

Reverie on Ten Years of Crossings on the Internet: Sabbathology #1 Redivivus

Colleagues,

Ten years ago tomorrow, January 27, 1996, the first Sabbathology posting went out into cyberspace. It wasn't a text-study as the term "Sabbatheology" –pronounced "Sabbath Theology" (you use the "th" twice)–later came to designate. It was yours truly ruminating on what you see below. There were only a handful of folks who got this #1 on that Saturday. I don't remember who all they were. The caption was chosen simply because it was a Saturday when the piece was confected. When the next Saturday came there was another movement of the waters. And so it continued. Before long, text studies on the upcoming Sunday's lectionary texts (ala the Crossings 6-step matrix) also appeared in these Sabbath postings, offered as a possible last-minute bonbon for the harried homilist slotted to be proclaimer in the next day's worship assembly. For 88 postings (till Nov. 15, 1997) the mix of text studies and random topics was the weekly routine. A heart operation (aortic valve transplant) was awaiting me at the end of 1997, so the Sabbathology venture passed into the hands of Robin Morgan and Mike Hoy after #88. From then on Sabbathology was text studies only with second generation Crossers in command. However . . .

When cardiac regularity returned, it was springtime and I had nothing to do. I asked myself: why did I "give it away?" I couldn't take it back. The "kids" were doing very well without me. It was a Thursday in May. I sensed a rumination coming on. The rest is history.

When you add 88 SabbTh postings to today's ThTh 398, you do not get ten years of weeks. There were a few wordless weeks during the first 88 postings plus a hefty hiatus connected with cardiovascular recuperation. But (sticking with the heart-muscle metaphor) on May 14, 1998 Thursday Theology started ticking, and now—with almost 400-in-a-row—ThTh postings haven't missed a beat. Mirabile dictu.

To see how the entire venture of Crossings on the Internet has grown, check the logs for 2005 @ <www.crossings.org/logs/> Last year the website averaged 1800 hits per day, with over 100,000 distinct computers served, and 1300 pages downloaded every 24 hours. If you want to know more (e.g., where did they all come from?) click on 2005 at the site. If curious, you can see the first ThTh at the Crossings website. Click on "Thursday Theology" on the homepage, then on 1998. Sabbaththeology #1, the first-born among them all, never got to the Crossings website. There was no such thing ten years ago when it was launched. Here it is.

Peace & Joy!

Ed Schroeder

Jan. 27, 1996

Sabbath Theology #1

Here are a few bits/bytes that came my way recently. First off, this bon mot: German researchers attempted to uncover what specific behaviors contributed to people's longevity and success. They found that those who kiss their spouses every morning have fewer accidents on their way to work. In addition,

"good morning kissers are absent [from work?] less often due to illness than non-kissers. And more amazing, kissers earn from 20% to 30% more and live almost 4 years longer!" A word to the wise...

And then a snippet from the good Jesuits at Georgetown University in Washington DC. From the Woodstock Report (Dec.1995). Ray Kemp, S.J., says in the interview of his "Preaching the Just Word" seminars: "One preacher said to us in a recent retreat, 'I have been aware for the last ten years that I have been preaching pious platitudes. WHAT I HAVE REALIZED THIS WEEK IS THAT MY OWN HEART AND SOUL HAVE NOT BEEN CONVERTED TO A RENEWED APPRECIATION OF THE GOSPEL. God is seeking to work in the world today through the instrumentality of the Church and through the instrumentality of, God help us, my own preaching.'"

How about this as an axiom? No one will do a very good job of preaching THE Gospel until the Gospel has been Good News to his/her own heart and soul. And for us Augsburg Catholic types, this variation on that theme: No one will ever rightly distinguish law from gospel until they have been struck in person (in heart and soul) with said Good News and thus moved—first internally for their own selves—from law to gospel. Knowing the difference is a HEART's experience, not a mind's comprehension. That's what Paul was talking about, wasn't he, when in the opening chapters of Romans he says the Gentiles did have knowledge of God, but did not acknowledge God. That pun (also in Greek), gnosis vs. epignosis, designates two differing venues, different locations, for the Aha! about God, about Gospel, about the Gospel's quantum difference from the law.

To one of my e-mail bemoanings from Australia in 1994 [For that calendar year ehs was guest lecturer at the Lutheran Seminary in Adelaide] about my students' opaqueness in catching what the

Good News was all about, Bob Schultz told me that same thing in other terms. It now comes home to me again as I hear of the lousy (non-Gospel, anti-Gospel) preaching of two dear friends, former students. The Crossings-alum reporting this to me asked: "How can that be? They were in the same classes with the rest of us, and it got through to me!" The obvious answer is: It did—well, maybe—get into their heads; it didn't get into their lives, their own personal histories. Now that I've composed this much, I'll cc. the message to a passel of folks, esp., Bob Schultz, and others to whom I doubtless owe letters. Cheers y'all!

So much for Sabbath-day theology on 1.27.96.

Ed Schroeder