

# Theopoetics:

That The Dead May Become Gardeners Again

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Running through the work of Brazilian theologian Rubem Alves is a story from Gabriel Garcia Marquez about a fishing village where, over generations, life has degenerated into routine, sameness, bored day after bored day.<sup>1</sup> Day in and day out, the same tasks (mending nets, fixing huts, gathering fruits), the same routine hopes and desires. Conversations have degenerated into routines; people barely hear each other; faces have a range of expected expressions and rarely detour from them. Each goes about his or her own daily life with a predictable dreamless sameness.

One sea-shiny morning, a child spots something bobbing in the water on the horizon. He cries out, and the entire village gathers on the beach to watch the unexpected object approach--even those who normally stay aloof, already having seen it all. It eventually beaches: A corpse, covered with algae and lichen.

The men and women of the village decide to give it a proper interment (for what else could be done?). The women take the body into a hut (since, in that village, women prepared the dead) and they begin to prepare it for burial. After laying it out on the table, they begin the work of cleaning it. And as they work, they begin to talk: Ah! Look how tall! This man would have hit his head in our doorways! And His skin, so light!

"When they folded his hands over his chest, they thought and said aloud that he must have loved like no-one had ever loved, and that he must have said words that had not been said in that village for centuries."<sup>2</sup> One woman wondered, Did he know the way to speak that would make women want to put flowers in their hair? And they all begin to speak and speculate:

*Whom did he love?*

*Did he know how to sail? To fish?*

*Did he play with children?*

*And they all laughed, and were surprised as they realized that the funeral had become a resurrection: a movement in their flesh, dreams, long believed to be dead, returning, ashes becoming fire, forbidden desires emerging to the surface of their skins, their bodies alive again ...<sup>3</sup>*

*Thought, imagination and words flew above the body ... From the conversation over the dead man a new life was being born. Everyone was looking at their past toward that which each one had been, and they were imagining that it could have been different....<sup>4</sup>*

This story, like all theo-poetics, opens up a space for unanticipated dreaming in which the past, present, and future are re-shaped as we reorganize and even re-create our own stories and our relationships with others, the world, and the Divine. As Alves reflects, "I see the theologian (No! the theo-poet ...) as someone who, like the dead man of the story, says the poetic word which opens up the infinite space of Longing, in hope that the dead will become gardeners."<sup>5</sup> Though he is silent, the dead man's appearance is an occurrence--like a poem, a ritual, or an activist event--which can open up that longing.

Theopoetics<sup>6</sup> is a style of writing or a theological stance, an artful way of working with language and worldview. The theo-poet uses the occasion of the poem to creatively suggest, ambiguously hint, generously intimate in ways that create space for the reader or the public to face the unknown, engage Mystery, to dream and be transformed.<sup>7</sup>

This article begins by exploring the theo-poetic perspective, and concludes by considering its application to social change activism and worship/ritual. "From our mouths"--from hands that hold pens or type on the computer, from paintbrushes of artists and muralmakers, from ritual planners and worship leaders, from drafters of visionary speeches and picket signs--"come the stories that transform memories and hopes, and nothing stays the same." This article considers how writing, activism, and spiritual leadership can, like the corpse in the story's fishing village, create "an enchantment that makes life return to that which was dead."<sup>8</sup>

As a staff member of a church-related nonprofit organization, I tend a garden of emerging leaders and social action projects around the country. As an artist, poet, drummer, and singer, I pay attention to the fluttering of life within and attempt to midwife art that emerges from the

soul's deep dreaming. As a coach & trainer of activists and social change facilitators, I support skilled and strategic social change which grows from people's own wisdom about their situation. As a member of the staff of Diana's Grove, a retreat center which uses myth and ritual for personal empowerment, I co-create rituals which engage and provide space for people's discovery of their wisdom and personal power, laying new patterns in the soul.<sup>9</sup> In all of these places (workshops, social change organizing, writing, rituals), I find application for the theopoetic perspective.

## **I. Theopoetics as a kind of writing**

Theopoetics stands in contrast to many styles of theological and literary practice which might be loosely categorized as "onto-theo-logic" (in the language of Heidegger and Hopper). Onto-theo-logic, in which logic and rational "truth" rises above the search for wisdom, asserts that we must accept or reject an asserted reality, at which point the writer's (preacher's, activist's) task is over. There is no invitation, mystery, or ambiguity of meaning, no point of entry or connection. Many poems-and many so-called prophetic statements or spiritual proclamations-are similar.

Poet and scholar Scott Cairns recounts the experience of hearing a man share a poem in a public reading. The hapless poet prefaced the reading in this way:

*I wrote this poem after I had been driving all night, headed West down I-90. I was in Wyoming and the sun was coming up behind me as I got to the top of a pretty big hill. I crested the hill, and the whole landscape opened up and there must have been a couple of thousand antelope spread all over the prairie.*

*Then he read his poem:*

*I am driving all night  
headed down I-90  
in Wyoming. It has been  
dark all night, and now  
the sun is coming up behind me.  
As I clear the top of the hill,*

*there they are: antelope.*<sup>10</sup>

This description of past events, lacking vibrancy or power, simply fails to create any sense of awe. This poem narrowly describes a narrative, locked into the "facts" of history, restraining it and forcing it to remain external to us. This is an obvious case of flat writing. But even when the metaphors are richer, they are often squeezed dry. Much conventional theological practice squeezes flat any metaphor or symbol it encounters. Conventional practice tries to get the dominant anecdote from [any metaphor] so that its numen can be left behind in favor of its 'meaning.' The snarling black dog, baring its teeth and yanking on its chain, becomes my leashed sexual hunger, my violent hatred, my touchiness when anything comes too near my proprium .... my mother's or father's restrained fury—all anecdotal meanings that too soon leave that ferocious image with its movement toward bottomless possibilities of emotion, memory, fantasy.<sup>11</sup>

How could our night-driving poet have created an opportunity for us to also gasp with the delight he felt on seeing those morning antelope? He could have evoked the experience, not pointed directly toward it. Pointing too directly often results in "religious sentiment rather than exorcism, nostalgia rather than actualized revelation."<sup>12</sup>

This is a challenging point for the theo-poet, because truly there is so much to say about current problems, spiritual truths, vexing issues. The tendency can be to say it all up front, to make sure that people "get it" but laying it out in bullet points--or a three-point sermon. But the theo-poet's task moves from proclaiming a worldview (position) that must be accepted to offering glimpses, tastes, hints of the worldview that the reader might enter into and be changed.

A theo-poetic sensibility strives to move from sentiment and nostalgia to a renewal of the power of language, in order to engage again and again the imagination and the spirit.<sup>13</sup> Theo-poetic work supports the reader to engage, reflect and even pray in the reading of it. It offers a kind of openness in the language, describing events in which the reader may participate and interact through the creation of a plenitude of responses, feelings, reactions. "Similar to a joke, it ends with an ambush that springs on the reader through the unexpected effect of the conclusion."<sup>14</sup>

This may lead to the envelopment of the reader in a sense of grace or Mystery of connection. Perhaps the reader becomes newly aware of a set of relationships in which they exist, or

reconsiders personal narrative, impact, and power. Theopoetics often provides opportunities for choice or a confession of belief, for a kind of conversation.

Suddenly the reader discovers that the story is not talking about an object but instead it is a net that wraps her, obliging from her a word, either a confession or a decision. The story doesn't speak about something .... it speaks with someone, establishing a network of relationships between people who agree to conspire--to co-in-spire, to breathe together--gathered around the fascination of that which has been said.<sup>15</sup>

Thus theopoetic sensibility seeks "a poetry which employs language as agency and power" and "demands that it be read and re-read, and poked, and puzzled over as an event of its own. The new poem is not about a thing; it is a thing."<sup>16</sup> The words and images are not dead on the page, but take a hint from the Hebraic notion of word as *davar/dabhar*, presuming "the word itself to be a thing, and a power." Scott Cairns, who compares this kind of approach to the work of rabbis doing midrash across centuries, notes that, "this perspective provides the consequent, Hebraic notion of a text as a made thing capable of further making."<sup>17</sup>

Rather than asserting simply "In Jesus, salvation is found," and expecting proselytes to jump on board, the theo-poet creates a story or poem which offers grace and personal resurrection as a possibility to consider and experience, layered with levels of meaning and possible interaction. In contrast to the clarity of the former, a theopoetics permits and invites a certain "damnable ambiguity."<sup>18</sup> Think of the teachings and storytelling of Jesus--too ambiguous, often, for even the disciples to "get it," but ultimately powerful and life-giving enough words to last for millennia. Onto-theo-logic asserts doctrine, but the theopoetic creates a space wherein the reader is drawn out into the "Open," the space where new life can flow forth from the subterranean caverns of the Source, of dreams, of the larger Divine life.<sup>19</sup>

*When gold is in the mountain  
and we've ravaged the depths  
till we've given up digging,  
it will be brought forth into day  
by the river that mines  
the silences of stone.<sup>20</sup>*

## **II. Theopoetics and praxis**

Theopoetics points beyond the page toward a way of being and a way of engaging groups and social issues. Roberto Goizueta cautions that without taking this next step, it may degenerate into "mere, narcissistic aestheticism."<sup>21</sup> Theopoetics, for Goizueta, demands a participation in the struggles of life and death, not only abstract explanations, "feelings," or conformity to a specific political or ethical program. "Aestheticism, or absolute ambiguity, is seductive for the same reason that mass movements are seductive: they hold out to us the possibility of flight from the demands of human consciousness and historicity."<sup>22</sup>

Far from fleeing the demands of social solidarity, theopoetics-beyond-writing is a practice of social hospitality, built on intention, which invites others to participate. It suggests a set of practices and attitudes. How can one bring an intention into the public square hospitably enough to invite others into a process of change?<sup>23</sup> Let's examine how theopoetics looks in the streets and in Christian and neo-pagan ritual.

## **III. Towards an invitational, poetic activism**

It's December 5, 2004. Twenty-three of us file from the gym of Grace United Methodist Church toward the six-point intersection of Chicago's Logan Square. We're together for a weekend workshop titled, "Magical Activism: Activism and Beyond."<sup>24</sup> My co-facilitator, Sarwat Rumi, and I have given the workshop participants a challenge: To plant the seeds of stories for a life-sustaining society in this crowded crossroads. Their stage is constructed of the space within the crosswalk (legal, public space) and the few seconds allotted in one red light in which their challenge is to communicate their story to all the stopped drivers.

The atmosphere we are building is that of a street party, inspired by activists from the Pagan Cluster in recent mass actions at the 2004 political conventions. Each group of four or five people comes up with their own plan. Some use street theater, others bow in reverence, others create signs in Spanish and English to question cultural assumptions. We parade around in one direction, each group using one red light at a time, then process back around and return to the church gymnasium to unpack the experience.

One participant makes an observation which pierces to the heart of invitational activism--of theopoetics in the streets. "Of the signs we made, all but one carried questions, not statements!" she said. (And the one with a statement was 'Question Reality!').<sup>25</sup> Imagine protest signs with questions (genuine, not sarcastic)--not answers. Imagine activists who see their role as one of helping societal consciousness to change, and who believe this needs to happen by helping people connect the dots, while resisting the urge to connect the dots for them--which precludes the invitation into engagement.

Something concerns me about the widely used yard signs that the Friends Committee for National Legislation has distributed before and during the occupation of Iraq: "WAR IS NOT THE ANSWER." No, it's not the answer--I don't dispute that. But these kinds of statements don't help foment the process of social ferment and imagination. They help people who already have tendencies toward one camp or the other to line up with and against each other. They are a fine way to make one's moral witness. But how can we actually help present an alternative vision, or better yet, engage folks in the process of seeking that vision?

Here are some of the signs created by participants in the workshop, created to emulate someone leaving Plato's cave who returns to try to bring others along.

*"Where are you going?"*

*"?Adonde va?"*

*"How do you plan to get there?"*

*"?Como piensa llegar?"*

*"How long have you been on this road?"*

*"?Cuanto tiempo ha estado en este camino?"*

*"What's stopping you?"*

*"?Que le para?"*

*"Is there any other way to get there?"*

*"?Hay otra manera de llegar?"*

*"Does your destination exist?"*

*"?Existe su destinacion?"*

Theopoetic activists acknowledge the importance of piercing to the heart of ultimate reality, and raising questions which promise to tumble worldviews. In addition to attacking specific issues, activists rooted in this kind of invitational stance address the cultural foundations that underlie them. Theopoetic change workers are priestesses and priests of a revitalized imagination, helping individuals and communities entertain new possibilities by tending the place where the heart and politics intersect. One definition of magic used widely in contemporary neo-pagan circles comes from Dion Fortune: "the art of changing consciousness at will."<sup>26</sup> Theopoetics points toward a magical activism, one which works to change a society's consciousness, not just make prophetic declarations.

#### **IV. Theopoetic ritual and worship: laying patterns in the soul**

Sixty-two youth gather in April 2005 in an auditorium at Manchester College (Indiana) for a regional youth conference in the Church of the Brethren.<sup>27</sup> The worship services begin with "stepping into worship," a layered set of walking meditations moving from the silly to the reverent over the course of two days. Invocations provide space to sense God's presence and activity in the body. Scripture in one voice is overlaid with questions for reflection in another, voices weaving in and out to distract the conscious mind and ease entry into the Presence.

Sermons are conversational, inviting kinesthetic expression "What does it look like to be fully alive, like the early church was? Create a position that represents that 'Soul Force' for you. Now what does it look like to want to shut down that aliveness, to restrict it, like the Pharisees? Find that 'Saul Force' inside yourself and create a position to represent that."

Participants carry blindfolds throughout the day to provoke self-reflection on ways they are blinded from seeing God's presence in each person, then follow the example of Bartimaeus and Saul who sought or received healing and sight. Together we lay hands on each other, praying blessing on each other and singing to each other, "No longer blind, let me see: Christ in you, Christ in me/Jesus, come and heal my sight; Help me be whole, let me see by your light."

Twenty-two men gather in the central Missouri woods to search together for a new paradigm of relationship, moving beyond the sea of male competition to a different way of connecting.<sup>28</sup> Invoking the elements of air-fire-water-earth, the men drift along as the spring breeze, step into the circle and become flames of a bonfire, join together to sway with the pull of a tidal pool, reach skyward to become a grove of trees. Later, the story is told of Uther Pendragon's death and the ensuing chaos, and the birth of Camelot under his son Arthur, all as an entry point into considering a new way of relating. Questions offered as a trance invite participants to reflect on what held Arthur back from the success at his coronation, and what stands in each one's way in reaching for the new paradigm. Participants are sent out to grapple with their fears in the dark evening, held by the night, peering toward a bright fire, then welcomed back to celebrate "Camelot," the new model of shared leadership, by washing in warm water, feeding each other fruit, dancing, drumming, simply being together; singing, "I am more than this, I am more than this, I am more than this, I am all of this and more."<sup>29</sup>

Illustrated by these two examples, theopoetic worship/ritual provides a chance for each to move more deeply into their own experience and understanding of the Divine and of their own lives. It creates in group format the kind of openness that theopoetic writing creates on the page. It asks each participant, How do you experience God, or the Divine? How does this story we are telling bounce up against your story--and how can we do that in the ritual space itself, not just have one person interpreting it? Theopoetic ritual creates opportunities for engagement, kinesthetic involvement, engaging the senses, and making discoveries about one's own path in the context of a larger story or myth.<sup>30</sup>

What is being called the emergent church is laudably moving in the direction of what might be considered theopoetic ritual. A recent experience in a self-proclaimed emergent church service left me feeling hopeful about this movement, especially as compared to earlier "contemporary worship" services with forty-five minutes of singing and forty-five minutes of preaching! However, the emergent church movement's participatory, multimedia worship with multiple stations for activities can be just as rigid or "onto-theo-logical" as any other form of worship--if it is built on a foundation of simple proclamation rather than elicitation and invitation. Can emergent church folks trust in the worshipper's own journey enough to create hospitable spaces for examining one's own journey, and not simply the schizophrenic pursuit of multi-sensory activity?<sup>31</sup>

## V. Theopoetics: an offering of first fruits

*"Imagine that before the abundance of flowers and fruits, nature should send us, beforehand, samples of that which is to come. First fruits, messengers. And so we can, in anticipation, taste the good taste of that which is coming. They don't nourish us. They awaken the appetite. They make us desire, with more intensity."*<sup>32</sup>

Theopoetics operates at the level of paradigm change about how to write, how to work as an activist, and how to create meaningful worship and ritual experiences, by providing first fruits, aperitifs of the world to come. The Beloved Community proclaimed by ancient and modern prophets is ultimately characterized by deep and surprising hospitality--hospitality for each believer and agnostic, hospitality for the enemy and friend alike, hospitality for all species and all life. More than just a kind of writing, theopoetics is a hospitable and elicitive stance--on the page (inviting more writing and speaking), in the streets (eliciting narrative rather than shouting answers), and in ritual/worship space (deepening each one's knowledge of self, Divine, world, Other). It is a style which tastes so good that one wants more--more revolution, more of the grace-filled Divine, more writing that tweaks and questions--more blossoms, more dreams, more loves. It creates enchantment which ultimately offers life to those dead in soul or spirit, a resurrection of the soul and the body.

<sup>1</sup> See Alves, "Theopoetics: Longing and Liberation," in *Struggles for Solidarity: Liberation Theologies in Tension*, edited by Lorine M. Getz and Ruy O. Costa (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 159-71; *The Poet, the Warrior, the Prophet, The 1990 Edward Cadbury Lectures* (; *La Teologia Como Juego* ()), Chapter Seven, "Historias que despiertan el amor (Stories that awaken love)," 101-113.

<sup>2</sup> Rubem Alves, *La Teologia Como Juego*, Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones La Aurora (1982): 102 my translation

<sup>3</sup> Rubem Alves, *Poet, Warrior, Prophet*, Philadelphia: Trinity Press International (1990): 22-3523

<sup>4</sup> Rubem Alves, *La Teologia Como Juego*, Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones La Aurora (1982): 102 my translation

<sup>5</sup> Rubem Alves, "Theopoetics: Longing and Liberation," in *Struggles for Solidarity: Liberation Theologies in Tension*, edited by Lorine M. Getz and Ruy O. Costa, Minneapolis: Fortress (1992): 170

<sup>6</sup> The term theopoetics emerged from conversations within the Society for Art and Religion in Contemporary Culture (founded 1960), and received attention via the work of Amos Wilder (whose articles on the topic appeared in *Christian Century* in 1975 and later were edited into a book, *Theopoetic*). Wilder attributes the term's genesis to Stanley Romaine Hopper, whose main essays on theopoetics have been collected into an edited volume: *Way of Transfiguration*. Hopper's first public mention of the term was in 1971 at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, in his speech "The Literary Imagination and the Doing of Theology" (the text of which is included in *Way of Transfiguration*). David L. Miller, "Theopoiesis: A Perspective on the Work of Stanley Romaine Hopper," in *Why Persimmons and Other Poems: Transformations of Theology in Poetry*, by Stanley Romaine Hopper, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press (1987): 3.

<sup>7</sup> From Hopper's words, attributed to Heidegger as he commented on Holderlin and Rilke. Stanley Romaine Hopper, *The Way of Transfiguration: Religious Imagination as Theopoiesis*, edited by R. Melvin Keiser and Tony Stoneburner, Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox (1992): 112

<sup>8</sup> Rubem Alves, *La Teologia Como Juego*, Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones La Aurora (1982): 112 - 113 my translation

<sup>9</sup> The phrase "laying patterns in the soul" comes from the work of my mentor Cynthia Jones, cofounder of Diana's Grove, Bunker, MO, a personal growth retreat center using myth and ritual to train leaders for alternative spiritual traditions. Cynthia and Patricia Storm founded Diana's Grove in 1994. See [www.dianasgrove.com](http://www.dianasgrove.com).

<sup>10</sup> Scott Cairns, "Shaping What's Given: Sacred Tradition and Individual Talent," *Image: A Journal of the Art and Religion*, no. 25 (Winter 1999): 77

<sup>11</sup> James Hillman, "Response to Stanley Hopper," David Ray Griffin, editor, *Archetypal Process: Self and Divine in Whitehead, Jung, and Hillman*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press (1989): 264-65. This edited volume includes an exchange between Hopper and John Cobb, Jr., to which Hillman responds in the volume's conclusion.

<sup>12</sup> Amos Wilder, *Theopoetic*, ( )3

<sup>13</sup> "Our technical age, our 'modernity' with all its practical tasks, is one peculiarly characterized by l'oubli des hierophanies, the loss of memory of signs of the sacred, the loss of man himself so far as he belongs to the sacred.... It is the epoch in which our language becomes ever more precise, univocal, in a word more technical, more fitted for those integral formulations which are called, precisely symbolic logic, it is in this same epoch of discourse that we wish to recharge our language, that we wish to start again from the fullness of language." Paul

Ricouer, *Philosophie de la volonte*, vol. II, 1960, Part II, "La Symbolique du mal," pp. 324-325, cited in Amos Niven Wilder, *The New Voice: Religion, Literature, Hermeneutics*, New York: Herder and Herder (1969): 149

<sup>14</sup> Rubem Alves, *La Teologia Como Juego*, Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones La Aurora (1982): 110 - 111 my translation

<sup>15</sup> Rubem Alves, *La Teologia Como Juego*, Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones La Aurora (1982): 110 - 111 my translation

<sup>16</sup> Scott Cairns, "Image Unto Likeness: The Body Breathing Again," *Image: A Journal of the Arts and Religion*, no. 22 (Winter/Spring 1999): 63, (*italic in original*)

<sup>17</sup> Scott Cairns, "Shaping What's Given: Sacred Tradition and Individual Talent," *Image: A Journal of the Art and Religion*, no. 25 (Winter 1999): 79, (*italic in original*)

<sup>18</sup> The phrase comes from Dean Johnson, Assistant Dean and Director of the Plowshares Grant at Goshen College, in his work on postcolonial discourse at Iliff School of Theology, winter 2005, [deannjj@goshen.edu](mailto:deannjj@goshen.edu).

<sup>19</sup> Stanley Hopper, *Way of Transfiguration*, 248-49, citing Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Art-Work," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translated with an introduction by Alfred Hofstadter, New York: Harper & Row (1971): 60-61

<sup>20</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, *Rilke's Book of Hours: Love Poems to God*, translated and edited by Anita Barrows and Joanna Macy, New York: Riverhead (1996): 63

<sup>21</sup> Roberto S. Goizueta, "U.S. Hispanic Popular Catholicism as Theopoetics," in *Hispanic/Latino Theology: Challenge and Promise*, edited by Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz and Fernando F. Segovia, Minneapolis: Fortress (1996): 266

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Scott Holland claims that, far from being restricted to the ivory fortress or the aesthetic effete, this kind of "rhetorical innovation ... will indeed become the chief instrument of cultural and political change." "Self-Creation and Communal Participation: What I've Learned from Walter Rauschenbusch's Backslidden Grandson, Dick Rorty," paper presented at the Young Center of Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA (2001): 4

<sup>24</sup> The workshop was sponsored by Chicago Reclaiming, Inc., [www.chicagoreclaiming.org](http://www.chicagoreclaiming.org), an organization dedicated to building a vibrant spiritual community in the Chicagoland area. For more about Reclaiming, also visit [www.reclaiming.org](http://www.reclaiming.org).

<sup>25</sup> The observation came from Christina Cruz, a member of Jubilee Troupe, an Anabaptist-rooted performance group using techniques of Playback Theater and modern dance to present biblical stories and personal narratives in ways that reinvigorate congregational life and strengthen communities' ability to hold each others stories. See [www.jubileetroupe.org](http://www.jubileetroupe.org).

<sup>26</sup> See for example Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*, San Francisco: Harper (1989): 7

<sup>27</sup> Church of the Brethren Midwest Regional Youth Conference, Manchester College, North Manchester, Indiana, April 16-17, 2005. Ritual plans prepared by Matt Guynn and Jim Chin-worth.

<sup>28</sup> Men's Mythic Weekend, Diana's Grove, Bunker, Missouri, April 22-24, 2005. Leadership team: Matt Guynn, Sunray, Jim Carey, and Jim O'Rourke.

<sup>29</sup> Lyric from a chant by River, February 2005, [www.rivermagic.org](http://www.rivermagic.org).

<sup>30</sup> "Leading to discovery" is one of the central arts of effective spiritual leadership taught at Diana's Grove. Cynthia Jones has said that ritual is "a multi-sensorial prayer that lays patterns in the soul." I am indebted to my training at Diana's Grove for specific ways of achieving this through trance, and inclusive, co-created, participatory ecstatic ritual. Diana's Grove runs a 250-member Mystery School, a leadership development program for those providing spiritual service in alternative spiritual traditions, Bunker, MO ([www.dianasgrove.com](http://www.dianasgrove.com)).

<sup>31</sup> See the writings of Brian McLaren and Sally Morgenthaler, or visit their websites, to enter into this conversation. For McLaren, [www.anewkindofchristian.org](http://www.anewkindofchristian.org); for Morgenthaler, [www.sacramentis.com](http://www.sacramentis.com). Also see [www.emergentvillage.org](http://www.emergentvillage.org) and [www.emergingchurch.info](http://www.emergingchurch.info).

<sup>32</sup> Rubem Alves, *I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body*, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers (2003): 75