

1: Discipleship and Imagination : David O. Brown :

Discipleship and imagination: Christian tradition and truth. [David Brown] -- "David Brown tackles questions on the presentation of biblical narratives over the centuries, and asks whether this has had an impact on our understanding of discipleship.

For Catherine Matri meae D. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above You must not circulate this book in any other binding or cover and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data Data available Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data Tradition and imagination: Both of them did much to widen my horizons. I am most grateful for the stimulus provided by Henk Vroom, Aard van Egmond and the students who participated. The following week I spent as a guest of the Redemptorists in Poland. To the outsider the Reformed church in the Netherlands and the Catholic church in Poland can appear to have little in common. Integral to the discussion that follows is my belief that discipleship is made possible only by community. What is required of lecture and sermon is of course quite different. Some of the theses in this book and its predecessor have already percolated into sermons and prayers. Appropriating Christ for the present 1 Valuing and prostituting women: Equality and Mary Magdalene 2 Pattern and particular: Saint and novel 3 Heaven and the defeat of the Beast: Social aspects of discipleship Part two: The impact of changing experience 4 Job and innocent suffering 5 Mary and virgin promise Part three: Reproduced by permission of the National Gallery, London 3. Anonymous sixteenth-century tapestry of the Hunt of the Unicorn. Reproduced by permission of the Glasgow Museums Burrell Collection 4. Reproduced by permission of the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, County Durham Introduction Although this is the second of two books on the role of tradition, it has been written in such a way that it can easily be read as a self-contained volume, with a somewhat different theme: In its predecessor, Tradition and Imagination, I worked on a rather larger canvass. So far from setting them in opposition to one another, I argued that a developing tradition needed to be seen as the motor that kept both engines running, and thus granted the Church the potential to respond effectively to changing social conditions. This was not intended to suggest inevitable progress. There is no escaping the admission that, from the perspective of the later community, both Bible and Church can alike be seen at times to err. Not infrequently, it will be insights from the biblical period that provide the most effective critique of what comes later. That aspect, however, has received little mention here, not because I deem the matter unimportant but because it is already a well-worn theme in the writings of numerous theologians. Oxford University Press, In Tradition and Imagination detailed consideration was given to some examples from the patriarchal narratives in the Old Testament and from the life of Christ in the New, and in particular due note was taken of how this brought about changes in Christian doctrine and self-understanding. Here our focus will be subtly different. Although doctrinal issues will still sometimes be allowed to emerge, our main concern will now be with how such change affects the practice of Christian discipleship. To that end, this volume is divided into three parts. The opening chapter of Part One uses changing attitudes to the status of women as a mean of focusing the question. I argue that relating neither to Christ as human example nor Christ as Lord is best mediated through the New Testament alone. In both cases, I shall be concerned to illustrate how the Church has much to learn from what happened at almost all the various stages in the story of these developments. So, although the relevance of the latter issue in particular is noted throughout this work, detailed attention is given to both questions in Part Three. Heresy is thus indispensable to the growth of orthodoxy, and so, though the ultimate aim should still be a common mind, there remains danger in supposing any issue completely resolved or closed. No bibliography is provided. This page intentionally left blank Part One Appropriating Christ for the Present In the earlier volume I sought to draw attention to two implications of the way in which I believe modern historical research now requires us to

regard the life of Jesus. Then, secondly, precisely because later contexts have often been very different, what was then initiated was not the appropriation of an unchanging past but its development as new contexts made possible the building of fresh insights upon those initial foundations. In establishing a connection with this volume, one of my main contentions in *Tradition and Imagination* needs to be put bluntly and starkly: The only way that conclusion can be resisted is if one believes, as I do, that Christ was very much more, and in particular with his resurrection and ascension now enjoys a humanity in heaven that is available to every age and time. Ironically, sometimes a pre-critical age perceived the truth of this observation more clearly than our own day. So, for instance, the modern funeral service of the Church of England opens with the priest declaring: The problem is twofold. The modern service has treated the original scriptural text more literally, by using the same past tense as the original narrative: As subsequent chapters will illustrate, this can come about as a result of quite a wide range of different factors: There is no simple pattern, and that is why close attention to the details of my argument is required. The second half of the chapter will argue that, despite repeated assertions that her image was used only to malign women, Mary did in fact function successfully as a means of establishing any penitent disciple in intimate relation with the risen Lord. Relating to the risen Lord is one thing, however; quite another, trying to imitate the human Jesus. This is far from as simple an issue as many an exegete or preacher seems to suppose. In the earlier volume I suggested that this is what in effect happened at an earlier stage in Christian history when Paul adopted a different attitude to law from Jesus. Here, though, it would be a matter of a post-biblical transformation. Even so, I do believe that the search for exact parallels is mistaken, and there is need therefore to identify a more complex type of relation between the original example and the often quite different shape its imitation will take in a different cultural milieu. Not only shall I argue for their intrinsic importance and the truth of some of the values they contain, but also I shall indicate why in some ways they may be seen as an anticipation of the characteristic modern pattern for such exploration: Christian discipleship needs to be aware of these differences if it is not to make impossible demands upon the Scriptures or judge later developments by the wrong criteria. But discipleship is not simply a matter of individual relationship to Christ as Lord or even of following his example, however indirectly, wherever it might lead. It also has a strong social dimension. But it is not only the present existence of the communion of saints that is adversely affected by current preoccupations, no less affected is understanding of the kind of impact exercised by the more negative aspects of traditional eschatology. It is easy to treat the doctrine of hell as a place of eternal punishment as pure aberration, but much can be learnt, in my view, from the history of its use. A rich notion of community was thus an incidental result. Although these are important, the reader should not lose sight of the wider context. My overall aim is to defend the legitimacy of changing patterns of discipleship and to draw attention to the indispensable role that the imagination has played in bringing about such changes. So far from regarding these as optional extras, they seem to me integral to the continuing health of the Christian faith. The Bible remains indispensable for Christian discipleship, but the danger is that too great a burden is placed on it. Although the Christian imagination came to the rescue, often its new responses were simply projected back into Scripture. The rise of biblical criticism forces us to be more honest, and face those tensions between biblical past and our own present. It is to consideration of some of these that I now turn, beginning with attitudes to women then and now. This page intentionally left blank

1 Valuing and Prostituting Women: It is only one of a number of possible examples which might have been considered. My reason for making this choice is less its importance or topicality, greatly relevant though these are, more that it illustrates so well what I perceive to be the two most common hermeneutical faults of our own day—how both too much can be claimed for Scripture and too little for subsequent tradition. On the one hand, I shall reject the view that Scripture offers in itself an adequate treatment of how the question of the equality of the two sexes should nowadays be appropriated. On the other, I shall contend that the much maligned treatment of Mary Magdalene in later tradition, so far from denigrating women, actually offers an indispensable model for human discipleship, both male and female. What unites both questions is the exercise of the imagination, the need to acknowledge its capacity to operate with quite different agendas from our own immediate, analytic concerns. At the same time, both illustrate well how revelation operates through the particularities of our human situation, not despite them. The way in which the legend of Mary Magdalene has

been treated over the centuries is the topic of the second half of the chapter. We begin, though, with the question of how Christian support for the equality of the sexes might most satisfactorily be maintained. At most what may be deduced is equality of regard, something entirely compatible with hierarchical assumptions. Thereafter in many ways there is regression until the changes consequent on industrial society helped to generate our own present understandings. In attributing the key impetus for change to non-biblical factors, I intend thereby no denigration of the Bible. An unsympathetic critic might respond that, in making such a distinction between equality of status and equality of regard, I have already abandoned a biblical or imaginative frame of reference for the language and terminology of the Enlightenment. The New Testament Principle: Equality of Regard Because of the dominance of concern for the status of women in contemporary culture, it is a natural, but, I believe, dangerously seductive temptation for Christians to desire to establish the direct relevance of the Bible to the issue. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians* Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1991; J. SCM Press, esp. Pulled out of context, it does of course sound as though Paul is giving an unequivocal endorsement to equality of race, class, and sex, together with all that that might imply. But, if one examines what he says elsewhere on these matters, such a contention becomes increasingly implausible. Thus in Romans 11 he leaves us in no doubt about the continued privileged position of the Jew; the Gentile wild olive shoot has been grafted on to the cultivated olive tree that is the Jew, and we are not to boast since it is not we who support the Jewish root but the Jewish root which supports us cf. Perhaps the easiest way of rendering Paul consistent is to say that what he means in Galatians 3 is not that 5 It is possible that Paul here is reinforcing existing Corinthian social practice cf. Dio Cocceianus, *Speeches* Eerdmans, Equally, there are some pointers to suggest that the original J passage carried no such negative implications: But it is hard to discount altogether the notion of inferiority implied by the taking of a part from a whole, rather than, say, an equal division of what was once a single body, as in the Greek version of the myth. One might compare a modern politician declaring that we are all equal as British citizens; that certainly would not carry with it any automatic commitment to equality in all respects, for instance, equality of incomes. For were a woman to wish to be a man. In Christ, on the other hand. Here also it is all too easy to be beguiled by our desire to make Jesus say what we want him to say. Certainly, women were numbered among his followers and he had close relations with some of them, but that in itself hardly shows that he regarded them in every respect as equals of men, any more than does his openness to children or Gentiles. *Luthers Werke* Weimar edn., vol. Calvin likewise insists that the verse must be read in a way which does not abolish a law that God the Father has himself established:

2: "Discipleship and Imagination" by Donald Roth

Brown has undertaken a Herculean task in both Tradition and Imagination and Discipleship and Imagination and rendered wonderful results. His encouragement of the Church to engage fully in ever-developing imaginative traditions is a worthy call and one to be applauded.

February 5, Ezekiel We see them in the beginning in the garden of Eden. We see them at the end in the revelation of John. Isaiah speaks of the trees of the field clapping their hands see Isaiah Trees are signs of flourishing. The Psalms open up with a powerful vision of a tree next to a river, giving us a vision of what the blessed or flourishing life looks like: The tree is like an immovable, powerful, and creative word. The river is the visual representation of the invisible Spirit, the source of life. Do you see this? Word plus Spirit equals life. This is a vision we must begin to visualize. We must ask the Holy Spirit to take us inside of the world being recreated by the revelation of Scripture. In this worldâ€”which is the only true worldâ€”the mountains are bowing down before the Lord and the oceans are roaring with the sound of his praise. The sun and the stars and the moon are all pointing to him. Our imaginations must be disciplined by the Word of God and the Spirit of God that we might learn to see the vision of awakening coming on the horizonâ€”that we might join the generation of those who now labor in glad travail for its arrival. They were a planting of the Lord and their lives displayed your splendor. We want to cease living with a foot in two worlds and we want to plant both of our feet in the only true world, the one you are remaking. Give us a holy imagination to perceive it. For the sake and splendor of your name, amen. The next person sees a cathedral. Which kind of person are you? Are you growing in the holiness of your imagination? Can you see yourself like a tree planted by streams of water? Subscribe to receive the Daily Text email. Take this one step further, join the Daily Text Fasting Challenge here. Whenever you sign up, it will begin the following Tuesday.

3: Discipleship and Imagination: Christian Tradition and Truth - Oxford Scholarship

As with its earlier companion volume Tradition and Imagination, this is a work that has relied heavily on the encouragement, advice and support of colleagues and friends.

Upon this summer Sunday, let us meditate together on imagination, and its influence in discipleship. Our gospel turns to the playful imagination of children in the marketplace. Paul wrote in a similar way to his Corinthian congregation: The walk of faith evokes and involves imagination, the free play of insight, the province of children and saints. Two What a gift are the parables of Jesus! He taught them in parables, says the Scripture, and without a parable he taught not one thing. Here, in a story form, is the same sentiment just remembered from Paul, God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. Jesus stands in the marketplace. He sees two warring groups of children. All community is endless contention and intractable difference. One game for the enjoyment of life preferred by Jesus himself, one game for the dour, self-discipline for life, preferred by John the Baptist. Yet neither group will give way. Groups, as Reinhold Niebuhr taught us in Moral Man and Immoral Society, have a hard time changing direction, or giving way, or forgiving, or summoning an imagination ready for discipleship. That requires a childlike heart. It requires an imagination soaked discipleship. It requires the person whom you are meant to become. Did you ever know and love somebody who was always a bit on edge? I mean a beautiful person with a heart of gold, who was run raw by the gone-wrongness of life? This can be a rough world for a sensitive soul. Someone who has an unquenchable passion for getting things right and for knowing when things are wrong. A little of that can go a long way. If your very hunger is for what establishes the soul, you can sometimes go hungry. Imagine with her eyes: Every child in the community was attending a safe, well-lit, quiet school, where virtually all could read at the sixth grade level by the time they finished the sixth grade level. Every sick person in the community had ample medical care, most of it preventive, and all of it shot through with a heavenly infusion of time, talent and money. Every person of color in the community felt confident entering the public spacesâ€”theaters, churches, stadiums, storesâ€”in every corner of the community. Every man was free to be a man. And every woman was free to be a woman. Every person is seen and heard as a real human being. Three Here at University, we are blessed with intelligence, youth, freedom, and reason. We want to be careful, and caring, so we pause here. We have much freedom, but how we choose to use it, in relation to the rest of community and society, is another matter. To do that, one needs a capacity to spend 12 hours a day alone in a library or in front of a computer screen. To do that, to write that series of scholarly papers become books become resume become tenure become professor, can risk leaving aside, if we are not careful, or leaving to others, if we are not careful, the imaginative stewardship of forms of civil society. Umpire work for the Little League. A seat on the PTA. In civil society we have the chance to influence others, and to be influenced among others, in lasting, personal ways. You want to speak to others, to convince others, to educateâ€”good. You cannot speak to others until or unless you speak for others. To be speak to requires first to speak for. Others will not hear or heed you, and should not, in your speech to them, if they do not, with utter confidence, feel, feel, that you speak for them as well. To speak for, you have to be with. Then, only then, will you enough funds in the relational bank when you need to withdraw some to say something that may then be audible. If you want people in Wisconsin to hear you, candidate, you have to go and be with people in Wisconsin. If you want people to hear you, preacher, you have to go and be with people, in visitation, on their turf. If you want to speak to others, educators, you will have to find a way to speak for others, not just to others. This is the whole genius of American civil society, from the time of De Tocqueville. Whether we will find, in the humiliations of an era whose leadership is shredding inherited forms of civil society on an hourly basis, the humility to go out and suffer with and for others, over the better part of the next decade, in order then to speak, is an unanswered question. To get to an answer we may just need some imagination in our discipleship. Four Wisdom is vindicated by her deeds. Our Gospel lures us and lures our imagination forward, for discipleship. Have we yet learned the lesson that what one meansâ€”by an act, a word, a statement, a vote, sayâ€”is not all that such an act means? We have experienced this lesson this year. The lesson, that is, that what you in your

heart meant by an act, a word, a statementâ€”a vote, is not in fact the limit of what that act, word, statement or vote meant: Wisdom is vindicated, known, in her deeds. The meaning of a text is found in the future it opens, the future it imagines, the future it creates. So too, the meaning of an act, a word, a statement, a vote, say, is found in the future, bright or dark, which it creates. What you meant is not what it means. For that, you have to listen to those harmed, or helped, by it. Meaning is social, not individual, hence our use of words, our developed language, our investment in culture, our life in community. You may have meant it one way, but its meaning is found along another. Such hard, tragic lessons, to have to learn and re-learn. Jesus is our beacon not our boundary. Imagination is a dimension of discipleship that is waxing not waning, needed not superfluous, crucial not peripheral. Our passages today, Genesis, Psalms, and Romans, draw our imaginations to forms of authority, and our engagement with them. In Genesis, the authority in ancestry. In Psalms, the authority in government. In Romans, the authority in conscience. In all these, the writers struggle to imagine a way forward, following the light of the beacon across the challenge of the boundary. Five Pause and meditate a little this summer on your own enjoyment of play. Our esteemed colleague and beloved mentor, now of blessed memory, Peter Berger did so, with imagination for discipleship, years ago in his little book, *A Rumor of Angels*. I see grown men enthralled on a green field following a wee little white ball, which seems to have a mind of its own, for three or four hours in the hot sun. I see grown women shopping together without any particular need, but immersed, self-forgetful, in the process of purchasing, God knows what. I see emerging adults fixed and fixated, days on end, in the World of Warcraft. Can you remember playing bridge in college all night long, to the detriment of your zoology grade? In playing, one steps out of one time into anotherâ€”When adults play with genuine joy, they momentarily regain the deathlessness of childhood. The experience of joyful play is not something that must be sought on some mystical margin of existence. It can readily be found in the reality of ordinary lifeâ€”The religious justification of the experience can be achieved only in an act of faithâ€”B. This faith is inductiveâ€”it does not rest on a mysterious revelation, but rather on what we experience in our common, ordinary livesâ€”Religion is the final vindication of childhood and of joy, and of all gestures that replicate these. Six Imagination in discipleship forms a wisdom vindicated, justified by her deeds. They are also Persons, capable of fusing eternity and time in the precious, anguished reality of a love that would be eternal amid the concreteness of time. A person is a being through whom eternity enters time. But we have lost a sense of eternity. Robert Hill This entry was posted on Sunday, July 9th, at You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2. You can leave a response , or trackback from your own site.

4: Discipleship and Imagination: Christian Tradition and Truth - PDF Free Download

Discipleship and Imagination Christian Tradition and Truth David Brown. Steers a way forward beyond the current impasse between conservative and liberal theology.

5: Discipleship and Imagination - David Brown - Oxford University Press

Footnotes. Donald MacIntosh, The Foundations of Human Society (University of Chicago,) at Kahneman at Kahneman at This may explain why we're more likely to eat candy of the bowl in the office when we're stressed than when we're relaxed; we simply lack the mental energy to rein in the fleshly self when we're busy with other things.

6: The Discipleship of the Imagination - Seedbed

Discipleship and Imagination has 3 ratings and 0 reviews. In this book, David Brown considers the ways in which biblical narratives have been presented

7: The Center for Prophetic Imagination â€” Radical Discipleship

DISCIPLESHIP AND IMAGINATION pdf

Our imaginations must be disciplined by the Word of God and the Spirit of God that we might learn to see the vision of awakening coming on the horizon.

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9: Pure Imagination Gala - Elmira Discipleship Ministries

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