

**MULTICULTURALITY:
MY LIFE IN THE LIGHT OF MULTICULTURALITY**

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Walter L. Michel

June 9, 1992

Since June 9, 1992 I have revised, edited and expanded this type of account of my life several times, most recently
March 22, 2000

Date Age	Country Location	School Occupation	Languages and Religions
1932-1942 1-10	YUGOSLAVIA Croatia -land,nation Slavonia -region Adolfsdorf -village	Child	German Evang. Lutheran,. Roman Catholic Moslem, Serb.Orth.

My father (an Austrian from Vienna) taught me to read and write German (Gothic and Latin alphabets). My mother was German ("Volksdeutsche" - from "Schwabenland" - settled hundreds of years before by the Habsburgs). I was raised as an Austro-German ("Deutsch-Österreicher") speaking German and Serbo-Croatian (outside of the home) and lived, knowingly, in "the *Diaspora*" (dispersion, i.e., not in the homeland, the "Heimat) as a protestant (Evangelical Lutheran of the Augsburg Confession) among Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Moslems. Pigmentation does not a multi-cultural person make.

MY LIFE AS A CHILD WAS COMPLETELY MULTILINGUAL, MULTICULTURAL, MULTIETHNIC, MULTINATIONAL, MULTIRELIGIOUS ... WITH THE LINES FIRMLY DRAWN BETWEEN GROUPS AND RELIGIONS.

	Vranovac	Pupil	same as above
	Trošeljje	Pupil	same as above

First grade of elementary school was all in Serbo-Croatian. I had to learn a third alphabet, the Cyrillic alphabet. Total immersion. No problem. But as a "German" and as a "Protestant" ("Lutheran") I was, of course, doubly an outsider, except, of course, in the exile German community.

Entered a German school (2nd-4th grade). The teachers were Roman Catholic nuns. As a Protestant, an Evangelical Lutheran, I was, of course, an outsider.

1938
6- Occupation of my country (Austria) by the German Army.

1941
9- End of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia

Forced relocation to Graz (Austria) because of the war in Yugoslavia (Occupation of Yugoslavia by the German Army). I was now a stranger in my father's country, Austria. Return to our home in Trošeljje after about three weeks. I was forced to become a member of the German Youth (9 years old). I had read most of the Bible already (my father made me read it, twice!). I was growing up in a very pious, Christian evangelical Lutheran home. I could not understand most of the teachings of the Church or what I read in the Bible or heard from the pulpit. But, I knew one thing: every time I had to say "Heil Hitler" I committed high treason in my relationship to my Lord Jesus Christ. I was a very troubled young boy.

1942 December

10-

Throughout the Fall of 1942 we had to endure fear and terror. Many of the members of the three or four congregations which my father served, had either left the country or had been murdered by Tito and his people. My father did not want to leave as long as there were people there who needed his pastoral care. He risked his life many times. He also had become very unpopular with the National Socialists (the Nazis) because of his work and his teaching and preaching. Finally, we had to flee our home in order not to be killed either by Tito and his guerrilla fighters/partisans or suffer from the persecutions of the National Socialists.

1942-1943

10-11

|Austria
|Bad Kreuzen/Grain

|Pupil

|German
|Evang.Luth, R.Cath.

Life as a refugee is never pleasant even if one is supposedly coming “Heim ins Reich,” the slogan which the Germans used (“home into the empire”) (actually we came “home” to an occupied Austria by the Germans, ruled by the Nazis). This was a very strange time for me. My father could not sit still - in the relative luxury in the refuge camp in Austria - and he accepted the urgent call from several German congregations in occupied Poland. In hindsight this was an absolutely horrendously courageous decision, again, putting himself and his family in danger. But, I learned an extremely valuable lesson. Refugees know something which persons do not know, who never had to leave everything behind and flee in order to remain alive.

1943-1945

11-13

|Poland
|Ślupza/Grenzhausen

|Pupil

|German
|Evang.Luth, Polish R.Cath.

I entered “Hauptschule” (preparation for the various trades). I was exposed to the *northern* German culture (quite different from the *southern* or Austrian). Soon I spoke the northern type of German. I also began the study of English in school.

Of course I was forced to continue to be a member of the German Youth. My father continued his opposition to the National Socialists and, therefore, was drafted into the Army. He was sent to the Russian front because of his anti-Nazi stance and almost perished there.

In the Summer of 1944 (12 years old) I was sent to a “Führer-ertüchtigungs-lager” (leadership] training camp) in Łódź/Litzmannstadt. Among the terrible experiences one stands out: One day our immediate leader (a boy of 16 years of age) pointed to some of us and said: “You, you, and you, follow me.” Of course, without raising any objections we followed him. He marched us to a tram station. We boarded the tram. After some time the doors to the tram were locked and a deathly silence fell upon all in the tram. I was horribly afraid, because I could not understand what was happening. But, of course, I also did not say a thing or even asked any questions. Then I saw and put two and two together. What I saw was terrible. Half starved, dirty people with yellow stars on their clothing. I was shocked. No one had prepared me for this moment. No one. Not my parents and not my leaders in the camp. No one had ever talked to me about what I was now witnessing. Soon the horror was over. The doors to the tram were unlocked and normal chatter filled the tram. None of us said anything about what we had just witnessed. No one asked questions and neither did I.

THIS EXPERIENCE TRIGGERED A LIFE-LONG STUDY OF THE BIBLE, JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

In the Summer of 1990 I was browsing in Powell’s Book Store (1501 E. 57th Street, Chicago, Illinois) and came across the book *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto 1941-1944* (Edited by Lucjan Dobroszycki. Translated by Richard Lourie, Joachim Neugroschel, and others. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984). For the next couple of days time stood still for me as I read and cried through the book.

If you want to see the scene which I experienced you can rent the movie *Europa, Europe*. In this movie there is an identical scene to my own.

1945, Jan. 20.

13-

We fled from Poland in order not to be killed either by the Poles or by the Russians. Panic. Terror. We spent some days in Dresden (a couple of weeks before the firebombing).

1945-1959

13-27	Austria Vienna	Pupil Student	German & Viennese Dialect Evang.Luth.; Roman Cath.
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We (my mother and brother) ended up in Vienna (Austria), the home of my father. We suffered the daily bombing of Vienna by the Americans. Horror! - I am one of those "Europeans" who believes that the carpet bombing of German and Austrian cities was a war crime. In addition we were severely mistreated by some of our relatives, who were officially *Christians!* - actually one of those who mistreated us was a deaconess! My view of the Church and of Christians was now completely shattered. We found loving care from some strangers. More questions, bitterness and confusion welled up in my heart and in my brain. I was treated as a foreigner by the other children, at first, because of my heavy northern German accent. I then, rapidly, entered this new culture and learned a new dialect: the Viennese way of speaking German and I have been a Viennese ever since (even after all these years in the U.S.A.).

1945, April 11

13		Student	Evangelical Lutheran; Roman Catholic
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End of the war for me. Russians occupied Vienna. About five or six Russian soldiers entered our cellar where we tried to find some protection from the fighting. We had lived in the cellar for more than two weeks. The first soldier who entered the room pointed his machine gun to my head and left it there (about a couple of inches from my head) while the other soldiers checked the cellar for snipers. One of the soldiers grabbed my mother. She protested in Serbo-Croatian. My mother could speak Hungarian, Serbo-Croatian, German and some English. (now *that* is multiculturalism! taken, totally, for granted in many places in Europe). The soldier released her and said, "We are brothers." He took my 9 year old brother on his lap, began to cry and tell us about his family and the horrors they had to go through in Stalingrad. Then the other soldiers took one of the ladies, went into the other room and raped her. Shortly after they left we felt safe to emerge from the cellar. I will never forget the sight and the smell which greeted me. Never!

During 1945/46

13-14		Student	Evangelical Lutheran; Roman Catholic
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I was constantly hungry and almost starved. I lived in the Russian sector of Vienna until 1955. Vienna was a divided city, just like Berlin, and just like Berlin it was surrounded by Russian occupied parts of Austria.

1945-1952

13-20		Student	Evangelical Lutheran; Roman Catholic
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Student in a "Realgymnasium" (preparation for university study). *Modern foreign languages*: English (eight years) and French (two years). *Classical language*: Latin (six years). It is the knowledge of languages and their cultures which make a person multi-cultural. My pigmentation does not make me a multi-cultural person. During secondary education I had a crushing experience: A guidance counselor looked at my records and in a very patronizing tone told me that everything is fine, but that I should not, under no circumstances, even think of a profession where foreign languages would be required ... "you are too dumb." I was crushed.

1952

20		Student	Evangelical Lutheran; Roman Catholic
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Graduation from "Realgymnasium" and travel in Switzerland (part of theater, song and dance group). I also passed the examination as a certified Austrian Folkdance teacher (I needed to know about 100 dances and be able to teach them).

1953-1959

21-27		Student at the University	Evangelical Lutheran; Roman Catholic
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In spite of being told that I was too dumb by a high-school counselor - I became a student at the Department of Theology at the University of Vienna because I wanted to know who was lying. I wanted to know the truth about the Bible, Dogma, Christianity, Philosophy, Judaism. I wanted intellectual and spiritual freedom. I found it rather quickly. Knowledge showed me the way how the stumbling blocks to even being able to hear the invitation to faith can be removed. Knowledge is not faith ("Glauben heisst nichts wissen"), but faith without knowledge is stupid, dangerous and deadly.

Since I am 20 years of age I had to work in order to earn enough money for living expenses. Tuition was free. I was one of the two “Werkstudenten” out of a group of about 30 students. One day my “Dekan” (Dean) called me into his office and said: “Herr Michel, Ich höre sie arbeiten.” (Mr. Michel I hear that you are working) I said that if I would not work I would not be able to study. He replied in so many words, that if I had to work I should not study and that I would never amount to anything, that I would never become an intellectual and a good student. I was crushed. Great encouragement from a fellow “Christian.”

1955

23	Student at the University	Evangelical Lutheran; Roman Catholic
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ALL Allies left Austria. What a grand celebration! Austria became free and independent again.

1956/57

24-25	Student in Heidelberg	Evangelical Lutheran; Roman Catholic
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I lived in a Studentenheim in order to be among students. Out of the blue the leader of the Studentenheim made it possible for me to receive a scholarship from the World Council of Churches and I became a student at the University in Heidelberg (Germany). In Germany I was, of course, treated as a person from another country and (in a derogatory way) as a “Schmalspurdeutscher” (narrow gage German). I traveled in West Germany and East Germany (Berlin). While studying in Heidelberg the fog in my intellectual and spiritual life began to lift. Wonderful.

1957/59

25-27	Teacher of Religion	Evangelical Lutheran; Roman Catholic
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After I passed all the required exams (Fall 1957) I began my career and service in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, beginning with service in the Evangelische Kirche in Österreich (AB = Augsburgisches Bekenntnis = Augsburg confession, = Lutheran) as a certified “Religionslehrer” (teacher of religion) in public schools in Vienna (1st.-8th. grades). There is nothing like it in the USA. Christian Education comes close to it, but there are no teachers of “Christian Education” in the public schools in the USA. I had, finally, become a searching Christian, by choice, and I had found a wonderful profession, where I could continue to learn - and get paid! I was set for life. I had a good profession, good friends ...

1959, earned the M.Div. equivalent.

27	Teacher of Religion	Evangelical Lutheran; Roman Catholic
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I, finally, presented myself to the appropriate university examinations. I passed them. What a relief. I was determined to continue my career as a “Religionslehrer.” I had found my niche, I lived in Vienna, I had many good friends, theater, opera ... what more could I possibly desire. I did, though, make plans to begin studies in the faculty of law, part-time, in the Fall of 1959. Then a phone call changed my life. It’s a long story.

1959

27	USA	Visitor in more than 30 locations from New York to Iowa and from Michigan to Louisiana	English - a new language and culture! experienced Christian religious plurality
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I was invited to come to the USA to study church life and the American way of life during July and August of 1959. Then my stay was extended another two months and then another two months.

I became acquainted with more than 20 different Christian denominations and preached and lectured in many of them. I traveled from New York as far as Iowa and from Wisconsin and Michigan as far as Louisiana. I was handed from one family to another and had to speak about Austria, the war, the Church in Austria, etc. This was a most interesting, multi-cultural experience. From skyscrapers to the cotton fields. Everything in America was strange (and still is ... even in the year 2000).

The Christmas days (1959) I spent with a family in Dixon, Illinois. On December 28, about 4:00pm, Don, a pastor of the Church of the Brethren, said to me, “Walter, you should really stay a little longer in the States.” He got up, went to the phone and called Pastor G. Curran of St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church. “Hi, George, I know you need a vicar. I got one for you.” From 5:00-6:00pm Pastor Curran interviewed me. I told him the truth. He left asking me if I would be willing to give my talk at St. Paul’s the next evening. I agreed. I had not planned to stay in the USA or to become a pastor. I was happy in my profession and I was happy with my friends and with life in Vienna. I had no reason to stay in the USA and I really did not want to stay. But the LORD works in strange ways. Once one gives the LORD a little finger ...

1960-1962

28-30	USA Dixon, IL	Vicar Pastor	English Evang. Luth.
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Instead of being on the boat, Jan. 15, 1959, I arrived in Dixon from Pennsylvania, and I began my work as a vicar, then, after ordination, as assistant and associate pastor.

Jan. 15, 1961--Ordination (United Lutheran Church in America):

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Equipped with my good secondary education ("Gymnasium) and my theological training in Vienna and Heidelberg I had absolutely no problem adjusting myself, my teaching and preaching to the situation at hand. The situation was, of course, very foreign (foreign language, foreign culture, small city, etc.).

My experience makes it very hard for me to understand the difficulty some students and even professors have to switch from one culture to another. There is no problem. All one has to have is motivation, an excellent theological education, and a readiness "to throw away one's life for Jesus."

1962-1966

30-34	USA Madison, WI	Campus Pastor	English & Latvian Evang. Luth.
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Another momentous change. My bishop thought that I would make an excellent campus pastor. So, one thing led to another and Rev. Carl Mau interviewed me and September 1962 I began as a campus pastor in Madison, Wisconsin at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. I served the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church (= National Lutheran Council). I was in my element. Students, professors, questions, intellectual stimulation, the whole thing was unbelievable and I felt that my whole life had prepared me for this task. Wonderful! The switch from a rural town to a university city was absolutely no problem for me.

1962, Fall--Meeting Gundega Reinfelds

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Another momentous event. I met Gundega Reinfelds, a scientist (physical chemistry, Ph.D. 1970), born in Riga, Latvia -- a zealous Latvian in Exile. As a fellow refugee we understood each other immediately - in this strange country, the USA. I was now exposed and soon immersed in another new language and culture. Furthermore, the fact of the occupation of Latvia by the Russians (Soviets?) provided a steady stream of horror stories of the suffering of Latvians by the Russians since 1940. About one third of the population of Latvia disappeared, most of them were killed. The suffering of the Latvian people, especially since 1941, is of epic proportions. The ignorance of "the West" of the history and the hopes of the Latvians (and many other peoples in that area of the world) is extremely dangerous for peace in this world.

1964, Aug. 1.--Marriage to Gundega Reinfelds in Australia.

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Of course, I had to learn Latvian - another language, another culture. We were married in Adelaide, Australia. Travels through Australia. Back to Madison. When the children were born (Selga, 1970; Dainis, 1971) my wife, of course, only spoke Latvian to the children. I, then, decided to speak German to the children. This is one of the reason why I am not able to speak Latvian fluently, but I am able to understand basic and intermediate Latvian quite well. I have preached in Latvian several times. The children have the command of three *native* languages (Latvian, English and German. The son also learned Russian and the daughter added Portuguese). In our home my wife and the children speak *Latvian*. When my wife and children turn to me they speak *German*. When English speakers are present we all speak *English*. We live with three languages and cultures AT THE SAME TIME ... and there is no problem. I, of course, add, my interests in the cultures of the ancient Near East, the Biblical Hebrew culture and religion, and the fate of the Jewish people past and present. It is hard for us to understand why so many Americans insist on remaining one-dimensional, one-cultural persons, especially, persons who want to become pastors. We do not understand how one can be an intellectual without being, at least, bi-cultural, if not multi-cultural.

1966-1970

34-38	USA Madison, WI	Graduate student English	Evang. Luth. Exposure to Judaism and Latvian Nature religion
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Another miracle happened: Professor Menachem Mansoor accepted me as a graduate student at the Hebrew and Semitic Studies Department of the University of Wisconsin with a full scholarship - for four years! I was in seventh heaven. My desire to know more about the Bible was fulfilled beyond my wildest dreams.

1967, M.A.

35 years of age

1970, Ph.D.

38 years of age

LANGUAGES and more discovery of other cultures:

Modern: Modern Hebrew (elementary to intermediate level in 1966)

Ancient Semitic Languages:

Biblical Hebrew, Phoenician-Punic, Moabite, Biblical Aramaic,
Syriac (one year), Ugaritic (one year), Arabic (one year).

1966, Summer. Study in Israel. Travel in Israel and Jordan.

34

An absolutely wonderful experience and becoming acquainted with several more cultures (Israeli, Arabic, Palestinian Christians, Druse, etc.)

1970-1972

38-40	Madison, WI Chicago, IL New Haven, Con.	Unemployed part-time work	English, Latvian, Evang. Luth.
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This was the most terrifying time in my life - even more terrifying than the war years. It was worse than the years during and right after World War II. My wife and I, both of us, had earned our Ph.D. and, now, it seemed almost impossible to translate these achievements into a profession and into an income. What was God trying to teach us? This experience was much worse for me than becoming a refugee (twice!). Extreme poverty, unbelievable shame (I have never got over this shame), humiliation at the height of educational achievement! ... and the children were born during this time (1970, 1971). This experience left me *permanently scarred*. I was taught an important lesson: even being good, very good, even the best - does not guarantee security in this world. And how did fellow Christians behave towards me during this time? Do you really want me to tell you? For example: a very important (pompous, authoritarian) pastor mistreated me terribly, "How come you can not get a position? There must be something wrong with you. I always suspected it." No help from anybody! No one cared. Not the Church and not the University. Unbelievable! We were alone, terrified.

1970-1971

38, 39 Part-time work as a pastor and campus pastor

1970, March 13, birth of our daughter, Selga.

38

1971, April 27, birth of our son, Dainis.

39 We barely survived financially. And then Gundega's parents visited. What do you think they thought of me and the marriage of their precious daughter to me, a failure, and a non-Latvian at that?

1971, September and Fall

39 Part-time work at LSTC. September, Hebrew I (\$450.-); Fall, group-leader and lecturer, "The YHWH Faith" (\$1,500). The other lecture was given by Carl Braaten. More than 70 students and about 6 faculty members were present at these lectures.

1972, January to July

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Finally, my wife secured a position as a post-doctoral fellow in the Chemistry department at Yale University and I took care of the two babies.

I went to see Prof. Marvin Pope, whom I had come to know through professional conferences. M. Pope respected my dissertation on Job in the Light of Northwest Semitic, very much, and then invited me to work with him on his third edition and revision of his Job commentary in the Anchor Bible. Pope's revision was based on my doctoral dissertation on Job. In spite of all the misery this was a highpoint in my life: work and daily discussion (from February to June) with a world-famous scholar in the field of my own competence. Fantastic. Pope's revision was published in 1973 and Prof. M. Dahood (of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome) was so excited that I had changed Pope's mind in favor of Dahood's understanding of Northwest Semitic studies that he invited me to write a three-volume work on Job in the light of Northwest Semitic studies, similar to Dahood's work on the Psalms.

1972-2000

40-68	USA	Assistant Professor	English
	Chicago	Associate Professor	Evang. Luth.
		Professor of Old Testament	

My studies, my teaching and preaching, are completely determined by my multicultural and global understanding of life and faith.

A FEW MORE COMMENTS:

1. 1979, April-June.

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I had been awarded a sabbatical for the academic year 1978/79. From September 1978 to March, 1979 I had written over 1,000 tightly argued philological notes on Job 1-24. Whenever I completed one chapter I sent it off to Rome. Prof. M. Dahood, my mentor, read and commented on my work and sent his comments back to me. It was a great joy and honor to work so closely with an important scholar.

Then from April to June I worked with Prof. M. Dahood in Rome. We went over the manuscript and argued many interesting points, in detail. He praised my work. Actually he himself wanted to write a Job commentary in the same style as his Psalms commentaries (in the Anchor Bible Series), but, he became completely involved with the Ebla texts, found in 1974/75 and so he turned to me and said: "You write the Job commentary in the Light of Northwest Semitic."

From my own dean and president at LSTC, I did not receive *any* support and I was even told that I would be dismissed from the faculty because I had not completed the whole manuscript of all of the 42 chapters of Job. The Sabbatical agreement with LSTC did not include the stipulation that I needed to complete the manuscript, but "to make significant progress." The trauma, which I experienced was very severe, and is still with me and has stifled my scholarly progress ever since.

Another important colleague plotted, during 1979/80 to remove me from the faculty. No reasons were given. I remained totally in the dark.

At the same time Prof. Dahood arranged that my book on Job would be published in three volumes, because of the tremendous amount of material. I lived with the Jesuits at the Pontifical Biblical Institute from April through June.

2. 1987--Publication of my book on Job

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There is no doubt in my mind that the writing and publication of this work is a miracle.

3. 1991, September--Freedom for Latvia.

59

Another miracle (my life seems to be full of them). Who would have ever thought ..., but the suffering of Latvians continues. The economic, intellectual and spiritual life is in shambles. The freedom of Latvia changed my life because my wife now spends all of her free time in Latvia and works feverishly on various aspects of "rebuilding" Latvia. I thought that there would be no danger in marrying a Latvian woman because one could trust the communists in the Soviet Union not to disappear, at least, in my lifetime. Well, this proves it again that one can not trust the communists.

4. A Few More Thoughts:

During my life at LSTC I have suffered several extremely serious blows in my relationship with authorities over me and with several powerful colleagues. My personal, intellectual, spiritual and scholarly life has been seriously effected by these events.

It was very hard for me to learn to forgive and “to let go” and to accept God’s promise: “Vengeance/recompense/restitution is mine.” I am able to forgive an injustice when the person who committed the injustice against me repents and shows evidence of new life, but, I am not able to forget.

Forgiveness, though, without repentance (on the part of the sinner) is a sin. There is no such thing as “Cheap Grace.” Repentance is very costly. Without repentance and restitution eternal damnation is assured. Forgiveness without repentance and restitution is a sin according to the Bible. That is, at least, what Jesus is teaching.

Recently (February 1994), I suffered, again, several extremely serious blows to my understanding of myself as a person, who is determined to be faithful, loyal, conscientious, honest, joyful, gracious, charming, exuberant, and enthusiastic. I was told (by authorities over me) that my enthusiasm and joy of life is misunderstood by a few persons and students and that they are hurt by it and that I should be a little bit less exuberant.

Finally, I have been taught that I must realize that some of my character traits are not only something positive but can also be interpreted (I think, by some immature and sick people) as something negative. This was one of the hardest lesson I had to learn in my life. What infuriates me, as a teacher and pastor, is the fact, that there was no discussion with these “challenged” persons. I have not been informed that these students were ever told to rethink (repent) their inappropriate behavior towards me.

I still do not understand why it would be appropriate to tell a rose not to be so beautiful and not to be so fragrant just because there are a few people who are allergic to beauty. I despise such persons, I am sorry for them and I feel pity for such people. Who has to change? I or they?

On October 21st, 23rd, December 30, 1996 and May 1997, and since, I suffered further horrible blows. They are much too sensitive to be recounted in a semi-public document like this one, although, I would like to shout them from the rooftops.

Finally, another miracle happened: during the first week of September 1999 the worst burden in my life at LSTC was lifted. Praise God! Now I can breathe again.

5. There is no doubt, though, that joy and deep spiritual and intellectual satisfaction far exceed the negative experiences in my personal, professional, intellectual and spiritual life at LSTC.

I am very much looking forward to the last year of my active service in *ecclesia* and *academia* (2000/01) and I will continue to give of myself completely (as best as I am able) as a person, teacher and scholar in the remaining years of my life.

I trust the LORD, who tells all victims of injustice (when it is impossible to gain justice): יל נקם ושלם, *lî nāqām wēšillēm*, “To ME belong Vindication and Restitution.” (Deut 32:35)

יל נקם ושלם	To ME belong Vindication and Restitution,
לתע תמטו רגלם	for the time when their foot shall slip;
כי רקי ביום יאדם	because, near is the Day-of-Disaster for them,
וקש עתתד למו:	Doom for them comes swiftly.
	Note the pairing of
	“Day-of-Disaster”/“Doom”=the “Day-of-the-LORD”

How long, Oh LORD? When will all of the innocent be vindicated? When will they receive recompense for their unjust suffering? Does vindication come “swiftly?” Why is it that even persons who call themselves “Christians” commit terrible sins (especially those who are granted authority and power by God)? I do not believe that the doctrine of “original sin” explains this horror. Are Christians not supposed to be “in Christ,” a “new Adam,” living the redeemed life daily?

Sin thrives in secrecy. Sin *must* be brought to light. Why do we hesitate to do this? Why do even I support secrecy and silence? Why?

I am not comforted by the words, which Jesus is reported to have said to his disciples, as recorded in Mt 5:11-12:
 Matt 5:11 Blessed are you
 when people revile you and persecute you

Matt 5:12 and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely
 on my account.
 and be glad,
 for your reward is great in heaven,
 for in the same way
 they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Of course, I have not included every joy and pain in the above accounting of my life in the light of multi-culturality.

In spite of some deep pain, disappointment and betrayal, I am deeply grateful to my LORD for a fantastic life of study, meditation and teaching. Also, I am now 68 years of age and completely healthy. Praise the LORD!

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