible to summarize in a few pages. (Well-meaning discernment bloggers try, but end up with a caricature more often than not.) Moreover, my direct exposure to most facets of the HRM is limited to surfing blogs and digging through forum threads. My face-to-face interactions in the HRM are (mostly) covered in an ethnographic study of HRM conversions (Barrett, 2014a) and MJ/HR congregations (Barrett, 2014b). While there are literally hundreds to thousands of texts on the HRM, most of them are internet article-length apologetics for, or arguments against, Torah obedience. No author, to my knowledge, has produced a historical or sociological survey.<sup>77</sup>

**Hebraic Roots Movement(s).** Like Judaism, the HRM is “not a monolith, but a mosaic” (Sharon, quoting Mark Saka, 2014); like Christendom/-ianiti(es), it feels the tension between central authority and local knowledge. Like the MJM, it is carving a place “in between” the other Abrahamic traditions. Since “identity markers as well as beliefs evolve over time with changes in the community...the same narrative may be expressed in a variety of ways” (Barrett, 2014a, citing Miller, 2010). The HRM is something of a giant soup pot, with flavors from nearly every

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<sup>76</sup> The first pogroms were Christian.

<sup>77</sup> A cursory search of Amazon.com for “hebraic roots movement” yielded 31 results, all of which were apologetic or polemical in nature (at least half were independently published). A basic Boolean search of 30 scholarly databases using “hebraic roots movement” AND “religion and culture” yielded 6 results, none of which had anything to do with the HRM.

tradition mentioned above (and some that exist nowhere but the HRM), that gets stirred up every so often when there is a tremor on the evangelical prophecy circuit.

*Messianic evangelicals.* The average Hebraic Roots believer (hereafter HR)<sup>78</sup> is a former/current evangelical whose background is strong on lifestyle and Christian witness and who is steeped in the Protestant tradition of personal Bible study and accountability. S/he is likely to lean toward charismatic worship and experiential doctrines such as spiritual warfare. One mid-sized Messianic synagogue in the U.S. Southwest (described in detail in Barrett, 2014b) displays vivid charismatic identity markers: CCM worship music, song leader and worship band (in addition to a cantor for the Hebrew prayers), Davidic dance with banners, and *shofar* blasts to open the service. One co-participant (a former Baptist married to a Messianic Jew) explained that most families in the congregation used to attend evangelical churches. While this is rare among Messianic synagogues, it is common in HR congregations and home groups.

*The new pentecostals.* I leave the word in lower case, since HRs who emphasize “Spirit-filled” worship may or may not affiliate with a Pentecostal or Holiness denomination (e.g. the Assemblies of God). I interviewed three co-participants (a Torah-observant ex-missionary couple in the Southwest, and a loosely Sabbath-keeping midwife in the South) who have ties to the (extremely) charismatic International House of Prayer in Kansas City. Robert Heidler’s (2006) book, *The Messianic Church Arising!*, displays a range of speech codes (Philipsen, 1992) characteristic of charismatics. Some HR authors suggest the 1901 Azusa Street Revival that started the Pentecostal movement was a link in the chain of Spirit-led reforms – starting before the Reformation (with men like Francis of Assisi) and culminating with the Torah movement – that occurred to restore purity and power to God’s people.

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<sup>78</sup> Some bloggers who oppose the HRM refer to its members as “Hebraic Rooters.” This is a misleading and somewhat mocking nickname that I abhor. We do not root around in the dirt like (unclean) pigs, thank you very much



*Wannabe Jews.* Virtually all HRs keep some portion of Torah, even if this extends no farther than choosing not to shop on the Sabbath while continuing to attend Sunday church services. Many, **but not all**, HRs eagerly adopt visible identity markers, such as wearing a *tallit* (prayer shawl) or *tzitzit* (tassels) and blowing a *shofar* (ram's horn) during worship. Some HRs, particularly influential HRM Bible teachers, show a tendency to imitate the MJM in markers (wearing *kippot*, a classic Jewish symbol that, unlike the three mentioned above, has precedent in tradition but not Text) and teachings (incorporating concepts from the Jewish kabbalah).<sup>79</sup> The trend of imitating Judaica may be a response to the MJM's overall rejection of HRs as "Gentiles" who need not (or should not) keep Torah – a "we don't need your permission" gesture of sorts.

*The new puritans.* The English Puritans were adamant about "purifying" the Church of England from pagan trappings. Similarly, the HRM urges believers to "come out" of the "pagan" practices of the institutional c/Churches. Most HRs have learned, somewhere along the way, that Christendom borrowed Sunday worship, Christmas, and Easter from Mithraism to replace the Torah's holy days. Speaking of "pagan holidays" has become something of a truism in the HRM, but leaving the holidays behind is often one of the first and biggest steps sojourners make when stepping out of their comfort zone. Alexander Hislop's (1853) iconoclastic work *The Two Babylons*<sup>80</sup> was the impetus for much contemporary pushback against holidays not found in Scripture, but he was certainly not the first to advocate for observance of the Biblical holy days.

*The new catholics.* I use this term because the work that some Messianic/HR scholar-teachers have done to defend the Text of the Christian Scriptures (e.g. New Testament)

<sup>79</sup> For an example, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rd1SojCxFNc>. Julian Jackson (right) is wearing a *kippah*; Jim Staley (center) uses the kabbalistic term *zimzum* to explain his view of the Godhead.

<sup>80</sup> *The Two Babylons* (1853) is out of print, but can be found at [http://www.ldolphin.org/PDFs/The\\_Two\\_Babylons-Alexander\\_Hislop.pdf](http://www.ldolphin.org/PDFs/The_Two_Babylons-Alexander_Hislop.pdf), [http://philologos.org/\\_eb-ttb/](http://philologos.org/_eb-ttb/), <https://archive.org/details/theTwoBabylons>. Compare Ralph Woodrow's *Babylonian Mystery Religion* (1966, 1981), which Woodrow later recanted and replaced with *The Babylon Connection* (1997), and Richard Rives' *Too Long in the Sun* (2006).

resembles the RCC's claims to (1) apostolic succession and (2) authority over the canon. In response to HR schismatics who claim that Paul's letters were not inspired, these scholar-teachers assert that Yeshua charged the apostles (Peter, James, and John as well as Luke) to define and circulate the NT canon and to treat it as equally authoritative with the *Tanakh* (e.g. OT). They are generally orthodox Trinitarian as well as Torah-observant (see Christensen, 2002, and Lawrence, "Can You Trust the New Testament Scriptures"), and ground their teaching in theological and archaeological research rather than polemics. In a sense, they are the classical apologists of the HRM. Christensen (2002) and Lawrence (n.d.) argue that the New Testament canon was defined by statements within the apostles' own letters, thereby implying that the RCC (while staying faithful to basic doctrines such as the deity of Christ) *later added* traditions and observances not sanctioned by the apostles. Even though the HRM adamantly opposes RCC observances and individual HRs assert non-Torah keepers may not be saved, the HR mainstream does not go so far as Sabbatarian groups in declaring itself the "only" true church. Rather, the majority of HRs look back at Jewish-Christian history as a series of steps off the path that are best corrected by a change in practice, not doctrine.<sup>81</sup>

*The new mennonites.* I leave the word in lower case because the HRM is not a Mennonite movement any more than it is Roman Catholic; however, an increasing number of HR families are seeking to wear Plain dress, go off the grid, and form insular agricultural communities. Some choose to farm or homestead in order to have the freedom to observe the annual Feasts (Levitical holy days) and/or the so-called "lunar sabbath" (explained below).

HRs who go in this direction also tend to have ties to the conservative home school movement, the Quiverfull movement (see Barrett, 2010 and 2014d), and the courtship/betrothal

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<sup>81</sup> Compare, for instance, Daniel and Patricia Juster (1999); Marvin R. Wilson (1989); and Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz (1996).

movement (see Barrett, 2013a). The Waller family, who are influential among HRs *and* CZs (through their pro-Israeli agricultural organization, HaYovel<sup>82</sup>), lived and farmed with/in an Amish community in Tennessee for a decade as they were beginning to seek the Hebraic roots of their faith. The HaYovel website elaborates (<http://www.hayovel.com/about/founders/>):

The Wallers moved to a small Amish/Mennonite community, where they lived “off-grid” without electricity and running water while learning organic farming methods. With parents and children working side-by-side, they made a success of their family farm, overseeing every aspect, from seed to harvest and sale. During their years on the farm, the family’s hearts were inspired to somehow use their unique combination of business knowledge and agricultural skills to bless the nation of Israel. In [2005], HaYovel was established, with the mission of facilitating the prophetic restoration of Israel through support of small independent farmers in the heartland.

In the award-winning documentary *The Journey Home* (Franklin Springs Media, 2005<sup>83</sup>), Tommy and Judy Waller state that their experiences among the Plain people inspired them to pursue family unity and an intergenerational “vision” with greater passion. Such language could have come from the lips of home school/Quiverfull luminaries like Doug Phillips or Scott Brown. More recently, the Wallers produced a DVD documenting the courtship/betrothal experience of their oldest son and his (now) bride, which has become a role model for conservative home schooling HR families (Barrett, 2013a).<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> The organization has been endorsed by Rep. Trent Franks, R-AZ, Rep. Louie Gohmert, R-TX, Rep. Mark Meadows, R-NC, Mike Huckabee, former governor-AR, and Rosemary Schindler Garlow, ordained minister and family member of Oskar Schindler (<http://www.hayovel.com/endorsements/>).

<sup>83</sup> Winner of the Jubilee Award for Best Documentary at the San Antonio Independent Christian Film Festival. Produced & Directed by Ken Carpenter (<http://www.hayovel.com/product/a-journey-home/>).

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.hayovel.com/product/betrothed-documentary-dvd/>

*The new hippie-preppers.* Interestingly enough, these and the “new mennonites” are sometimes the same people. One co-participant family are homesteaders, homeschoolers, and generally very conservative; for instance, they speak admiringly of the Waller betrothal model, and they have connections with a local Mennonite community. At the same time, they practice alternative medicine using (for example) homemade herbal compounds and a hand-made chiropractic table. Home birth is becoming popular among HR women. Jordan Rubin (not HR), author of *The Maker’s Diet* (2004), probably can be credited as one of the early advocates of “Biblical” natural living. For more recent (HR) examples, check out Paul Nison’s Torah Life Ministries (<http://torahlifeministries.org/>) and The Raw Life (<http://healthwatchman.com/>) and Zachary Bauer’s New2Torah (<http://www.new2torah.com/>) and An American Homestead: Off Grid Living Deep in the Ozarks (<http://anamericanhomestead.com/>). *One word: BEARDS.*

*Sacred Names and lunar Sabbath.*<sup>85</sup> Outside the mainstream, things get more complicated. For the average churchgoer, this is where things also get weird. The Sacred Name movement (see, for example, <http://www.sacredname.com/>) likely started out with the simple intention of restoring the usage of the Tetragrammaton in place of the generic (and somewhat disingenuous) King James rendering “the LORD” for traditional Jewish renderings such as *HaShem* (“the Name).” Several English Bible versions have been published with various renderings of the Name(s) restored (e.g. “Yahweh” for “the LORD,” “Elohim” for “God,” and “Yeshua” for “Jesus”).<sup>86</sup> Generally, to mainstream MJs, these usages are as offensive as they are to traditional Jews who refuse to pronounce (or even spell in full) the Name of G-d.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> not capitalized, to distinguish it from the mainstream seventh-day Sabbath

<sup>86</sup> To date, no author has traced a connection between the SNM and the Jehovah’s Witnesses. In fact, SNM adherents typically argue against the authenticity of “Jehovah” on a linguistic basis.

<sup>87</sup> convention used for demonstration purposes

Most mainstream HRM leaders have a preferred version of the Name(s) that they use in preaching or teaching, but (to my knowledge) do not publicly endorse one version over another or refuse to fellowship with those who differ. The HR congregation with which I sojourned was home to a Sacred Namer (of the “Yahweh and Yahushua” variety, as distinct from “Yahuwah” and Yahushua,” to give a tiny idea of the SNM’s diversity and hair-splitting), a mainstream “Yahweh and Yeshua” user, and two who still used “God and Christ” on a regular basis. None of the members confronted one another over use of the Names; a tacit agreement seemed to be in place that the Names were a non-essential doctrine.

Some Sacred Namers concentrate on their preferred name for the Father; others focus on the technicalities of how Jesus’ name was pronounced in Hebrew or Aramaic. Some – including a few HRs who would not otherwise identify as Sacred Name – write the Name in paleo-Hebrew characters. Unfortunately, many elevate the “correct” spelling and pronunciation to salvific status. Overall, the SNM is distressingly sectarian, ranging from the offbeat to the cultic.

The lunar sabbath<sup>88</sup> is a less common (but growing) observance, based on the belief that the day of rest commanded in Exodus 20 should be counted from each new moon rather than based on an unchanging seven-day cycle. In other words, the day of rest always falls on the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days of the lunar month, but will not always fall on a Saturday. Similarly, some HRs (and a few Sabbatarian groups) observe the new moon as a sabbath of rest. Whether to observe it at the conjunction or the sighted sliver, however, no one can agree.<sup>89</sup>

*Aramaic and the Aleph-Tav.* The Aramaic Primacy theory (see, for instance, <http://www.yaim.org/web/literature/eldertraina/notgreekhebrew.html>) asserts that the New

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<sup>88</sup> See, for instance, <http://www.lunarsabbath.info/index.html>.

<sup>89</sup> Jewish tradition counts the new moon celebration from the time the moon is sighted. Many HRs prefer to count from the conjunction (dark of the moon).

Testament was composed in Aramaic and only later translated into Greek for a wider audience. Christensen (2002) cites it only in passing. Translator George Lamsa (1933) cites the *Peshitta* text of the Syriac churches as an extant example of the earliest Aramaic manuscripts. Andrew Gabriel Roth's *Aramaic English New Testament* (2006, 2012) follows the model of Lamsa's (1933) *Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts*, but relies on previous translations of the *Peshitta* (<http://netzari.angelfire.com/aent.html>). Stephen Pidgeon's *Cepher Bible* (2012) combines the Aramaic primacy theory with the restoration of Sacred Names and the Aleph-Tav Theory (the obscure, but increasingly popular, teaching that the Hebrew letters *Aleph* and *Tav* are sprinkled throughout the Old and New Testament original manuscripts as a "signature" from Yeshua, who in the Greek text of Revelation 22:13 refers to Himself as "the Alpha and the Omega"). Although the average HR may purchase one of these translations for reference or devotional use<sup>90</sup>, it is not likely that the Aramaic manuscript question occupies much of his/her study time. Aramaic Primacy functions more as a support for the overall "Hebraic vs. Greek" paradigm.

*Ephraimites.* Some HRs hold to the Two-House doctrine mentioned above; others do not. As this could be the subject of another study entirely, I will reserve my comments for now.

*More ancient paths.* Increasingly, those who enter the HRM as (presumably) orthodox Trinitarian Christians end up exiting the other side as Binitarian (e.g. the Father and Son are co-equal Persons, but the Holy Spirit is not), some variety of Arian (e.g. the Son was a created divine being or a "lesser Elohim"<sup>91</sup>); or absolute Unitarian (e.g. Elohim is a literal unity with no Son, and Yeshua was a man<sup>92</sup>). There may be minute variations that fall into the cracks between these categories as well. I sojourned with a congregation that included a Binitarian, a Trinitarian,

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<sup>90</sup> as I did in 2013

<sup>91</sup> See, for instance, The Yahweh's Restoration Ministry at <http://www.yrm.org/>.

<sup>92</sup> See [http://torahkingdomliving.com/?page\\_id=353](http://torahkingdomliving.com/?page_id=353).

and a “don’t-know-what-I-am” (that was me at the time). YouTube and the HR blogworld are crammed with testimonies of HRs who have left Trinitarian theology for a concept of God that more fully accords with their understanding of *echad*. One of my co-participants left the HRM for Orthodox Judaism; he believes Yeshua is Messiah, *but* only a man. Others who claim the HR label fall closer to an Islamic-style “pure” monotheism or a concept of “ETERNAL” or “CREATOR” (caps theirs)<sup>93</sup> that could also be influenced by the Native American *Wakan-tanka*. In contrast with MJs and mainstream HRs, who tend to rely on rabbinic tradition, those who turn to a new orthodoxy often find guidance from non-rabbinic sources such as Karaite Jews.<sup>94</sup>

In contrast to HRs, I have found to date one report of a Messianic Jew converting to a modified Orthodox Judaism and no reports of Messianic Jews confessing an Islamic-style faith. The MJM has much stronger ties to the world of Christendom and the Christianiti/es, as well as a deep mooring in the *Halakhah*, making MJs less likely to seek wisdom outside the established tradition.

*Cults, lunatics, and Hebrew Roots jihadists.* Every move of God has its wheat and tares.<sup>95</sup> I hope to cover the HRM’s cultists and sociopaths, such as Yisrayl Hawkins and Daniel Yochanan Lee, in a future study.<sup>96</sup>

***Hebraic Roots Narrative(s).*** Identity markers, concepts of God, language, and lifestyle together are called a *cultural schema*: a “scheme” or framework for living. Fitzpatrick (2004) explains that schemata are “knowledge structures that...influence attention and perception” (p.174); the perceptions that we use to create shared cultural knowledge are themselves shaped

<sup>93</sup> Compare the Armstrongite splinter site run by Frank Nelte at <http://www.uhcg.org/>.

<sup>94</sup> See <http://www.karaite-korner.org/> and <http://www.nehemiaswall.com/>. One of my co-participants is a personal friend of Karaite luminary Nehemia [pronounced “Ne-hee-mee-ah”] Gordon.

<sup>95</sup> I speak here in the mixed voice of faith and irony.

<sup>96</sup> One Facebook member, commenting on a video of Lee’s that condemns another HRM ministry to hellfire, posted at Faith, Grace & Torah on January 23, says, “He looks like a hebrew roots [sic] jihadist.” Another responds, “Looks like he belongs in Isis, talks like it too” (<https://www.facebook.com/Faith.Grace.Torah?fref=nf>).

by what our culture says is important to pay attention to. Therefore, the creation of schemata is something of a circular process. In addition to cultural schemata created by the group of which we are members, we each have *cognitive schemata* created by our personal history and experiences. My cognitive schema is the set of glasses I wear when I look at the world. Many HRs believe that their schemata have been shaped by pagan influences that crept into the Christian tradition and need to be reframed. This goes beyond adopting a new cultural schema (identity markers) to creating a new cognitive schema (a “Hebraic” rather than “Greek” viewpoint; see Moen, 2008; Lawrence, “Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek (Western) Thought”; and Scott, “Hebrew Mind vs. Greek Mind”).

“The biblical narratives create a world, and it is within this world that believers are to live their lives and understand reality” (Smith, 19--., p. 75, quoted in Barrett, 2010, p. 5-6). “*And you shall tell them to your children...*” (Deut. 6:7).

The narrative that peaked at Sinai forms the outline for the new cognitive schema. In a very real way, HR sojourners consider themselves to be “members” of the community that was formed at the foot of the mountain when Moses descended. In the congregation where I sojourned, Torah study times were punctuated with phrases like “He told us He would meet with us on this day [the seventh day]”; “He gave us the option to obey and receive a blessing”; “but we are a rebellious house.” If performance is memory (Fassett & Morella, n.d.), memory is history. And history is a narrative shared equally between the ancestors and the grandchildren yet to be born. “All things that happened to them were a lesson for us, on whom the ends of the ages have come...that we might not set our hearts on evil things as they did” (1 Corinthians 10:6).

Every HRM sojourner narrates his/her journey differently, but all believe in some way they have



“passed through the cloud and were baptized in the sea” (1 Cor. 10:2) and the *Shema* was spoken to their ears.

**The remnant.** But everyone claims the Text and the narrative. Whose claim is most valid?

*“He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly” (Rom. 2:28). I want to be one of those who “keep the commandments of God, and hold to the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17). I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him (1 Kings 19:18). My brothers and sisters and mother are those who hear the word of God, and do it (Luke 8:21). Hear, O Israel...*

*Shema Yisrael  
Adonai Elohenu  
Adonai echad<sup>97</sup>*

In the seventh-century Anglo-Saxon devotional poem *Exodus* (Bradley, p. 50ff.), the children of Israel halt at the Red Sea, Pharaoh’s army at their backs, death certain. As Moses lifts his staff, they tremble, hoping he will bring about a miracle. The narrator chooses this moment to interrupt himself and bring up a piece of history he forgot to clarify back in the poem *Genesis* – namely, how Noah’s life was preserved in the Great Flood. Only with this background in place does he finally usher the children of Israel across the “flood” into victory, leaving the Egyptian host dead on the seashore.

I can’t promise that my journey will be as thrilling as their transit across the Red Sea. Nevertheless, this is the point where I must “turn back” to history. With you, I await the

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<sup>97</sup> Here, the music video version of *Exodus* contains a suspended (dissonant) chord.

conclusion, eager to find the “Israel of God.”<sup>98</sup> Whoever they are, they are the ones I want to join myself to and sojourn with!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **A chosen people**

As Tribble and Russell (2006) point out, family feuds have been part of Abrahamic faith since the time of Isaac and Ishmael. “The putative unity of family and faith, located in the man Abraham, spawn[s] disunity and disparity between his two wives and their respective children” (p. 3). In the Christian tradition(s), chosenness assumes even greater importance than it did for the Jews who came before; for in this case, the “people of God” are tasked with setting themselves apart, not only from the world, but from the previous heirs to promise. Or so the (dominant) narrative runs. And the tradition(s) find more than one way to divide *new-Israel* from *not-Israel*, splitting YHWH’s inheritance (Psalm 79:1) down the middle like a rack of lamb...excuse me, a rack of (pork) ribs, we don’t keep kosher around here.<sup>99</sup>

**Two nations.** Two nations are in your womb...

And the elder shall serve the younger (Gen. 25:23).

**Supersessionism.** Traditionally, Christian theology has made division between *old-Israel* and *new-Israel*. The technical theological term is *supersessionism*: the Church has superseded, or replaced, “the Jews” in God’s economy. In a 2001 speech titled “Christian Zionism: Justifying Apartheid in the Name of God,” Anglican theologian Stephen Sizer claimed that “the New Testament...reinterprets, annuls and fulfils those promises [of land to Abraham’s seed] in and through Jesus Christ” and, therefore, to support a Jewish state in the Middle East today is to stand on heretical ground. Since the Church is the spiritual people of God, the “promises made to

<sup>98</sup> And (in the music video version of *Exodus*) eager to resolve the chord and end the discomfort and uncertainty of suspension!

<sup>99</sup> The understanding reader will pardon the sarcasm.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph are therefore now to be understood as fulfilled only through those who follow Jesus Christ, for they alone are designated the true children of Abraham and Sarah” (2001, n.p.). This theological thinking is of the sort condemned by Nicholls (1995) for its tendency to breed hostility toward Jews, and for good reason. John Chrysostom (ca. 349-407) and Martin Luther (1483-1546), who produced some of the harshest polemic literature against Jews in their day, also happened to be *the two Christian theologians most quoted by the Nazi architects of the Holocaust* (Sharon, quoting Mark Saka, 2014).

**Dispensationalism.** The dispensationalist innovation (articulated ca. 1820 by British pastor John Nelson Darby, and popularized in the United States ca. 1880 by Cyrus Ingersoll Scofield) makes a different division: *the-Israel* versus *not-Israel*. In this scheme, the Jewish people (synonymous with “Israel” in Biblical references and with the current Jewish state) were central to God’s plan for salvation history during the Age of Law, but were *put aside*<sup>100</sup> during the roughly two-thousand-year Age of Grace (dominated by the church<sup>101</sup>). After the rapture of the church takes all New Covenant believers to heaven, God will resume dealing with His Old Covenant people, bringing a last-days remnant to salvation and faith in Christ.<sup>102</sup> The key point: the New Testament church is not Israel and never can be; God deals with His two chosen peoples under different “administrations” (dispensations). Critics point to bias in dispensational rapture theology, which beams Christians to heaven while leaving “unsaved” Jews to face the Great Tribulation (see Barrett, 2012).

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<sup>100</sup> Note the similarity of this language, deliberately chosen, to the divorce language in Deut. 24:1-4; a man may “put away” a wife who displeases him.

<sup>101</sup> In dispensationalist publications I have encountered, God’s people are “church,” not “Church.”

<sup>102</sup> According to the Rev. John Hagee in *Four Blood Moons* (2013), heavenly signs show the rapture is imminent; other preachers like the Rev. Jerry Falwell have long pointed to signs like corruption in American culture.

**Evangelical Zionism.** Evangelicals who support the Jewish state<sup>103</sup> use a third division: *the-Israel* and *also-Israel*. Evangelical Zionists take literally *both* Genesis 12:3's promise, *He who blesses you [Abraham], I [God] will bless, and* Romans 11:17's promise, *You were grafted into the olive tree.*<sup>104</sup> Thus, many are delighted to help Jews re/claim the Promised Land, for they believe they are obeying God by "blessing" the physical seed of Abraham. (The Jewish religion and the Jewish state are often conflated into one entity under the umbrella term "Israel.") At the same time, many evangelicals possess a sense of brotherhood toward Jews and the Jewish state that is lacking in mainline and fundamentalist denominations. They are likely to support Jewish evangelism through organizations like Jews for Jesus; they are also the most likely (in my observations to this point) to worship with Messianic congregations and to start *exploring their Hebraic roots.*<sup>105</sup>

**Two houses: Ephraim vs. Judah.** Some in the HRM solve the problem a different way: *both-Israel* versus *and-Israel*. By concentrating on the physical line of descent alone, they trace Abraham's "seed" to the four corners of the earth where they believe the Lost Tribes have settled, in accord with statements of the Hebrew prophets and anecdotes from Josephus. What sets the Two-House belief apart (e.g. from British Israelism) is that it does not privilege one group. Ephraim (that is, the Ten Tribes that made up the ancient northern kingdom of Israel, went into exile in Assyria in 722 B.C., and disappeared from the history books) has one role in God's last-days economy, while Judah (that is, the Two Tribes of the southern kingdom, exiled to Babylon in 586 B.C. and completely evicted from the Holy Land in 76 A.D.) has another; yet

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<sup>103</sup> That is to say, the majority of evangelicals, represented by denominations like the Assemblies of God; the growing minority who identify as progressive or emergent are likely to support the Arab-Palestinian cause. Evangelicalism is mixed on this issue. In my childhood church, all my family's close friends were evangelical Zionists; yet the United Methodist denomination of which we were a part was, at the time, steadily moving toward its current pro-Palestinian stance

<sup>104</sup> For Sizer (2001), the "ultra-literalist Biblical hermeneutic" (p. 159) is the biggest flaw in CZ thinking.

<sup>105</sup> spelled without a cap here to illustrate that "Hebraic roots" is a theological construct as well as a cultural label

neither group replaces the other. The rivalry of Leah and Rachel (sister-wives of the patriarch Jacob) and of their offspring (Leah's six sons vs. Rachel's son Joseph, whom his brothers sold into slavery, Gen. 37:28) is often cited as a prophetic picture of how the Two Houses will strive with each other until the Messiah returns to reconcile them (Ezek. 37:16-17<sup>106</sup>). Most Two-House teachers trace Ephraim to the Anglo-Saxon peoples, but others descry Ephraimite seed as far off as the "coastlands" (KJV "islands," Isa. 11:11) of China and Mesoamerica.

**Two kingdoms.** Other divisions are possible besides the standard ones. Going back to the Text, or ever<sup>107</sup> Moses came up from Egypt, Abraham/Abram left Ur and, with it, all the gods of his fathers – including the sun god Shamash, the fertility goddess Ishtar<sup>108</sup>, and the priest-kings who reigned in the Sumerian city-states just as Jannes and Jambres would later enthrall Egypt (2 Timothy 3:8). Most importantly, Abraham abandoned the concept of a god-king (a ruler whose authority came from his association with the powers of nature) for that of a God who was King (compare monotheistic personalism in Parsons, "Parashat Eikev"). Royal authority fades before the Judge of all the earth; so do unjust power structures.<sup>109</sup>

In midrash, god-king Nimrod stalks the life of baby Abraham (Edery, 2003). *Cuando el rey Nimrod* may thus be read as the response of a marginalized people to oppression. The Sephardim identified their own history of oppression under Ottoman Muslims and European Christians with what their ancestors suffered in Egypt, and they did so by locating that identity-

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<sup>106</sup> Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions....

<sup>107</sup> KJV language for "before"

<sup>108</sup> These are their later Babylonian names. Leonard Woolley's epic archaeological dig showed that Ur was a thriving city around the time Abraham would have lived; see *Ur of the Chaldees* (1929, 1952) and *The Sumerians* (1965).

<sup>109</sup> Gen. 18:25

giving set of Events – the birth and miraculous survival of a special son – at the very genesis of their history, not in Moses, but in Father Abraham, whose faith was enough to save worlds.<sup>110</sup>

*Saludemos al compadre y tambien al moel  
Que por su zekhut mos venga el goel  
Y ri'hma a todo Israel  
Cierto loaremos al verdadero  
Let's greet the godfather and also the moel  
For because of his virtue the Messiah comes to us  
And to redeem all Israel  
Surely we give praise to the true one*

Moses delivered the people, but Abraham is responsible for ushering the Messiah into history. The god-king, incarnation (often) of the sun, is also the incarnation of empire. He colonizes bodies as later imperial powers colonized land.<sup>111</sup> Messiah will destroy such power structures to set up a kingdom of righteousness and peace. To sing of Abraham, then, is to do resistance.<sup>112</sup>

*Avram avinu, padre querido  
Padre bendicho, luz de Israel  
Our father, Abraham, beloved father,  
Blessed Father, light of Israel*

Alternatively, rather than a liberation theology in which the people of God triumph over the kingdoms of the earth, the Nimrod-Abraham trope lends itself to an apolitical theology in which God's people triumph by transcending. In this sense, God's people are those who separate themselves from worldly offices to await a "better kingdom."<sup>113</sup> Admittedly, I have never heard the midrash of Nimrod and Abraham invoked by either a liberation theologian or a conscientious objector! Even the bare Biblical references to Nimrod's rule (Gen. 10:8-12) and Abraham's

<sup>110</sup> I allude to a quote from the *Talmud*: "...whoever destroys a single Israelite soul is deemed by Scripture as if he had destroyed a whole world. And whoever saves a single Israelite soul is deemed by Scripture as if he had saved a whole world" (*The Two Talmuds Compared*, Jacob Neusner, Volume C, Tractate Sanhedrin, Scholars Press, Atlanta, Georgia, 1996, Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 4:10 A, pg. 95, at <http://www.revisionisthistory.org/revisionist5.html>).

<sup>111</sup> Viz. Gilgamesh, taking the daughters of all his noblemen on their wedding night.

<sup>112</sup> Abraham was a "stranger" or sojourner. Compare Woodley (2012), p. 16: "The *disempowered triad* of widows, orphans, and strangers best represent [sic] God's concern for those who have few material goods (food, clothing, shelter) and who are most easily oppressed (justice)."

<sup>113</sup> In Heb. 11:16, Abraham is portrayed as looking forward to a non-earthly kingdom.

*salida* (exit or departure, Gen. 12:1-4), however, lend themselves perfectly. Nimrod versus Abraham has become my personal metaphor as I seek to understand how the Bible teaches believers should relate to political systems.

Then again...what if Hislop (1853, along with Rives, 2006, and Woodrow, 1987) was on to something? If the god-king Nimrod and his mother-wife Semiramis/Ishtar instituted sun worship in Sumer, this sheds a new light<sup>114</sup> on what Abraham walked away from...and on what Scripture means by *come out of Her, my people*.<sup>115</sup>

**Two women.** A dividing line runs down the middle of the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures from start to finish. By most Christians, other than fundamentalists<sup>116</sup>, it is ignored. This is the line between the faithful bride and the unfaithful wife: the remnant versus the harlot.

This line cuts deeper than the Pauline allegory of Sarah and Hagar (Galatians 4:24-26), in which one is a slave and the other freeborn. Rather than *station*, the difference between the harlot and the bride is one of *nature*. The great irony – and what makes the harlot-vs.-bride trope so fascinating – is that the true remnant is hidden; those who are visible, claiming to be His, are pretenders.<sup>117</sup>

### **A continuing people**

Counting Christianity and Islam, Judaism has influenced fifty percent of the world's population. Historians of the Arnold Toynbee school failed to explain Judaism, because it never declined as – presumably – any religion should do after three thousand years of diaspora,

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<sup>114</sup> Pardon the pun.

<sup>115</sup> Jer. 51:45, Rev. 18:4; caps mine.

<sup>116</sup> I include both Protestant fundamentalists like Jack Chick, who claim the RCC is Babylon the Great, and Catholic fundamentalists like Walid Shoebat, who claim Islam is Babylon.

<sup>117</sup> In future work, I will offer a possible explanation, rooted in sociobiology and social science theory, for why the theme of “two women” figures so prominently in the Text.

assimilation, and cultural change.<sup>118</sup> In the words of Voltaire: “The Jews are still here” (Sharon, quoting Mark Saka, 2014).

In Christian tradition(s), the fact that the Jews are “still here” has brought consternation to some, vindication to others. Augustine “wrote that it was necessary a Jewish remnant be preserved as a ‘witness’ to the futility of the Old Covenant” (Barrett, 2014c, p. 4). Modern evangelical Zionists, on the other hand, point to Jews and the Jewish state as evidence that God keeps covenant and “hath not cast away his people, whom he foreknew” (Rom. 11:2). In either case, the existence of Scripture and the existence of the Jewish people are used to mutually reinforce each other.

**Who.** “We are a rebellious house” (Frances, co-participant<sup>119</sup>). *Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night...If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever* (Jer. 30:35-36). “Now that we understand our heritage, we’re connected to a people more than thirty-three hundred years old. When three million people hear something at the same time and they’re still doing it, you know that it’s not made up” (David, co-participant). *I looked for it [the vineyard YHWH planted] to bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes* (Isa. 5:2).

**We/they.** Many contemporary MJ/HR songs follow the same convention as *Cuando el rey Nimrod*; they situate “us” within history by narrating a Biblical event in the first person plural.<sup>120</sup> Throughout *Exodus*, particularly in the following sections, I employ “they” and “we”

<sup>118</sup> Secrets to this longevity may include the concept of a universal God, one who – though He had promised them a place – was not place-bound, but could travel with them into exile, as well as the fact that Judaism early became a “religion of the Book” (Sharon, quoting Mark Saka, 2014).

<sup>119</sup> All co-participants are identified by pseudonyms. For demographic details, see Barrett (2014a), pp. 11-15.

<sup>120</sup> See Steve McConnell, “Pesach Song,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewDdp91nqV4>, and Zemer Levav, “The Telling: Official Version,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCPpl6ZKvD8>.



somewhat interchangeably, sometimes in ways that sound deliberately contradictory. I do this to emphasize that I identify with **both** the believers (Jewish and Gentile) who clung to Torah (**continuity**) **and** those in the Church who left it behind (**change**). I stand somewhere between the two groups, since I was raised outside Torah – to Paul, I was a Gentile *without the law* (Rom. 2:12; compare 2 Chron. 15:3) – but am seeking to re/turn to it. The use of “we” does not necessarily imply that I consider myself a member of any particular group or movement. It does signify, however, that I would rather consider all of “us,” even those I believe are in grave error, as one (sadly divided) House than retreat into the exclusivist use of “we” *versus* “they.” Time will tell whether this is the right decision.

We just crossed the Sea and are marching to Sinai;<sup>121</sup> let’s see if we make it to the Land.<sup>122</sup>

**Witness.** Stephen, before he was martyred, gave testimony (the “witness of history”) against the rebellious house. “Then said the high priest, *Are these things so?* And he [Stephen] said,<sup>123</sup>

*...And when forty years were expired, there appeared to [Moses] in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.*

.....

*He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.<sup>124</sup> This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.<sup>125</sup>*

<sup>121</sup> *We’re marching to Zion, / Beautiful, beautiful Zion; / We’re marching upward to Zion, / The beautiful city of God* (“Come, We That Love the Lord,” Isaac Watts, 1707).

<sup>122</sup> Here I deliberately imply both the allegorical “Land” of heaven imaged by Christendom and the Christianit/ies, and the physical “Land” that is the ambition of political Zionists and dispensational theologians.

<sup>123</sup> Pp. 58-60 are an excerpt of Stephen’s testimony; for the entire retelling of the promise to Abraham, the Exodus, the disobedience in the wilderness, and the reasons for exile, see Acts 7:1-54.

<sup>124</sup> Steve McConnell, “Pesach Song,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewDdp91nqV4>.

<sup>125</sup> Steve McConnell, “Vayikra Shmo,”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaw1jAX7Xw0&list=PLjCtCM6IaaAse7lxFEMvWA-wt5dwtb-ME>.

*This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers<sup>126</sup> who received the lively oracles... To whom our fathers would not obey, but...turned back again into Egypt.<sup>127</sup>*

Stephen, a master storyteller, sets it all up. Characters march across the stage of Hebrew history: Abraham is called out, Joseph is enslaved in Egypt, a pharaoh arises to torment the Hebrews with forced labor and slaughter their sons. Moses, at eighty years of age, receives a commission from God in a flaming bush and leads the people out, shepherd's staff in his hand.

The narrative is *familiar* to these chosen people. They have heard it since they were young enough to lisp at the Passover table, *Why is this night different from all other nights?* A good Jew hearing the story would have every reason to pat himself on the back; after all, he is *chosen*.

But Stephen defamiliarizes the familiar. The story takes an uncomfortable turn:

*And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.*

...Well, our fathers weren't perfect. But surely, in a minute, he will go on to talk about David or one of the prophets.

*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost:*

What! How can this man call *us* uncircumcised?

*As your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?*

Look at how loyal we are to Moses, compared to our fathers. We love the prophets. We've never worshiped other gods since we returned from Babylon!

*And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:*

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<sup>126</sup> Who was this angel? Compare Pete Rambo, December 4, 2013, "Was Jesus on Mt. Sinai? Does it matter?", <http://natsab.com/2013/12/04/was-jesus-on-mt-sinai-does-it-matter/>.

<sup>127</sup> Zemer Levav, "Don't Let Me Fall Away," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIwp87lnCkg>.

*Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*

Stephen has indicted the people of the Book with capital crimes: murder, idolatry, and lawlessness. With one sweep, he has identified a crowd of card-carrying Jews with every sin their fathers committed and with every curse of Moses' covenant.<sup>128</sup>

...When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth" (Acts 7:54).<sup>129</sup>

If his indictment is true, the sin of the golden calf is our/their first identity marker.

Rehearsing the drama of our fathers' sins can be painful. We "love to be counted with the seed of Jacob when blessings are promised, but pitch [our] tents far away" at other times (p. 28 in this text). For centuries, Christendom and many of the Christianiti/es<sup>130</sup> have claimed the place of new-Israel while casting aspersions on old-Israel as "legalists"<sup>131</sup> or "Christ-killers." Christian theologians stake entire books on the premise that only certain "Old Testament commands" are binding on "New Testament believers," taking a selective approach to change and continuity. Yet a literal reading of the Gospels indicts Christians equally – *who have received commands from the lips of the Messiah, and have not kept them!* Yeshua/Jesus never spoke against the Torah; in fact, He upheld it on numerous occasions.<sup>132</sup> Most of His disciples uphold it in the breach, more than the observance. Furthermore, as Yeshua/Jesus said, *take the log out of your own eye*. What, morally, is the difference between a "Christ-killer" (if there be such) and a Jew-

<sup>128</sup> The same strategy has been used by supersessionist theologians to show that the Jews were rejected as "Christ-killers." Nicholls (1995) documents historical incidents, while Carroll (2001) recalls anecdotal experiences, of Christian rejection of Jews.

<sup>129</sup> By contrast, Peter's hearers, when "cut to the heart," cry out, "What shall we do then?" (Acts 2:37).

<sup>130</sup> For an extreme example, see fundamental Baptist pastor Steven Anderson's anti-HRM videos on YouTube.

<sup>131</sup> a Christian shorthand for the (faulty) assumption that Jewish constructs of righteousness are entirely works-based, with no place for genuine repentance and God's forgiveness

<sup>132</sup> e.g. Matt. 5:17-20, 23:2-4, 23:23; Luke 4:16; John 7:23

killer (of which, we know, there were many during the Crusades and Inquisition)?<sup>133</sup> At times, I wonder if I want to identify myself with the people(s) of the Book at all, considering their past.

If I am honest, however, I will not be afraid to write myself into *either* the narrative of the Jews' rejection of the Messiah, or the narrative of the Church's rejection of the Jews. *Your people are my people, your God my God*; your past, my past. Nor will I be surprised when the golden calf rears up again at turning points in our/their/your history. There is "no difference" (Rom. 10:12); for indeed, we are (all) "a rebellious house."

### Turning points

It is not my purpose to argue the historical accuracy of the Text, but to examine the **effects** of belief in the Bible's accuracy on the lives of those who (claim to) follow it. Part of using an "orthodox interpretation" (Sharon, quoting Mark Saka, 2014) is to allow the people of the Book to stake their claim to authenticity. Moreover, to meaningfully compare the present with the past, I need a baseline of ancient praxis/belief. Therefore, I start from the assumption that the Biblical record is, so to speak, "what happened"<sup>134</sup> and that the Text has come down to us more or less intact.<sup>135</sup> I trace how the people(s) who claim to be heirs to the tradition have kept intact (**continuity**) or made alterations to (**change**) their ways of rehearsing the narrative and writing themselves into it. Instances of continuity or change in liturgical practices – including worship order, days of worship, and (especially) music – highlight turning points in the history of this "continuing people."<sup>136</sup>

### Two roads. Frost's traveler stood

<sup>133</sup> I use the phrase "Jew-killer" for dramatic effect, highlighting the genocidal implications inherent in much of historical Christian theology – not to suggest that all or most Christians are or were intent on killing Jews.

<sup>134</sup> Dr. Richard Gamble instilled in me a fear of using this word loosely, but use it I must

<sup>135</sup> My subjectivity should be evident in the fact that I treat both the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures as authoritative

<sup>136</sup> I regret that, for reasons of space, I could not include the worship traditions of non-Jewish Sabbatarian sects in this discussion.

Where two roads diverged in a yellow wood...

*One wide, with open gates to every promise*

*That Pilgrim's heart and body might have craved...*

*One narrow, with no promise but of pain –*

*No gain, no worldly lovers – that's the cost*

*Of traveling where the Master's footsteps trod*

*The lonely road that leads, alone, to God.*

And i...

Will i take the road less traveled by?<sup>137</sup>

Christian, Jew, or other, we ground our identity in the liturgical drama wherein we *live, and move, and have our being* (Acts 17:28). Liturgy refers to the “forms of worship employed by any faith community, but particularly those that follow a set pattern of ritual participation (e.g. an agreed-upon set of symbols)” (Barrett 2014b, p. 4).<sup>138</sup> The Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) uses *leitourgeia* to translate the Hebrew *tziva/mitzvah* (commandment, appointment) (Werner, 1959). Judeo-Christian liturgy broadly understood is “a typological recapitulation of past events that shape communal identity” (Barrett 2014c 3/4, citing Hahn, 2005). In short, the re/presentation of G-d's acts in history serves as the bridge point (a “sacred bridge”? see Werner, 1959) where G-d and G-d's people meet, remember, and mutually rejoice.<sup>139</sup>

*Why is this night*

<sup>137</sup> paraphrased from Robert Frost, “The Road Less Traveled By,” and John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*

<sup>138</sup> This statement applies as well to “low-church” Christians who do not use liturgy in its strict sense. I grew up singing the gospel hymn “Victory in Jesus”: *I heard an old, old story / How a Savior came from glory... Each “performance” of the hymn recapitulates the “old, old story” and reapplies it to the believer: He loved me ere I knew Him / And all my love is due Him / He plunged me to victory / Beneath the cleansing flood!* In church, driving with my family, or alone, the “performative ‘[became] a site of memory’” (Giroux & Shannon, n.d., in Fassett & Morella, n.d., p. 141).

<sup>139</sup> In the phrase *G-d and G-d's people*, I deliberately evoke the sound of both Jewish and Christian liturgical voices. All Judaism write “G-d” for “God,” out of reverence for the Name; liberal Christians typically refer to God without gendered pronouns.

*Different from all others  
Why do we celebrate?*

*My child, this night  
Is when the plague passed over  
For deliverance we'd prayed---*

*We hid inside  
With blood our doorposts covered  
By YHWH's chosen Lamb we're saved*

**Tabernacle.** Early Hebrew poetry was transmitted through oral tradition, the war chants and bridal songs of a nomadic people. Kraeling and Mowry (1957) speculate that the earliest declamations recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures were “sung in response to the invitation of the precentor [song-leader] by the members of the clan as they approach[ed] a tribal watering-place” (p. 285). Consider The Song of the Well. “The LORD said to Moses,

‘Gather the people together and I will give them water.’”

Spring up, O well!  
Sing about it,  
About the well that the princes dug,  
that the nobles of the people sank—  
the nobles with scepters and staffs (Numbers 21:16-18).

Hebrew poetry derives its rhythm from the inflections of speech, featuring a parallel structure of two-part lines or two-line couplets that lends itself to a call-and-response pattern. This metric structure is also featured in the victory chants that were “characteristic of the group movements of desert tribes” (p. 285). Such was the *Shirah* (Song) of Moses and Miriam after the nation crossed the Red Sea (Exod. 15:21):

Sing to the LORD,  
for he is highly exalted.  
The horse and its rider  
he has hurled into the sea.

Performed responsively by separate groups of men and women (led respectively by Moses and his sister), the *Shirah* was accompanied by tambourines and dancing (Exod. 15:20), and likely sung with “strident and staccato” vocalization (p. 286) that voiced the sheer thrill of victory over one’s enemies.

Yet are not we the same Hebrews whose camp rang with *noise of war* – victory chants – as they gave themselves over in lust to a foreign god, the calf-idol?

It is not the noise of war,  
Nor of those slain in battle;  
It is the sound of singing that I hear (Exodus 32:18).

*This is the first turning.*

**Temple.** In the Psalms and Prophets, parallel metric structure continued to define Hebrew poetry during Israel’s monarchic age. The “strophic or refrain structure may have played a part in the ‘Songs of Ascent’” (Werner, 1957)<sup>140</sup> and other celebratory music of the First Temple era. Music in the king’s court included diverse instruments, male and female vocalists, and the so-called “royal psalms” (Psalm 21, 72, and 110, 45) (ref. 10, 11). Psalms sung by Levite choirs in the Temple (presumably at the Three Pilgrimage Festivals) “celebrated...the enthronement of the Lord upon his holy hill” in Zion (ref. 12):

God has ascended amid shouts of joy,  
the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.  
Sing praises to God, sing praises;  
sing praises to our King, sing praises.  
For God is the King of all the earth;  
sing to him a psalm of praise.  
God reigns over the nations;  
God is seated on his holy throne (Psalm 47:5-8).

The blasts of the courtly trumpet, however, could not hide the cries of the poor and the stranger from the ears of YHWH. For the stench of our sin, the Land spewed out first Israel, then Judah.

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<sup>140</sup> Psalms 120-134 (esp. 122), which explicitly celebrate the event of “going up” to Jerusalem

In Babylonian captivity, the psalmist queries, “How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?” (Ps. 137:4):

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept  
when we remembered Zion.

.....

May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth  
if I do not remember you,  
if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy (Ps. 137:1, 6).

When the exiles of Judah returned to the Land and rebuilt the Temple under Nehemiah’s supervision, the Levite choral ensembles resumed their place on the Temple steps for daily worship. According to Christensen (2002), Nehemiah and Ezra, together with the Levites and scribes, developed a systematic structure for Judah’s sacred music that shaped not only worship events in the Temple, but the composition of the Biblical canon. Although this music was not preserved, Christensen (2002) traces the accentual patterns of Biblical poetry to show how song and Text inter/acted to create one another.

*Yet sacrifice and offering You have not desired, but that we would heed the voice of YHWH. For obedience is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.* Ephraim and Judah alike do not listen; they have become like a backsliding heifer (Hosea 4:16).

*This is the second turning.*

**Synagogue.** With the destruction of the Second Temple in A.D. 70<sup>141</sup>, instruments were banned from Jewish life (excepting weddings and the *shofar* blast on high holy days) “as a sign of national mourning” (Kraeling & Mowry, 1957, p. 285; Nulman, 1985). The rabbis of exile taught their congregations that respect for the Scripture required a “tuneful” reading. In response, diaspora synagogues placed increasing emphasis on the role of the cantor. As diaspora life became more institutionalized, the informal song-leader, or *Sheliah-Tzibbur* (reminiscent of the

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<sup>141</sup> My research did not cover the music of the Maccabean era or the music of the Ten Tribes in diaspora after the northern kingdom was destroyed.



tribal precentor), gave way by the sixth century to the semi-professional, paid *Hazzan* (ref. 16). Diaspora music also began to go in two different directions: Ashkenazi and Sephardi. My research to date indicates that the Sephardim – despite stringent persecution – clung more tightly than the Ashkenazim to the original song traditions of their ancestors. For instance, the Sephardic version of the *Shirah* may be the original melody sung by Moses and Miriam, since it features an ancient pentatonic scale (Nulman, 1985). I have suggested (Barrett, 2013b) that when the Spanish Inquisition followed Sephardic Jews to the New World, the Sephardim used the ballad tradition to preserve fragments of secret Jewish heritage.

At the same time, medieval Jewish musicians borrowed and exchanged material as it crisscrossed Europe in the hands (or on the lips) of traveling courtly entertainers. Liturgies developed in secret by the Jews of Spain show Arabic, Spanish, and Gregorian as well as Hebrew influence (Barrett 2014c, ref. 12, 13). Furthermore, as Jews in diaspora sought to maintain their identity and avoid assimilation, the lines between religion and daily life began to blur. While Jewish fathers led worship in the synagogue, Jewish mothers kept the tradition alive at home, with (un)surprising results: many of the *Zemirot* (“table-songs”), lullabies, and love-songs share their melodies with the liturgy (Barrett 2013 ref. 14). *Cuando el rey Nimrod* is sung to the tune of the Sabbath prayer *Shalom Alechem*; the love song *Los bilbilicos* (p. 85-86 in this text) shares its tune with the prayer *Tsur Mishelo* (Liturgy ref. 16). The Sephardim, in particular, relied on folk songs to maintain their identity (Nulman, 1985, p. 69); Israel Katz writes, “It was the tenacious nature of the Sephardim, particularly those from North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, to retain in their oral tradition textual vestiges from their centuries-long existence on Iberian soil” (p. 349). Year by year, Jews continued to welcome Elijah to the Passover table and to conclude the meal with a joyful shout: “Next year, in Jerusalem!”

No more did Judah build “high places on every hill and under every green tree,” as *every man did what was right in his own eyes*. In the words of Sabbatarian J.N. Andrews, “after their return from Babylon they were never guilty of idolatry...the chastisement of that captivity effecting a cure of this evil” (Andrews, p. 62, *History of the Sabbath*, citing Dr. Clarke on Ezek. 23:48).<sup>142</sup> But, to prove we would not go astray, we made chains to bind ourselves to YHWH’s law. Chains wear well, once you get used to them; they make grand identity markers and even jewelry. Are we not they of whom Yeshua spoke, that *teach for doctrines the commandments of men*?<sup>143</sup>

*This is the third turning.*

**Church.** Jewish and Christian liturgies share a musical origin in ancient Hebrew melodies (Werner, 1959). Idelsohn (writing 1914-1932, cited in Werner, 1959), a cantor, ethnomusicologist, and pioneer of Jewish music studies, demonstrated that early Hebrew melodies were retained in Temple and synagogue worship and, from there, spread into early Christian congregational settings. Werner (1959) suggests the *Hazzan* was responsible for preserving and transmitting the song tradition from the Jewish to the Christian context. As the Messianic movement accepted more Gentile converts, it began to look less Jewish, until the Jewish and Christian traditions stood parallel rather than on a continuum. Diaspora Jews used the singing of psalms to identify as distinctively Jewish (Kraeling & Mowry, 1957). In time, Christendom adopted that identity marker as its own, but settled it in a heavenly (rather than earthly) metanarrative (cf. Hahn’s, 2005, treatment of liturgy): the Eucharist.

<sup>142</sup> I have not consulted Jewish renderings of this period of Judah’s history; presumably, they would agree.

<sup>143</sup> Edith’s (co-participant) references to “rabbi trails” exemplified the (common, but not uniform) HR belief that the Jewish sages wrongly added tradition to Text by claiming equal authority for the Oral Torah, *Talmud*, etc. It can be argued that medieval rabbinic writers show far more wisdom and sensitivity than Christian writers (see, for instance, Lamm, 19-- , on Judaism’s support for women’s marital rights). The typical HR argument, drawing themes from Christian arguments, cites Yeshua’s opposition to the Pharisees. Others suggest Yeshua *was* a Pharisee (of the more moderate Hillel school, as opposed to the fundamentalist school of Shammai), but spoke against abuses of the system.

*Haggadah vs. Eucharist.* Christendom and the Christianit/ies assert the Eucharist originated with the Last Supper and was passed to the Church by the apostles; the HRM contests this, citing evidence that the Last Supper was a Passover meal that the apostles continued to observe.

*Why is this night  
Unlike any other?  
Why do we celebrate?*<sup>144</sup>

*[Messiah] our Passover was sacrificed for us;*

*therefore let us keep the feast (Paul).*<sup>145</sup>

The Passover observance initiates the Hebraic (also Jewish) liturgical calendar, just as the Passover event initiated the story that led to Sinai. The story of the human race began with creation, but the story of a called-out people begins with redemption. In Christian tradition, Christ's death to redeem us from slavery to sin was the ultimate Passover; all past celebrations, even the historical event in Egypt, were mere *types and shadows* (Heb. 10:1). Christians either reenact (in Christendom) or remember (in the Christianit/ies) His death "as often as [they] drink" the cup (Paul) – which may be yearly, quarterly, monthly, weekly, or even daily. HR teachers contend that, when Sha'ul<sup>146</sup> told the Corinthian believers to "keep the feast," he meant it literally (thus, "as often as you drink it" means at the appointed time for Passover). Therefore, many HRs observe a yearly *seder* rather than partaking of bread and cup regularly.

The Christian Eucharist<sup>147</sup> is a powerful identity marker in both "low" and "high" c/Church traditions. To the Christian mind, HRs are "replacing" a mandate of Christ<sup>148</sup> with a

<sup>144</sup> Ceil & Moishe Rosen's (1978) *Christ in the Passover: Why is This Night Different?* articulates an MJ approach to the Passover *Haggadah* that is also accessible to Christian audiences.

<sup>145</sup> This statement is quoted at a key moment in the *Book of Common Prayer* communion liturgy.

<sup>146</sup> Paul

<sup>147</sup> variously called Eucharist (Gk. "thanksgiving"), "the Lord's Supper," or "c/Communion"

<sup>148</sup> Matt. 26:26-28

temporary “Old Testament” observance. For HRs, Passover *is* the mandate, spoken by the same YHWH who *in the fullness of time* (Paul) would die in the flesh for man’s sin; Christians are the ones who have “replaced” it with a modified pagan mystery.<sup>149</sup> Who, here, is guilty of innovation?

The Passover-Eucharist controversy illustrates the tug-of-war between history and tradition in both Christian and HR worship praxis. Our detective work to find the “Israel of God” is no light task. If God’s record is marked by history (Moen, 2008), His people ought to be marked by history as well. *Without the foundation of history, what good is the narrative that provides me with an identity?* (p. 19 in this text). And their/our/my history emerges from the pages of the Old Testament, not just the New. As Moen (2008) points out, “[t]he Biblical record constantly reminds us that this is the God Who rescued Israel out of Egypt, the God Who parted the Red Sea” (p. 56); everything God did in sending Messiah is tied to His dealings with Israel. Faith in the Christ-event presupposes my identification with God’s people, who were born from the Passover event.

Whereas Christian tradition only looks back, the HRM tries to look forward and backward simultaneously. Looking forward from Egypt to the redemption that would come through Moses, HR believers write themselves into the story of *first-Israel*; looking backward from the redemption that has come through Messiah, HR believers write themselves into the story of *all-Israel*.<sup>150</sup> This simultaneous gaze supports a robustly historical faith. Remember, “[B]y attending to history...I draw near to God” (Carroll, 2001, p. 615). Attending to history also

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<sup>149</sup> HRs point out that, while the Torah prohibits consuming flesh with the blood (Lev. 17:10) and Acts 15:20 repeats the prohibition, the RCC and related traditions state the bread and wine are mystically transformed into Christ: “body, blood, soul, and divinity.” (In the UMC, whose “means of grace” tradition stands in the middle between sacramental and memorial views, I grew up hearing, “Take...and feed upon Him in your hearts by faith.” I am interrogating whether the “means of grace” concept might have place in an HR/Torah cognitive schema and liturgy.)

<sup>150</sup> my designations, explained on pp. 176-177

brings uncomfortable questions. Many enter the HRM because they believe Christian identity markers resulted from change, **not** continuity.

*Holy nation vs. assimilated “nations.”* The first *followers of the Way* (Acts 24:14) were observant Jews; only over time did non-Jews trickle into their ranks (Messianic Jewish Association of America, [http://www.mjaa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=rd\\_messianicmovement\\_messianic\\_judaism](http://www.mjaa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=rd_messianicmovement_messianic_judaism)). For several generations after the Romans sacked Jerusalem (AD 70), Christian leaders still showed “reverence for the Temple as the central sanctuary of both Jews and Christians” (Werner, 1959). Bishop Clement of Rome, in *To the Corinthians* (ca. A.D. 95-100), implies that second-century Christians considered the Temple the proper place of worship (in Werner, 1959):

Not in every place, brethren, are the continual daily sacrifices offered, or the freewill offerings, or the sin offerings and the trespass offerings, but in Jerusalem alone and even there the offering is not made in every place, but before the Sanctuary in the court of the altar; and this too through the high-priest....

According to Werner (1959), Clement’s statement betrays a “typically Jewish reverence” for the Temple, suggesting early Christians had absorbed Jewish attitudes. Moreover, Clement quotes the early prayer *Tersanctus* (“Thrice-Holy”), based on the Jewish *Kedusha*. During this general period (ca. 100 B.C. to A.D. 200), the synagogue performed three daily prayer services; Tertullian (d. 225) and the *Didache* (“Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,” ca. AD 100) author cite these services as common Christian practice (Werner, 1959).

The archaeological work of Snyder (1985) suggests that the everyday customs (e.g. iconography, linguistic forms, architecture) of early Christians were indistinguishable from those of their neighbors until ca. AD 180. Possibly a recognizably “Christian” set of identity markers

did not emerge until the sect achieved a Gentile majority and its Gentile members felt the need to distinguish themselves from both non-Messianic Jews and non-Christian Gentiles. According to David Chernoff (<http://shema.com/messianic-judaism/what-is-it/>), Gentile converts outnumbered Messianic Jews by AD 100, but did not begin to worship separately until certain Gentile leaders began to condemn “Jewish” observances such as the Sabbath. Second-century events such as the Simon Bar Kokhba’s failed revolt against Rome made Gentiles eager to distance themselves from Jews, Messianic or not (Saka paper, reference 6).

By the mid-third century, separatism led to supersessionism (*new-Israel* replaced *old-Israel*) (Saka paper, reference 6), as “Christianity inclined toward the reconstruction of a wholly imaginary and idealized Temple” (Werner, 1959, n.p.) – no surprise, since “Greco-Roman culture prized allegory, mysticism, and abstraction” (Barrett, 2014b). In little time, common Greco-Roman customs entered the Christian milieu. An AD 260 inscription asks the New Testament figures Peter and Paul to “keep in mind” (pray for) the departed buried in that tomb (Snyder, 1985, pp. 144). According to Snyder (1985), the belief that the spirit of “the special dead remained near the place of burial ran strongly through the Greco-Roman social matrix” (145). Snyder (1985) notes that the cult of martyrdom did not emerge until after Constantine unified church and state; from Constantine’s time onward, martyrs’ tombs were differentiated from those of the ordinary dead, and “[t]hese martyria were then expanded by Constantine to form church buildings as we know them” (p. 65).

Intriguingly, this is also the time when a unique Christian liturgy burst onto the scene. According to Harper (1991), little evidence survives from prior to Constantine (if Werner, 1959, is correct, Christian worship was led by the *Hazzan* for two centuries). Starting ca. A.D. 313, however, liturgical rites appear in several languages and regional styles, spawning a plethora of

forms such as Gregorian chant. In the new, “allegorical” Temple (a theme continued by Hahn, 2005), the *Hazzan* was a cultural relic and his music useful only to remind listeners that the Jewish synagogue was “the cavern of devils” (John Chrysostom, ca. 386, Saka reference 11). By the late 300s, Jews in Christian Europe were pushed into ghettos, banned from holding office, forced to close their synagogues, and banned from reading their own Scriptures in Hebrew (Saka reference 14).

*This is the fourth turning.*

**Camp meeting.** The Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-Reformation built on medieval Church music, transforming Latin mass and Gregorian chant into soaring choral polyphony (Palestrina, Victoria, Tallis, Byrd) and stirring congregational hymns (Luther). The Baroque period (Vivaldi, Bach, Handel) and the classical period (Haydn, Mozart) saw the flowering of elaborate musical techniques, as the lines between sacred music and secular performance began to blur. At the same time, a parallel tradition of popular sacred music began to take hold. Some groups, like the Puritans in England and the New World, stood by the Psalms as the only appropriate music for God’s people; early Quaker groups preferred silence. With the era of revivalism starting in the early and mid-1700s (led in England by John Wesley, in the American colonies by Whitefield and Edwards), however, congregational music took on a life of its own. Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts are among the foremost hymn writers of the period known (on this side of the Atlantic) as the First Great Awakening. When the Second Great Awakening of 1801-1805 swept over the American frontier like a brushfire, popular music carried the sparks of revival. Poor whites, slaves, and free blacks mingled freely in a multi-denominational mayhem at camp meeting sites like Cane Ridge, Kentucky, where competing ministers offered the communion elements in what could be almost a sacred parody of carnival

barkers and stumping politicians. The folk music of Appalachian settlers (primarily of Scots-Irish background) and the work songs of slaves mingled as well, creating a new sound: the camp meeting hymn (Barrett, 2010b, citing Lorenz, 1990, and Cornelius, 1999).

*I will arise and go to Jesus  
When by Satan sore oppressed  
In the arms of my dear Savior  
There is power, there is hope and rest*

*On the cross with death He struggled  
Broke the curse, captives released  
Through the thorns and stripes He suffered  
He became our healing peace*

*Three days passed—death could not hold Him  
From the grave He living rose  
Pioneer of our salvation  
Gone before to slay our foes*

*Lo! The incarnate God ascended  
Pleads the merit of His blood  
Against all sin, against the accuser  
He makes us stand—His Word is good<sup>151</sup>*

Intriguingly, the first camp meetings may have grown out of a Scottish tradition transplanted to the Appalachian frontier (Conkin, 1990). Presbyterians in certain regions of Scotland (such as Ulster) were accustomed to taking communion only a few times a year in special outdoor services. Communicants brought a “token” (a wooden piece like a coin) from their minister to prove they were spiritually prepared to receive the elements. The intense pressure of having to prove one’s right standing with God (e.g. evidence of election), combined with the fact that its infrequency set apart the communion meeting from ordinary church meetings, made services extremely emotional for those who attended. In fact, sometimes communicants would fall into an emotional frenzy upon receiving the elements. The emotional fervor and musical richness of slave religion (inherited from African indigenous traditions) also

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<sup>151</sup> “Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy,” traditional; adapted



shaped the camp meeting and its hymn tradition. From the eastern ridge of the frontier, revivalists split away in all directions to form new denominations (Hatch, 1989).

The revivalist tradition, even as its altar calls and mourner's benches became a cultural fixture, infused American popular religion with themes identified by Boorstein (2006) as Evangelical: regular church attendance, the "authority...of the Bible, and...a personal relationship with Jesus Christ" (Warner Colaner, n.d., p. 11). In evangelical religion, the drama of salvation is personalized: *What has God done in your life? Will you let Jesus save you today?* This "evangelical faith of instantaneous conversion and demonstrative sanctification" (Davis, 1992, p. 23) also engaged the post-Enlightenment notion of "benevolence" or social concern (Loveland, 1999, p. 181) to stimulate Christian social witness. Many evangelicals involved themselves in abolition and temperance movements. The agony of wrestling with sin, the moment of truth when a sinner is "born again," and the high-flying joy of the "witness of the Spirit" (leading to social action) made a narrative every believer could appropriate to "achieve a coherent sense of [him/herself]" (Ellis and Bochner, 2003, p. 220). The new birth – a high peak of life – makes symmetrical the "story we use to link birth to life to death" (p. 220). As long as one remains in sin, the story lies askew.<sup>152</sup>

The elements (communion tokens, hymn singing, high emotional pitch, rustic outdoor setting) of Cane Ridge and other revival meetings have obvious historical sources. Yet, as I trace the contours of my heritage as a daughter of the tradition<sup>153</sup>, at times it seems the hazy outline of Sinai appears behind the camp meeting tabernacle. Why, after all, do mystics seek out the desert

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<sup>152</sup> The impulse to repentance similarly undergirds America's public life; leaders from the 1775 Continental Congress to presidents Lincoln, Truman, and Reagan have encouraged the American people to humble themselves before God as a national corporate act (<https://nationaldayofprayer.org/about/>).

<sup>153</sup> My father's family has a long history at Indian Springs Camp Meeting in northwest Florida, and his moment of spiritual reckoning came under the Indian Springs tabernacle where his early churchgoing memories were formed. How could not my time have come under a similar tabernacle during a summertime camp meeting?

or a “mountain-top experience,” and why did (and does) revivalist rhetoric invoke images of Egypt, Jordan, Sinai, Jericho? Are these mere tropes, drawn from Biblical lore, or spiritual archetypes?

*Where shall I go, to meet with God? (Psalm 42:2)*

*I will draw her away into the wilderness... (Hosea 2:14).<sup>154</sup>*

After all, the temporary dwelling where the Israelites “camped out” under the stars of heaven for a week-long high celebration of God’s favor<sup>155</sup>, after the intense soul-searching of Yom Kippur<sup>156</sup>, is called – in English – a “tabernacle.”<sup>157</sup>

*I will arise and go to Jesus  
When by Satan sore oppressed  
In the arms of my dear Savior  
There is power, there is hope and rest*

*Is this the first re/turning?*

**Messianic Jewish Movement.** According to the Messianic Jewish Association of America, “‘Jewish congregational worship’ is a vital antidote to repeating the old pattern of assimilation into the Gentile churches” (MJAA, [http://www.mjaa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=rd\\_messianicmovement\\_messianic\\_judaism](http://www.mjaa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=rd_messianicmovement_messianic_judaism), in Barrett, 2014b, p. 10). Stern (2007) asserts that Jews who believe in Yeshua (e.g. the historical Jesus) as their Messiah need a culturally Jewish expression of their faith for the purpose of remaining set apart as God’s chosen people, distinct from (Gentile) Christians. In most Christian congregations, Stern says, MJs are either and denied the right to express their Jewishness or

<sup>154</sup> “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, Bring her into the wilderness And speak kindly to her....And she will sing there as in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt...” (Hosea 2:14-15).

<sup>155</sup> Sukkot, the Feast of Booths

<sup>156</sup> the Day of Atonement, highest holy day, when all Israel is called to repent

<sup>157</sup> The Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) was the temporary “dwelling” place of YHWH in the wilderness before the Ark of God was set up at other locations in Canaan. In John 1, the Messiah is said to have put on flesh in order to “tabernacle” with us. Many HRs believe Yeshua was born during the fall Feast of Tabernacles, rather than on December 25, because this is the season when YHWH is said to “dwell” with His people. HRs continue (perhaps unconsciously) the camp meeting tradition when they gather at “feast sites” to celebrate Tabernacles.

placed on a pedestal as “the church’s token Jew,” such that their Jewishness “gets defined not by ourselves but by the Gentiles around us” (p. 13). In the past, Jews clung to music as the heart and soul of what distinguished them from Gentiles; in converting to Christianity, they gave up their traditions for new ones. Today, Messianic Jews stand in a middle space<sup>158</sup>, worshipping with a music that is both old and new.

The MJM is older and more influential than the HRM, yet has a surprisingly small body of literature devoted to its history (and no discernible literature devoted to its music). From an initial ethnographic survey, I concluded that mainstream Messianic congregations (e.g. those affiliated with a body such as MJAA or IAMCS, the International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues) are likely to blend Jewish and evangelical Christian elements in belief and worship praxis. For instance, congregations often display a statement of faith on their website or in their informational literature (a common practice in United States Christianity/es, where orthodox belief functions as a prime identity marker); they appear to follow autonomous congregational forms of governance (a throwback to the Jewish synagogue); they encourage members to observe the Biblical Feasts (a literal application of Leviticus); they are likely to follow customs such as the Torah scroll processional (a key tradition of Jewish worship) and halakhah such as a particular definition of kosher slaughter (a rabbinic development); they often use a Messianic *siddur* (adapted from standard Jewish liturgy); and they may include Davidic dance (a dance form developed by evangelical Christian supporters of the MJM) in worship. Beit HaDerekh, a mid-sized west Texas congregation, exemplified all these traits. As an IAMCS congregation with an unusually high proportion of non-Jewish members (presumably, evangelicals who entered the MJM by way of the HRM and chose a Jewish rather than HRM

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<sup>158</sup> I use the word “stand” deliberately to invoke the “standing” prayer, quintessential to Jewish observance and important to many observant MJs.

congregation as their home), Beit HaDerekh also exemplifies the increasingly liminal nature of the MJM. Gentile encroachment into the territory of “Messianic Jewish” identity, raised as a concern by Stern (2007), is growing. My co-participant Frances, a Gentile by birth, worshiped in Messianic synagogues for years before finding a more permanent home in a Torah-observant (Ephraimite) house fellowship that styled itself “Messianic.” To Stern (2007), she would be a “Messianic Gentile” – not “Jew.”

Yet the MJM’s reluctant *mingling with the nations* (Hosea 7:8)<sup>159</sup> seems to mimic a pattern already laid down in Jewish music: adopting what works and adapting it to suit Jewish taste (as medieval Jews did with Arabic and Gregorian chant). Since the 1960s, when Reform Jews shocked the Orthodox by bringing in pipe organs, “all Jewish denominations...have felt ‘a major tendency towards popularization [and e]ven Hasidic music has been influenced by pop music’” thanks to the pervasive 1960s youth culture that reshaped Judeo-Christian attitudes (Mermelstein 1996). The same musical influences that created the CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) genre had a formative influence on the music of the MJM. The cantor may lead the congregation in singing Sabbath liturgies, but the Messianic worship artist defines their musical identity for the rest of the week. This is not to say that all MJs listen to Messianic artists exclusively, but simply to say that “Messianic” or “Jewish” or “Hebraic” music is a cultural currency, recognized by MJs and HRs as well as evangelical and mainstream Christians as distinct from CCM and church hymns. For instance, an MJ or HR event (from home worship meetings to major prophecy conferences) may be given a signature “Jewish” flair if MJ artists are featured or their music played in the background.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>159</sup> “Ephraim [or in this case Judah?] hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned.”

<sup>160</sup> During my visit, Beit HaDerekh opened the service with an audio track by Misha Goetz, daughter of MJM legend Marty Goetz and a recording artist in her own right.

With the establishment of the Jewish state, modern cantors began to look outside their immediate ethnic traditions to revitalize synagogue worship. As Jewish eyes once again focused on a Middle Eastern homeland, naturally the music moved toward a more “Mediterranean” style (Schleifer, 1995). The MJM took on this sound as well as popular music influences. Joel Chernoff, whose 1970s band Lamb was known for rock-driven guitar and vocals, is generally considered to have invented the “Messianic” sound. The ensuing generation of major MJ music artists included Paul Wilbur (classically trained tenor), Marty Goetz (baritone and pianist), and Ted Pearce (like Chernoff, a former secular artist with a rock-inspired sound). Some MJ bands echo a “Jewish” sound that falls somewhere between an American choral ensemble and a European *klezmer* band; The Liberated Wailing Wall, a blend of eight voices with stereotypical instruments (violin, accordion), might be an example. Others highlight Sephardic folk influence; the Hanes family cites “an eclectic mix of Israeli artists, such as, Habrera HaTivit, Pavarim, Ofrah Haza, The Almagribis, and others” including Messianic artist Elisheva Shomron (<http://www.messianicmusic.com/Reviews/zemer.htm>), as well as their Latin American Sephardic heritage. Along with vocals and Davidic dance, the Hanes family band Zemer Levav features ethnic percussion instruments (djembe, dumbek, and tubano); guitar, oud (a stringed instrument), and bass; and violin, mandolin, piano, and harp. Messianic worship leader Steve McConnell (a Gentile who entered the MJM by joining a Messianic synagogue<sup>161</sup>) blends musical and textual elements into meditative, piano-driven songs that are clearly Messianic in theme, but not necessarily in style. Zemer Levav started as the Hanes family led worship in a nondenominational church. Again, mixing and sharing are evident.

The “Messianic” sound is typified by traits such as Mediterranean instruments, wailing vocalizations (with “lai-lai-lais” thrown in for good measure), use of Hebrew words or names for

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<sup>161</sup> <http://www.messianicmusic.com/Reviews/steve.htm>

God (“Yeshua,” “Adonai”), and the harmonic (or “Hungarian”) minor; these conventions characterize the Israeli artists cited by Zemer Levav, but were brought into currency by Lamb. Even CCM giant Maranatha! Music produced a 34-track album titled *Messianic Praise* (2011) that mixes these conventions with its trademark concert worship band style. Yet, as a genre, MJ music eludes categorization. Some artists (Misha Goetz) cross over into a CCM style; some (Kerah Joy Oliveira) identify as “folk” or “world” (<http://keraholiveira.bandcamp.com/>, April 1, 2015); some (Jonathan Settl) carry classical vocals into the studio. What makes the sound unique, however, is not the instruments, modes, vocal styles, Hebrew words, or metric patterns. It is a combination of all the above, plus one more: identification with the Jewish people and/or the Jewish state. Some artists (Karen Davis, Barry and Batya Segal, Ted Pearce) highlight Zionist themes in their music, while others (The Liberated Wailing Wall) are overtly evangelistic toward Jews. As a cultural currency, the music of the MJM conveys images of “coming home,” spiritually and physically – to Messiah, and to the Land. As a religious identity marker, it conveys what many MJs and CZs believe: that, finally, the Jewish people worldwide are returning to their cherished place at the center of G-d’s plan.

*Is this, then, the first re/turning?*

**HRM.** The overlap between “Messianic” and “Hebraic Roots” worship artists makes precise differentiation difficult and, perhaps, redundant. After all, both schools of artists sing about Yeshua the Messiah to (more or less) the same audience (believing Jews, supportive Christians, and Torah-keepers in the middle). They echo the rising trends in CCM, crossed with indie-folk sounds and the occasional Mediterranean flourish (Christene Jackman’s music illustrates the indie-Mediterranean blend). No literature describes the liturgical music of non-Jewish Torah-observant or Hebraic Roots congregations, and the varying degrees to which

“Jewish” traditions flavor congregational worship make generalization impossible. My tentative ethnographic findings suggest that HRs tend to worship with existing Messianic congregations where possible and with evangelical churches (observing Biblical holidays on the side) if a Messianic fellowship is not available, reaching out to start their own group only if they feel they will be rejected by MJs or evangelicals (e.g. for teaching Two-House doctrine). Those who worship with MJs are exposed to Hebrew liturgy; this may prompt them to move deeper into Judaism, as did one co-participant, who now heads an Orthodox synagogue that follows a Portuguese *siddur*. My co-participants in a Two-House home fellowship tuned in to B’nai Shalom’s live stream Sabbath service on Friday evenings.<sup>162</sup> To start and conclude their Saturday afternoon Torah study gatherings, they recited (in English and Hebrew) a minimal liturgy downloaded from the B’nai Shalom website. Using Jewish liturgy may be more common among HRs who follow MJ pastors, authors, and teachers; non-Jewish authors like Heidler (2006) encourage Christians to continue meeting on Sundays while adding Sabbath and Feast Day celebrations with worship music as the Spirit leads.

Musically, at least, if not in congregational practice, it would seem that Lamb’s long-ago prayer (“Jew and Gentile, One in Messiah,” from *The Restoration of Israel*, released 1999) has come to pass.<sup>163</sup> Nevertheless, subtle differences emerge in the music of MJM and HRM worship artists. Of the artists featured on Season Two of the Hebraic Roots Network show *Messianic Music Unplugged* (<http://hebraicrootsnetwork.com/messianic-music-unplugged/>), only one – Marty Goetz – follows the established conventions of Messianic music. The rest, artists from around the world (Mason Clover, Joshua Aaron, The Waggoners, Teshuva, Andrew Hodkinson, Ross, Mishkanim, Brenda Wheeler, and Elisha), favor a blend of sounds. Although the classic

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<sup>162</sup> <http://www.bnaishalom.tv/services/watch-live>

<sup>163</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUR6rU4hYE8>

Messianic sound shines through here and there, American folk styles (e.g. bluegrass gospel) and the “raw” postmodern vibe of CCM clearly mark the new HR music.<sup>164</sup> Whereas the first generation of HR believers resisted Christianity, aligning themselves with “Jewish” identity markers<sup>165</sup>, the rising generation may be resisting the MJM by creating unique markers.

*Evangelical.* Still, HR artists identify as Messianic. Up-and-coming teenage artist Elisha illustrates the tension (<http://www.elishaworship.com/index.php/about>):

At just 19 years old [in 2013], Elisha is a polished and prolific Messianic singer/songwriter whose heart's desire is to bring glory to Yahweh.

Traditionally, MJs refrain from spelling out the divine Name; most HRs (whether Sacred Namers or not) explicitly spell and speak the Name as an identity marker. Is Elisha Messianic or HR?

Influenced by the [CCM] worship styles of Kari Jobe and Hillsong, Elisha composes piano-driven songs that come from a place of humble adoration, beautifully capturing the intimacy between the Father and His beloved people.<sup>166</sup>

Judging from Stern (2007), MJs may be reluctant to identify mainstream Christian sources as having influenced their Messianic expression of faith, lest this compromise their stance as fully “Jewish” believers and not pseudo-Jewish Christians.<sup>167</sup> HRs, on the other hand, if they come from an evangelical background, likely had some Messianic inspiration on their journey, while many also remain open to the forms and vocabulary of evangelical worship. The HRM exodus from traditional churches carried with it forms inherited from nineteenth- and twentieth-century Protestant Christianity: prophecy conferences, annotated Bible translations, holiness retreats, and

<sup>164</sup> Compare the music of HaYovel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZJhyTdukio> and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_jmsD904Hk8&list=RDbCqKEiZ78zY&index=17](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jmsD904Hk8&list=RDbCqKEiZ78zY&index=17)

<sup>165</sup> I place “Jewish” in quotation mark because the HRM does not consider Torah obligations to be for Jews only.

<sup>166</sup> Jeremy Camp <http://www.elishaworship.com/index.php/store>

<sup>167</sup> Exceptions include Kerah Joy Oliveira, <http://keraholiveira.bandcamp.com/track/worlds-lover> but she was raised in Calvary Chapels!



the like. The mainstream of the movement, for all the Names and Feast Days cluttering the picture, is evangelical at its core. More than providing liturgical drama for sacred days, music serves as a lived expression of “humble adoration” in the everyday.

*Hebrew.* As one approaches the outer sectors of the movement, HR musical expression becomes more uniquely “Hebraic”; that is, it blends Messianic conventions and other styles with an explicitly Hebrew-centered worldview that transcends evangelical cognitive schemata. As an example, Micha’el ben David infuses his Psalm adaptations with equal parts R&B flavor and Messianic style. Formerly known as Michael Morris, Micha’el ben David served as a worship leader at Times Square Church (a major nondenominational church in the Pentecostal tradition in New York City) until 2001, when a mission trip to Russia prompted him to pursue evangelistic work in Israel. “Discovering Israel inspired Micha’el to embraced [sic] his Hebrew identity and change his name to Micha’el ben David”; his choice to embrace a Hebraic identity led to rejection from friends and family (<http://www.examiner.com/article/micha-el-ben-david-anointed-music-minister-is-sent-to-israel-and-the-nations-of-the-world>). In his music videos (<https://www.youtube.com/user/Emetzion>), ben David wears identity markers on his sleeve – literally. He dons skullcap, tallit, and tzitzit; kisses a scroll representing the Torah; and whispers the Tetragrammaton (“Yod-Hey-Vuv-Hey”). Although his promotional materials do not specify his beliefs, ben David claims Jewish ancestry, suggesting he may align with one of the Black Hebrew movements.

*Is this, then, the first re/turning?*

***The Israel of God?*** The paradox of the Judeo-Christian narrative is that its many stories are also one story.<sup>168</sup> “Do God’s people define themselves by difference, or by sameness?” (p. 25 in this text). The answer – perhaps unsurprisingly – is “both.” Every “people of God” since Sinai

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<sup>168</sup> Space considerations force me to neglect other movements such as the medieval Sabbatarian sects.

has taken identity markers from the Text, but shaped them with material from the surrounding culture, for a sub-narrative must define itself against [in relief or in opposition to] what came before. If we take an orthodox interpretation – which “let[s] each religion interpret itself” (Sharon, quoting Mark Saka, 2014) – each sub-narrative is internally consistent. How, then, can I know when I have found the “Israel of God”? Nicholls (1995) observes that, although the historian withholds judgment, s/he need not ignore spiritual truth (T/ruth?) to do scholarship. After all, history “has something to do with faith and therefore with theology” (p. 425). The historian knows to take a long view.

The HRM tries, self-consciously, to take a long view of Judeo-Christian history. Looking at the narrative (not the Text alone, but the history of Judaism and Christianity) through the lens of Torah obligation, the HRM sees a series of golden calf incidents, of “turnings” away from YHWH’s pure instruction. From start to finish, we are “a rebellious house” (Frances, co-participant). Repentance involves reversing direction.<sup>169</sup> Until we reverse, we/they are walking down the wrong road.

**The road of return.** Yet the road *away* may also serve as the road *home*. In HR teaching, the entire course of Judeo-Christian history is a fulfillment of prophecy. Knowing that He had sworn His faithfulness to a “rebellious house,” YHWH warned Ephraim and Judah that they would be scattered and sifted among the nations until they *returned to seek Him in the latter days* (Hosea 3:5). We/they are privileged to be that end-time remnant, born into the generation that makes the Great Exodus out of Babylon into holiness. If a tale of two women (harlot and bride) shows the contrast between faithful and unfaithful people(s) of God, then a tale of one woman

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<sup>169</sup> Christene Jackman, “Lechoo Venashuva (Come and Let Us Return),” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gW5ompkzvY>

and her two lovers shows the faithfulness of YHWH *in spite of* everything the “rebellious house” would do.

It is a story written from the beginning, from before the beginning. In it, marriage – a human act – becomes drama, metaphor, and divine pageant.

**Marriage.** It was too good to be true. The woman of his dreams had accepted his proposal. She had taken the cup from his hand, drunk of the wine.<sup>170</sup> He was not a king, only a poor shepherd; but she treated him as one, spoke of him glowingly as if he were a prince among men. Out of all the virgins, he had chosen her; out of all the men who sought her, she had chosen him. Soon, she would join him under the *chuppah*, hand in hand.

*Morenica a mi me llaman  
Yo blanca naci  
El sol del enverano  
Me hici ansi  
Little dark one, they call me  
But white I was born  
The sun of summer  
Has made me this way*

*Morenica, graziosica sos  
Tu morena, yo graziosa y ojos pretos tu  
Little dark one, beautiful you are  
Dark are you, handsome am I, and dark your eyes*

*Morenica a mi me llaman  
Los marineros  
Si otra vez a mi me llaman  
Me voy yo con ellos  
Little dark one, they call me  
Those sailors of the sea  
If once more they call me  
I will go with them*

*Morenica, graziosica sos  
Tu morena, yo graziosa y ojos pretos tu*

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<sup>170</sup> It is unclear who first popularized the tradition, now accepted by many HRs and evangelical CZs, that the Jewish betrothal formula involved sharing a cup of wine and formed the backdrop of the Passover meal and the Last Supper/communion.

*Little dark one, beautiful you are  
Dark are you, handsome am I, and dark your eyes*

*Morenica a mi me llama  
El fijo del rey  
Si otra vez a mi me llama  
Me voy yo con el  
Little dark one, he calls me  
Son of the king  
If once more he calls me  
I will go with him*

*Morenica, graziosica sos  
Tu morena, yo graziosa y ojos pretos tu  
Tu morena, yo graziosa y ojos pretos tu  
Little dark one, beautiful you are  
Dark are you, handsome am I, and dark your eyes*

**Divorce.** So this was it. The blow-to-the-gut feeling of betrayal. But how could it be? He had chosen her. She had drunk from his cup.

*Puncha, puncha la rosa huele  
que el amor mucho duele  
Tu no nacites para mi  
presto, alejate de mi  
Tu no nacites para mi  
presto, alejate de mi  
Prick, prick, the thorny rose  
Just like love, it stings  
You were not born for me  
Quickly, away from me*

There was only one thing to be done: send her away, forget her, not expose her to that shame, the law that demanded she drink of the bitter water that brings a curse. Never mind; he would drink of her cup.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> I purposely conflate two portions of the Torah: the death penalty for wanton adultery while betrothed, and the “bitter waters” that a married woman must drink if her husband suspected her of adultery. The bitter waters are explicitly said to take their bitterness from the words of the penalty for adultery, which the priest writes on a scroll and then washes off into the water. In the Christian Scriptures, Yeshua/Jesus is said to have “taken out of the way” the ordinances that were “contrary to us.” He speaks of a cup in the Garden of Gethsemane. Careful readers of the Text will recall the many references to a cup of judgment throughout the Prophets, and in Revelation. Readers may also note an allusion to the betrothal of Joseph and Mary. Like his namesake in the Hebrew Scriptures, Joseph, husband of Miriam (Mary), may be considered a “type” of the Messiah

*Acordate de aquella hora  
 Cuando te besaba la boca  
 Aquella hora ya paso  
 Dolor quedo al corazon  
 Aquella hora ya paso  
 Dolor quedo al corazon  
 Do you remember those times  
 When I kissed you on the lips  
 Now that time is over  
 Sorrow fills my heart*

*Si otra vez me quieres ver  
 Sale afuera te hablare  
 Echa los ojos a la mar  
 Alli me puedes encontrar  
 Echa los ojos a la mar  
 Alli me puedes encontrar  
 If once again you long to see me  
 Come outside, I'll speak with you there  
 Turn your gaze to the sea  
 There you will find me*

***(Re-)betrothal.** Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved  
 of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of  
 Israel.... So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an  
 half homer of barley: And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not  
 play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee (Hosea 3:1-3).*

*La roza enflorece  
 En el mes de mai  
 Mi alma s'escurese  
 Firiendose el lunar  
 Mi alma s'escurese  
 Firiendose el lunar  
 The rose blossoms in the month of May  
 My soul is blackened, wounding the moon*

*Los bilbilicos cantan  
 Suspiran del amor  
 Y la pasion me mata  
 Muchigua mi dolor  
 Y la pasion me mata*

*Muchigua mi dolor  
The little birds sing, sighing with love  
And passion slays me, my sorrow increases*

*I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer (Song of Songs 5:6).*

*I have not spoken in secret...I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain (Isaiah 45:19).*

*Los bilbilicos cantan  
En el arbol de la flor  
Y debajo se asentan  
Que sufren del amor  
Y debajo se asentan  
Que sufren del amor  
The little birds sing in the flowering tree  
And beneath it sit those who are suffering from love*

*La roza enflorece  
En el mes de mai  
Mi neshama mi ventura  
Estan en tu poder  
Mi neshama mi ventura  
Estan en tu poder  
The rose blooms in the month of May  
My soul and my life are in your power*

*I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love (Song of Songs 5:8).*

RACHEL (co-participant, quoted in Barrett, 2013a, p. 22): Brayden [Waller] went away to prepare a house, and they did not see each other. They really wanted to have a picture of when Jesus comes back. The whole betrothal is a picture of how God woos us as His Bride; He is committed to us, even when we reject Him. (22)

*Mas presto ven, palomba  
Mas presto ven con mi*

*Mas presto ven, kerida*  
*Corre y salvame*  
*Mas presto ven, kerida*  
*Corre y salvame*  
*Quickly come, dove, quickly come to me*  
*Quickly come, beloved, run and save me*

**Whose telling?** As a storyteller, I have the privilege of hindsight. I may be tempted to think I “[know] better what it was all about than the participants” (Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 1958, p. 192, cited in Carroll, 2001, p. 610). In presenting the overlapping narratives of Sinai and Pentecost, as I ground my telling in historical and musicological evidence, I have to make decisions about what to exclude and what to emphasize; what threads to tie together, which to leave untied; how to assign responsibility. Everyone who (re)tells these narratives, whether in a Messianic *Haggadah*, a Mass, a Bible study, or a blog post, makes the same decisions. As an “inscriber” of the text, the one who “looks backward” (to use Arendt’s phrase), I have some sort of prerogative to arrange events and causes in a sequence that makes sense and, perhaps, even to assign motivation and blame, for these things allow us to say *what it meant*. If we use personal story “to achieve a coherent sense of ourselves” (Ellis & Bochner, 2030, p. 220), then certainly we use corporate story to achieve “weave a large network of connected meanings” (Lowry, 1982, p. 11). As humans, we almost can’t help but do this (Lowry, 1982), and so we feel it is our right.

**(Con)Text.** But do we actually have this right? It is one thing to appropriate the Text to ourselves, if we are willing to take on the burden of history, accepting the curses as well as the blessings of chosenness. It is far another to appropriate the Text and then say that it has new meanings, unknown to the original tellers – and that we have authority to give it those meanings. “[B]y attending to history...I draw near to God” (Carroll, 2001, p. 615). Surely we are not free to interpret by our own lights. Must not all our (re)tellings reflect the story as God has already told it – which is to say, *as He sees it*? Will the clay say to the potter, “Mold me thus?” (Isaiah 45:9).

*Co/participant.* Yet I cannot escape the fact that I am reading the story with these two eyes. When I (re)tell the story *as I understand it*, do I run the risk of misrepresenting someone else's lived experience? Many of my songs are written as an attempt to translate an/other experience into terms I can inscribe on my own body – physically through involving my voice and hands, and metaphorically by writing myself into the narrative as one of “us”/them (the other).

*A thousand nights  
One just like another  
A thousand times  
We've prayed  
Our eyes grow dim  
As winter follows summer  
For Messiah still  
We wait*

Have I the right to the story of members (past) of the House of Judah awaiting Messiah when I (present) am not a Jew, by ancestry or by conversion? It seems I am appropriating their lived experience as Christendom and the Christianit/ies have appropriated the Text. Or do I have the right by virtue of the fact that I (though a “foreigner” who worships a “gentile” Messiah) claim the same Text and call myself one of them, accepting their failures (not just their victories) as mine, declaring *your people, my people* and *your God, my God* (Ruth 1:16)? Where is the line between Naomi and Ruth, between natural Israel and the wild olive branch (Romans 11:17)? Or is there another kind of branch that is (just) me?

*A thousand stars  
Each looks like another  
A thousand heights  
To climb  
The labor pains  
Are coming ever closer  
For the virgin's birth  
God's sign*



*What makes this fold  
More than another stable  
Not just a home  
For sheep  
In Beth Lechem  
Just another town in Judah  
Has been born God's Lamb  
Our King*

*What makes this baby  
Unlike any other  
In flesh  
He came to dwell  
Why is this girl  
No ordinary mother  
She has borne  
Emanuel*

### **Research questions**

RQ1: How do I write myself into the “telling(s)” of the Covenant made at Sinai? How do I write myself into the “telling(s)” of the Covenant made at Pentecost? Do these overlapped “tellings” challenge me to the same faith-acts?

RQ2: Does my performance of identity with/in the HRM bear marks of continuity or change (or both)? What faith-acts do I perform, and (more importantly) why?

RQ3: Just as my HRM sojourn has caused me to exchange one “lifeway” for another, has it caused me to exchange one “thought-way” (cognitive schema) for another?

RQ4: Has my sojourn into historical-autobiographical-ethnographic-reflexive writing made me more attentive to the “hum and buzz of implication,” not only in past times and places, but in my present lived experience?

RQ5: Have my sojourn(s) helped me become more fully grounded in my faith in Yeshua/Jesus, the Word made flesh?

*A thousand nights  
We would expect Messiah*

*But not tonight  
Not here  
But God surprised us  
Showed He's still our Father  
Loved us enough that He drew near*

(c) Sharon Barrett - SAMPLE

### Movement III

#### *Yada'*: Confession

ישוע<sup>172</sup>

*Who is this Man  
Unlike any other?*<sup>173</sup>

Let me know you, for you are the God who knows me; *let me recognize you as you have recognized me* (1 Cor. 13:12). . . . We know that *you are a lover of faithfulness* (Ps. 50:8, 51:6), for *the man whose life is true comes to the light* (John 3:21). I wish to act in truth, making my confession both in my heart before you and in this book before the many who will read it (*Confessions*, p. 207).

#### **Perspective(s): environment**

Typically, the methodology section of a research study opens with an explanation of the researcher's theoretical perspective. In this movement, I speak in the voice of an auto/ethnographic researcher.<sup>174</sup> The theories that I employ to interpret the data collected are a clue to my beliefs about the nature of the world, the nature of t/Truth, and my own ability to tease truth(s) out of the data via my chosen research method.

The postmodern generation (twentieth century) challenged the notion of "absolute t/Truth" by deconstructing it. Whereas the scientific method developed by Renaissance investigators of the body and the cosmos concerned itself with empirical data ("Can you observe it? Can you repeat it? Can you measure it?"), today's research methods are more fluid. The "so-called post-postmodern generation" (late twentieth and early twenty-first century) ushered in

<sup>172</sup> *Sh'ma, Yisra'el, YHWH Y'shua*. *Yada'* means "to proclaim" (perhaps, by implication, "to preach"). Wesley preached with a tombstone for his pulpit when the established churches turned him out. Here, I proclaim *Y'shua* as the center ("cornerstone," Ps. 118:22) of the chiasm (see pp. 110-111).

<sup>173</sup> Steve McConnell, "Vayikra Sh'mo," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaw1jAX7Xw0>

<sup>174</sup> Among other things, this means I shift between speech registers in an effort to respond to multiple perspectives.

feminist theories, phenomenology, reflexive and dialogic ethnography, and other new models of research (Krüger, 2010). The method of investigation concerns itself less with “hard” data and more with the emotions, perceptions, and subjective internal “realities” that are wrapped up in being a group member (insider, an “emic” perspective) or a researcher (outsider, an “etic” perspective). In other words, my “perspective” is everything; and my perspective, in turn, is shaped by my “environment.” (*Remember the fish!*)

This new methodological emphasis is of particular concern to me as an auto/ethnographer who seeks to weave into her study material from disciplines (such as history) that are traditionally more “objective.” Since the mid-twentieth century, ethnographers have begun to develop “new models for ethnography that involve the fieldwork methodology of collecting data to support goals *internal* to the field experience” (Krüger, 2010, p. 68). In essence, going into the field *is* the goal (compare Hamera, 2006, and Pollock, 2006, on “going in at the risk of going under”). Pollock (2006) writes that the relationship between researcher and field subjects is co-performative and reciprocal, rather than documentary and subject-object. No longer does my research serve the interests of some colloquy of sophisticated Western scholars looking to “objectively” analyze and pick apart and generally look down upon (“objectify”) the lived experiences of another group of people without living their experiences *with them*. Rather, I serve the goal of *experiencing* the interior world and material life of the people I am studying in order to talk about it. No, not studying; I’m *coming alongside them* in relationship. I seek to build a co-dwelling with them using the same vines and lattices that they build with, instead of bringing my own house pre-constructed of two-by-fours.

The new method is also of concern to me as (first) a person of faith who studies the social sciences and (second) a social scientist who studies religion. Stark (2003) points out that the

social science disciplines came from the attempt to discredit religion on a rationalistic basis; the first sociologists of religion “premised their work on atheism – and many still do” (p. 4). Emile Durkheim believed that “god...can be nothing else than [society] itself” (quoted in Stark, 2003, p. 4). In other words, since there is no g/God, we make our own rules; social sanction is the only penalty for breaking them. Durkheim and his fellows determined that moral imperatives arise from choice and circumstance, not from the will of a supernatural Being. Marx called religion an “opiate”; Freud considered it an “illusion” (p. 5). If these men were right, then the fact that I am not sufficiently objective – by their definition – to study religion from an *outside* point of view (being, as I am, pleasantly blinded by my “illusion”) is only the beginning of the problem. In my conscience, I remain morally bound by the dictates of my religion. To ignore or scorn these dictates (even if they are “rules” made by my culture) would violate who I am as a human being. This puts me in a difficult place.

The new methodology raises questions that keep me awake at night – *Ah!*<sup>175</sup> I ask myself, till the question becomes tasteless from repetition, *if knowledge is determined by perspective, how do I know that I know what I think I know?*<sup>176</sup>

**How do I know?** Every person’s basis for “knowing” rests on a paradigm: a framework “of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied” (Guba, 1990, quoted at <http://www.personal.psu.edu/wxh139/paradigm.htm>; compare Patton, 1990). That framework rests on epistemology: our beliefs about “the nature of knowledge and the process by which knowledge is acquired and validated” (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, quoted at <http://www.personal.psu.edu/wxh139/paradigm.htm>). In other words, *what* I know is determined

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<sup>175</sup> meant to signify a cry of uncertainty, not insight

<sup>176</sup> Compare York (2011), pp. 3-4: “So much of what passes for a person’s search for God tends to be located in one of two frameworks: personal experience or apologetic precision.” In the course of his wryly narrated, sometimes laugh-out-loud sojourn among fundamentalists and others to “find God by finding Satan,” York (2011) points out that most people’s frameworks fall apart when pressed.

by *how* I know. The pursuit of this “how” easily turns into a rabbit hole from which there is no exit. For example, consider the differences between positivism and naturalism. The positivistic framework considers reality to be “single, tangible, and fragmentable,” and treats cause and effect as separate and distinguishable; by contrast, naturalistic inquiry assumes that realities “are multiple, constructed, and holistic,” that “the knower and the known are interactive and inseparable,” and that all entities “are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, cited at <http://www.personal.psu.edu/wxh139/paradigm.htm>). Is your head spinning yet?

***Social construction of reality.*** The constructivist paradigm, developed by social scientists in the mid-1900s, holds that reality is socially constructed by the group and mediated through symbols as we interact in our daily lives and our ritual moments. Lowry (1982, p. 11) asserts that we are genetically endowed with “a special *organizing* mode of perception,” what philosopher Susanne Langer calls “*transformational*: We are co-creators of our own perceptions” (p. 11). From these moment-to-moment perceptions, we “weave a large network of connected meanings” (p. 11). Cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s constructivist approach explained culture as “meanings embodied in symbols” (Krüger, 2010). Geertz (1973) “emphasized that symbols (the vessels, as it were, of cultural content) are arranged into patterns and systems that both transmit and transform meanings” (Barrett 2014b, p.17). Events of transmission and transformation are ongoing, reciprocal, and fluid.

***The interactionist paradigm.*** The interactionist paradigm applies constructivism to social life. Since “group life is necessarily a formative process” (Blumer, 1973, quoted in Hunter, 2010), human relationships are dynamic, never static. Long (2012) writes that all social structures are “always in a process of being created, and this occurs through communication and

negotiation” (n.p., in Barrett, 2014a, p.9). Mead (1934) and Blumer (1972) defined society as a web of relationships, created “as we interact with objects, words, or ideas in the outside world and assign them agreed-upon meanings” (Barrett, 2014a, p. 9). Society could not exist without this running negotiation, but such negotiation could not occur without symbols.

*Symbolic interactionism.* We use symbols (agreed-upon fragments distilled from our shared perceptions) to communicate with one another about our experiences and reactions. Symbols are primitive, even primal; they need not be verbal (though words are symbols), but encompass all aspects of our social life including gesture, dress, nonverbal utterances and pictures, musical and dance motives, social rituals (e.g. politeness codes), social roles, and “behavior patterns that reflect identity and social status” (R. Daniel Shaw, 2013). Symbols “deal with the intuition, with imagination, and with emotion rather than with thinking, sensations, or the will” (Webber, 1999, p. 107, paraphrasing Peter Roche de Coppens, quoted in Barrett 2012, p. 6). The capacity of symbols to mediate the unseen means that symbolic interaction in the form of ritual is critical to religious practice. Ritual “clearly derives some of its power from primal sensibilities...by involving the very bodies of the performers” and thereby their emotions (Barrett 2014a, p. 6).

*Symbolic interaction and religion.* Could the social construction of reality via symbolic interaction explain where religion gets its power and its meaning? Deacon & Cashman (2009) argue that, by evolving the capacity to use symbols, humans achieved three fundamental shifts in the psyche: (1) the desire to define ourselves and our place in history via narrative; (2) the predisposition to see hidden meanings in everyday objects and events; and (3) the capacity for transcendent emotional experiences (e.g. the emotions that we experience as “spirituality”). Anthropologist “[Harvey] Whitehead [cited in Douglas, 2009] suggests [that] ritual keeps

religion alive by impressing its meanings on the memory” (Barrett 2014a, p. 4). In a previous study, I found that memory and memory-making acts play a role in transforming the identity of a voluntary religious convert. On this basis, have I spent my entire life as a preacher’s daughter and born-again believer “constructing” my identity from the rituals (prayer, hymn-singing, testifying of my faith to others, conforming my lifestyle to expectations drawn from an American evangelical reading of Scripture) that surround me, that were given to me? Are all my “faith-acts” merely bringing me in touch with “transcendent” emotions, not an Other who is real and tangible? Is my faith a product of history or mere memory?

*Identity formation.* These questions loom larger and more real as I tackle the literature dealing with identity formation. Identity formation occurs when we “place ourselves (the self is considered an object) in the context of other objects” (Barrett, 2014a, p. 9. *So I’m an object. Really?* “By affiliating ourselves to symbols with predetermined meanings, we create identity markers that denote our status to other members of the affiliated group” (p. 9). *So all I did when I walked down the grassy floor of that campmeeting tent to substantiate my “faith” with “action”*<sup>177</sup> *was to identify myself to other members of an “in-crowd”?* Thanks a lot, social science. Thanks to you, I now have an unraveling concept of myself and the efficacy of my faith-acts.

It gets better. Citing recent literature on epistemology from Kenneth Gergen (2009), Hu (2013) writes, “All forms of knowledge are specific to the relationship between the knower and the known and carry within them the knower’s community values” (n.p.). The knower’s community values are constructed from a mix of individual perceptions and group negotiations as the “self” places him/her/it(?)self in the context of other “objects” (e.g. other members of the community). Nicelescu (2012) cites the oxymoronic “Jubu” or Jewish Buddhist (the Jew who

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<sup>177</sup> see p. 112, footnote



adopts practices from Buddhism) as evidence that religious belonging can be entirely fluid, based on self-identification. On the other hand, the human predisposition to narrative (Deacon & Cashman, 2009) suggests that if a person – even the Jubu – decides to write him/herself into a community’s history, s/he is affirming what that community agrees on as t/Truth. The communal narrative of t/Truth is always “under construction” (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1973; Long, 2012). At the same time, narrative is concrete; it always roots itself in place, often in event. In other words, memory-making acts (rituals) bear witness to history. Yet again, at times a community agrees on a history that did not – in the strict sense of the word – happen.<sup>178</sup> Does that make it less real?

*Dis/closure.* When I first ventured into ethnographic research, I found it deceptively simple to enter the world of the post-/postmoderns and sojourn with them. I have a performer’s temperament. The concept of research that is subjective; that reads my/your internal register of feelings as a text, as real as a historical document; that seeks to translate those feelings into a story (not just produce a report), is attractive to me. Furthermore, the new methodology suits the kind of research I hope to conduct among religious communities. In my first ethnographic study, I wrote the following (Barrett, 2014a, p. 8):

As a scholar of religious communication, I find myself naturally drawn to symbolic interactionism, since (as Geertz recommended) it acknowledges the fundamental role of symbols in mediating the meanings that living human persons create.

Now, however, I wonder: can I keep one foot in the scholars’ world and stay true to my own values, attitudes, and beliefs? But can I keep the other foot in my community’s narrative (values, attitudes, beliefs) and be intellectually honest?

If persons create meanings – that is, if meanings are not given to them via revelation – then “the deepest truths, those truths that give purpose, direction, *meaning* to [a] people’s life”

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<sup>178</sup> e.g. through collective amnesia or denial of a painful historical event or even shame from what occurred

(Lowry, 1982, p. 3), are only the product of perception and negotiation. This is why Lowry (1982) can say, “Myths bend, over time, as circumstances change” (p. 10). Of course, we still may be able to resolve our felt needs by converting to a dogmatic religion (one that offers structure and stability in the form of teachings, rituals, and t/Truth; see Douglas, 2009). A dogmatic tradition “answers life’s basic questions or at least explains life’s major events in a meaningful way” (Barrett, 2014a, p. 7), often via a linear event-based narrative. It fills the human need to find hidden meaning in events and objects (Deacon & Cashman, 2009). But that is the extent of what it can do.

***Spiritual-experiential reality.*** Maybe I’m being too dogmatic (as it were). I’ve been accused of such before. I’ll try to look at things from another perspective: that of experiential religion, which involves high-arousal rituals such as traumatic initiation rites that leave participants “scrambling to construct meaning out of an overwhelming experience” (Barrett, 2014a, p.4, citing Douglas, 2009) or low-arousal activities such as meditation. (In both cases, spiritual reality is experienced via nonverbal or preverbal means.<sup>179</sup>) An experiential religious community is more likely to accept a t/Truth that evolves or, in Lowry’s (1982) words, “bend[s] over time”; t/Truth often finds expression in myth rather than historical narrative (Barrett, 2014a). One community’s (or one person’s) t/Truth or m/Myth may vary from another’s *without causing either of them to question fundamental reality*.

This leaves me two options: either realities are “multiple, constructed, and holistic” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) or there is one higher r/Reality, but persons’ awareness of that r/Reality is constricted by their cultural context and level of spiritual openness. Recently, a scholarly acquaintance described how his experiences of “a higher power”/“the Universe” are “triggered through nature” (his words):

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<sup>179</sup> The fact that nonverbal and preverbal experience bypasses symbol is a complication I haven’t untangled yet.

It comes down to religious experience. To live it is to know that it's real. You can read something and regurgitate it, but that's not the same. There can be people who are devout and disciplined in a religious tradition, but they've only related to the text; they haven't had an experience, and that's putting the cart before the horse. Experience is what solidifies your belief system. That becomes your truth.

Yet human religious experiences differ widely enough to warrant competing t/Truth claims. Is individual experience reliable enough to offer t/Truth as well as truth?<sup>180</sup>

**Textual authority.** A dogmatic religion says no. Instead, it rests t/Truth in a received Text (or Text and parallel Tradition). In the dogmatic religious paradigm (e.g. framework for interpreting the world), reality is *received*; it is not constructed, by the group or the individual. I noted in my previous study (Barrett 2014a) four themes that emerge in a dogmatic religious tradition:

(1) the search for an authentic received tradition, (2) the resolution of inconsistencies in the tradition, (3) an order that distinguishes the sacred from the profane, and (4) a response to customs that fall outside of what the tradition teaches is normative.

The battle between central authority and local knowledge is only part of the picture. The real battle concerns Theme 1, whether there is a Text that provides a narrative to the believing community; the details of how to interpret the Text can be worked out over time. (Working out details is the purpose of *halachot*, *hadith*, papal bulls, and pulpit commentaries, which address Themes 2, 3, and 4.<sup>181</sup>) Dogmatic religions (including their fundamentalist extremes) seem to

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<sup>180</sup> See York (2011), p. 4: "...many people across a variety of cultures, times, and places have stressed one-on-one experiences with something referred to as the divine....At this point it may simply be enough to point out that the biggest problem with this form of knowledge is the limitations of anything self-referential. Everyone's personal experience is just that – his or her personal experience."

<sup>181</sup> This is also where religious wars come from; e.g. "Our Text is older/more authoritative/more new-and-improved than your Text...."

subsidist best in societies whose cultural schemata are shaped by a literate heritage (e.g. a cultural “canon” preserved in manuscripts, and a tradition of education and scholarship); a rising interest in experiential forms of religion is associated with a decline in literacy and/or interest in the written word.<sup>182</sup>

In a dogmatic tradition, the community is the arbiter of truth (via continuity of praxis and dogma), but the individual cannot be trusted with it. The exception is the founder of the tradition. Somewhere the ball stops rolling and the community declares, “[**Person X**] was the first one to hear from God, so all subsequent interpretations of the revelation should be based on his, and let those that deviate be anathema.” My problem, as a co-member<sup>183</sup> of a dogmatic religious community and a scholarly community, is this: when I search for “[the] authentic received tradition,” I must take the author(s) at their word that **they** experienced an encounter with the Author (the Other). This takes me in a tight little circle back to what J. Franklin (formerly Hanok ben Isaac) calls “hearsay religion” – the reason he renounced Torah observance to become an agnostic.<sup>184</sup> Yes, the Text is received – received from those who constructed it, based on what they saw with *their two eyes*. Again, *how do I know that I know what I (think I) know?* The only answer I can give is that those who claimed to be “eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Peter 1:16) saw something **in the flesh** confirmed by many witnesses (Acts). *The man who saw it has given testimony...* (John 19:35). He “knows” because he “saw,” not because he was subjected to an esoteric vision or mystical encounter. *That which was from the beginning, which we have*

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<sup>182</sup> Compare Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, 1985; Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, 1985; and Veith, *Modern Fascism: Liquidating the Judeo-Christian Worldview*, 1993. The emerging church (in a deliberate departure from the verbal tradition that has dominated Christendom and the Christianities) relies on a postmodern language of visual and tactile symbols designed to appeal to preverbal emotion and more appropriate for a preliterate society (compare Webber, 1999).

<sup>183</sup> e.g. simultaneously a member of both

<sup>184</sup> <http://jewsandjoes.com/blog/my-journey-into-and-out-of-hearsay-religion/>

*heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled...* (1 John 1:1). Their testimony relies on tactile evidence, not “transcendent emotions.”

***Continuity of experience.*** *All things that happened aforesaid were written down for our learning...* (Rom. 15:4; compare 1 Cor. 10:11). To us, God is silent<sup>185</sup>; but to our father Abraham, He spoke. Symbolic interaction makes available a sort of vicarious lived experience that affords continuity to the group’s evolving corporate narrative. As opposed to m/Mythic truth that “bends,” revealed t/Truth is a straight line (or a “straight stick,” in the words of HR/MJ teacher Tim Hegg).<sup>186</sup> For those of us “far off” (Acts 2:39), who have “believed through their testimony” (John 1:7), collective memory is the witness to the history that brings faith.<sup>187</sup> This memory is inscribed on bodies (via praxis or ritual) and inscribed on minds (via doctrine or theology).

**How do I write?** When we do theology, we bridge the gap between history (what is seen) and faith (what is not seen). Theology, as a witness to history, presupposes that historical events have meaning. Yet theology is just as much a telling as is history, and is just as subject to cultural pressures in the (re)telling. Nicholls (1995) comments that “the encounter with critical history” (p. xxv) rendered modern theology more open to new methods (e.g. reading “from the margins”). Likewise, postmodern and critical thought in the social sciences affected theology. Theologians who deal with inculturation have drawn from the work of Geertz (Krüger, 2010), who developed the concept of *local knowledge* to match his concept of *culture as text*. Every

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<sup>185</sup> This text was scratched into a wall at Auschwitz ([http://www.holocaust.com.au/mm/j\\_sister.htm](http://www.holocaust.com.au/mm/j_sister.htm)): *I believe in the sun even when it's not shining / I believe in love even when I don't feel it / I believe in God even when He is silent.*

<sup>186</sup> “If you are told that your obedience to God’s commandments is not complete unless your halachah conforms to this rabbinic dictum or that rabbinic tradition, watch out! You are being led down a slippery slope....Let the word of God be your sole authority for knowing what pleases God. A person determines if a stick is crooked by putting it next to a straight stick. Let the Bible be your straight stick” (quoted by Zachary Bauer, <http://www.new2torah.com/about-new2torah/#sthash.vHuS1Svt.dpuf>).

<sup>187</sup> I speak here in the voice of a believer standing in the general Hebraic-Christian tradition. I say “Hebraic-Christian” rather than “Jewish-Christian” because the Hebrew Scriptures predate Judaism as a religion.

local text is an incarnation of that knowledge community's memory of an event; the meaning communicated through that textual message is not necessarily un-"true" by virtue of being less accurate (e.g. in the historical sense).<sup>188</sup>

As a historical writer, I have the privilege of "looking backward" (as Arendt put it) and arranging the evidence as seems best to me. Since I am dealing with "facts" (e.g. observable evidence drawn from written texts), I strive for accuracy. As an ethnographic writer, dealing with the "texts" of set-apart (e.g. sacred, set apart by ritual) moments and everyday (e.g. secular/profane, mundane) life activities, I strive for faithfulness. The two concerns are similar, but not identical; the difference is largely a matter of perspective. Accuracy and faithfulness both are concerned with finding the nexus between the internal and external human worlds; that is, with teasing out the motives that produced historical actions, or the values/attitudes/beliefs that produce social messages. For the historian, the line between assessing responsibility and assigning blame is a fine one; for the ethnographer, the area between describing co-participants' values and judging those values harmful is sometimes grey. As a writer who deals with religion, theology, and spiritual reality, I carry all these concerns on my shoulder, plus another: that of articulating a given reality through the moral and ontological lens of my tradition, while practicing empathy toward persons who see through the lens of another tradition.

***Detachment vs. involvement.*** Nicholls (1995), speaking to scholars of religion, offers comments that are also instructive for complete-member researchers. He states that the scholar who studies his/her own religious tradition "must still aim at detachment and objectivity, as well as benefitting from the empathy arising from [his] participation in it" (p. xxv). At the same time, he acknowledges that self-awareness and detachment "ought not to entail a reductionist attitude

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<sup>188</sup> Meanings and messages can and do change over time; yet this does not mean that r/Reality has changed. If we find ourselves creating and sharing new symbols, it could mean, instead, that we have departed by a step (or more) from the reality our forefathers indicated to one another.

that denies the reality of the spiritual dimension” (p. xxv). In other words, even what I experience subjectively still exists in an objective realm outside me. I am striving, not so successfully, to walk the tightrope between detachment and self-conscious subjectivity.<sup>189</sup>

***Culture vs. self.*** Denzin & Lincoln (2003, p. 209) artfully describe my dilemma:

Back and forth autoethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations (see Deck, 1990; Neumann, 1996; Reed-Danahay, 1007).

The place where I stand to view the “vulnerable self” is somewhere outside the world, yet not fully inside me. The image of a submarine periscope comes to mind.

***Outside vs. inside.*** A previous generation of social scientists saw themselves forever standing outside (“etic”). They believed, with Geertz, that the “‘culture of a people is an ensemble of texts...which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong’ (quoted in Conquergood, 2002, p. 149)” (Hamera, 2006, p. 13). The new ethnographer walks inside (“emic”), as close as co-participants will allow. S/he tries to “walk in the moccasins” of an “other” people as fully as s/he can, in order to faithfully render the meanings they assign to their cultural doings and *how those meanings change over time* as they update their “ensemble of texts” with new practices. I am still learning to read from an “emic” perspective, since the “etic” perspective is engrained in me.

***Providence vs. process.*** The “providential” perspective (if I may so call it, versus the “process” perspective) is equally engrained in me. Traditionally, Christians and Jews (excluding

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<sup>189</sup> As a musician, I constantly hold the two in tension. Music is both art and science; it requires rigorous objective awareness of a composition (historical context, construction according to the rules of music theory) to accomplish the subjective craft of interpretation (emotional honesty, nuances that are the performer’s alone).

the most progressive) believed that history is unfolding according to a comprehensive plan, more or less determined by God. John J. Parsons (“As the Day Draws Near”) calls this worldview “monotheistic personalism.”<sup>190</sup> In other words, to say that “History is a story told by God” (Carroll, 2001, p. 615) is to state a fact, not make poetry. The *telos* of history is a *fait accompli*. Using this paradigm, it is (too) easy to read the Text as depersonalized facts with no human texture.<sup>191</sup> By contrast, Conquergood (2002, cited in Hamera, 2006) advocates a methodology that pays attention to the interpenetration and co-production of texts, a process visible only from the inside. This notion of coming up from the inside has parallels with Bakhtin’s (1981) dialogism (Hamera, 2006, p. 13). According to Bakhtin (1981, cited in Hamera, 2006), textual voices are material and social, rather than disembodied and abstract; they occur in real time and at varying decibels. We ought to “read” a text as if we are overhearing a conversation on a street corner. It is certainly possible to do this if I am open to such ideas as process thought, which makes room for the unfolding of new inter/personal<sup>192</sup> r/Realities through interaction. But is it possible to treat voices within the Text as a dialogue if one believes that “[s]ince God knows and providentially controls everything, human history is a controlled process that leads to a destination” (Parsons, “As the Day Draws Near”)? I’m not sure.

### **What do I confess?**

While crafting this movement, I scribbled an angry note to myself that reads (in part), “This is NOT about hard ‘evidence’ for the only right way!” And it’s really not. I promised you at the beginning that we would have a conversation, not a monologue, and that you would be a

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<sup>190</sup> Dogmatic religion prefers linear narrative; it also prefers an omniscient narrative voice. This may reflect a universe in which power is a dominant value. The theme of power emerges in Binitarian, “lesser Elohim,” and Arian constructions of Yeshua (constructions that are often used to reinforce female subordination).

<sup>191</sup> as fundamentalists do, using the modern paradigm described by Armstrong (2001)

<sup>192</sup> and intra/personal, e.g. within the Godhead (compare theological literature on inter-relationality in the Christian Trinity)



co-participant, not a passive reader being indoctrinated with propositional “truths” (or “t/Truths”). That is a practice of “domination and control” (Goodall, 2000, p. 14, citing Wayne Brockriede, 1972)<sup>193</sup> that does not allow you the “equal role” you deserve to play in “determining knowledge outcomes” (p. 22 in this text). And the most effective way to help you learn (e.g. determine a knowledge outcome, that is, what *you* want to take away from reading) is to show (“not tell,” Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p. 200) you where I stand. Again, it’s not about “evidence”...but about showing the development of my perception(s) over time!

*Shema, Yisrael, Adonai elohenu, Adonai echad.* Here, at the center of the movement titled “Confession,” at the heart of the chiasmic menorah structure, I am at my most vulnerable. The keystone of an arch is supposed to be a place of strength; for me, no. In making this confession, I expose myself on every side. I make myself, perhaps, offensive...not least of all to the academic community, by declaring my faith-bias to be central to my research.

When I call myself a monotheist, I still don’t know precisely what I am communicating.<sup>194</sup> Stark (2003) identifies monotheism not by worship of one God rather than many gods, but by worship of a particular type of God. He defines monotheism as corporate devotion to an all-powerful, beneficent being (the One True God) that controls human access to the afterlife, and he believes it succeeds because of its appeal to human self-interest.<sup>195</sup> Stark (2003) also suggests that the exclusivity and intolerance famously associated with monotheistic

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<sup>193</sup> I see the domination-centered approach as a serious problem emerging in the field of propositional apologetics. Compare the personal account of well-known apologist Matt Slick’s daughter Rachel, now an atheist (<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/friendlyatheist/2013/07/15/the-atheist-daughter-of-a-notable-christian-apologist-shares-her-story/>). Rachel’s telling suggests her upbringing focused on right knowledge, not relationship.

<sup>194</sup> Here I speak in the voice of faith. The literature on inter-relationality, cited above, has promise for re/imagining God without the overtones of solipsistic domination that accompany “pure” monotheism; however, all or most of the literature takes a Trinitarian stance that many HRs question.

<sup>195</sup> According to Stark (2003), the One True God (his designation; he also renders “Gods” in the plural) was able to out-compete polytheistic gods because the promise of infinite “otherworldly rewards” (e.g. eternity in the afterlife) beats a lowercase god’s earthly favors of health and wealth (p. 176) and “justifies not only an exclusive exchange relationship with the One True God but an *extended* exchange relationship” (p. 176) that requires the individual to join with a group in making “periodic payments [rituals]” over a lifetime to gain the expected payout (p. 177).

faiths is rooted in the group's subconscious desire to prove to their One True God that they are loyal to their "exchange partner" and will not switch to doing business with someone else.

The concept of an "exchange partner" resonates with the evangelical tradition in which I was raised (despite the Evangelical emphasis, as cited in the literature, on having a "personal [as contrasted with impersonal] relationship with Jesus Christ" [Warner Colaner, n.d., p. 11]). For instance, believers are encouraged to forego certain practices or pleasures of this life either to prove their loyalty, to avoid losing their reward (1 Cor. 9:27), or to prepare themselves for the next world by cutting emotional ties to this one. The meaning of suffering is tied up in the future, not the present.<sup>196</sup> Prayer is often a means to an end. The "exchange partner" concept reflects, to some degree, how I have approached my faith in the past. More and more, however, I see the weakness of an exchange-based relationship: its emphasis on *performance*, rather than *presence*. I have begun to interrogate the possibility of a different quality of partnership, one rooted in friendship (person-to-person) rather than exchange (thing-to-thing) (compare Kinlaw, 2005).

An impersonal thing-to-thing partnership avoids "the moral and ethical substance that is intrinsic to personhood" (Kinlaw, 2005, p. 90). The role of an "exchange partner" is to ensure that I get what I paid for, no more, no less. The grocery store clerk owes me change, not a chat over coffee. Even moral imperatives put forth by a One True God can affect what I *do* without affecting who I *am*. Reconfigured as social mores, they can compel me to change my behavior (e.g. my social self), but not my nature (e.g. my interior self).<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>196</sup>I invite you to draw a connection to future time orientation as an American cultural characteristic. Of course, not every culture dominated by a dogmatic religion is future-oriented.

<sup>197</sup> See York (2011), p. 6: "Arguments for the existence of a god based on intelligent design, cosmology, contingency, etc. tell us nothing about the CHARACTER of a God who is supposed to exist...What does an impersonal Unmoved Mover care about in terms of ethical behavior?" The abstractions of apologetics have the same effect as the depersonalization of an exchange relationship. In both cases, the relationship is extrinsic, not intrinsic, in orientation, and does not have to touch the person – the moral or ethical component – at all!

By contrast, Moen (2008) explains that the moral imperatives that flow from the personhood of God have to do with *what is in accord with God's nature* and therefore, because we are persons in His image, have to do with *bringing our nature into accord with His* (compare Kinlaw, 2005). Morality is foremost about *nature*, not *behavior*. Drawing on the work of Rabbi David Fohrman, Moen writes that, before the man and his wife ate from the tree<sup>198</sup>, moral awareness had nothing to do with what was “good” or “evil,” but only with what was “true” or “false”: “Moral decisions were either true (reflecting what God said or did) or false (not reflecting what God said or did)” (p. 136).<sup>199</sup> Because God is not a hypocrite (contrast Moen, 2010, p. 186: after eating from the tree, the man and his wife became “like the snake who appears as one thing on the outside but is really something else on the inside”), whatever He says or does is completely in accord with His nature. He has nothing to hide. There is no variance between His social self and interior self.

The process of reframing my cognitive schema to conceive of God as a vulnerable, willing partner has been, to put it mildly, unsettling. The image of God as a distant father figure, unapproachable except via self-abasing appropriation of the substitutionary atonement of Christ, is enshrined at the center of Christianity, and evangelicalism – famous (at least among its adherents) for emphasizing a “personal relationship” with God – is no exception.<sup>200</sup> Prayers ought to be timid: “O God, if it be Your will....”<sup>201</sup> Overturning this image, in order to picture a

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<sup>198</sup> Genesis 3

<sup>199</sup> Compare Bonhoeffer, cited in York (2011), p. 75: “Bonhoeffer [*Ethics*, pp. 17-20] argued that...Ethics is the attempt to know good and evil without knowing God [cf. Milbank, *Word Made Strange*, pp. 219-232].”

<sup>200</sup> One way to redeem this distance is through a sacramental tradition meant to bring Christ closer, such as the “Eucharistic Presence” practiced by the RCC. Intriguingly, emotional attachment to the sacrament left an imprint on Protestants as well; see pp. 72-73 in this text.

<sup>201</sup> I speak partly in the voice of the “divine healing” local knowledge tradition that shaped my spiritual development as a teenager. One pastor-teacher, leader of a local knowledge community in the broader Word-Faith tradition, preached on the phrase, “O God, if it be Your will....,” which he called “the prayer of unbelief.” He accused evangelicals and fundamentalists who pray in this way of asking God to heal, but adding a disclaimer because

God who is *near* to me in an intangible yet substantial way, shocked me – What if God really didn’t have plenary power to fix the broken universe, but was waiting on us to do our part? What if God didn’t have the future completely planned out? What if God was a woman?<sup>202</sup> – but also kept me going. Lived experience (individual and communal praxis, primarily in the form of personal devotional/prayer life) was no longer sufficient. In order to stake my heart – not just cognitive schema, not just affections, but loyalty – on this “partner,” I must be able to trust<sup>203</sup> that His intentions toward me (Jeremiah 29:11) are what He said.

Exchange partnerships are easy. I can “do” performance; I can do it well. I don’t like friendships. When I “do” presence, I feel vulnerable. That is precisely the challenge I am forced to face as I walk out this new understanding of relationship, of what it means to be a self. No, not a self; a *person* (Kinlaw, 2005). Only a person can commit to another person “in a relationship of trusting love” (p. 98). I am still learning to be a whole person. I am learning, too, to “put my body on the line” (Pollock, 2006, p. 328). By surrendering to the tensions of flesh, the rhythms of embodiment, I am learning what a weighty thing it is to say that God walked as a man. As I learn to name my emotions, to rock with them instead of going rigid and weightless, I come into an understanding of His lived experience (Hebrews 2:14-18, 4:15-5:8). *Rejection. Like a slap. Instant recoil.* There’s a recoil in the spirit, before the one in the shoulders and gut. *Stiff noses, turned up as they walk by.*

### *Picture*

the Levite and the priest walking by

the man wounded by robbers on the roadside; then picture a man

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inwardly they doubt healing *is* His will. The phrase can also be explained as an attempt to avoid the cognitive dissonance that erupts when one prays and does *not* see the expected result.

<sup>202</sup> Here I speak rhetorically, not literally.

<sup>203</sup> “Trust” differs from “believe”; one is cognitive/affective, the other an act of the will.

with Roman whip wounds on his shoulders,  
not a parable this time, Levite and priest spitting on him because

He dared to say, “*Before Abraham,*

***I AM.*”**

*This is the casting-off and the crying of every leper, every widow, since the beginning, and it’s  
all concentrated in one, in Him, the Holy God, who came to give us Presence<sup>204</sup> and all we  
wanted was an exchange partner.*

*I gave them bread, I gave them sight  
Still they turn and say  
That everything I am is a lie  
The prophets told them who I am  
Still they turn away  
With hearts so hard My people die*

*You’ve walked with Me three years and more  
Why can’t this pierce through your hearts  
That I’m the One you’re waiting for  
These miracles, My suffering  
It’s the plan of the ages  
Set from eternity long before*

*Will you call Me your King  
Will you follow Me as Ruler  
Will you call Me your God  
Will you pray to Me as Healer  
Who do you say I am  
Heaven’s waiting for your answer  
Will you call Me your Lamb  
Will you trust me as Redeemer*

*And thus I bleed, and thus I die  
The Suffering Servant sent  
To atone for the sins of mankind  
Three days and nights, and now I rise  
Do you believe?  
Then touch My hands, My feet, My side*

*Will you call Me your King*

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<sup>204</sup> *zoe*-life, the dynamic life of the Other that transcends *bio*-life (see Zizioulas, 1985)

*Will you follow Me as Ruler  
Will you call Me your God  
Will you pray to Me as Healer  
Who do you say I am  
Heaven's waiting for your answer  
Will you call Me your Lamb  
Will you trust me as Redeemer*

*Will you call Me your King  
Will you follow Me as Ruler  
Will you call Me your God  
Will you pray to Me as Healer  
Who do you say I am  
Heaven's waiting for your answer  
Will you call Me your Lamb  
Will you trust me as Redeemer*

*Who do you say I am<sup>205</sup>  
Heaven's waiting for your answer  
Will you call Me your Lamb  
Will you trust me as Redeemer*

*Selah.*<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Matthew 16:14-17

<sup>206</sup>The empty space is not an error in the manuscript; rather, it is designed as a miniature Grand Pause, or moment of silence (the meaning of *Selah*) for meditation on what has just been heard.

As I learn to trust, I begin to see the purpose of being embodied. I always thought “putting [my] body on the line” (Pollock, 2006) meant performance. Behavior. Perfection. Weariness. But body is presence. Crossing the “line” takes me not into the boxing ring, but into the bedchamber.<sup>207</sup>

*Sacrifice and offering  
LORD, You have not desired  
But a body You have prepared for me  
So here I am, LORD, I have come  
To do Your will, O my God  
For Your law is within my heart  
And my mouth will declare Your praise*

### **Participant: self**

**Who am I? Sharon.** Singer, composer, writer; dreamer, dancer, daughter. *I run after God because He tagged me first.*<sup>208</sup>

**Participant demographics.** Twenty-five-year-old unmarried Caucasian American female, born and raised in the U.S. Southwest. My education includes two bachelor’s degrees and the near completion of two master’s degrees.

**Socioeconomic status?** Well, I’m not starving. Though my tax returns and my pantry, last time I opened it, would seem to indicate otherwise. (*Joke. I think.*) Actually, you can call me a starving artist; I’ll take that label. There’s a donation box at the back of the room, for those who... Okay, no, I really am joking.

**Family background?** My father is an evangelical pastor-evangelist for thirty-plus years, my mother a homemaker for almost as long. Our family communication pattern (FCP) fell

<sup>207</sup> See Maurice Lamm’s eloquent treatment of the marriage chamber in *The Jewish Way in Love and Marriage* (1980, 2008). In *yichud*, a newly married couple experiences their first moments alone in each other’s presence. The bride opens the door, while the groom awaits her permission to enter. Entering the room together seals the marriage, symbolic of the physical intimacy they will have later on. Similarly, making my body – the enfleshed self – available to the Other signifies vulnerability in a space that is completely safe and intimate. (It should go without saying that I speak metaphorically and do not implying any physical or corporeal union with the Holy One.)

<sup>208</sup> Twitter profile tagline (<https://twitter.com/shoshanahgold>).

between *consensual* and *protective*, with an equal mix of what Fitzpatrick (2004) identifies as *conversation orientation* (open communication about members' experiences) and *conformity orientation* (expectation that members submit to an authority structure). Third daughter of four, I count the home schooling years (especially the years we traveled with my father in his on-the-road ministry) as the best time of my life, when I built the foundation for the learning I would do in college and for who I would become as an adult.

*Religious background?* Just a Methodist PK<sup>209</sup>, accustomed to moving churches every few years and hearing words like “holiness” and “repentance” and “love” for so long I can’t say how old I was when I first stood in a pew and sang “Amazing Grace.” Ours was an Evangelical home – in the literature, a “household in which one or both parents regularly attended an Evangelical church, believed in the authority and accuracy of the Bible, and emphasized the importance of having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (Boorstein, 2006)” (Warner Colaner, n.d., p. 11). I first identified as a born-again Christian by personal profession of faith<sup>210</sup> in 2004.

*Religious affiliation?* Nope, sorry. If you’re going to give me a box to check, like on one of those Pew Surveys, I won’t do it. That’s churchianity.<sup>211</sup> If you want to know how I got *here* (Sinai and Torah) from *there* (my personal Exodus ten years ago), keep reading!

### ***Performer biography.***

Sharon Marleis Barrett, soprano, received her B.A. in 2012 from Hillsdale College, where she majored in music and American studies. She is grateful for the

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<sup>209</sup> “Preacher’s Kid”

<sup>210</sup> For those not familiar with evangelical traditions, this takes many forms. In my case, it meant walking down to the grassy “prayer rail” area under a camp meeting tent in the twilight of a cooling July evening in the mountains of New Mexico to tell my preacher-father it was time I “asked Jesus to be my Lord.” Some authors use the term “sinner’s prayer.” For me, this term is not adequate to describe the social significance of my choice to “respond” to an “altar call” in front of everyone at camp meeting who surely thought I was already “born again” – in other words, to declare my presumed “insider” status was a put-on.

<sup>211</sup> I wish I could take credit for coining this word.



opportunities she had to study voice with Melissa Osmond, piano with Debra Wyse, harp with Amy C. Ley, and composition with Dr. Mathew Fuerst – studies that culminated in two senior recitals. For her final recital, Sharon collaborated with Debra Wyse on a suite of Sephardic ballads, which formed the musical foundation for *Exodus*.

Although Sharon's performance experience includes community theatre and college opera scenes (Beauty in *Beauty and the Beast*, Mimí in *La Boheme*), the majority of her musical endeavors have centered in the local churches where her family was active. She sang her first (impromptu) solo in a Mother's Day Out program at age three. In the two decades since, she has led singing, accompanied worship on piano and harp, and provided special music whenever and wherever she could.

At Sul Ross State University, Sharon received the *Puertas Abiertas* Graduate Fellowship and the Expanding Horizons Graduate Fellowship and studied voice with Dr. Donald Callen Freed. After she completes the M.A. in Liberal Arts, Sharon hopes to apply to an interdisciplinary Ph.D. program and take *Exodus* to dissertation level. In the meantime, she is active in singing, composing, recording music, and writing.

### ***Artist's Statement II***

*I sing to the Holy One of Israel with the music of the harp (Psalm 71:22)! Many of my songs are original compositions with a Hebraic/Messianic flavor.*<sup>212</sup>

**Who am I: soul.** The “self” is more than just the self; I am a person, a soul (Heb. *nephesh*; Gen. 2:7, “And God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul”). Deep within ourselves, we know this. We undertake “the project of telling a life” in response “to the human problem of authorship, the desire to make sense and preserve coherence over the course of our lives” (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p. 220); we do so not as an exercise in fun,

<sup>212</sup> Facebook profile description ([https://www.facebook.com/teshuvahmusic/info?tab=page\\_info](https://www.facebook.com/teshuvahmusic/info?tab=page_info))

but because our sense of *is-ness*, if I may, depends on it, depends on our ability to hang our beginnings and endings on the peg of time. According to Kinlaw (2005), the moderns and postmoderns, starting with Descartes, have ignored the *person* to focus on the *self*, an elusive, solipsistic entity that does not exist, what Robert Bellah called the “therapeutic self” (cited in Kinlaw, 2005, p. 97); the self that sees no meaning in other objects except as they are self-related; the self that is the pinnacle of existence, from which all values, moral and otherwise, radiate.

*...thou hast searched me, and known me.*<sup>213</sup>

*Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?...If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;*

*Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*<sup>214</sup>  
*[For] in thy book all my members were written...*

*when as yet there was none of them.*

As Kinlaw (2005) puts it, the “knowledge God seeks is not subject/object knowledge but subject/subject, I-Thou, knowledge between persons” (p. 102).

Wow! If this God seeks knowledge “with” me, not “of” me, I am safe with Him. He will not try to pick me apart and objectify me, as I so often do to myself. “Knowing God” (“or, rather, being known of Him,” Galatians 4:9) is a participatory process, one that promises to lead me into deeper self-knowledge, that is, seeing myself *as He sees me*, as well.<sup>215</sup>

### **Who am I: subject.**

*“It is you, O Lord, who judge me. For though no one can know a man’s thoughts, except the man’s own spirit that is within him (Ps. 50:3, 51:1), there are some things in man which even*

<sup>213</sup> Esther Mui, “Psalm 139:1-18 Song ‘You Have Searched Me and Known Me,’”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5HINlegg5M>

<sup>214</sup> Zemer Levav, “Even There,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfsIQMYoXLk>

<sup>215</sup> Esther Mui, “Psalm 139:23-24 ‘Lead Me in the Way Everlasting,’”  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_Q-sPK286W8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Q-sPK286W8)

*his own spirit within him does not know....I shall therefore confess both what I know of myself and what I do not know. For even what I know about myself I only know because your light shines upon me; and what I do not know about myself I shall continue not to know until I see you face to face and my dusk is noonday (Is. 58:10)” (Confessions, p. 210-211).*

**Reflexive writer.** The reflexive writer (Ellis & Bochner, 2003) walks a delicate line between articulating an experience (which requires a certain form of objectivity) and *living* that experience, not once only, but again for the reader (which requires surrendering to subjectivity, even to emotions that are preverbal but demand articulation). The reflexive ethnographer (Krüger, 2010) writes with an added layer of responsibility; s/he must articulate someone *else’s* experience, without living it, but by living alongside it, all the while being aware of the reactions that are shaped by his/her *own* experiences.

...Remember, “A fish doesn’t know what water is!” We can’t objectively describe another person’s or culture’s experience until we realize that we ourselves are not objective. We are always affected by our own medium ....As ethnographers (“people-writers”), we have an extra-heavy responsibility to untangle ourselves from our medium while simultaneously interacting with it – since “you are writing the environment with you in it.”...So the ethnographer’s job is to “defamiliarize the familiar. What are you embedded in?” (Barrett, quoting Joseph Velasco, 2014).

This awareness presents an interpretive challenge, but also offers added insight into *how* humans “do” lived experience.

**Evocative narrator.** Narrative inquiry aims at “expressive and dialogic goals” (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p. 217). By writing in the first person, I make myself the subject of research; by writing in a reader-friendly voice, I “[reposition] the reader” as a coparticipant rather than a

“passive receiver”; by “stressing the journey over the destination” (p. 217), I open up those spaces of co-production and contradiction, where my life looks like a scribbled-over text, and make you a partner to my struggle. Sometimes, when one is living inside it, this “coming up from the inside” (recall Hamera’s, 2006, p. 13, discussion of Bakhtin’s, 1981, dialogism) feels more like fighting to the surface for air.

Most importantly, an evocative narrative text deconstructs two falsehoods: the social illusion that I am a “rational actor” who can make decisions without relying on emotion, and the “scientific illusion of control and mastery” (p. 217). By disclosing “hidden details of private life” (p. 217), I expose and humble myself. *I am dust, as all my fathers were...* (Psalm 90:3, 103:14).

**Performance ethnographer.** As a performer who attempts to be self-reflexive, I have been doing performance ethnography all my life without realizing it. Krüger (2010) writes that participant-observation that extends to “direct participation in” performance (e.g. in dance, drama, and music) offers “a privileged means of access to embodied knowledge and fellow feeling” as well as to stylistic and aesthetic aspects that can enhance the researcher’s understanding of the art form (p. 75). Pollock (2006, p. 328) further writes of performance ethnography that it entails “going *in* to a social field at risk of going *under*.” Just as reflexive writing enfolds the writer emotionally and may take him/her by surprise, so ethnographic work “folds back on the researcher-subject,” showing that s/he is not “in possessive charge of the knowledge produced,” but “dispossessed and charged by it” (328). The aim of “defamiliarizing the familiar” brings a heavy cost with it.

Yet the cost is worth it, for those who make the journey. Philosopher Gabriel Marcel believed that “it is in ‘inter-subjectivity’ that we know ourselves and our world” (Kinlaw, 2005, p. 83). For Marcel, modern thought is egocentric; it results in “‘being-for-itself’ that cuts us off

from others; in cutting ourselves off from others, we cut ourselves off from ourselves” (p. 83).

The new ethnography follows the same line of thought. It seeks to reestablish the principle of relationship in place of the detached “objectivity” of a researcher who is self-centered, solipsistic, bound by the interpretive constraints of his/her own culture and personal research priorities. By “going in” and “going under,” the ethnographer also “goes deep”; s/he opens up to the “surprising, even disarming, processes of transformation” (Pollock, 2006, p. 328) that result from being open to others, and, in learning more about him/herself, avoids being “cut off.”

Going “under” is exhilarating and humbling...in the same way that nearly drowning would be, I suppose.

***Complete-member researcher.*** Then again, ethnographers may go so far as to become “fully committed to and immersed in the groups they study” (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p. 213)! These may be groups “of which they already are members or in which, during the research process, they have become full members with complete identification and acceptance” (211). There is at least some precedent for complete-member researchers in a religious context; Jules-Rosette (1975) became a baptized believer and full member of the African Apostolic church she studied. Talk about “going in” and then “going [all the way] under”!

My defining moment of “going under” happened beneath a campmeeting tent. Or so I thought, until a year or so ago. Now I ask Him, sometimes daily, is there more required of me? *What shall I do, that I may work the works of God?* (John 6:28). I thought “crossing over” into a Hebraic lifestyle might be it, what He wants of me; might be how I “know” that I am His (1 John 2:3, 2 Tim. 2:19). But neither do I yet have “complete identification and acceptance” (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p. 211) in the HRM.

I have been “going in” to the HRM, bit by bit, over a lifetime. Watching God’s Learning Channel<sup>216</sup> almost nightly from about age nine to thirteen or so. Reading pamphlets my mother had picked up about the pagan origins of the Christmas tree. Listening to a family friend in our middle-of-the-road evangelical church, during a Bible study, explain with ardor what he was learning about “Jewish roots.” Attending, at this friend’s suggestion, a model Passover *seder* hosted by a Messianic rabbi. I was perhaps ten years old. You know how parents stand around after an event and talk for *hours*. My sister and I “borrowed” purple table runners from a pile left in the corner after the *seder* tables were struck<sup>217</sup> and danced, danced, among the chairs and curtains<sup>218</sup> and ordinary metal room dividers that looked to us like golden posts in the Temple, to the “Jewish music”<sup>218</sup> that swirled through the now near-empty hall. It might have been a Paul Wilbur record, or even Joel Chernoff. It was our first time in a hotel banquet room, and we imagined we were in Jerusalem.

*What shall I bring to come before the LORD  
Of all the earth—how can I please Him?  
Can my body be offered for my sin?  
No, He has shown you what is good  
What He requires is to do justice  
And love mercy—this is His law  
And to walk humbly with your God*

### **Instrument: body**

Technically, the human body is a wind instrument; sound is produced in response to the breath, as air passes over the vocal folds (cords). Breath translates the body’s individual vibratory frequency into vibrato (the slight natural undulation of a pitch). In and on my physical self, I “play” the story; with my vocal self, I “sing” the story; through my emotional self, I

<sup>216</sup> a formerly MJ/HR, now primarily Zionist/CZ, broadcasting station based in my former hometown in the Southwest

<sup>217</sup> In theatre, to “strike” the set is to take it down and store it

<sup>218</sup> To us at the time, Messianic worship music was “Jewish.”

“inscribe” the story. As a reflexive-evocative narrator, going “in” to my own history at the risk of “going under,” I put “[my] body on the line” (Pollock, 2006, p. 328) in multiple ways.

**Remembering.** This “project of telling a life” (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p.220) is a dance on the “line” between memory and fantasy, history and interpretation. Past tense, present tense...whatever. Lived experience is a reality that eddies over and through me, as distinctions blur. I am attempting to be “reflexive.” Doesn’t that mean I’m just a mirror “reflecting” all that I have done, that has been done to me?<sup>219</sup>

**Journals.** Eight years of questions, prayers, musings. Ten journals of all colors, sizes. Some with Scripture emblazoned on the cover; some with Scripture and inspirational tidbits tucked in by the publisher on every page.

Then journaling becomes a substitute for praying. It has been, for long months and longer years, too difficult to pray aloud to Him, offer Him my words as if opening my soul to a friend, wait in the expectation that I will receive. This “hazardous journey” (*Exodus*, p. 51) is too far and too tiring. *Often the man on his own experiences grace...* (p. 322). Often, but not always.

**Bible study notes.** One journal, the smallest, pink and spiral-bound, is devoted to note-taking during the Saturday afternoon meetings of my Sabbath group. *I have finally found them! My people! Maybe that’s why I was led to this out-of-the-way town to start graduate work at a little-known school.* This is my only journal now. I write in pen, never pencil as before. In the back of my mind I don’t know if this is a sign of newfound confidence, or of my desperation to have something that *can’t* be erased in my rapidly tumbling world.

**Conversations.** I have an unusually sharp memory for conversations, even if I can’t recall where I last laid my pencil. It has served me well as a participant-observer and performance ethnographer. I have done much note-taking after the fact.

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<sup>219</sup> Matt. 6:12

**Course notes.** t/Truth (T/ruth?) pops up in random spots in lecture notes and response essays, as I draw together knowledge across disciplines or relate academic concepts to a value/attitude/belief.

**Previous research.** Every major paper I have written embodies a bit of my soul – not just values/attitudes/beliefs, but emotional longings and spiritual wisdom.

**Music.** The music I write is one of the most accurate barometers of my emotional and spiritual state at a given time. This is equally true of the music I listen to. Around 2009, I discover Messianic music, starting with Zemer Levav's debut album *L'Rosh Pina* (2001) and then Paul Wilbur's *Shalom Jerusalem* (1995) Four years later, I discover the HR music world, starting with Christene Jackman on YouTube.<sup>220</sup> For my seeking soul, this music is a whole new level of real.

**Inscribing.** Above (in "How do I write?"), I questioned the integrity of my stance between continuity and change, objectivity and subjectivity, and insider/outsider perspectives. I'm not sure the tightrope will hold. But let's keep moving. What and how I know is not what matters most, nor what I say and how I say it; what matters is what I do. In writing *and acting* reflexively, I offer my body as the location where tension and disagreement is mapped and inscribed. By revisiting the past, I acknowledge the claims of history on my story (as identity markers, desires, choices), but I also accept that what "has been done to me" (Matt. 6:12) has real implications. I surrender to the effects of (my) history on (my) body (mind, emotions, voice), not denying them.

**Body as territory to be mapped and marked.** A map (compare de Certeau, quoted in Conquergood, 2002, p.145) images the relation of one thing to another by dividing the two. In the same way, by choosing to be "set apart" for the Kingdom of Heaven, I agree to allow a line

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<sup>220</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/user/PlanetJackman>; <http://www.shuvcreative.com>



to be drawn between myself and the rest of the world; for *if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him* (1 John 2:15). More often, the line cuts across a part of my body in the process. I lose cherished pursuits, beliefs, and cultural markers that no longer belong. *I miss the childhood excitement of choosing a new “Easter dress” each spring and putting on white shoes again! I miss pulling ornaments out of my mother’s box and hearing her (re)tell the story of each one as we positioned it on just the right bough, testing it for weight, hiding the ones that weren’t as pretty deep under needles.* I add others that, though they appeal to me, feel foreign. *Why did I ever think I wanted to try a headcovering? I look frumpy, and worse, I’m tacitly endorsing the oppression of women in patriarchal households who “cover” because their husbands and pastors require it of them.*

In my study of RCC conversions, I found that “conversion is imaged as a physical act expressing obedience to God” (Barrett 2014a, p. 21). Ray (1997, n.p.) writes of his Catholic conversion, “A strong turning was required.” Sometimes we must wrench ourselves out of our context; we progress from “defamiliarizing” the familiar to eschewing it altogether. Another Catholic convert, Madrid (1994, n.p.), images conversion as a lamb being led to slaughter: “Conversion is a form of martyrdom. It involves the surrender of oneself – body, mind, intellect, and faith to Christ.” I have not found the martyr image in HRM conversion narratives; however, the Torah provides us with an object lesson that is just as earthy:

*And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever (Exo. 21:5-6).*

Coming to faith, surrendering to the ownership of history, is sometimes violent.

*Body as the place where covenant is inscribed.* The body is the location where a covenant is cut<sup>221</sup> and where the eternal is impressed upon the temporal. Once marked, my body is *not my own* (1 Cor. 8); it is a *living sacrifice* (Romans 12:1). Yet is this martyrdom, this “piercing,” this violent wrenching out of one way of life into another, like the war brides of Benjamin (see Judges 21:8-24; compare Deut. 21:10-14), really about sacrifice, about the giving up of rights to my very self, the opening of myself in vulnerability to pain? This is, often, what it feels like. But might it be, instead, about giving up my right *to be self-interested*, that I may live “in trusting love” (Kinlaw, 2005, p. 98)?

*To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice. (Prov. 21:3)*  
*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise (Psalm 51:17). To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices (Mark 12:33). Sacrifice and offering you did not desire...my ears you have pierced (Heb. 10:8).*

*With confidence I can approach Your throne  
 To ask Your will—I know You hear me  
 And will answer—this is Your Spirit’s promise  
 To worship You for Your great mercies, LORD  
 This living sacrifice I offer  
 To be transformed and keep Your perfect will  
 And to walk in Your law of love*

### **Data analysis: memory**

On this reflexive journey, I meet myself coming and going (as researcher and co/subject). It’s easy, and tempting, to fall into the trap of Narcissus – gazing with too much longing at my own reflection. But therein lies death (Prov. 16:25). Self-focus, self-entrancement, (attempted)

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<sup>221</sup> The metaphor (often quoted in HR literature) refers to the graphic practice of “cutting” a sacrificial animal, so that the two parties could walk between the split pieces, to seal the covenant.

self-subsistence – “that would be to have entered into hell” (Kinlaw, 2005, p. 98). Whence, then, shall my self-awareness come? It comes from the Other, who alone has the right to my story. I am the parchment, He is the Scribe<sup>222</sup>; the identity markers I have chosen, mere ink, no meaning, empty words unless they are expressing the Word. My task is to teach myself (how) to read them.

That is the purpose of data analysis. I gather data by observing (internally, externally, and reflexively) the lived experiences of my participant, self; I arrange it by (re)living and (re)enacting the choices my participant has made in her transition from one lifeway to another. As I’ve said, it’s not about what I know; it’s about what I do. Therefore, the interpretive framework through which I “read” my ensemble of life-texts must explain my choices in terms of *action*. My participant was worried earlier that her “faith-acts” would be without “efficacy” (p. 96 in this text). I will make it my job to show her that her faith “availeth much” (James 5:16). After all, my aim is to show, not tell. What concrete results have happened in her life as a result of her Exodus to bring her closer to the goal of righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21)?

**Evolving themes.** Memory plays handmaiden to my data analysis. This is a specific genre of memory: semantic memory, which stores conscious knowledge rehearsed over time, rather than episodic memory, which stores fragments of experience and emotion (compare Whitehouse, cited in Douglas, 2009). Semantic memory allows me to group experiences and associated emotions into clusters around a set of themes or thematic elements. I identify themes by “bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone” (Leininger, 1985, p. 60, quoted in Aronson, 1994, p.258).

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<sup>222</sup> In the churches where I grew up, we often sang a praise chorus whose key line, the musical turning point, was “You are the Potter, I am the clay”; compare Isa. 64:8.

When ordered around themes, the fragments show a narrative arc that is cohesive, believable, *and* faithful to human experience and motivations.

In studying religious conversions (Barrett, 2014a), I adapted the techniques of open coding and thematic analysis to distill themes from a variety of data sources including books, blogs, face-to-face conversations, participant-observations, and personal reflections. Typically, themes are drawn from actual verbal units; Ryan (n.d.) writes, however, that “researchers’ values, theoretical orientation, and personal experience with the subject matter (Bulmer 1979; Strauss 1987; Maxwell 1996)” are acceptable sources. Therefore, I treated my “interpretative approach...as a distinct point of origination” (Constas, 1992, p. 258, quoted in Aronson, 1994, p. 258) from which I shaped a set of themes that resonated with co-participants’ and my experiences in the HRM. In other words, even though I conceived of myself in the role of researcher, I was already treating them as co-participants and myself as a subject. The gathering of data and the extraction of themes began to feed one another; as themes emerged from the data already collected, I found myself returning to the “field” (the internet, my written notes, and my memory bank of conversations) to see what more evidence I could extract.

The same approach evolved with *Exodus*. Poulos (2008, p. 119, in Morrow, 2012, p. 8) notes that the auto/ethnographer does not choose his/her experiences “solely to make them part of a published document; rather these experiences are assembled using hindsight (Bruner, 1993; Denzin, 1989, Freeman, 2004).”<sup>223</sup> Since my data source is my lived experience, I need thematic units that will help me trace a narrative hidden under the surface. Unlike other interpersonal areas explored by qualitative research, however, religious experience is both highly personal and,

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<sup>223</sup> In contrast to Arendt’s assertion that the historical narrator must not assume that hindsight makes him/her omniscient, a personal narrator “is best situated to describe his or her own experiences more accurately than anyone else” (Wall, 2006, n.p., in Morrow, 2012, p. 8).

to a great extent, invisible<sup>224</sup>; even the individual who is living it may not understand it or be able to articulate a meaning. Therefore, I cannot rely on verbal or physical units of expression alone (documented through reflexive writing and “hindsight”) to discern patterns that would lead to a narrative. Rather, the experience itself becomes an instrument for interpreting the experience. I engage in a process of constant interior-exterior scrutiny, looking inward to my emotions and simultaneously outward to my actions; tracing the minute changes in values, attitudes, and beliefs that affect my actions, but also affect how I feel about myself; interrogating the effect of *rehearsal* on *recall*, that is, of a new lifestyle and new habits on my cognitive schemata. *As a man thinks in his heart, so is he* (Prov. 23:7).

**Epiphany.** As I surrender to the rhythm of self-questioning, self-reassurance, self-doubt, I struggle still to order the moments of my life into a coherent narrative. What is wrong with me? I must be a poor auto/ethnographer, or I’m not writing reflexively enough. Or I’m so burdened by the *pressures* of adopting a new identity that I can’t handle analyzing the *process*. Ellis & Bochner (1992) reassure me: There are “events in which individuals are so powerfully absorbed that they are left without an interpretive framework to make sense of their experience” (p. 81, citing Denzin, 1988). Such events are called “epiphanies.” “Aha!” I think. (This is my mini-epiphany.) I have been going through/going on this journey for roughly four years (over fifteen years, if you count baby steps like attending the model *seder*), but without an interpretive framework other than the cultural schema into which I was born, from within which context I made the initial decision to step out into a new schema. Of course I should not fault myself for struggling to categorize the emotions associated with cognitive dissonance, liminality, and more. Nor should I fault myself for seeing multiple “realities” in my past and present – that is, threads

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<sup>224</sup> In this it is like gender and sexual orientation, popular topics among contemporary auto/ethnographers.

of belief and action that intertwine without regard to chronology. It is impossible to put my life into tidy little boxes as I would like to do.

**Embodiment.** Four themes emerged from conversion narratives (Barrett 2014a), including “(1) the search for the authentic Biblical tradition, (2) the problem of inconsistencies in Christian history, (3) the proper order for sacred time, daily life, and relationships, and (4) the Biblical response to pagan traditions” (p. 17). While these themes crop up in *Exodus*, along with cognitive dissonance and liminality, they are not the focus. Rather, the focus is on *the experience itself*: the quest for meanings that can be fashioned into thematic elements. In keeping with the concept of *body as instrument*, I offer an embodied rehearsal of the values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices that I wrestle with and constantly interrogate in the process of taking on my new identity. I inter/act<sup>225</sup> with the body as *dress*; the body as *language*; the body as *movement*; and the body as *voice*. This inter/action, distilled into musical and verbal vignettes, finds public voice via social media (e.g. blogs and music videos) as well as everyday life.

*You have searched me, LORD, and You have tested me  
To know if my heart would follow You  
So lead me in the way everlasting  
May my speaking and my secret meditations  
Be pleasing in Your sight  
O LORD my Rock and my Redeemer  
And my mouth will declare Your praise*

### Results preview: the body between

“The person undertaking a conversion process – however brief or minimal – experiences a liminal state as s/he crosses over the threshold from identity to identity” (Barrett, 2014a, p. 9).

“Performance studies struggles to open the space between analysis and action”  
(Conquergood, 2002, p. 145).

*Public or private?*

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<sup>225</sup> I am the “actor,” yet I engage in running dialogue with myself.

I stand between, and make my confession.

*Objective or subjective?*

Through my telling, I seek to balance the demands of two (equally valid and valuable) methods of searching for truth. In the process, I attempt to unravel the many different tellings of the One True God's doing. Who has the right to His story? I am caught between the *law* of objectivity...rationality...stasis...and the *grace* of subjectivity...imagination...movement. The ordinance of doing justice to the evidence, vis-à-vis the liberty of "(re)writing" it as new textual voices enter the conversation. Are these two *pillars*<sup>226</sup> opposed? The *burden of history* (Warren, 1946) has fallen on me, and I have not made peace with it. How can I *reconcile these in the body of my flesh* (Colossians 1:22)? Questions, sleepless nights are graven on my face. The text of my struggle can be read in the tracks of tears. I read conflicting stories, and cannot answer which one is truth. Yet they all are inscribed in my body, in my mind, as the *path of life* (Psalm 16:11) is inscribed on my heart.

*Social science truths or spiritual T/ruth?*

*Father, give me the words. Guide me in Your truth, and teach me!!!* (Psalm 25:5). *Show me what is Your right way, that I may walk in it. The Holy Spirit, who is the Comforter, will guide you into all truth* (John 16:13). *He will be with you and give you what to say* (Exo. 4:12, Luke 12:12). *Father, teach me!!! If Your Presence does not go with me, then do not bring me up from here!* (Exo. 33:15).<sup>227</sup>

*Evidence or interpretation?*

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<sup>226</sup> The *Sephirah* of *Chesed* (mercy, kindness) and the *Sephirah* of *Gevurah* (justice, strength), an allusion to the Kabbalah of the *Zohar*. During my ethnographic trip to Beit HaDerekh Messianic congregation, the speaker referred to the "pillars" of *Chesed* and *Gevurah* as two attributes of G-d which are united in the Messiah. By making this allusion, I do not endorse Kabbalah or other forms of mysticism that are popular in the HRM.

<sup>227</sup> personal journal excerpts, ca. 2011-2012

I am dancing on the fence between three (and more) disciplines, each with its established methods; each with its own priorities in research and its own taboos regarding what is and is not acceptable as knowledge. The danger of doing this dance is that one may easily fall down into the cracks between the boards and get stuck.

*Emic or etic?*

*Detached or involved?*

*Central authority or local knowledge?*

Conquergood (2002) speaks of a “transgressive travel between two different domains of knowledge”: the received and the popular (p. 145). I fear I am sinning against one or more of my chosen disciplines by mixing methodologies in a “promiscuous traffic between different ways of knowing” (p. 145). Isn’t mixing supposed to be impure anyway? *You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed...* (Lev. 19:19). We know this in our bones, I think; it’s the source of cultural taboos the world over; so of course we feel “liminal” and “transgressive” when trying to live in dual states!

*So, O Lord, all that I am is laid bare before you...And I make my confession, not in words and sounds made by the tongue alone, not only with sung and spoken prayer, with the interpenetrating voices of the great cloud of witnesses, and with the richness of reflexive writing, but with the voice of my soul and in my thoughts which cry aloud to you. From my journals and prayers, with the inner voice of my spirit, I bring my questions to You. Your ear can hear them* (*Confessions*, p. 207).

*Continuity or change?*

*Christian or Jew* (Nicholls, 1995)?

*Hot or cold* (Rev. 3:16)?



Here I stand<sup>228</sup>, and I confess: Hear, O Israel, YHWH your Mighty One [Elohim],  
YHWH is one [*echad*]. Yeshua haMashiach, *Hu Adonai*.

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<sup>228</sup> It is unknown whether Martin Luther actually said these words before Charles V at the Diet of Worms in 1521. Reformation scholar Heiko Oberman (*Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*, Yale, 1989) renders Luther's speech as follows: "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by evident reason-for I can believe neither pope nor councils alone, as it is clear that they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves-I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture, which is my basis; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant, because acting against one's conscience is neither safe nor sound. God help me. Amen" (Elesha Coffman, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/news/2002/apr12.html>).

## Movement IV

### *Shuv*: Change

אלהינו<sup>229</sup>

“What happens when the pressure of truth and the drive to repentance begin to call in question part of the substance of faith?” (Nicholls, 1995, p. 418). In Robert Penn Warren’s *All the King’s Men* (1946, n.p.), protagonist Jack Burden reflects that discovering the truth is like getting sucked into a black hole, leaving you nothing to stand on.

For the truth is a terrible thing. You dabble your foot in it and it is nothing. But you walk a little farther and you feel it pull you like an undertow or a whirlpool. First there is the slow pull so steady and gradual you scarcely notice it, then the acceleration, then the dizzy whirl and plunge into darkness. For there is a blackness of truth, too. They say it is a terrible thing to fall into the Grace of God. I am prepared to believe that.

I feel this, too, in looking (backward) into the history of my “people” who have called themselves by His Name (2 Chron. 7:14), but not lived as the Book says,— and yet He seems still to acknowledge them and bless them,— as well as (forward) into the implications of how I “walk” out Torah in my own life. Sometimes I feel, like Jack Burden, as if the weight of original sin is all pulling on my shoulders. I feel angry at the false teachers who came in into the early Gentile church and told us to live like modified pagans instead of the grafted-in *all-Israel* we were meant to be, and at the preachers and teachers of today who are preaching it all wrong to the flock and telling them, “peace, peace” (Jer. 6:14, 8:11),— and yet God is blessing them far more than He is blessing me and so of course I must be all wrong and twisted up about it and legalistic and

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<sup>229</sup> *Sh'ma, Yisra'el, YHWH Y'shua Elohenu. Shuv* (root of *teshuvah*, “repentance”) means “turning.”

seeking in vain, because of course if His way is easy and His burden is light, then there must be no requirements to it and I am making it too difficult. ...Right?<sup>230</sup>

*Often the man on his own experiences grace...to travel the paths of exile (Exodus, p. 322).*

“I am not interested in what you *know* [but] in what you *do*” (Moen, 2008, p. 45). Most Christians who decide to “do” something about the covenant restrict themselves to supporting the Zionist state, evangelizing Jews, or worshiping alongside a Messianic congregation. Well, it’s true, I could take the route James Carroll proposes at the conclusion of *Constantine’s Sword*. Carroll (2001, p. 604) believes he can look outward from his own tradition, apologize to the Jew, repent, restore whatever he stole (the Torah way of restitution is implicated in Rabbi David R. Blumenthal’s description of “Catholic *teshuva*”), and then continue on his way *while staying within his own tradition still*. If I take his route, it is a short step to becoming Catholic, actually: a convert to the “new covenant [under] a new ecclesial administration” (Barrett 2014a, p. 18), a daughter of the universal and triumphant Church, returning along with thousands of my “erring brethren” from the byways of schism and heresy. *I believe in God, the Father Almighty...and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord...and in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church...*

But an honest look into the mirror of history tells me this is not good enough.

Why be a *hearer of the word, and not a doer*, who *beholds herself, and goes her way, straightway forgetting* what she saw there? (James 1:23-24).

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<sup>230</sup> This section (pp. 130-132) and Movement V are examples of modified layered writing (see Pensoneau-Conway, S.L., & Toyosaki, S., 2011).

...The style of a layered account is unique in that it utilizes a sectional approach. Literally, the page is separated into sections of text, with each text being a different part of the self (or a different self altogether).

I have come to believe that the only way to “restore the years the locust has eaten” (Joel 2:25) is **to actually return to what we left behind**. This means stripping away more layers to get at what lies behind Christendom’s (or the Christianiti/es’) version of the story.

But how far am I willing to take this road? Nicholls (1995, p. 432) writes, at the end of *Christian Antisemitism*, that there is no “conclusion of the movement of repentance, or return, short of actual return of the Church to the Jewish people.” I understand how he arrived at this conclusion. When I read, with *compunctio*, the narrative of our sins, I covet not only restitution but reversal. With my own hands I want to strip away the “idolatry” (p. 432) of my fathers. Count me a convert to “the glory, the adoption, the patriarchs...” (Rom. 9:4). *Shema, Yisrael, Adonai Elohenu, Adonai echad!*

Then again, today’s Judaism(s) discourage proselytes. Even if the whole of the c/Church(es) rose up as one to make *teshuvah*, Nicholls (1995) questions whether the Judaism(s) would take us in (p. 432). Returning to the Judaisms, I would have to give up my Messiah. Even the MJM would reject me, as a non-Jew who wants to write Torah on her body as well as her heart.

Besides, He called me while I was still a *foreigner to the house of God* (Eph. 2:19). I have a waiting faith community that, at least, seeks to do the “weightier matters” of the Torah; sure, they’re not perfect, but no one is. Maybe it’s better I just stay where I am (1 Cor. 7:24).

*My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.*  
(Song of Songs 2:10)

## **Rehearsing**

To you, the reader, I have risked myself. I have committed to you the high points of my history: how I got “here.” Now that we are here, I am about to risk again. The art of

autobiography – *writing the self* – leads to self-examination. “What concrete results have happened in [my] life as a result of [my] *Exodus* to bring [me] closer to the goal of righteousness” (p. 123 in this text)? I will now give an accounting<sup>231</sup> for how I *write myself into* “the history of this ‘continuing people’” (p. 60). *I offer here an embodied rehearsal of the values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices that I wrestle with and constantly interrogate in the process of taking on my new identity* (p. 126). I am prepared to become vulnerable.

We rehearse, of course, to prepare ourselves for performance. The *moment of performance* is the result of many ongoing *acts of performance* (rehearsals). The concept of *autoperformance* (a “[presentation] conceived and performed by the same person” (Kirby, 1979, p. 2)) goes back at least four decades and encompasses not only the author, but the content itself, which is likely to be autobiographical (Pensoneau-Conway & Toyosaki, 2011, p. 390). Before that, Wallace (1956) referred to the intertwined aspects of self and culture, mental images and material experiences, as a “mazeway” (Adler, 1977, p. 26). Since performance is “a way of *creation and being*,” not merely “entertainment” (Madison & Hamera, 2005, n.p., emphasis in original), each of our inter/actions and reflections within our personal “mazeway” may be conceived of as an *act of performance*: a rehearsal for the person we are trying to become.

Kogut’s (2005) autoperformance models a self-questioning stance through her one-sided dialogue<sup>232</sup> with a theatrical audience. She addresses core issues of ethnographic praxis such as the lack of traditional “hard” data, the fear of being too self-focused, and the risk of judging rather than observing co-participants. In my autoperformance, I address issues that are central to my praxis as a member of a faith community. Moving beyond my scholarly contributions as a

<sup>231</sup> I choose this word to emphasize the “weight” of storytelling; it is like old-fashioned silver coins that one counts out, into the hand, one at a time, seeing how they stack up; just as a story has *weight* in the concrete world, it also has *value* in the relational world.

<sup>232</sup> Since Kogut (2005) poses statements and questions with the intent of arousing thought in audience members, it would be inaccurate to call her work a monologue.

complete-member researcher, I wrestle with the hard questions of what I am *responsible to do* as a person of faith – for *faith, without works, is dead* (James 2:17). Addressing this subject means my audience expands to include not only members of my “dogmatic religious community and [my] scholarly community” (p. 100 in this text), but the Other of whom I write, toward whom I commit<sup>233</sup> all my faith-acts. For *what is prayer, but “telling” my story back to Him* (p. 24)? I am keenly aware of how all that I reveal here bears on my own spirituality.

### **Circling around hermeneutics**

As Barton (2011) observes, my “experience—reactions, observations, biography, and emotions—are [sic] data” (p. 432). The raw data, once arranged, helps me see the pattern of my choices and their consequences. Richardson (1990, p. 183) believes narrative “is the best way to understand the human experience because it is the way humans understand their own lives” (quoted in Bochner, 2012, p. 155). Persons intuitively understand that no moment is divorced from any other moment in life, and that learning from the past is possible and even desirable. I believe (most) persons feel their experiences reflect something deeper than mere cause and effect; we are not, most of us, Skinnerian theorists. We want our choices to affect *who* we are, not just *what* we are. *Stuff has causes; people have purposes* (Sharon, quoting Don Westblade, 2007). We understand our lives best through narrative because it allows us to see the lessons we learned (or think we should have learned). My mistakes and backtracks, the “spaces...where my life looks like a scribbled-over text” (p. 116 in this text), are where I go to find guidance for the future.

This is where auto/ethnography becomes precious, for I can learn from the choices – good and bad – of others too. As I *come alongside them in relationship* (p. 92 in this text), I can

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<sup>233</sup> I use this word in the sense of committing an act and in the sense of “committing” my well-being to Him as an act of faith (see Daniel W. Whittle, “I Know Whom I Have Believed” (1883), public domain, based on 2 Tim. 2:12.

ask and observe, and without passing judgment (on what they did), I can judge (what would be right for me to do).<sup>234</sup> This requires taking a long view. Ellis and Bochner (2000, p. 740) urge “authors [to] use their own experiences in the culture reflexively to bend back on self and look more deeply at self-other interactions” (quoted in Pensoneau-Conway & Toyosaki, 2011, p. 390). I look at self-other interactions not merely to evaluate them qualitatively, but to judge whether I am treating others as I ought.

From the parts, I look to the whole. The *history of this “continuing people”* is an ongoing saga of stumbling, repenting, and more stumbling. If I inscribe myself on this story, I have a responsibility to find the lesson in every event. Just as the auto/ethnographer uses the in-and-out, back and forth zoom lens (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), I use the hermeneutical circle (as described by García Landa, 2004, p. 157):

...The interpreter’s attention does shift from the part to the whole, with the help of comparisons and of intuition, and then back from the whole to the part, in order to reinterpret that part (thus, interpretation constantly requires reinterpretation).

As a result, I constantly rehearse the story with/in myself. The lesson I find, at the end, is always the same: grace.

### **Finding time**

*In the beauty of holiness  
Worship the LORD  
Enter with thanksgiving  
And come with one accord  
Bring your gifts and offerings  
And sacrifices near  
Worship and praise Him  
The LORD is dwelling here*

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<sup>234</sup> Judging without passing judgment is one of the greatest lessons, one I am only beginning to learn.

History is a funny thing; like memory, it repeats itself in unexpected ways and times. In fact, *History is neither a circle nor a line; rather, it is a spiral* (Sharon, quoting Richard Gamble, 2010). History's *moments of performance* interlock in a repeating web (Lukacs, 1994). If history is a text, then the "reader and the text are related to each other in a way that is basically *circular*" (Blum, 2009, p. 6).

EDITH (co-participant): Everything happens according to Yahweh's cycles.<sup>235</sup> That's why we keep the Feasts. The Feasts are prophetic of what is going to happen in the last days.

BLUM (2009, pp. 6-7): The reader brings a "preunderstanding" to the text, and the text transforms it into a new understanding, which can then operate as a preunderstanding in another encounter with the text.

*SHARON: A religious observance can be a text. It teaches, is designed to teach.*

RUTT (2006, p. 3): Gadamer claims that understanding comes when the text and the interpreter are fused.

*SHARON: This happened to me when I read Berry's Remembering (2008). I adopted Andy Catlett's pilgrimage as a metaphor for my own "exile" (my struggles with close relationships). Stories do lead the soul; somehow narrative has power to affect the will.*

BARRETT (2014a, p. 28): In the HRM, the yearly cycle revolves around the Biblical Feasts, also referred to as *mo'edim* (Hebrew, "appointments").

EDITH (in Barrett, 2014a, p. 29): For us, this [Passover] is like a high holy day.

MOSES (Exodus 13:10, 12:14): *You shall keep this ordinance [feast] in its season from year to year...for a memorial, throughout your generations.*

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<sup>235</sup> It was unclear whether Edith would follow the convention "YHWH"; I use "Yahweh" when quoting her to represent the unambiguity in her pronunciation and her schema for God. "YHWH" (based on consonantal Hebrew) is a fluid spelling that lends itself to several possible vowel combinations.



*SHARON: The Sabbath also looks “back” to the creation. Yom Kippur looks “back” to Passover – one atonement mirroring the other. In the Feast cycle, time folds in on itself.*

GARCÍA LANDA (2004, p. 158): Discourse is for Bakhtin dialogic, it is “always already” embarked in an implicit dialogue with previous utterances.

*SHARON: Memory is a dialogue with history. The Feasts are YHWH’s hermeneutical cycles, designed just for us. The events depicted are our “family photo album” (“here, we are eating Passover; here, we are standing at the foot of Sinai”). The covenant-affirming Feasts, contrasted with our failure to keep covenant, show us how to repent. Passover and Yom Kippur even have special “times of cleansing” built in.<sup>236</sup>*

GARCÍA LANDA (2004, p. 157): We see, then, that the celebrated hermeneutic circle is more exactly a hermeneutic spiral. Only interpretations which do not produce new meaning are circular, with the circle becoming in fact a vicious circle.

*SHARON: It won’t become a vicious circle, unless we fail to learn from the past. We are supposed to recall the past because it delivers us into our appointed future.*

The cycles remind us who we are; they clarify our purpose.<sup>237</sup>

## **Finding place**

Place is more than physical space. It is space (physical or metaphorical) endowed with memories, associations, and meanings. For Jews in diaspora, the synagogue was a space (with attributes of place), but their true “place” was the Jewish community. They did not consider living in the Promised Land essential to Jewishness; in fact, the first-century Hellenistic Jew Philo used the Land as an allegorical representation of virtue (Burge, 2010).

<sup>236</sup> Passover is followed by the week of Unleavened Bread, when the house is cleansed of leaven; the Day of Atonement is preceded by a forty-day period of *teshuvah* and a ten-day period called the “Days of Awe,” when, according to tradition, the people of God should seek and extend forgiveness for all debts and transgressions.

<sup>237</sup> I have invoked the concept of cycles throughout my narrative. Do you see the re/turning points throughout?

*SHARON: Identity takes on special attributes when the locus of memory is displaced.*

Today, the MJM and HRM have seen a pendulum swing back to a literal sense of Jewish space as Jewish place, with the founding of the Jewish state. Many HRs expect the House of Ephraim (the lost Ten Tribes) will be regathered to the Land prior to the Messianic Age, just as the House of Judah (the Diaspora Jews) is there now. For this regathering, they await a “Greater Exodus.”<sup>238</sup> My co-participants at Mayim-Hayim (a post-HR Orthodox synagogue) believe they (as members of Ephraim) will reclaim their rightful place in the Promised Land only once they submit to Judah’s authority to interpret the Torah (via the Oral Torah and a revived Sanhedrin).

### **Living in place<sup>239</sup>**

*In the beauty of holiness  
Worship the LORD  
In the body of believers  
His Temple is restored<sup>240</sup>  
To stand upon His holy ground  
And see Him face to face  
Bring clean hearts and clean hands  
Into His chosen place*

In observing the “set-apart times,” I find identity. I also find common purpose with a community. The complete-member “researcher and participants enjoy a close emotional stance as a result of shared cultural locations” (Pensoneau-Conway & Toyosaki, 2011, p. 388, citing Adler & Adler, 1987), which include not only meaningful spaces but cognitive schemata. When I plang my week around the seventh-day Sabbath, a portion of time is not my own; I divide it from the rest of the week to show that it, and I, do not belong to the world of secular pursuits. For my co-participants in Beit HaMidrash, the seventh day is qualitatively different from other days.

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<sup>238</sup> beyond the scope of this paper

<sup>239</sup> “Living in place” means living in a community (relational place), living in the physical world (but not of the world), and waiting “in place” for the Kingdom to finally come to earth.

<sup>240</sup> built of “living stones” (1 Pet. 2:5)

FRANCES (Barrett, 2014a, p. 29): No, I don't believe you are wrong if you meet on a Sunday or a Tuesday to study the Word. But this [Sabbath] is the day that He said He would meet with us.

EDITH (Barrett, 2014a, p. 29): If you and your boyfriend agreed to meet for breakfast at seven o'clock on Thursday, and you don't show up, and you say you'll go Friday instead, and he's not there, are you going to tell him, "Oh, sorry, I thought just any old day would do to meet with you?" No, of course not! Thursday is the day he set aside to meet with you. And we hurt Yeshua's feelings when we don't meet with Him on His day [Sabbath].

*SHARON: So time itself is also a form of place. The "enfolding" of time has a concrete aspect to it. "Where shall I go, to meet with God?" (Psalm 42:2). ...But how does this differ from the sacramentalism of the RCC, which (I thought) HRs abhorred as pagan?*

EDITH (Barrett, 2014a, p. 29, emphasis added): For us, this [Passover] is like a high holy day.

**It's like going to church for Communion if you were a Catholic.**

*SHARON: Maybe we all, deep down, have this desire for incarnational worship and sacramental unity. Maybe it is natural. Or is it a manifestation of how humans symbolically construct reality? After all, according to Deacon and Cashman (2009), our "capacity to use symbols" gives us "the desire to define ourselves...via narrative," to see "hidden meanings" in the everyday, and to seek "transcendent" spirituality (p. 95 in this text). In other words, do HRs attribute sacred quality to the Sabbath (and Feasts) because the symbol (a set-apart day) seems to bring spiritual reality closer? Symbol makes us feel we can grasp the spiritual world – even if it exists [primarily] in our minds. As members of a dogmatic religion, moreover, they/we need a symbol that fits into a narrative scheme, showing how our faith "story" remains stable over time.*

The fact of “shared cultural locations” (Pensoneau-Conway & Toyosaki, 2011, p. 388) means people who *sojourn together* naturally adopt the same “patterns of symbols that dot the path of daily life like milestones” (Barrett, 2014a, p. 30). Our ways of marking time and space make natural identity markers, since members of a community have incentive to link their lives together. Shared times are meaningful; by the same token, (spiritually) meaningful times are meant<sup>241</sup> to be shared. Barton (2011) puts it well: “[M]y story, which arguably I should own, is ‘co-mingled data’; thus telling my story inherently means sharing someone else’s story” (p. 432). The auto/ethnographer’s dilemma overlaps into my life as member of a faith community.<sup>242</sup>

**Living in “no man’s land.”** Like the Hebrews on the march (p. 62 in this text), we tend to congregate at the same watering-place. This is especially true of those who find each other outside the confines of the mainstream. Just as MJs “stand in a middle space” (p. 75) between Jew and Christian, HRs are uncomfortably stretched between Christianiti/es and MJM.

FRANCES (Barrett, 2014a, p. 19): I went to a synagogue in [another state] that was trying to be Jewish. The Talmud, the scrolls, the *kippahs*. . . . And I said, this is not of the LORD.

*SHARON: Frances found herself in the paradoxical position of many HRs: leaving the Christianiti/es for Torah observance, then deciding that Jewish traditions are an obstacle to observing the Torah as written. How do we explain such a thing to our friends and families? They already think we have gone off the deep end, gone “Jewish,” because we “keep what was written in the first five books” (Edith, Barrett, 2014a, p. 19). There is no way to communicate that we are “not Jewish; just biblical” (Jeffrey, co-participant).*

<sup>241</sup> I could have said “created” or “designed,” but chose to play on the sense of “meaning” in “meant”; just as people have purposes, so do set-apart times and spaces! Creation does not happen without intention!

<sup>242</sup> “So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Rom. 12:5).

BARRETT (2014b, p. 30): We [members of my HR home fellowship, in conversation] agreed that we would not be accepted into a Messianic congregational alliance because of some of our specific beliefs.

For members of a liminal community, symbolic bonds are especially fraught with emotion, since members “share [both] a ‘common set of experiences, feelings, and goals’” (Pensoneau-Conway & Toyosaki, 2011, p. 388, quoting Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 67) *and* the pain of being different.

SHARON (to Edith and Frances): It is so nice to be able to come to visit someone’s house for dinner and not worry about whether they are going to serve pork and how I am going to respond without hurting their feelings!

*SHARON: What bothers me most is when another Christian tries to serve me pork and I say, as gently as I can, that I don’t eat it, but thank you, and they immediately respond – thinking they are being so kind! – oh, you don’t need to worry about that, hon, you know we’re not under the law! If I were actually Jewish, no one would say that; they would assume a respectful distance from my food choices and might even feel embarrassed if they accidentally served me pork. But since I am one of them, so to speak, not only do they expect all my practices to mirror theirs, but when I act counter to their expectations – creating a bit of cognitive dissonance – they assume I am “weak in faith” (Rom. 14:1-2)! They brush away that dissonance, rather than allowing my “difference” to affect their “attention and perception” (Fitzpatrick, 2004, p. 174).*

**Living apart.**<sup>243</sup> The confluence of shared, set-apart time and shared, set-apart space creates *place*. I was “fully committed to and immersed in” (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p. 213) my local HR community. But what happens when *place* begins to fragment? *Rejection....stiff noses*

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<sup>243</sup> Here I allude to my departure from the HR congregation with which I sojourned for almost a year.

(p. 108 in this text). Common “experiences, feelings, and goals” (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 67, in Pensoneau-Conway & Toyosaki, 2011, p. 388) cannot guarantee ongoing friendship and unity.

ADLER (1977, p. 25): Cultural identity, in the sense that it is a functioning aspect of individual personality, is a fundamental symbol of a person’s existence.

*SHARON: One without an identity is like one without a country<sup>244</sup>; s/he goes nameless in the world of men.*

When I left my HR home fellowship<sup>245</sup>, I lost the persons in closest proximity to me who shared my identity markers. A “fundamental symbol of [my] existence” (Adler, 1977, p. 25) was shattered, since “in a relationship of trusting love” (Kinlaw, 2005, p. 98) we become a part of those to whom we give ourselves.

*SHARON: Where can I find social support for this transition? It feels awkward to seek it in my former community (family and friends in the Christianiti/es); what I have lost means little to them. If anything, they might be glad I am “out” of the HRM and back to sanity. If I start attending a Sunday church now, there will be too many questions I can’t answer. I’ll stay a wallflower.<sup>246</sup>*

The pain of loss cuts deep. I have known the loss of friendships, loved ones, cherished dreams. But I believe the pain of loneliness is greater. Without social support, when you experience loss, you cannot heal.

While I feel out of place in a Sunday church, *neither do I yet have “complete identification and acceptance”* (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p.211) *in the HRM* (p. 117 in this text).

Maybe I never will. I feel doubly liminal. Can you stand on the edge of an edge and not fall?

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<sup>244</sup> Compare Hebrews 11:13-14

<sup>245</sup> due to personal differences

<sup>246</sup> I no longer identify with the “HRM” label, though I continue to be Torah-observant.

*SHARON: I am liminal as to man (a spectator, not just to the secular world, but to organized religion in general), but accepted as to God. If I can know – or believe – that my identity is safe with Him<sup>247</sup>, whether I do or don't do these "identity markers," it suffices me.*

### **Finding voice**

As a vocalist, one of my greatest challenges has been achieving comfort what is called the "middle voice": the register roughly between Eb4 (above Middle C) and Eb5 (one octave up). Situated between two "breaking points" of the register (liminal areas called *passaggi*, meaning "passages" or transitions), the middle voice comprises a tenuous mixture between "chest" and "head" tones, resulting from where the sound naturally vibrates as a singer moves up the scale. To successfully negotiate register transitions, I relax my body, face, and jaw muscles; breathe "on the vowel"; and engage my vocal folds (vocal cords) to feel a "buzz" in my larynx, telling me the folds are *adducted* (closed). Sopranos notoriously struggle to find this middle voice, also known as "the mix."

The dialectic of middle voice, that territory "between," serves as a metaphor for my struggle to deal with ambiguity in my spiritual life. I love the black and white: chest sound lies here, head sound lies here, and the two never need touch. Real life, however, like singing, is not that way! It is in the "buzzing" of adducted cords (opposed sides coming together), of tension (muscular engagement above and below the voice, never "on" the voice) held in perfect balance, of head-and-chest mixing and meeting in a "promiscuous traffic" (Conquergood, 2002, p. 145), that life happens and that learning happens. Like my struggle to define my "place" in between scholarly disciplines, my struggle to find my "voice" in between religious narratives is a necessary step toward finding answers.

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<sup>247</sup> Col. 3:3

**Dissonance.** *I have been “going in” to the HRM, bit by bit, over a lifetime* (p. 118 in this text). Now that I, gingerly, am stepping “out” again, the once-familiar is strange. “The process of reframing my cognitive schema to conceive of [Christian history] as [a series of golden calf incidents] has been, to put it mildly, unsettling” (p. 109). Most HRs may experience this cognitive dissonance without naming it. If they name the process, it is called *building a Hebraic worldview* (see, for instance, Moen, 2008, 2011; Scott, “Hebrew Mind vs. Greek Mind”; Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz, 1996).

FITZPATRICK (2004, p.174): [Cognitive schemata are] knowledge structures that...influence attention and perception.

The HR cognitive schema puts attention on the “hum and buzz of implication” (Trilling, 1950) through which first-century Jews and Gentiles heard the preaching of *Kefa* (Peter) and *Sha’ul* (Paul). In Acts 15:19-20, James enjoins Jewish believers “not to trouble the Gentiles who are coming to God”; Christendom and the Christianiti/es take this to mean Gentiles need not keep Torah to enter the believing community. But the HRM points to the next verse:

*For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day* (Acts 15:21).

Bivin (2005) and other HR authors suggest the apostles, who promoted Gentile inclusion, continued attending synagogue; they expected Gentiles would adopt Torah *here a little, there a little* (Isa. 28:10), by attending synagogue *alongside Jews* – just without being “troubled” to formally convert to Judaism first.

But the HR worldview goes beyond “attention and perception” (Fitzpatrick, 2004, p. 174). To resolve the dissonance of accepting that everything one has practiced *from a child* (2



Tim. 3:15)<sup>248</sup> – holidays, names for God, favorite foods – is wrong, one must consciously “choose against” those things in one’s mind and replace them with the “right” choice. Early on (while still attending evangelical churches), I mentally defined Saturday as “restful” and Christmas as “pagan.” Over time, I dealt with the dissonance of abandoning cherished memories and spaces by naming positive aspects, such as the HRM’s stress on **faith as action**.

*SHARON: The HRM claims to value praxis over belief. I value praxis more and more, as I explore how the communicative arts can promote justice and mercy.*

PENSONEAU-CONWAY and TOYOSAKI (2011, p. 393): For Schrag, being praxis-oriented embodies an art of liminality, or middle voice.

*SHARON: This is a liminality I can accept. I am continually “on the way” to the heart of Torah: loving YHWH and my neighbor. Often, I fall; always, I get up.*

I love the “Hebraic worldview” for how it seeks to resolve discrepancies between Scripture and praxis by conforming praxis to the ANE or first-century Jewish milieu. This is what an encounter with memory *should* be. If we want to write ourselves into the story, we must feel, and hear, and smell what the story was like for our fathers. But I am uncomfortable with the anachronistic HR cultural practices (patriarchy, plural marriage, disdain for higher education, and more) that sometimes result.

*SHARON: The push to “de-Greekify” one’s worldview and make it properly “Hebraic” seems like an attempt to achieve **righteousness via cognitive perfection**. I have had enough of performance. I need vulnerable, grace-full presence (p. 108 in this text).*

Now, as I go through the process of *un*-framing my schema, to see God’s people (and myself) as flawed-yet-beloved, *despite every golden calf* we (I) have erected in our (my) lives, it is just as unsettling. It is vulnerable. It is dissonant. And I am finally ready to voice the dissonance.

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<sup>248</sup> e.g. since childhood

**Fragments.** Narratives are whole(s), but we tell them in pieces. “The self in autoperformance takes on a fractured character, as an autoperformer cannot at once perform the whole of self” (Pensoneau-Conway & Toyosaki, 2011, p. 390).<sup>249</sup> As I emerge from the HRM, I am re/constructing my identity from the pieces I have brought with me.

**Body as dress.** Visual markers are what others see and notice first.

*(Not) blending in.* I can be mistaken for what blogger Marty Peña humorously calls a “Skirtwearer Homeschooler” (<https://my32cents.wordpress.com/2015/04/07/the-5-tiers-of-homeschooling/>). What’s invisible to others is my year-long transition to skirts (and pants) of unmixed fibers.

MOSES (Leviticus 19:19): ...[N]*either shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee.*<sup>250</sup>

SHARON [describing to her graduate committee the choice to restock her wardrobe]: Is it hard to take a dress I really liked and give it to the thrift store, just because it’s a poly-cotton blend? Absolutely! ...But it’s a transition. Today, I wore 100% fabrics just for this occasion. Everything you see [full skirt, knit top, blouse, hat] is made of 100% cotton or wool. The wool hat was a gift from a friend in my Torah study group.

*Sharon: Sometimes I wonder if I was just looking for an excuse to make over my wardrobe as a way of remaking myself.*

VELASCO: So, kosher clothing...hmm.

SHARON: Well, yes! But I also listen to the progressive evangelical side, and as I get deeper into that, I have to ask myself... Is it kosher if it was made in a sweatshop?

<sup>249</sup>I leave out of the discussion several controversial identity markers, such as observing the woman’s monthly cycle.

<sup>250</sup> Many HRs interpret this to mean they should replace natural and synthetic blends with one hundred percent natural fibers. Others take it at face value (“linen and wool”) or as a rule against mixing animal and plant fibers.

*To tichel, or not to tichel.* HR women who cover their heads are more likely to be members of patriarchal congregations (compare Daniel Botkin, <http://www.thesimpletruth.net/booklet/headcovering.html>). HR teachers who advocate for egalitarianism (Moen, 2010) or against heavy patriarchy (Maria Merola, <http://doubleportioninheritance.blogspot.com/2013/10/does-mosaic-law-silence-women-in.html>) treat head coverings as optional. I observed HRs with connections to evangelical or Messianic congregations who also cover, but they seem just as likely to do so with a *tallit* (gender-neutral prayer shawl) as a *tichel* (Orthodox Jewish woman's headscarf).

SHARON: So, the last time I visited, I noticed you weren't wearing a head covering. [On earlier visits, the co-participant had her hair tucked under a baseball cap or pinned under a bandana.] I was surprised, because I thought you covered all the time.

RACHEL (co-participant): I don't all the time, because my husband [Jeffrey, co-participant] doesn't ask me to. I know some women whose husbands ask them to cover, and so they do. If he asked me to do that, then I would submit to him. [Rachel and Jeffrey hold to a patriarchal model of marriage.]

*SHARON: Ancient Hebrew women probably covered for cultural reasons; theologians disagree on whether the Bible mandates it. Many HRs cover as a symbol of patriarchal order – a feature of ANE culture that they read backward into the Text.*

Is it kosher for me to wear something that may be a symbol of oppression for other women?

*SHARON: Or is it oppression? Rachel and Jeffrey seem to have a balanced marriage, despite their patriarchal values. Paul Nison's head covering videos<sup>251</sup> feature women speaking, not men on behalf of women; these women (and girls) make independent,*

<sup>251</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D\\_RX9jCg46M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_RX9jCg46M), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iM4oKTtGdYI>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWJYC9eSnLM>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ce4aklxN1Sk>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOi-LhBIBmc>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zS-UA6mCtq8>

*informed decisions to cover, even if covering runs counter to their upbringing and prior beliefs. With titles like “Head Covering Makes Her Feel Set Apart”*

*(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zS-UA6mCtq8>), the videos show that head covering is not just an HR anachronism, but a powerful, and freely chosen, visual marker of Torah uniqueness.*

**Body as language.** If others do not notice my wardrobe, they may notice my words.<sup>252</sup>

**Dialect.** The HRM speech community has a range of dialects that depend on the individual’s affiliation (e.g. Messianic/evangelical, Sacred Name, Black Hebrew). My former HR home fellowship used a standard Ephraimite (Two-House) dialect, with individual variants:

<i>We:</i>	Ephraim (the Ten Tribes), or Ephraim and Judah combined
<i>They:</i>	Judah (today’s Jews), Messianic Jews, or Christians generically
<i>Adonai:</i>	The Lord
<i>Elohim:</i>	God (lit. “Mighty One”)
<i>Yahweh:</i>	The LORD
<i>Yeshua:</i>	Jesus of Nazareth
<i>YaHUshuah:</i>	Jesus of Nazareth
<i>Israel:</i>	The Jewish state
<i>Messianic:</i>	Hebraic, Torah-observant, and/or Messianic Jewish believers
<i>Messy-antic:</i>	The HRM and MJM, when speaking of divisions over doctrine
<i>Torah:</i>	The Pentateuch (not the rabbinic Oral Torah)
<i>Rabbi trails:</i>	Most of Jewish midrash [a pun on “rabbit trails”]

<sup>252</sup> Recently, I was ostracized on a fundamentalist Christian internet board for using “YHWH” and “Yeshua” instead of “God” and “Jesus.”

In round-table study, group members preferred to use Sacred Name translations such as *The Hebraic Roots Bible: A Literal Translation* (Don Esposito, 2012)<sup>253</sup>, *The Aramaic English New Testament* (Roth, 2012), and *The Scriptures* (Institute for Scripture Research, 2009). When reading aloud from standard translations (e.g. KJV), they inserted Hebrew terms where appropriate (e.g. *Adonai* for “Lord”).<sup>254</sup>

**Repression.** Every speech community has its own taboos. In this conservative HR local community<sup>255</sup>, questioning actions of the Jewish state was off limits (despite Burge’s, 2010, exegesis arguing that Zionism is not compatible with Torah values). As in many culturally homogeneous communities, unspoken taboos mark the edges of members’ comfort level.

EDITH: We’re going to skip ahead in our Torah portion [weekly readings that follow an annual cycle], since [Dennis, co-participant] isn’t here this week. This chapter [Leviticus 15] is about the laws for uncleanness [menstrual taboos]; for modesty, we don’t read that when men and women are together in the study.

SHARON: *The Bible is a frank, earthy book. We have read about circumcision, childbirth, and rape with no qualms. Why does the menstrual taboo embarrass us? HR author Wilson (<http://www.torahclass.com/archived-articles/958-featured-article-sp-1418389067>) even suggests the end of menstrual separation was a time for a woman to celebrate her femininity. But American culture is particularly uncomfortable with women’s bodies. This is when I must practice cultural sensitivity, respecting my fellow members’ boundaries.*

<sup>253</sup> downloadable for free at <http://www.coyhwh.com/en/bible/hebraicRootsBible.pdf>

<sup>254</sup> I followed their example when reading aloud from my copy of Lamsa’s (1933) *Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts*, which is not a Sacred Name Bible.

<sup>255</sup> Judging by the most vocal members, my group was conservative in a “red state” sense, though somewhat liberal by current HRM standards; for instance, none of the women covered, and unmarried women were active in group leadership.

*...But I don't know if I can sit comfortably in a community that shuts down questions.*

Unspoken taboos also regulate the construction of shared cognitive schemata. In researching female genital mutilation, I encountered literature on intactivism (the movement to ban male circumcision on infants). Hoping to co-construct a reasoned response to intactivist arguments, I raised the question to my group. (The following dialogue is redacted from a longer discussion.)

SHARON: What's the real reason behind circumcision? I've been reading about the dangers of it, and I don't understand why...

EDITH: It's much more hygienic when the man is circumcised. In Africa, they showed it reduced the rates of HIV.

SHARON: Well, I know in some African nations, it's cultural for the men to have multiple partners including other men, animals, and women who aren't their wives. I can see how circumcision would reduce disease in that case. But don't you think restoring a culture of monogamy would accomplish that a whole lot more effectively? Besides, babies circumcised in hospitals are at higher risk of hemorrhage...

EDITH: Yahweh made these laws for our health. We don't need to question them.

*SHARON: I don't question YHWH's laws. I question man's application of them. If there is a compelling reason to circumcise despite the (admittedly marginal) health risks, I want to be able to articulate it!*

By interrogating a key Torah identity marker, I unwittingly called into question the entire epistemic foundation of the HR value system. I also threatened group cohesion by hinting that my schema did not conform.

LUTTON (<http://crystallutton.com/you-keep-using-that-verse/>): God's instructions for how to

live are spelled out in the first five books of the Bible....*And in those instructions there is not one single suggestion, let alone a command, to spank a child.*

SHARON (speaking to an evangelical couple, parents of an HR co-participant; paraphrased):

There are actually studies showing that spanking before about age 5 can be harmful to young children, because their brains are still developing. [One of the couple replied that spanking is commended in the Bible.] Well, actually, I've been researching that too. The Hebrew words don't mean what we think they mean when we read the King James. The word for "rod" actually means a shepherd's rod for guiding, not a rod for spanking.

*SHARON: Wow, I messed that up. Not only did I alienate this couple by questioning their long-held views by which they successfully raised two children, but now that the news has gotten back to their son [my co-participant] that I don't believe in spanking, he and his wife probably think I'm a complete liberal progressive. They already think I'm a feminist because I don't agree with patriarchal gender roles. This will just reinforce their decision not to send their daughter through higher education, I suppose. Sigh... Why do I have to conform to other people's politics to be accepted in the HRM?*

**Narration.** "HR sojourners consider themselves to be 'members' of the community that was formed at the foot of the mountain when Moses descended" (p. 48 in this text).

*In the beauty of holiness  
Worship the LORD  
Prophecy and praise Him  
Proclaiming His Word  
By His acts of power He's proven  
He is mighty to save  
Who led His people out of bondage and  
Redeems you from the grave*

Locating oneself within the Sinai narrative requires deft handling of terms and a willingness to bridge contradictions.

EDITH (Barrett 2014a, p. 25): [I tell people] I follow Jesus and I keep Leviticus.

*SHARON: Edith “bridges the gap between two separate symbolic languages” (Barrett 2014b, p. 30). But our group still doesn’t have a label.*

SHARON: If we’re not Messianic, then what are we?

ANGIE (co-participant): We don’t tell people we’re “Jewish,” because that brings up the wrong associations....We like to call ourselves first-century Christians.

*SHARON: Angie, a former evangelical, cites first-century apostolic authority to justify returning to Torah...similar to former evangelicals who cite the second-century fathers (who, the RCC claims, passed on apostolic tradition) to justify returning to Rome!*

This is how people “do” dogmatic religion. Individuals measure their praxis against the plumb line of the tradition’s founder or its appointed custodians (see p. 100 in this text).

*SHARON: I still haven’t resolved the dissonance between RCC claims and HRM claims.*

*HRs who claim Jewish tradition as an authority are making the same argument as Rome; they depend on an ongoing oral tradition to tell them how to “read” the Text. HRs who take a sola scriptura approach are in the same boat as the Protestant churches: a chasm of time separates us from the apostles, with only a sparse New Testament record of how they responded to Torah, and we are not willing to fill in that gap with the generations of Christians who responded to it as they believe the apostles taught the fathers to do. Are we really supposed to think the Ruach haKodesh<sup>256</sup> abandoned all-Israel after Constantine? But if not, then why not accept that He was guiding the popes to shepherd all-Israel?*

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<sup>256</sup> Holy Spirit (Heb.)



It's clear why they call us "Messy-antics."

**Body as movement.** Dance became symbol for me when I "put [my] body on the line" (Pollock, 2006, p. 325), offering my "'felt experience as research instrument' (Banks & Banks, 2000, p. 234) and research site/data" (Pensoneau-Conway and Toyosaki, 2011, p. 386). Davidic dance "epitomizes the spirit of Hebraic Roots/Messianic worship. It is participatory, emotionally expressive, holistic" (Barrett, 2014b, p. 23). Members of Mayim-Hayim congregation welcomed me, as a participant-observer, to engage with them in a simultaneous *moment of performance* (ritual) and *act of performance* (rehearsal): an hour of worship dance before the *siddur* reading. Davidic dance uses a limited repertoire of steps, simple enough to be learned quickly by unskilled dancers, but varied enough to support endless improvisation. The moment-to-moment recapitulation, as co-participant Della (wife of the synagogue leader, David) coached us through semi-choreographed song sets, freed me to express the ambiguity I felt that day.

*SHARON: "Coming to faith, surrendering to the ownership of history, is sometimes violent" (p. 125). As I submit my body, concrete self, to Torah markers, I feel wrenched away from everything familiar. Worship dance – a "transcendent" experience that "derives...its power from...involving the very bodies of the performers' and thereby their emotions" (Barrett, 2014b, p. 22, p. 95) – heals the breach, comforts me.*

The literature on performance ethnography emphasizes co-emotionality. Krüger (2010) praises "direct participation" for its "privileged means of access to embodied knowledge and fellow feeling" (p. 75, p. 116 in this text). My co-participants at Mayim-Hayim were liminal and ambiguous, as I was; having left Christian backgrounds to seek HR community, they (a small core group) chose to remain when the community split over the issue of conversion to Orthodox Judaism. They were undergoing Orthodox conversion as a group, but had not achieved full

status. I felt the discomfort of their state “in process,” as they negotiated liturgical identity (learning a full Sephardic *siddur*, without accompaniment or the help of a *hazzan*) and theological identity (articulating their intent, as Ephraimites, to submit to Judah’s leadership). I questioned (Barrett, 2014b) whether the congregation had the cohesion needed to sustain identity transition. During the *siddur*, only two co-participants seemed comfortable enough to sing along with the Hebrew melodies, and congregational involvement in the service was sparse.

Della indicated the Davidic dance worship hour was a holdover from Mayim-Hayim’s days as an HR congregation and, once they completed the conversion, it would be eliminated.

DELLA: [explaining why only four women, including the ethnographer, were present in the dance circle] Some of the people aren’t comfortable with the Davidic dance, so they show up just before the service starts at 2:00. [Those who arrived at 2:00 seemed to be farther along in the transition to Orthodox; for instance, one man came wearing a Hasidic-style black hat rather than a *kippah*.]

SHARON: *It seems they have retained the dance hour this long to ease the transition for those who found it meaningful. Ambiguity is obvious in the choice of music – MJ and CCM worship songs that refer to “Jesus” or “Yeshua,” implying He is God, when my co-participants no longer believe He is and are replacing this musical genre with liturgy. But how will those members fill that particular symbolic need once it’s gone? More to the point, what need does it fill for them?*

For me, dance fills the need for nonverbal engagement of body in the music-making process. I don’t just play the music; I almost become the music, for dance allows me to cooperate with rhythm and melody in a nonrational way.

*SHARON: I sensed connection with my co-participants as we engaged in simultaneous pattern-making, but I wonder what the music made them feel. How can the ethnographer put a finger on co-participants' "embodied knowledge" Krüger (2010, p. 75) without asking them outright to describe it?*

Despite the slightly anachronistic origins of Davidic dance (modeled after twentieth-century Israeli customs; see [http://levhashem.org/davidic\\_dance.html](http://levhashem.org/davidic_dance.html)), dancing to "Hebraic" music offers a conduit to a special kind of HR/CZ "fellow feeling" (Krüger, 2010, p. 75): the elusive "hum and buzz" (Trilling, 1950, n.p.) of the Holy Land, past and present. As a child I danced, reaching out for this feeling, without even knowing what I sought to feel (see p. 118 in this text).

*SHARON: Is this "presence"? I feel everything I think I am supposed to feel. When I dress myself just so – sandals, a flowing skirt, headscarf with my favorite earrings peeping out, brilliant purple and wine and brown and turquoise (for in colors, I fling my soul to the wind, with an inner recklessness no one would guess) – I am my own brand of Southwestern Jewish woman. Am I performing a role, or creating the new me? And when I dance, who is dancing – the "role" I inhabit, or the "me" I have fashioned from these adornments? If "Hebraic" music marks my body as I engage with the music through dance, then I am ready to become "Hebraic."*

**Body as voice.** Most people know me as singer and pianist, not student, writer, teacher. What they don't know is that music is my lifeline to emotional expression. I struggle to articulate my emotions, even to myself, and to identify the emotions of others, a condition known as

*alexithymia*.<sup>257</sup> When I sing, those boundaries melt away. My emotional self takes on body, enters *the world of men* (p. 142 in this text), feels flesh-familiarity with the “buzz” of lived experience of a thousand fellow persons past and present. My *internal register of feelings* (p. 97) is set to humming; I am alive to pain, alive to joy, alive to others, *alive to God* (Romans 6:11).

**Music as dialect.** As I accustomed myself to using “YHWH” and “Yeshua,” I found myself wanting to rewrite songs I had composed for church use years before. Inserting new identity markers can destroy the original artistic vision – or it can create something new and equally beautiful.

(vs. 5, composed ca. 2010)

*In the beauty of holiness  
Worship the LORD  
Through His mercy and His righteousness  
Approach His throne with one accord  
By Jesus’ perfect offering  
We are sanctified once for all  
So confess and bow before Him  
For the LORD is Lord of all*

(vs. 5, revised summer 2014)

*In the beauty of holiness  
Worship YHWH  
Bow before our holy King  
The Lamb who was slain  
By Yeshua’s perfect offering  
We are sanctified once for all  
So confess and bow before Him  
For YHWH is Lord of all*

**Music as storytelling.** A recurring melodic fragment in *Exodus* is *A thousand nights...* (pp. 12, 24, 63, 68, 90, 91, 162). The original text (pp. 90-92) was written in 2010 for Christmas Eve in an evangelical church. Intended to evoke the style and sound of Sephardic ballads, “A thousand nights (*Mil noches*)” uses harmonic minor (alternating with natural minor), ballad structure with an anonymous Jewish narrator, and harp accompaniment<sup>258</sup>; it was performed in English and Spanish for a bilingual audience. The Christmas text narrates the birth of Christ in

<sup>257</sup> Hesse and Floyd (2011) cite research linking alexithymia (the state of being “without words for emotions”) to factors including rural background, large family size, low levels of affection in close relationships, and childhood trauma. Coincidentally, these factors may be emerging in the HRM as stronger trends (see Barrett, 2013a).

<sup>258</sup> The first comment of several listeners was, “That sounds so Hebraic!”

the voice of a first-century Jew. At Passover 2015, I adapted it into a Holy Week text, bringing the narrative full circle: Bethlehem to Jerusalem.<sup>259</sup>

*A thousand nights  
We've sat around this table  
To sing and celebrate  
How we marched out  
How almighty God was able  
To save us from the firstborn's fate  
The dying lamb  
Between us and the Angel  
Of Death – for he died  
In our place*

*A thousand lambs  
All bleating in the Temple  
Each wears its master's name<sup>260</sup>  
The Lamb of God  
A victim of betrayal  
Once a babe in Bethlehem  
Will make the Cross  
His new Passover Table  
When He dies in Jerusalem*

*What makes this Savior  
Unlike any other  
They mock Him – “King of Jews”  
A Man who claimed  
To be one with the Father  
His miracles show He is true  
Still, many doubt  
That He's the only Savior  
But mock Him not –  
He dies for you*

The harmonic minor, which infuses the song with recognizable “Hebraic” flavor, is also a compositional device rich with implications.<sup>261</sup> Its significance lies in its divergence from natural

<sup>259</sup> The Passover text for “A thousand nights” was composed, but not performed, to accompany the Maundy Thursday Eucharistic in a liturgical church.

<sup>260</sup> This line alludes to the tradition in HR circles (popularized by Andrew Gabriel Roth) that the sign hung around Yeshua's neck, “King of the Jews” (Mt. 27:37), spelled the acronym YHWH, just as each lamb brought for sacrifice in the Temple had a plaque hung around its neck to identify its owner.

<sup>261</sup> A complete harmonic analysis is obviously beyond the scope of this project.

minor: the raised seventh (in this case, D E F G A Bb C# instead of D E F G A Bb C). In Western tonal music, our ears expect certain chords to precede the tonic (in this case, D) as a phrase resolves. Here, the chord progression contrasts the warm, grounded feel of the natural minor (using a C major chord to end a phrase, e.g. “*King of Jews*”) with the knife-edged, slightly off-balance feel of the harmonic minor (filling out an A major chord with exotic C#, before resolving to D, e.g. *He dies for you*). Constant interplay between C (which normally leads to F major) and C# (which normally leads to D minor) creates a mosaic of ambiguity and crisscrossed expectations.

I also introduce a foreign chord: D major.<sup>262</sup> The jarring interpolation of D major (“*His miracles show He is true*”) before G minor (“*Still, many doubt*”) suggests mingled fear and hope as the individual decides whether s/he will believe.

**Music as mother tongue.** If the evangelical hymn tradition is my first language, the musical and textual language of MJ/HR worship songs is becoming my second. The mixed influences from folk music, CCM, and other styles make it an accessible language, unlike the elevated tongue of classical “sacred music” (e.g. the requiems, masses, oratorios, and chorales I studied and performed throughout my college vocal career), which puts off many listeners. I am reminded of the “father tongue” referred to by LeGuin (1986, cited in Bochner, 2012, p. 159). BOCHNER (2012, p. 159): Spoken from above, the father tongue runs the risk of distancing the writer from the reader, creating a gap or space between self and other.

*SHARON: The musical language of synagogue liturgy may be something of a “father tongue” to those not born in the tradition. As a participant-observer, I see MJs and HRs*

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<sup>262</sup> The i-iv-VII-I/sus-I-iv chord progression seems fairly common in the “Hebraic” musical dialect. It is unclear whether it has precedent in Mediterranean or Israeli music as such, or is a device adopted by European Jewish music from Western tonal music.

*striving to fit a mold of liturgical tradition that is “distant” from their own cultural heritage and lived experiences.*

*Hebrew liturgy (pp. 77, 80-81) can be a meaningful identity marker; some HRs comment (as I did at first) that they feel uniquely “at home” when singing in Hebrew.<sup>263</sup> But I have never felt more “Gentile” than when I tried to sing along with the siddur at Beit HaDerekh. The running interpolation of Yiddish and Hebrew phrases from the leader, while probably intended to make the synagogue experience feel authentic, made him seem inaccessibly Jewish.*

BOCHNER (2012, p. 159-160): What is missing from most social science writing is “the mother tongue” (LeGuin, 1986)...of subjective and conversational expression....

*SHARON: Today’s MJ/HR artists consciously speak in worshipers’ “mother tongue”: the English language (peppered with Hebrew words like “teshuvah” and “YHWH”), the dialects of American folk and popular music, and the musical idioms of evangelical worship. As Bochner (2012, p. 160, citing LeGuin) says, it is “[v]oiced in a language of emotions and personal experience....”*

## **Finding grace**

What about those times when the voice cracks and you can’t negotiate the register break?

This is where *grace* fills in.<sup>264</sup>

**The witness of history: judging and being judged.** I account for my choices in *Exodus* for the same reason I recounted the post-Sinai narrative: to find that “nexus between the internal

<sup>263</sup> One reason mainstream Christians shy away from the HRM may be the very divide created by a “Jewish” worship vocabulary, including Hebrew liturgy. A few Hebrew words in a worship song are merely exotic; a whole liturgical prayer can create distance between speaker and listener or imply superiority (an accusation sometimes made against the SNM).

<sup>264</sup> Evangelical idiom defines grace as “unmerited favor.” Some HR authors tend toward ANE patronage relationships as a framework for understanding grace (*chesed*). Either way, grace is appropriate here.

and external human worlds,” the point of contact between historical events and cultural messages (p. 102 in this text); to understand how and why praxis shifted to reflect culture over Text.

SHARON (p. 104): For...the ethnographer, the area between describing co-participants’ values and judging those values harmful is sometimes grey.

As a historian, I am learning to withhold judgment. If I take only one lesson from this journey, it is that I see “with these two eyes” (p. 90), and my vision is blurry. In my own sub-narrative, I chase the illusion of consistency. In this, I am *no better than my ancestors* (1 Kings 19:4)...or than millions of Christians who have loved a Jewish Messiah while rejecting His Torah, or thousands of believers in the HRM who adopt practices (such as patriarchy) that seem to reject Torah’s *intent*. Their hearts are the same as mine: they seek to live out the T/ruth they know, however incomplete.

As a complete-member researcher, however, I pay attention to whether words and praxis line up, and if not, why not. The HRM, in its second generation, may be in danger of losing its “first love” (Rev. 2:4), its original spontaneity and devotion.

MITTELSTADT (2008, p. 3): Weber [n.d.] argues that movements...inevitably journey toward institutionalization in an attempt to establish doctrinal and pastoral boundaries, only to suffer further routinization of the charisma.

In evangelical lingo, what Weber identifies is termed “legalism.” As in fundamentalist religions worldwide (Armstrong, 2001), HRM doctrinal traditionalism results from cultural schemata (patriarchal worldview), the pressures of modernity (the need for systematic answers), and black-and-white thinking (a low tolerance for ambiguity).<sup>265</sup> “[R]outinization of the charisma”

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<sup>265</sup> I am interrogating a possible correlation of neurotic personality traits with “legalistic” or rule-based religion, with the nexus lying in the area of childhood trauma (e.g. corporal punishment as exposed by Greven, 1990, and Heimlich, 2011) and fear of God/parents. I proposed (Barrett, 2013) a link between alexithymia (a factor in black-and-white thinking) and the restrictive courtship teachings popular in HR and fundamentalist home school families.



(Mittelstadt, 2008, p. 3) leads to mega-ministries and cults of personality. The HRM has gone as far as it can go within the confines of Christian orthodoxy. In response, the iconoclast spirit that animated the early HRM continues apace, producing outside-the-box practices (the revival of plural marriage), unorthodox positions (Binitry and Arian doctrines), new innovations (Biblical exegesis using paleo-Hebrew pictographs), and a groundswell of proselytes to Orthodox Judaism. The horizon looks dark with sectarianism. On the other hand, the HRM is ripe with diversity. Thoughtful authors such as Skip Moen (2010) promote moderate positions on issues like women's equality. The HRM has much to offer to the post-/postmodern world, *if* adherents stay faithful to discovering the intent of Torah rather than protecting personal pet doctrines and cultural traditions.<sup>266</sup>

*SHARON: Am I wrong to consider progressive evangelicalism a "Torah" movement – of a very different kind? Progressivism leads to many political and theological conclusions that most HRs (and I) don't share. On the other hand, progressive evangelicals rightly note the hypocrisy of modern Christians who cling to social and economic practices that are dissonant with justice and mercy. Compare Webb's (2001, 2004) "redemptive hermeneutic," in which Torah functions **not** as the final revelation, but as a stepping stone up from the harsh practices (e.g. gender inequality) that permeated ANE culture.*

**The witness of the heart: weightier matters.** Woodley (2012) argues the Native American "Harmony Way" (along with indigenous constructs of well-being worldwide) is an extension of a *shalom* construct that undergirded ancient Hebrew thinking.

*SHARON: If Woodley (2012) is right, how has the HRM missed something this big?*

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<sup>266</sup> I speak here in the voice of faith.

WOODLEY (2012, p. 17): The understanding of Israel's obligation to...the oppressed widows, orphans, and strangers was meant to be so much a part of their thinking that God even commands them to leave any forgotten act of harvesting to benefit the poor.

Drawing on his proposed *shalom* construct, Woodley (2012) states: "God has a special concern for the poor and needy, because how we treat them reveals our hearts" (p. 15). Remember, "God is not a hypocrite...whatever He says or does is completely in accord with His nature" (p. 109 in this text, citing Moen, 2008). Likewise, what we say or do reveals who we are.

BLUM (2005, p. 133): If someone participates in a [ritual], but does so...without being in the right subjective state or attitude, then are we not inclined to suggest that the ritual fails to convey meaning in that case, even that it has *lost* its meaning?

*SHARON: To paraphrase... If I keep the Feasts, but fail to show compassion to someone who is hurting, has not this ritual lost its meaning? Hasn't the act of performance **failed to prepare me** for the moment of performance, in which I am called on to demonstrate the kind of person I (should) have become (p. 133 in this text)?*

So here I stand, feeling "*liminal*" and "*transgressive*" (p. 131); for the weight of this whole Torah with its implications is too much for one body to bear. How shall I *do justice, and mercy, and faithfulness...without leaving the other [external identity markers] undone* (Matt. 23:23)?<sup>267</sup>

In the parable of the ten virgins<sup>268</sup> (Matt. 25:1-13), five bridesmaids arrive late to the wedding supper after their lamps run out of oil. Some HRs cite the parable as an example of Christians in the "last days" who have the opportunity to learn and obey Torah, but fail to do so – whose hands are empty of faith-acts that Yeshua will recognize when He returns. I can do

<sup>267</sup> The HR ministry Messiah's Branch, which maintains a soup kitchen/shelter in Wichita, KS, exemplifies how to do both (<http://www.messiahsbranch.org/mission.htm> and [http://www.messiahsbranch.org/statement\\_of\\_faith.htm](http://www.messiahsbranch.org/statement_of_faith.htm)).

<sup>268</sup> apparently bridesmaids

nothing but lay the parable at my own doorstep. If I have not done *justice, and mercy, and faithfulness*, how can all the HRM identity markers in the world help Him recognize me?<sup>269</sup>

*Today there was a wedding banquet held  
From old to young, our town rejoiced  
the best wine flowing down  
The people streamed  
from every corner  
To join the midnight feast in the Father's house<sup>270</sup>*

*The first wedding I'd ever seen  
and it just might be tonight  
The ten of us, sisters and friends  
would join the parade with lights*

*All day there was a hubbub in the streets  
The air was thick with noise and dust  
people all around  
Soon, they said,  
we'll see the Bridegroom  
He'll take his Bride away to their new-built house*

*I gathered all I thought I'd need  
my lamp, my wick, my shawl  
In my hurry I stumbled, spilled some oil  
raced out and shut the door*

*The night dragged on without a single cry  
Except the lonely turtledove  
mourning for her spouse  
We whispered –  
our lids grew heavy –  
I laid my head down...*

[A shofar blast sounds]

*Arise, arise! The Bridegroom's coming!  
Come out, come out! Prepare to meet him!*

*At midnight hue and cry awoke us all  
We blinked, bewildered – then we saw*

<sup>269</sup> Here I speak completely in the voice of faith. The ballad that follows is almost a direct rendering of the parable, composed completely in the first person to emphasize my own sense of moral responsibility. Compare the sobering end of Matt. 25 (vv. 41, 45): *Depart from me...for what you did not for the least of these, you did not for me.*

<sup>270</sup> The caps throughout denote the text's dual reference to the parable and the event the parable represents.

*the great approaching crowd  
The Bridegroom  
had kept his promise  
The bright procession was riding into town*

*We raced each other to light our lamps  
Mine was the first to ignite, but oh  
It sputtered – I couldn't believe my eyes –  
I was running out of oil*

*The night was black around me as I ran  
To the merchant's stall in the marketplace  
on the other end of town  
An ounce of oil,  
oh please, please hurry  
Can you hear my heart beating loud*

*I reached out to that narrowing shaft of light  
Oh, won't you let me in, my lord  
Out of breath, in tears, but silence – too late  
They'd already shut the door*

[Grand Pause]

*Today there was a wedding banquet held  
The air was filled with feasting smells  
and with rejoicing sounds...  
The Bridegroom came –  
why was I waiting*

*With my lamp out?*

***Selah.***

## Movement V

### *Ger*: Conversion

<sup>271</sup>יהוה

At one point in the development of *Exodus*, I contemplated ending the project here. “The wedding banquet” is meant to be followed by meditative silence (indicated by *Selah*) as the narrative and accompaniment abruptly end.<sup>272</sup> Musically and textually, the moment echoes the *Selah* following another critical question (p. 110 in this text): *Who do you say I AM?*

### Ambiguity

I decided not to end *Exodus* on this note<sup>273</sup>, because my journey has not ended yet. I am ambiguous about the future of the HRM and my future with/in it. Although I retain some HR identity markers, I no longer use the label “Hebraic Roots” any more than I call myself “Wesleyan” or “Methodist”; this does not change the fact that I was raised in the UMC<sup>274</sup>, spent some of my emerging adult years in the HRM, and was indelibly shaped by both, but it represents the fact that I conceive of my relationship to both the UMC and the HRM in a new way. As an analogy, consider how a child’s relationship to the parents (at least, in modern Western culture) changes as s/he grows up. They will always be parents; but, for the emerging adult child, they are no longer absolute authorities, but partners and guides. S/he relies on them for support and wisdom, not for dictating his/her choices. Similarly, I accept the wisdom found in the many traditions that shaped this “continuing people”; but, apart from them, I am blazing my own way.

<sup>271</sup> *Sh'ma, Yisra'el, YHWH Y'shua Eloheinu, YHWH*. While a *goy* is a foreigner, a *ger* is a proselyte or “sojourner.”

<sup>272</sup> The music video will feature a complete fade to black, with no sound, lasting at least seven seconds.

<sup>273</sup> The song ends on a foreign chord without resolving to the tonic. I could not, in good OCD conscience, end on a chord that does not resolve.

<sup>274</sup> United Methodist Church

I do the same with my scholarly work. In the end, I hope I have at least shown the limits of the scholarly dialects by bumping up against them. I can't say I have achieved the elusive "wedding of the father to mother tongue, which produces 'a native tongue' [LeGuin]" (Bochner, 2012, p. 160); but I hope to stimulate additional discussion of how to make the match. More important (to me) is highlighting the limits of the disciplines themselves. History and theology, for instance, need not be divorced from each other any more than the objective ("father") and subjective ("mother") idioms. History and the identity of the self may be more intertwined than we realize. And personal identity bears an undeniable relationship to theological constructs of personhood. For these reasons, throughout *Exodus*, I quote Augustine's *Confessions*. Augustine was a Latin father whose anti-Semitic and neo-Platonic views turned Western Christians farther away from Torah and Hebraic thinking (Juster & Juster, 1999). I questioned my choice; what has a fifth-century Roman Catholic to do with a twenty-first century evangelical Torah-keeper? By "inscribing" Augustine in my story, was I marking him as an influence or endorsing his beliefs? Nonetheless, *Confessions* is a watershed in devotional literature, as is *City of God* in history and theology. Writing and reflecting on spiritual experience through a theological-historical lens<sup>275</sup> may be the next step for scholars to explore in the making of a "native tongue," and Augustine set the bar high for this kind of discourse fifteen hundred years ago. I knew that, if I sought to contribute to the genre of spiritual autobiography, I would end up imitating him in some way.

Ambiguity reigns in my ongoing interactions with the "continuing people," as well. I inter/act with diverse Christians on fundamentalist and progressive internet boards; I provide occasional music in evangelical and liturgical churches. I indulge my fascination with liberation theology by reading Gutiérrez (1993) and Ateek (1989), and I interrogate Catholic and Jewish stances on marriage, divorce, sex, and birth control. I maintain long-distance friendships with

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<sup>275</sup> particularly in the form of conversion narratives

HR co-participants and continue to collect conversion narratives (Barrett, 2014a). Now that I lack a formal community, a non-descript label like “believer” seems to suit; it avoids loaded words like “Torah,” “Hebraic,” “Messianic [Jewish],” and “[Sunday] Christian.”

*SHARON: But Whom do I say I “believe” in? YHWH echad? Or a three-in-one deity?*<sup>276</sup>

Mostly, I listen and watch, interrogating my current schema in the light of lived experience – in other words, what kind of person I am becoming as I “rehearse” God’s nature for the world to see (pp. 106, 133, and 162 in this text)?

## Law

Stark’s (2003) sugar-daddy-in-the-sky implies a line of criticism drawn from Feuerbach (as cited in York, 2011): humans “merely project their desires, needs, and wishes onto an imaginary deity that proceeds to fulfill such desires, needs, and wishes” (p. 5). York’s (2011) language describes the ultimate exchange partner. This approach could be called *legalism* (informally defined in the evangelical lexicon as “an attempt to earn righteousness by following rules [specifically the OT Law]”).

*SHARON: Evangelicals emphasize “a personal relationship with Jesus Christ” (Warner Colaner, n.d., p. 11). From this relationship-based perspective, they often critique HRs as “legalists.” HRs respond with two (linked) defenses: (a) It’s not legalism, just obedience, and (b) We obey because we are saved, not to be saved.*

*Deep down, I know there is a deeper issue than either side is willing to admit.*

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<sup>276</sup> Martin Parsons (2005, not an HR) articulates a “contextualized christology [sic],” which “starts from the concept of God dwelling in unapproachable light...to present the concept that God can locally manifest a veiled form of his presence [e.g. Jesus] in order to relate to his creation” (p. 252). Parsons “clearly distinguishes [the Persons of the Godhead without] implying belief in tri-theism...by focusing on the different roles of the Father, Jesus and the Spirit” (p. 252). HR teacher Maria Merola’s ([http://doubleportioninheritance.blogspot.com/2011/06/yahuwah-elohim-is-one-in-essence\\_20.html](http://doubleportioninheritance.blogspot.com/2011/06/yahuwah-elohim-is-one-in-essence_20.html)) non-trinitarian articulation of *echad* is remarkably similar.

Allport and Ross (1967) assured me I was on the right track in identifying this deeper issue. It comes back to Stark's (2003) concept of the exchange partner. Let's assume for a moment there really is a One True God who created everything and who has infinite resources. This One True God wants to ensure His fame is perpetuated to all generations of human descendants, so He cuts a deal with a tent-dwelling nomad: *You promise to worship only Me, invest sacrifices from your flocks and herds, cut off a flap of skin to show you're really serious, and teach your sons to do the same; in exchange, I promise to look after you, increase your flocks and herds so you never run out of sacrifices, and make your descendants outnumber everyone else's. Deal? Great, we now have a patron-client relationship; I'm your new patron (which means I'm the more powerful party).* From now on, His client goes through life looking for opportunities to remind his patron that he is still loyal and still qualifies for favors. Since the balance of power is against him, the client has an incentive to *perform* his devotion in public. He may perform so well that he convinces himself and others that he genuinely loves his patron, even if he actually fears him.<sup>277</sup> He knows that all resources (including the afterlife) are at the One True God's disposal, and if he wants a share, he must ask in just the right way.

I would argue this is a fair reading of Stark (2003), but Stark's (2003) book isn't a fair reading of YHWH. Certainly, the "*extended exchange relationship*" (p. 176) with an all-powerful partner is a step up from the limited, capricious deities of polytheism. But if the One True God has infinite resources and also is infinitely good, why wouldn't He share them at no cost? From the covenants with man described throughout the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures, I argue YHWH is

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<sup>277</sup> Emotional attachment to the patron One True God also might develop through the emotive power of symbolic interaction; e.g. if the client lives in a community of clients who share the same patron and the same loyalty markers (rituals), he feels linked to them, reinforcing his tie to the patron.



shown doing exactly this, offering to meet every need in return for only one thing: our/their faithfulness.<sup>278</sup>

Where this differs from Stark's (2003) concept of the ultimate exchange partner, who demands faithfulness in return for provision, is that a man/woman who is faithful to YHWH moves a step beyond client status to **friendship**. Abraham is called "the friend of God" (James 2:23); he is even shown bargaining with God, potentially changing God's mind. Yeshua tells His disciples, "No longer have I called you servants, but I have called you friends" (John 1:15), assuring them, "Whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will do" (John 14:13). If not a relationship of literal equals, this is a relationship of positional equals. Remember, the "knowledge God seeks is...I-Thou, *knowledge between persons*" (Kinlaw, 2005, p. 102). Abraham, because he knows (presumably by experience) that God's nature is to be just, can appeal to that nature as the basis of his argument that God should spare Sodom (Gen. 18:17-33).

Why, then, has exchange-based religion continued to be popular with monotheists throughout the ages (as Stark, 2003, demonstrates)? Human nature offers a partial answer. We don't like to be vulnerable before others. We do like to think we can achieve "favorite" status by performing our devotion *better* than the next man.<sup>279</sup> After all, we pay our way for everything else in life; we learn to get what we want by manipulating how others see us, putting on the right "face." Our patron has the right to demand certain identity markers to prove our absolute fealty. If someone else says He told them to use different identity markers, they must be wrong.<sup>280</sup>

Allport and Ross (1967) offer a term for this side of human nature: *extrinsic religious orientation*. The extrinsically religious person "uses" his/her religion to bring about benefits in

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<sup>278</sup> Deut. 30:20

<sup>279</sup> see the self-righteous Pharisee

<sup>280</sup> They have to be wrong; otherwise, we're wrong, and we might be missing out on our chance at heaven.

his/her life, which may include a sense of well-being<sup>281</sup>, access to social support<sup>282</sup>, physical health or promises of health (see Egbert, Mickley, & Coeling, 2004, p. 9), and even the promise of an afterlife (as in Stark, 2003). By contrast, the *intrinsically religious* person “bring[s] everything in life to be in concert with religious belief” (Egbert, Mickley, & Coeling, 2004, p. 9, citing Allport & Ross, 1967). S/he may receive the same benefits from religion as the extrinsic individual, but is motivated by what s/he can offer God or the faith community, not what God/the community offers him/her. At first, I believed I was being *extrinsic* if I kept only the parts of Torah that are convenient for me, and *intrinsic* if I kept every part that I could, *even to my hurt* (Psalm 15:4). This is bringing every part of life in concert with my beliefs, right? I am “putting my whole self in,” as the song says; I am putting “[my] body on the line” (Pollock, 2006, p. 325).

*What shall I bring to come before the LORD  
Of all the earth—how can I please Him?  
Can my body be offered for my sin?*

(An evangelical would think I am being *extrinsic* for keeping Torah, and the only way for me to be *intrinsic* is to give up external effort and concentrate on the personal relationship.) But that was my shallow reading of Allport and Ross (1967). The “deeper issue” is “about *nature*, not *behavior*” (p. 106 in this text).

## Grace

YHWH’s moral imperatives (expressed in the Torah) “flow from the personhood of God” (p. 108). They “have to do with *what is in accord with God’s nature* and therefore...with *bringing our nature into accord with His*” (p. 108; Moen, 2008; Kinlaw, 2005). In the past, I feared that if I sinned<sup>283</sup> (or made a serious social *faux pas*) in public, it would reflect badly on

<sup>281</sup> possibly via symbolic interaction and transcendence

<sup>282</sup> via identity markers, which guarantee insider status in some community

<sup>283</sup> e.g. transgressed a known law of Christian ethics, a line the average person would know Christians are not supposed to cross

my claim to be “a Christian.”<sup>284</sup> Once I opened myself to ambiguity about whether I was “a Christian” (having shed certain evangelical identity markers to take on HR markers), I was set free to concentrate on intrinsic motivation.

*No, He has shown you what is good  
What He requires is to do justice  
And love mercy—this is His law  
And to walk humbly with your God*

Becoming intrinsic is about letting that “[person] in His image” (p. 108) shine forth, not about marking myself as a certain “kind” of person.

I’m not sure I’m as successful as I would like to be at becoming intrinsic, because I live “on the spectrum.” My struggle with alexithymia is rooted in mild Asperger syndrome (AS).<sup>285</sup> As my fellow Aspies can attest, we love rule books! Our cognitive schemata are fraught with detail, since we must attend consciously to more data than the average neurotypical person. To navigate the “mazeway” of social cues, we draw ourselves elaborate “maps.” These internal “rule books” (where to stand, when to shake hands, how loudly to speak, etc.) articulate for us how to inter/act in the world.<sup>286</sup> I fear making Torah another “rule book,” following it to ensure divine acceptance just as I follow my internal “maps” to ensure human acceptance.

### *Artist’s Statement III*

*“And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.”<sup>287</sup>*

On the other hand, I know (that is, as an act of faith, I embed the belief in my schema) that He has already accepted me. I have nothing to do to impress Him, except to *be*. So I make Torah my “way of *creation* and *being*” (Madison & Hamera, 2005, n.p.), my way of “rehearsing”

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<sup>284</sup> The evangelical tradition places great emphasis on “showing” as well as “telling” one’s faith via a public “witness” of integrity.

<sup>285</sup> not formally diagnosed

<sup>286</sup> In a sense, I feel I must study common identity markers that people use to mark themselves as members of the human community, and then “put them on” as best I can, as if to say, “Look! I can do this. I’m human too!”

<sup>287</sup> personal blog header (<https://teshuvahmusic.wordpress.com/>), quoting Psalm 40:3

my identity as that “[person] in His image” (p. 106, 133 in this text) whose *life is hid* with/in Him (Col. 3:3).<sup>288</sup> Years ago, I let journaling “[become] a substitute for praying” because I thought He had stopped answering (p. 121). I wanted – oh, craved – to be healed of the social difficulties that made me feel “cut off” (Kinlaw, 2005, p. 83, citing Marcel, n.d.) from others. Remembering the pain of rejection, I adopted an extrinsic orientation in my relationships, determined to make people like (the fake) “me,” constructed out of (pitch-perfect) performance of social cues. In my mind, AS was a box that isolated me; I could never hope to step out of it into such a sensitive task as co-performing emotion and culture with ethnographic participants. Looking back on my *hazardous journey* (p. 119 in this text), I see His way of healing me was to take me through these “‘surprising, even disarming, processes of transformation’ (Pollock, 2006, p. 328) that result from **being open to others**” (p. 117 in this text) in the role of a **complete-member researcher**. The HRM was my gateway to healing.

## Israel

And so, we ...*arrive where we started*

*[To] know the place for the first time* (Eliot, “Little Gidding”).

My “place” is not the HRM, but the “Israel of God.” After rambling through the “mazeway” of denominational histories, have we found her? I think so.

SHARON: From Egypt to Messiah was *first-Israel*; from Messiah to the end is *all-Israel*. I term the pre-Messianic continuing people as “first-Israel” because that is exactly what they are, whether Ephraim, Judah, or Gentile.<sup>289</sup> I chose “all-Israel” to describe the continuing people since Messiah, to maintain the theme of “no distinction” (Rom. 10:12). Sha’ul

<sup>288</sup> Nothing I say here negates the authenticity of my born-again experience as a faith-act. In the evangelical community, that identity marker still holds; I can point to a historical moment when my personal Exodus took place. Furthermore, I still give it weight as the watershed moment of my spiritual journey.

<sup>289</sup> Ruth, a member of the nation of Moab who married into an Ephraimite family, represents for HRs the foreign-born who “sojourns” with Israel (see Lev. 24:22 and Num. 15:15-16).

(Paul) uses the term (“all Israel shall be saved”) in the same passage in which he speaks of non-Jews being “grafted in” to Israel (Rom. 11:24-26). For those accustomed to speaking of **Israel** and **Church**, I offer these terms in the hope of defamiliarizing the familiar.

Scripture describes all-Israel’s relationship with God in three metaphors: royal, marital, and familial (Kinlaw, 2005).

*SHARON: Abraham believed in a God more powerful than all the Nimrods of this world. So he “got up and went out.”*

SHARON (p. 56): Rather than *station*, the difference between the harlot and the bride is one of *nature*.

*SHARON: A spouse is supposed to be a “vulnerable, willing partner” for life. If I don’t display that kind of loyalty to Him, I’m not His.<sup>290</sup>*

Every family has spoken and unspoken codes that govern what matters to family identity and how members represent the family to outsiders.

*SHARON: YHWH’s family code outlines how we should represent Him in the world.<sup>291</sup> Doing family is a big responsibility. If I’m not willing to abide by his family code, am I His?<sup>292</sup>*

In the HR framework, the parable of the two sons (Luke 15:11-31) represents the homecoming of Gentile believers to Torah, the “inheritance” that elder brother Judah has kept spotless all this time. The younger son “rises and gets out,” not to be near his father, but to get

<sup>290</sup> Spousal loyalty is completely different from exchange partner loyalty; it is loyalty to a person, not a set of benefits.

<sup>291</sup> e.g. Torah; Deut. 30:11-14, John 15:10

<sup>292</sup> Daniel and Patricia Juster (1999) point out that most Christians keep more of Torah (e.g. justice, mercy, and faithfulness) than they themselves realize. On the other hand, Christians tend to elide their way past the cognitive dissonance that results from reading Matt. 23:23: “You should have done these [ceremonial laws] without leaving the other undone [justice, mercy, and faithfulness].”

away from him to a far city of wine and pleasure. When famine wastes him, he sets his eye on his father's house, planning to beg for help – just a job as a hired hand, nothing more, not to be reinstated as a son. When he “repents” (turns) homeward, however, his father meets him on the road, lifts him up and kisses him; calls to the servants, “Prepare a feast! This son of mine was dead, and is alive!” *This son of mine*. No matter how far he strayed from the father's house, he still belonged there, and his path led him back there.

The firstborn, working in the field, hears the music, smells the cooking, and is incensed. “Father! I have worked for you my whole life... *neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment*...yet what have you ever done for me, to recognize my obedience? And when *this thy son* shows up, what do you do? Kill the fatted calf!” *This son of yours*. Not *my brother*.

*SHARON: I feel the c/Churches look at me this way, because I have gone “off the reservation” and become “Jewish.” If I abandon their/our cherished Sunday, pray to the Messiah in Hebrew (of all languages!<sup>293</sup>), stop eating the catfish and pork chops and “low country boil” that give my family cohesion (for every Southern family creates its identity around food; the making of food, the eating of food, the memories of food, the times when there was no food), I turn into a “strange thing” (Hosea 8:12). In looking backward, I have “gone back under the law” and am now – in a curious reversal – a “foreigner” to the Father's house (Eph. 2:19).*

Unlike the five foolish virgins, who were unprepared for the wedding, the elder brother misses the homecoming feast because he is nursing resentment at his father for showing “no distinction.” HRs often interpret this to mean Judah (the Jews) will continue to resent us/them (Ephraim, the Gentiles) for coming “home” to Torah observance (see Nicholls, 1995). But what if the parable is really staring us back in the face? Maybe it is not trying to tell us about Judah

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<sup>293</sup> The discerning reader will note the irony.

and Ephraim, so much as it is trying to highlight the deficiency of the extrinsic orientation that drives exchange-based religion.

*SHARON: Then, too, I feel myself looking this way at others who have not “put [their] body on the line” (Pollock, 2006, p. 325) at Sinai, as I have. I commit myself unfettered to the Text, giving up my old (familiar) identity, struggling to establish a new one, and what is my reward? Cognitive dissonance, as I watch others meet their felt need for a “personal relationship with Jesus Christ” (Warner Colaner, n.d., p. 11), while my faith-acts go seemingly unreciprocated. It is enough to make me question the reality of God.*

After this winding journey, who do *you* think is the Israel of God? From what you know of me (now), do you think I am one of them (p. 27)?<sup>294</sup>

## Epiphany

The *zoe*-life of God (Zizioulas, 1985) is an “economy of giftedness,” which replaces the “economy of exchange” (Sharon, quoting Nathan Schlueter, 2009; see Berry, 2008). The economy of exchange runs on fear; fear of not measuring up, of being overlooked, of being replaceable, and most of all, of not having one’s needs met.<sup>295</sup> It is fueled by scarcity. The economy of giftedness is fueled by abundance.

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.*<sup>296</sup>

<sup>294</sup> I speak in the combined voice of faith and scholarship. If certain traits are (according to the Text) expected to identify the “household” of God, then it is legitimate to assess whether someone fits those traits – from either an emic or an etic perspective.

<sup>295</sup> In this, it parallels the natural human economy of supply and demand.

<sup>296</sup> Helen H. Lemuel, “Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus” (1922), public domain

Performance is self-conscious. It means you stand outside looking at yourself, comparing yourself to others to make sure you measure up. You are not integrated, not whole; you must split yourself.<sup>297</sup>

*SHARON: I have “stood outside” myself too long, trying to analyze myself through others’ eyes.*

Presence is not self-conscious.

It is spontaneous...like a dance.

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<sup>297</sup> Compare the concept of splitting with reactions to trauma (e.g. Greven, 1990, on the effects of corporal punishment).



## Final Blessing

*Mitzvah*: Commandment298 <sup>א</sup>א

*My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away*  
(Songs 2:10).

I am tempted to assign blame. I am angry at my forefathers for telling lies, lies about His Torah, lies about His Messiah. There is no place between that is untainted. “They have all gone astray; there is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). Every stage of Biblical and post-Biblical history boasts a golden calf of some kind.

Could those golden calves be a blessing in disguise? Let me explain. “The way that Hans-Georg Gadamer puts this point is especially striking: *human beings are only able to understand anything about the world around them on the basis of the prejudices they bring with them!*” (Blum, 2009, pp. 6-7, emphasis in original). I am blessed – however I may feel about it – to have been born into a flawed culture! My early experiences, superintended by my parents, gave me “good prejudices” that shaped my cognitive schema. Did growing up in a Sunday church, celebrating Christmas and eating ham, hurt me? No, it ensured my schema was so ordered as to believe there is a God and I am responsible to Him. Church offered me a safe place to develop my musical gift. It made me open to spiritual experiences and curious about people whose experiences are unlike mine. It made me sensitive to the fact that people *don’t* know anything but what they’ve been given...and if this applies to me, eating ham because (according to my

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<sup>298</sup> *Sh'ma, Yisra'el, YHWH Y'shua Eloheinu, YHWH echad*. The narrative is *echad* (“united”) as we tie up loose ends.

pastors) *the Bible tells me so*, how much more does it apply to persons doing things that concretely harm them or others, who think it's right because *their culture tells them so*?<sup>299</sup>

*History is neither a circle (as the Greeks believed) nor a line (as the Hebrews believed); rather, it is a spiral* (Sharon, quoting Richard Gamble, 2010). It loops back in on itself time and time again, not because it is meaningless and endless, but so we can learn from the past and move forward. We have **continuity**, in that we revisit the same stopping points along our journey that our ancestors did; and **change**, in that we have the opportunity not to repeat their mistakes and put the same burden on our descendants.

“If you could not accept the past and its burden there was no future, for without one there cannot be the other” (Warren, 1946, n.p.).

Maybe this is “taking up my cross” in some way.

No, the past is not my burden to bear. It is His story, and His people, and He is big enough to handle all their mistakes, and mine too. He bore all of it on **His** Cross.

Don't worry, just follow.

*Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away* (Songs 2:13).

But still I hesitate.

Will He be angry with me if I “turn back” and “Judaize”? Will He be grieved with me if I neglect His Torah? Will I be failing Him if I continue to stand still, uncertain – for the “double-minded man” (James 1:8) cannot please Him? I hear Him calling, but I no longer know from which direction His voice is coming.

*Today I place before you a choice, life or death, blessing or cursing. Therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live!* (Deut. 11:26 and 30:15, 19).

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<sup>299</sup> Anna B. Warner, “Jesus Loves Me! This I Know” (1860), public domain. Patriarchy and corporal punishment come first to mind as culture-bound practices (both of which find [mixed] support in the HRM).

I don't want to repeat the mistakes of my fathers. I want my children to know life, and life more abundant (John 10:10). Whatever that looks like. *Cling to Me, for I AM your life* (Deuteronomy 30:20).<sup>300</sup> His commandments are *a tree of life* to those who lay hold of them (Proverbs 3:18). There are two that I can start with: "Love YHWH your Mighty One with all that is in you, and love your neighbor as yourself."<sup>301</sup> Those sound simple enough. And hard enough.

"Take up your cross, and follow Me."

I think He is waiting on me.

*I will arise  
I will arise  
Arise, arise  
I will arise*

*But what about all the other Christians who are not doing Your Torah, and they don't even seem to know or care that it matters, even though Your Word seems so clear on the subject, and yet they seem to have more joy and more blessing and more anointing than I do? What am I missing? What am I still doing wrong? Do You not love me as much as You love them? Am I not loving You enough? Am I actually completely 180 degrees wrong about this Torah thing after all, and just deceiving myself into living in legalism??? What about the Torah people who seem to have nothing but rules? And the ones who unwittingly used their rules to hurt me?*

"What is that to you? Come, and follow Me."<sup>302</sup>

*I will arise  
I will arise  
Arise, arise  
I will arise*

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<sup>300</sup> Frances (co-participant) regularly quoted Deut. 30:20, emphasizing that we (group members) should strive for the ideal of trusting dependence in our covenant relationship with God.

<sup>301</sup> Matt. 22:37-40; Deut. 6:5, Lev. 19:18

<sup>302</sup> John 21:22

Prodigal daughter: all I can do is start walking home. Maybe I will receive *grace to travel this path of exile* after all. If He is strong enough to carry me. If I trust Him enough to lean on Him.

*Maybe all this is a cruel cosmic joke. There is no YHWH. I have believed in vain (1 Cor. 15:2).*

“Sharon, will you also go away?”

“Lord, to whom shall I go? For You alone have the words of life.”<sup>303</sup>

*Who is this Man  
unlike any other?*<sup>304</sup>

*And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel (Isaiah 8:14).*

*A thousand nights  
We would expect Messiah  
But not tonight  
Not here*

*But He'll surprise us  
Our Eternal Father  
He'll stand on earth  
His Word we'll hear*

*If any man have an ear, let him hear (Revelation 13:9).*

*Our eyes will see Him  
Yes, Him, and not another  
for our Redeemer  
shall appear*

*Behold, I am coming quickly (Revelation 22:12).*<sup>305</sup>

<sup>303</sup> Carroll, 2001, ends his epic, p. 617, with these words from John 6:67-68.

<sup>304</sup> From here to p. 179, the text is constructed as a layered musical presentation of the author's personal subjectivity as it would be performed in the context of a church service. I deliberately echo Jonathan Cahn (nationally known MJ rabbi), who ends his two books, *The Harbinger* (20-) and *Mystery of the Shemitah* (20-), with the literary version of an evangelical “altar call.”

<sup>305</sup> Esther Mui, “Rev. 1:5-8 Behold, He is Coming with Clouds,” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0Jjd5X\\_UvE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0Jjd5X_UvE).

*Like a thief in the night  
I'll rend the skies  
And when they look on Whom they have pierced  
Great will be their cry*

“An authentic confrontation with history results in the opposite of self-exoneration”

(Carroll, 2001, p. 601). *They were cut to the heart...* T/ruth elicits one of two reactions: harden the heart (Acts 7:54) or open it (Acts 2:37).<sup>306</sup> *Who do you say I AM?*

*Baruch shem k'vod  
Malchuto  
L'olam va'ed*

*Yeshua ha'Mashiach  
Hu Adonai*

“Who is the Messiah? *Tell me, that I may believe in Him*” (John 9:36).

*Do you believe YHWH saves?  
Heaven's waiting for your answer  
Will you call on His Name?  
Will you trust Him as your Savior?*

*How long will you halt between two opinions* (1 Kings 18:21)?

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<sup>306</sup> Why does the book of Acts portray listeners responding to Stephen with hard hearts, but to Peter with open hearts? Does this illustrate the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic spirituality – the difference being in how the individual who is “cut to the heart” allows that knowledge to change him/her?

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- Your life is hid with Christ in God  
Therefore place your mind on heavenly things  
Where Yeshua is seated at the Father's right hand  
And has given us all spiritual blessings*

## Readings

In keeping with Conquergood's (2002) call to give greater weight to popular knowledge and to the invisible interpenetration and co-production of texts, these suggested readings include a variety of texts produced by HRM leaders and critics, as well as historical and archaeological



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*I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments. Ps.*  
*119:176*

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