

## Homogeneity: Safe or Profane?

### The Journey Toward the True Self: A Study of Genesis 11:1-9

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Genesis 11:1-9 contains the story of the Tower of Babel. In it all the people of the world speak one language. A community traveling from the east decides to build a city and erect a tower on the plains of Shinar in order to make a name for itself and to prevent its dispersion throughout the whole earth. God comes down to see the city and the tower that the people have been building. God's response to the people's action is to confuse their language and scatter them all over the earth.

Traditional interpretation of this text rests on a pride/punishment paradigm, according to which God's response is an act of judgment on the people for attempting to usurp God's dwelling place. I argue that this is a morally destructive interpretation, one that perpetuates the fear of, and inhibits deep communion with, those different from oneself. The new understanding I propose is derived from the hypothesis that the text of Genesis 11:1-9 was constructed by the postexilic as a means of understanding God's true purpose in the exile.<sup>1</sup> The used this story to articulate to the postexilic Israelite community the positive work of God through the trauma of the exile. I show how a fresh exegetical look at Genesis 11:1-9, combined with a psychological analysis both of the community in the text and the community of scholarship responsible for the traditional interpretation of this text, can uncover a way for a morally constructive approach to this passage. I conclude by showing that such an approach is needed to counteract the fear, anxiety, and the unhealthy homogeneity within our faith communities today.

#### Genesis 11:1-9: A Translation

*1 Now in all of the earth there was one language and one speech.*

*2 And when they journeyed from the east and found a plain in the land of Shinar, there they settled down.*

*3 And each one said to their companion, "Come, let us make bricks<sup>2</sup> and burn them" and there was to them the brick for stone and asphalt for mortar.*

*4 And they said, "Come! Let us build a city for ourselves and a tower<sup>3</sup> with its top in the skies and let us make a name for ourselves lest we be scattered upon the face of all the earth.*

*5 And YHWH came down to see the city and the tower, which the human beings had made.*

*6 And YHWH said, "Behold, one people and one language<sup>4</sup> to all of them. And this is defiling<sup>5</sup> of that which they are making. Now nothing will be withheld from them about which they propose to make.*

<sup>7</sup>Come! Let us<sup>6</sup> go down there and let us mix<sup>7</sup> their language so that each one will not hear the language of their companion.

<sup>8</sup>YHWH scattered them from there upon the face of all the land and they ceased building the city.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore its name is called "Babel,"<sup>8</sup> because there YHWH mingled the language of all the land and from there YHWH scattered them upon the face of all the earth.

### **Genesis 11:1-9: Traditional Scholarship and a Case for Re-interpretation**

Much of what constitutes the general theology of those who attend church on Sunday morning has been derived from older scholarship on key biblical texts characterized by the work of Herman Gunkel, U. Cassuto, E.A. Speiser, and Nahum M. Sarna.<sup>9</sup> The work of Theodore Hiebert provides a comprehensive outline of the history of interpretation of Genesis 11:1-9, in which he shows the influence of the Pseudepigraphic texts of *Jubilees* and *Sibylline Oracles* on early Jewish scholarship.<sup>10</sup> This scholarship in turn influenced the early church fathers (Philo, Augustine, Jerome), as well as the reformers Luther and Calvin, thus setting the paradigm of exegesis for centuries.

The traditional scholarship on Genesis 11:1-9 argues that this text originated from the Yahwist source documents and is rooted in the assumption of hubris present in the people wandering from the east. This hubris, evident in their attempt to build a tower to storm the heavens and approach God's dwelling, leads to severe punishment. Thus the confusion of languages and dispersion upon the earth are understood as punishment for the pride of this people. But is human pride what is at issue in this text?

There is wide consensus in both traditional and recent scholarship that the people have a twofold desire to settle down and to make a name for themselves.<sup>11</sup> And recent scholarship for the most part agrees that this first desire is born out of fear of being scattered upon the entire face of the earth.<sup>12</sup> Now the second desire to make a name for themselves can be understood as prideful desire for fame and glory, as traditional scholarship has maintained. But it could also stem from the human need for security and a bounded identity. If we presuppose the perspective of the postexilic community, it is possible to see the story as a way of retelling the journey of the exile. A community that sought unity through homogeneity is scattered by God by means of the exile, to fulfill God's mandate while still remaining God's chosen people. The story of exile then is about God's purposeful actions, actions by which God enables this community to live out God's mandate, rather than the harsh actions of abandonment and destruction likely felt by this community's members. A closer examination of the literary structure of the text, attending to its lexical and grammatical nuances, will serve to confirm this re-interpretation.

David W. Cotter argues this text is more easily understood when analyzed as a concentric diagram—indicating that what humanity has sought to do, God undoes.<sup>13</sup>

- A. v.1: all the earth was of one language
- B. v.2: there
- C. v.3: and they said to one another
- D. v.3: let us make bricks
- E. v.4: let us build for ourselves
- F. v.4: a city and a tower
- X. v.5: YHWH came down to see
- E. v.5: that which the people had built
- D. v.7: come ... let us confuse
- C.v.7: so that they will not understand each other's speech
- B. vv.8,9: from there
- A. v.9: the language of all the earth.<sup>14</sup>

I find this concentric diagram helpful but not without limitations. While I agree that this passage is better understood in a concentric pattern to show the human-divine interplay, I believe that the pattern can illuminate that what humanity has sought to do, God reconciles and makes right, thus indicating God's ultimate grace and provision to the postexilic community. Cotter does not see this because he omits v. 6 entirely from his structure. For him the turning point is v. 5 where YHWH comes down to see what the people have built. According to Cotter, YHWH is provoked to come down because the people, rather than fulfilling God's command to fill the earth, sought to challenge their human finiteness and "approach God's own dwelling," a reading which remains consistent with traditional scholarship.<sup>15</sup> But in order to maintain this pride/punishment motif, Cotter has to leave out v. 6 entirely. A more complete concentric or chiasmic structure in which this verse 6 included appears as follows.<sup>16</sup>

- A. v.1: all the earth was of one language
- B. v.2: there
- C. v.3: and they said to one another
- D. v.3: let us make bricks
- E. v.4: let us build for ourselves lest we be scattered
- F. v.5: YHWH came down to see
- X. v.6: YHWH saw one people and this was *defiling* what they were making
- F. v.7: come ... let us go down there
- E. v.7: let us mix their language
- D. v.8: they left off building the city
- C. v.7: so that they will not hear one another
- B. v.8: from there YHWH scattered
- A. v.9: YHWH mixed the language of all the earth.

This version of the concentric diagram highlights how God comes down to look at the community and sees first one people with one language and pronounces *this* condition

as defiling or profaning their accomplishments. The emphasis then is not on the accomplishments but on the manner in which they have carried them out. This reading turns on the peculiar form of the Hebrew word *haHilläm* in v.6. This word has consistently been translated as “beginning.” However, a more accurate translation is “to defile, profane, or dilute.” If we accept this alternative translation, we can begin to wrestle with the deeper human problem at work in this story – the problem of homogeneity, the desire for which, as I will argue, stems from fear and anxiety. It is this desire that causes the members of this community to find comfort and security in the sameness of their neighbor, ultimately leading them to profane what they set out to accomplish.

Why would this community’s homogeneity profane or defile their accomplishments? God’s mandate in Genesis 1, a text found in the Priestly source material, is for humankind to scatter upon the entire face of the earth, to be fruitful and multiply. It is impossible to scatter upon the face of the earth if you seek to stay close to your own. Scattering would insure diversity, plurality, and a mixture of cultures and languages. God commands this community to scatter upon the face of the earth, but it has sought desperately to remain intact, refusing to scatter, “*lest we be scattered*” (v. 4). Their homogeneity has defiled the product of its labor because what its members have been making is a way to protect themselves out of fear of living the blessing God has for them. Any community intent on maintaining its homogeneity rather than seeking ways to mix, mingle, reconcile, and build alliances with those different from it is in danger of exploiting and oppressing those unlike it in its midst. In this perspective, the community is in essence laying the groundwork for oppression. And this has defiled what this community sought to accomplish on its own.

As God mixes the language, the members of this community begin to hear the tongue of others. It was in this experience that the Israelite community was able to glean meaning from the exile. As we know today, language is vital for building relationships and alliances with those who are not the same as we are. In the “confusion” of tongues, God gave this community the gift of language. By mixing the languages within their homogeneous community, God offered them the possibility of communicating with outsiders, those against whom they had originally been protecting themselves. God’s “forced integration,” though not understood during the exile, could serve as a way to explain the exile to future generations.

Instead of seeing this as a story of punishment, then, where “Yahweh came down to destroy human unity once and for all,” we can understand it as an act of creation. This way of seeing moves the text from a place of disgrace to a place of grace, from a place of God’s abandonment to a place of God’s ordination.<sup>17</sup> Babel is now a place where God mixed, God created, God made something new, God moved. Traditional exegetes would have the “Tower of Babel” serve as an object lesson whose purpose is to warn humanity against the temptation of pride and arrogance; this new understanding can

allow the “Tower of Babel” story to remind us of God’s presence and direction, and God’s ultimate creativity, love and grace.

### **The Psychosocial Implications of Human Development found in Genesis 11:1-9**

It is not surprising that early interpreters and even modern churches have been resistant to the preceding interpretation. A pride/punishment paradigm is much easier to understand and quite honestly leads us to ask fewer questions. We are given a defined code to live by: do not seek to trump God or you will invite severe and potentially life-threatening punishment.

Those in positions of power have most consistently throughout our history been the ones to interpret the Bible to us. For this reason, little reading has been done in the style of *as if*.<sup>18</sup> *As if* reading causes us to get into the shoes of the other long enough to read about how any given text would speak to those not mentioned, or to those who are the victims of oppression within the text. *As if* reading attunes us to other quiet nuances missed by those who live with a sense of privilege. “To read the Bible with such intention means that we must face up to our habits of reading that have been shaped by the ethos and ethics of ordinary and academic life.”<sup>19</sup> It is precisely the lack of this kind of intention that has allowed us to overlook the crux of Genesis 11:1-9. Until we read this passage *as if* lives depended on it, the lives of those who have been the victims of unconscious oppression resulting from the internalized belief that diversity, variety, plurality, and difference was God’s punishment, we are able to escape our responsibility to our other. Once we begin reading the Bible *as if*, we overcome the tendency to gloss over intricate details that may challenge years of traditional scholarship.

The inability to read *as if* stems from a deeper issue, the issue of self-differentiation. Because scholars have been unable to differentiate from their academic system or perhaps even from their own cultural system, they have missed nuances within biblical texts that can lead to new ways of thinking about God and community as represented in the Bible. Ironically, it is this very issue of self-differentiation, and the inability to do so, that is at the heart of the inability of the community in Genesis 11:1-9 to fulfill God’s creational mandate.

### **The Community of Genesis 11:1-9: A Model For Introducing Family Systems Theory**

To expound on the concept of differentiation and its pervasive effects on our being and the systems within which we live, I propose to use the story in Genesis 11:1-9 as a model for introducing Family Systems Theory (FST), a psychological theory introduced by Murray Bowen.<sup>20</sup> FST suggests that when a family has the appearance of extreme togetherness, as the community in our story portrays, it is often due to their emotional “stuck-togetherness.”<sup>21</sup> The community, which sought to settle down in the plain,

apparently had no dissenters in their mix, creating the illusion of complete harmony. However, often the reality within that system is not so harmonious. Individuals within the system learn to function to maintain the stable functioning of the other members, a pattern of behavior which results in an almost incapacitating anxiety. In such systems, if one member seeks to make an adjustment, the other members become destabilized and have to compensate in order to restore harmony or equilibrium.<sup>22</sup>

It is possible that at the time Genesis 11:1-9 was constructed, members of the postexilic community were in danger of becoming deeply enmeshed with each another, due to the trauma of the exile and the loss of identity which inevitably stemmed from it. The story suggests that there was not one person among them willing to challenge the group decision to settle down, although all were presumably aware of the original mandate to be fruitful and multiply. Perhaps those who composed this story were realizing the unity they had strived for and in some ways maintained, at least for a while, was not an actualized, differentiated, healthy unity, but an enmeshed, entangled, and anxious unity. In this perspective, the story serves as a warning, not against striving for excellence in production, but against striving for homogeneous unity as a means to remain protected from being scattered and mingling with the other.

### **The Community of Genesis 11:1-9 Under Psychoanalysis**

We can further illuminate the situation of the community by viewing it from the perspective that psychoanalysis affords on child development. The psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut discusses the development of self in regard to the needs of infants and toddlers from ages 1-3. In this early developmental stage, there is need for an attuned caregiver to provide the necessary components of self-development, components which enable the child to see herself reflected back to her, to develop a strong ego as a safe place in which to begin to find her own self.<sup>23</sup> Without these vital components, the child is in danger of developing a fragmented self. A fragmented self has no benchmark; it is a self that has no way of knowing or gauging her existence and actions on her own; therefore, she must be parasitic on others in order to construct her reality. A fragmented self leaves a child stunted in her ability to know herself and maintain healthy relationships with others until she is able to seek therapeutic attention. Often this fragmentation breeds extreme internal anxiety, which can have many negative consequences, one of which is the inability to emotionally differentiate from family, relationships, or cultural systems to which she has attached to assuage the loss and anxiety felt from lacking a healthy whole self.<sup>24</sup>

It is possible that the postexilic community responsible for constructing our story has experienced spiritual and psychological stunting. We can only imagine that the trauma of the exile and its repercussions – of having to adopt foreign ways of living and worshiping in order to survive in exile – must have had enormous impact on the psychosocial development of the members of this community.

It is also possible that the priestly community was acting out their own internalized fear, seen more clearly now from the other side. Experiences of such devastating loss – whether they occur during the stages of early development, or as mediated through family stories that can perpetuate a cycle of relating for generations – can lead to fragmentation of the self.<sup>25</sup> The fragmented self readily adapts to groups or systems in order to find her “true self.” Loyalty then to those groups becomes paramount and any threat to the unity or identity of the group is sensed as life threatening.<sup>26</sup> Therefore the mandate by God to scatter upon the entire face of the earth, given earlier within this community’s history, was regarded in essence as a death sentence by fragmented selves. These selves, enmeshed within a system, were unable to know their true selves in relation to one another in the larger context of God’s plan. It was essential for them to maintain this enmeshment because it was the only thing they had to tell them who they were. Thus it was not out of pride but out of the deep anxiety produced by a fragmented self that the community sought to make a name for itself, which would set it apart from others and give it a firmer sense of identity.

Anxiety causes human beings to act in dysfunctional ways. Rather than building alliances, anxiety causes them to build barriers. Alliances open up the possibility for challenge to the self-enclosed identity human beings tend to create for themselves. But such a challenge threatens the already fragmented self because she has sought security in something outside of herself, in a human-made structure, be it social (the community “from the east”), psychological (“let us make a name for ourselves”) or physical (“let us build a tower”). This story then shows us in essence the dilemma of the human psyche in regard to embracing God’s mandate. And this dilemma did not disappear with God’s act of grace in mixing the language of the people and dispersing humankind. We continue to see consequences of the fear expressed in this community throughout our world today.

### **Applications of a Morally Constructive Versus a Morally Destructive Interpretation**

The paradigm established by early scholarship regarding this text has significantly impacted the missiology of the church.<sup>27</sup> As we have seen, the crux of early interpretations is found in the unanimous conclusion that the final punishment of humankind is to confuse their language and disperse them across the face of the earth. This is the result of God’s wrath: unity was abolished and chaos unleashed so that humanity would no longer seek to gain independence from their Creator and would know the consequences of their pride for the rest of time. By believing that God, in God’s wrath, cursed the unity of this community and created different languages so that its members could no longer understand each other, we are left with an understanding of a God who ultimately sees the plethora of languages and cultures as a curse rather than as a blessing.

It is no wonder humanity remains so culturally, ethnically, and racially divided. If we have internalized this myth as it has been constructed by the tradition of interpretation of this text, how can there be any hope or vision of a multicultural and multiracial unified future? The only application from this traditional interpretation is that we should find those who look and talk like us and keep our pride in check! But by critically examining this interpretation, we understand more clearly the harm it has had and may continue to have on the psyche and, therefore, on actions of individuals and entire societies.

Take, for example, the case of Apartheid, a political system in South Africa which was theologically supported by the Dutch Reformed Church on the biblical basis of the division of languages and cultures presumably found in Genesis 11:1-9.<sup>28</sup> This harmful institution was dismantled fourteen years ago but to this day, the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (NGK) and the United Reformed Church of Southern Africa (URCSA), remain structurally and governmentally segregated as the NGK refuses to unite with the URCSA because of differences in language and culture.<sup>29</sup> While there are in fact a few African and Colored congregations under the NGK umbrella and there remains a white minority within the URCSA, governmentally the NGK has refused to unite with the church responsible for the composition and adoption of the Belhar Confession. We must not neglect to see how deeply entrenched in the core of our being – language, culture, and community – such theological interpretation has become, not only within our churches but also within society.

Closer to home we see communities complacent in their homogeneity, continually resisting ethnic and cultural plurality and diversity. Over forty years after the Civil Rights Movement we see racial divides becoming more and more accepted and institutionalized in America.<sup>30</sup> Even the attributes which characterize America have become crutches upon which our nation rests in order to avoid the work of integration, diversity, and heterogeneous unity. As Emerson and Smith surmise in their work on evangelicalism and the racial divide,

Choice and freedom are two of the dominant American values that today maintain the racialized society. Contemporaries may view these values as the realization of America's destiny, but these values are at the same time now essential tools in dividing people along socially constructed racial lines.<sup>31</sup>

Where is the church in the midst of this struggle? If we are honest with ourselves, we will have to admit the church too is avoiding this work as evidenced in its homogeneous houses of worship.<sup>32</sup> The church has a responsibility to the world. However, it is increasingly apparent that religious communities have become places where individuals become unhealthily attached and rebel when pushed to live out

God's mandate, to scatter and love their other in risky and sometimes life-threatening ways.

It is essential for individuals within a system to become differentiated from it for any hope of change and renewal within that system and within the culture at large. The church has a responsibility to the world to pave the way for justice and reconciliation. However, this is a threatening task if individuals have not properly differentiated. Along the journey toward justice and reconciliation the self will inevitably be threatened because she will come into contact with something different, something other. And if the self cannot stay intact under this pressure, the church must abandon its mission.

This failure has been a recurring theme in the life of the church at work in the world.<sup>33</sup> If the church is to lead culture toward a more just and reconciled society, it must become properly differentiated. Here lies the crux. If the church is filled with undifferentiated individuals, how is the church as a system to lead the way toward cultural change? Churches have, some may argue, regressed back to the state of this community we read about in Genesis 11:1-9, having become enmeshed in their homogeneous community, enjoying their safety and their settled life. At this rate we are in danger of becoming the community God was attempting to prevent by mixing the language of the community from the east. Churches pride themselves in being unified families when in actuality they have become homogeneous institutions in which members assuage their fear by becoming enmeshed with one another and the larger system.

God's mandate to scatter upon the face of the earth and fill it and cultivate it is mirrored in God's commandment to the Israelites as expressed in the *Shema* : to love God with your whole heart and mind and love your neighbor as yourself. This is repeated again in the New Testament when Jesus states that the greatest commandment is to love God and love your neighbor as yourself. One cannot love her neighbor if she is not in community with her neighbor. One cannot properly know himself, in order to love himself, until he is properly differentiated from his family or societal system. Therefore obedience to God's mandate requires a high level of maturity and the ability to transgress – to perpetuate cultural growth. The question for the church becomes "what is our responsibility to human psychological and community development?" If the church has a mandate to scatter upon the face of the earth, how is it to do that when it tends to create comfortable, settled, homogeneous houses of worship? Rather than challenging parishioners' sense of identity and exploring ways to help them differentiate, we tend to foster enmeshment and lack of individuality for fear of the emotional drama such differentiation would ignite.

It is not until we are able to help our parishioners--and ourselves for that matter – to differentiate that we will be able to read the Bible *as if* others' lives depended on it. It is not until we are able to differentiate from our family (societal) systems that we will be

able to mature and transgress, creating authentic cultural change. It is not until those of us in the white community are able to differentiate from our position of power and privilege in society that we will be able to understand the world from the perspective of our other and therefore authentically engage in multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-lingual communities.<sup>34</sup> It is not until these things occur that the work we do will cease to profane the communities we seek to create.

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<sup>1</sup> I devote a chapter in my honors thesis at New Brunswick Theological Seminary arguing for the possibility that Genesis 11:1-9 be considered, rather than a Yahwist text, as which it has traditionally been considered, as a Priestly text written through a postexilic worldview. For more on this see chapter four of my thesis entitled, "Homogeneity: Safe or Profane? The Journey Toward The True Self" (the full version of this text).

<sup>2</sup> "Let us make bricks": this construct chain *nilBünâ lübênîm* literally means *make brick for brick*. Or another way to translate this construct chain could be *let us whiten or cleanse the brick*, which is particularly interesting if we think of this text as a Priestly text – the would be very familiar with the cleansing of elements necessary for temple construction.

<sup>3</sup> *ûmigDäl* is found in no other early text – J or E. This is a word only found in later texts (Ex 14:2, Num 33:7, and throughout Judges, 2 Kings, Neh).

<sup>4</sup> Notice the first thing YHWH observed was the occurrence of one language *wüSäpâ 'aHat lükulläm*.

<sup>5</sup> And is followed by *haHilläm* this is a hiphil verb which literally means *this (what followed before) is profaning or defiling*. This word occurs only once in the Hebrew Bible in this particular form. However, the Hebrew vowel pointing and sentence construction clearly indicate this is in reference to YHWH's observation that there is one language. This word is traditionally translated as "And this is the beginning;" I believe it is more accurately understood as "And this is defiling that which they are making," which helps us understand the danger of "nothing being withheld from them," for now all that follows and all that is not withheld will be profaned given their "oneness." Even if we use the traditional interpretation of "And this is the beginning" it is still true what God is referring to is their "one language" – their homogeneous way of being together.

<sup>6</sup> *në | rdâ* with a 1cp prefix – *let us go down*. God is referencing God's self as plural. It has been suggested that this is simply God referring to God and the celestial beings. However, there are two distinct occurrences in the Hebrew Bible of God referring to God's self in a plural fashion – here and in Genesis 1:26, believed to be from the P source material. As I point out in my thesis, I believe this indicates further that Genesis 1 and Genesis 11 are to serve as bookends to the Priestly documents regarding Israel's primeval history. (My thanks to Beth Tanner here.)

<sup>7</sup> *Wünäblâ*, meaning *let us mix or mingle*, is only once translated as *confuse* and once translated as *confound* – both occur here in the traditional translation of this passage. However this word occurs thirty-eight times throughout the Hebrew Bible other than these two times, and every other time it is mentioned it is translated as *mixed* (as in the mixing of flour and oil to make a grain offering).<sup>7</sup> This is another example (as with *profaning*, as I will show below) where the traditional translation *confuse* has become institutionalized. It seems our concordances have made special provisions for these translations, which remain unquestioned. This word is more appropriately understood in this text as God *mixing* the language of the people. Mixing the substances for the grain offering is also the work of the priest, which further indicates location of this text within the .

<sup>8</sup> They did indeed receive a name, or at least the place in which they were sent out of received a name. The name given was *Bäbel* which is perhaps a word play on *Bälal* meaning *mixed* or *mingled* because perhaps God's mixing of the language and scattering of the people upon the entire face of the earth was in fact ordained and intentional, in effect, the point of this story, the point to be remembered and therefore given a name.

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- <sup>9</sup> Herman Gunkel, *Commentary on Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 1997), originally written in 1901. U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), originally written in 1949. E.A. Speiser, *Genesis* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964). Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (NY: Schocken Books, 1970).
- <sup>10</sup>Theodore Hiebert, "Babel: Babble or Blueprint? Calvin, Cultural Diversity, and the Interpretation of Genesis 11:1-9," in *Reformed Theology: Identity and Ecumenicity II, Biblical Interpretation in the Reformed Tradition*, eds. Wallace M Alston and Michael Welker (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 127-145
- <sup>11</sup> Bernhard W. Anderson, "Unity and Diversity in God's Creation: A Study of the Babel Story," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 5, 2 (April 1978): 69-81. Walter Brueggeman, *Genesis* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982). See also Hiebert, "Babel," 127-145. These are a few scholars forging a new path of interpretation regarding Genesis 11:1-9.
- <sup>12</sup> See especially Anderson, *Unity* and Hiebert, *Babel*.
- <sup>13</sup> David W. Cotter, O.S.B, "Genesis," *Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2003), 69.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.
- <sup>16</sup> Verse six reads: "And YHWH said, 'Behold, one people and one language to all of them. And this is defiling of that which they are making. Now nothing will be withheld from them about which they propose to make.'" Notes on my translation and the nuances of the Hebrew language here can be read above.
- <sup>17</sup> Gunkel, *Genesis*, 95.
- <sup>18</sup> Gary A. Phillips and Danna Nolan Fewell, "Ethics, Bible, Reading As If," in *Bible and Ethics of Reading*, eds. Danna Nolan Fewell and Gary A. Phillips (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1997), 1-21.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.
- <sup>20</sup> Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation To Generation: Family Process In Church And Synagogue*. (New York: The Guilford Press, 1985), 27.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.
- <sup>23</sup> Andrew Morrison, ed., *Essential Papers on Narcissism* (New York: NYU Press, 1986), 176-177.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 181-186.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.
- <sup>26</sup> Alice Miller, *The Drama of the Gifted Child: The Search for the True Self* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 64-65.
- <sup>27</sup> Hiebert, *Babel*, 127-145.
- <sup>28</sup> For full reference on the development and argument for Apartheid in South Africa, see W.A. Landman, *A Plea For Understanding: A Reply to the Reformed Church in America*, (Cape Town, South Africa: Ned. Geref. Kerk-Uitgewers, 1968).
- <sup>29</sup> "Chances of unity in the church faded late last year, when NG congregations reacted overwhelmingly negatively to the notion of church unity, especially over Belhar. Boesak told the synod they heard the reasons for the rejection of Belhar was that NG Church members saw it as a political document that reminded them of apartheid. Issues like land reform, affirmative action and white people's loss of power also influenced them negatively about unity. Boesak said there was no theological motivation against church unity. As far as he was concerned, the problem was that the NG Church was unable to meet evangelical demands in view of the political views of its members. This meant only one thing: That 'the demon of racism' had not yet fully left the NG Church." Beeld Neels Jackson, "Demon of racism' in NG Church," News 24 South Africa, February 10, 2008, [www.news24.com/News24/South\\_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442\\_2403100,00.html](http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_2403100,00.html). Accessed: 10 February 2008.

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<sup>30</sup> Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided By Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 154 -168. Emerson and Smith derive information from social and cognitive psychologists to help articulate the growing problem of the racial divide in houses of worship.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>32</sup> Emerson and Smith estimate that “because 90% of African Americans attend predominately black congregations, at least 95% of white Americans – and probably higher – attend predominately white churches,” *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>33</sup> Emerson and Smith draw a brief but thorough survey of 265 years of race and religion in America highlighting patterns along the way, which help illuminate the systemic presence of racialization in the church, *Ibid.*, 21-49.

<sup>34</sup> Adam D. Galinsky, Joe C. Magee, M. Ena Inesi, and Deborah H Gruenfeld, “Power and Perspectives Not Taken,” *Psychological Science* 17, 12 (December 13, 2006): 1068-1074.