

*Sea Raven, D.Min.
572 Atwood Drive
Gerrardstown, West Virginia 25420*

December 7, 2009



Larry Alexander, Publisher
Polebridge Press, Westar Institute
Willamette University
900 State Street
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Proposal: *Theology from Exile: Commentary on the Revised Common Lectionary for an Emerging Christianity*

Dear Mr. Alexander:

The attached proposal is partly in response to Bishop John Shelby Spong's call for "a new Christianity for a new world," and partly in response to the increasingly critical need for Biblical literacy, as called for by the Westar Institute. The late Robert Funk wrote, "The end of the Christian era is marked . . . by the decline of religious literacy. . . . The mainline churches have by and large adopted a defensive posture; they have raised the drawbridge and manned the battlements against . . . critical knowledge of Christian origins. . . ."¹ As a volley across the moat and a challenge to those battlements, I propose a series of three books, providing liberal Christian commentary on the *Revised Common Lectionary* (RCL). This series offers a unique approach to lay bible study and clergy sermon preparation that explores traditional Christian scripture in the light of contemporary Christian scholarship.

These commentaries are not sermons, nor are they "blogs." They have been published on my website as "Liberal Christian Commentary," and listed on the popular Christian resource website, textweek.com (<http://www.textweek.com>.) I have received appreciative comments from diverse readers, ranging from Mennonites in Florida to an independent study group in South Africa. All have found food for thought, some have appreciated the research, some have requested permission to use my re-imagined rituals of communion. An expansion of one of the commentaries on Year C's Holy Week was included in *Originally Blessed*, a book celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the publication of Matthew Fox's *Original Blessing*. This essay (for which I hold all publication rights) is included in the discussion of Eucharist in the Appendix to the enclosed manuscript (Part D).

¹Scrimgeour, Andrew D., Ed., *Just Call Me Bob: The Wit and Wisdom of Robert W. Funk* (Polebridge Press, Santa Rosa, CA, 2007), p. 108.

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I began this project in Year C, Advent 2006. The RCL designations of Years A, B, and C are, of course, not biblically sequential, so whether one begins a study guided by the RCL in year B, C, or A is not important. The first book in this proposed series, *The Year of Luke*, contains the theological framework for the entire work. The second book, *The Year of Matthew*, begins to develop a case for a serious challenge to the RCL. With the third book – *The Year of Mark* – I have become convinced that the purpose of the RCL is to justify doctrinal Christianity at the expense of Jewish tradition and in the face of post-modern sophistication and Third Millennium cosmology. The time may well be close at hand for developing a new Common Lectionary. This series can be part of that dialogue.

This proposal package includes the following:

1. A brief CV;
2. A proposal document;
3. Excerpts from all three years of weekly commentaries on RCL readings. including Advent, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and commentaries for “ordinary time”;
4. An appendix that discusses reimagining Eucharist.

Thank you for your consideration of my work. If you wish to communicate by email, my address is searaven57@comcast.net; telephone (304)229-3293. An SASE is enclosed for your convenience in returning the proposal if it does not meet the needs or the interests of Polebridge Press.

Sea Raven, D.Min.

Enclosures

cc: Arthur J. Dewey (w/out enclosures)
Robert J. Miller (proposal document only)

P.S.: As a convenience to Polebridge Press editors and reviewers who may be dispersed around the U.S., I have placed a PDF version of this entire submission on my website at <http://www.gaiarising.org>. Click on *site map*, and scroll down to Section VI, Polebridge Press.