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# A Word-and-Flesh Profession: A Response to White and Brueggemann

## **Abstract**

Speech remakes the world through a relationship among words, speaker, and hearer. On one hand, this view of the human encounter as essentially rhetorical precludes an understanding of speech as purely subjectivist or emotivist self-expression. On the other hand, this same view of human speech interaction precludes the understanding of speech acts as mere descriptions of previously discovered or reasoned truth, either empirical or abstract. Professor White reaffirms this triad among words, speaker, and hearer with what he has identified as the “deeply reciprocal” dynamic of language. Professor Brueggemann also describes the speech acts between Moses, Abraham, and their God as community-constituted and relational. The author returns the discussion of this triadic relationship among words, speaker, and hearer. For now, however, she asks the reader to take the “we” language, what Professor Brueggemann has elsewhere termed testimonial, as an invitation to hear what has happened, and what is truth in a legal controversy.

## **Keywords**

James Boyd White, Walter Brueggemann, Speech, Language

## **Disciplines**

Discourse and Text Linguistics | Other Law

# A Word-And-Flesh Profession: A Response to White and Brueggemann

by Marie A. Failing\*

Let me begin by acknowledging that some of us in this audience might think me arrogant or abrasive to begin an address using the plural “we” or “us” and to proceed with Christian language and lawyer narrative language even though I am reasonably sure our assembly here is only partly Christian and partly lawyers. The “we” language, which assumes a shared community, at first blush may seem to include everyone; but many of us are right to be troubled by it, both as a matter of hospitality and as a matter of telling the truth about the world. Indeed, most of us may more easily remember that we are a religiously pluralistic community than recognize that lawyers live in multiple communities or *nomoi* with world views that are often as irreconcilable as religious beliefs. If you are puzzled by that claim, I dare you to put an animal rights lawyer in the same room with a medical research university attorney!

In writing the text, I started with “we” as an address, not with “I” or with “you,” because of a common ground I believe I share with both Professor White and Professor Brueggemann about the way in which speech remakes the world through a relationship among words, speaker, and hearer. On one hand, this view of the human encounter as essentially rhetorical precludes an understanding of speech acts as purely subjectivist or emotivist self-expression. On the other hand, this same view of human speech-interaction precludes an understanding of

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speech acts as mere descriptions of previously discovered or reasoned truth, either empirical or abstract. Professor White reaffirms this triad among words, speaker, and hearer with what he has identified as the “deeply reciprocal” dynamic of language: “Whenever a person wishes to speak to another, he must speak a language that has its existence outside himself, in the world he inhabits.”<sup>1</sup>

“For while a person acts both with and upon the language that he uses, at once employing and reconstituting its resources, his language at the same time acts upon him.”<sup>2</sup>

“Every writer [and we might add speaker] speaks to an audience and in doing so of necessity establishes a relationship with that audience . . . .”<sup>3</sup>

Professor Brueggemann also describes the speech acts between Moses, Abraham, and their God as community-constituted and relational. He claims that Israel is a “‘culture of interpretation’ . . . a set of social relationships in which the ongoing interpretive act is itself definitional and constitutive of what mature people do.”<sup>4</sup>

I want to return to a discussion of this triadic relationship among words, speaker, and hearer. For now, however, I ask you to take the “we” language I use as what Professor Brueggemann has elsewhere termed testimonial,<sup>5</sup> an invitation to hear what has happened and what is the truth; but as only one witness’s testimony, indeed, as the testimony of a corroborating witness to much of what you have already heard here.

1. JAMES BOYD WHITE, *WHEN WORDS LOSE THEIR MEANING: CONSTITUTIONS AND RECONSTITUTIONS OF LANGUAGE, CHARACTER, AND COMMUNITY* 6 (1984).

2. *Id.* at 8.

3. *Id.* at 15.

4. Walter Brueggemann, *The Endless Task of Interpretation*, 53 *MERCER L. REV.* 1019, 1021 (2002).

5. WALTER BRUEGGEMANN, *THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT* 120-21 (1997). Brueggemann argues for an interpretation of the Biblical revelation as testimonial. In trial,

there is a reality in question, and there are different, competing accounts of what that reality is (or was) . . . . The actual event, however, is enormously supple and elusive and admits of many retellings, some of which are only shaded differently, but some of which are drastically different.

The court, however, has no access to the “actual event” besides the testimony. It cannot go behind the testimony to the event, but must take the testimony as the “real portrayal . . . .” [T]he testimony is a public presentation that shapes, enjoins, or constitutes reality . . . . [W]hen the court makes a decision and agrees to accept some version of reality based on some testimony, the testimony is accepted as true—that is, it becomes true.

*Id.*

You have understandably heard much about words today, or more broadly, speech-acts—the ways in which lawyers and theologians speak and write to an audience. We are a profession of words, to be sure. We make and unmake worlds by the way in which we speak and write to particular others—including Yahweh—in particular contexts. Like smiths with amazingly clean hands, we have been taught to mimic our elders, to fire, solder, and polish words while holding before us a “vision of what is ultimately intended,”<sup>6</sup> to bring the discipline of craft and character to bear in our lawyering.

But we are a word *and* flesh profession. I make this small amendment to what has been said because I believe it is too easy for lawyers to get lost in their words, to imagine that the world is meaningfully constituted only by words that make and reflect experience. But the word and flesh coexist, they depend on each other and upon the opposition that each makes against the other. We are witnesses to a struggle where word hides flesh and behind flesh, where flesh hides word and behind word. We are unmaskers and makers of masks. We help word and flesh hide from each other, and we expose them, including the aspects of the flesh which are out of reach (and certainly the control) of our minds, that is, beyond what might commonly be called experience—a first word and flesh reality.

Professor White has reminded us of the tentative, broken character of what we can know and say about truth and justice.<sup>7</sup> Professor Brueggemann has reminded us about the riskiness of speaking the word.<sup>8</sup> Yet we do claim to be about something that is more than partial, tentative, illusory, and broken; we claim that there is some ground on which we can call “law-doing” just or compassionate.

Being a good Lutheran girl, I must join both Professor White in his skepticism that we will find the truth of justice and Professor Brueggemann in his awe of the human project of telling God that we expect Him to be just. Standing on Professor White’s side for a moment, we who earn bread advocating the truth of truth cannot forget that word can hide truth that only flesh can disclose, and flesh can deceive us as only word can ferret out. If words alone could find falsehood, we would not bother with cross-examination; computers that can cross-match words would be enough. In cross-examination, as we wield a transcript in our hands, throwing the words of previous testimony against the present witness, words are found out by flesh: the truth becomes apparent in

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6. Brueggemann, *The Endless Task*, *supra* note 4, at 1033.

7. James Boyd White, *How Theology Might Learn From Law*, 53 *MERCER L. REV.* 1009, 1010 (2002).

8. Brueggemann, *The Endless Task*, *supra* note 4, at 1023.

startled eyes, a damp brow, the way a witness moved in the chair. In fact, falsehood is so blatantly disclosed in flesh that we usually do not even need to remind the jury, "Did you see how that witness shifted uneasily when I questioned him?"

But flesh can also hide what only the word can disclose. My client Sharon L. flounces down into a chair by my desk, smiling and vigorous, ready to discuss why the welfare department will not give her more food stamps. I apprehend that this is a woman at peace, uncowed by the welfare worker, and seemingly unbroken by the fear that she has hardly enough food for her kids. As Sharon, still smiling, slowly dusts off each betrayal by her worthless husband like a painfully remembered souvenir, I come to understand that flesh is lying to me, that the serenity was painted on her face — by Valium. All the words in the world cannot ferret out the truth that only flesh can tell, while the flesh, impervious to cross-examination, may sometimes be unmasked only by the word.

Indeed, all of the words in the world cannot bring the justice that only flesh can bring. In the Biblical story, the dishonest judge finally grants the widow her justice<sup>9</sup> not because of her eloquence, but because she shows up! He can ignore the validity of her arguments but not the face which bears down upon him incessantly in her need.<sup>10</sup> There are no possible words that can deliver the justice that our clients, showing up and staring another person in the face, can get.

Ironically, it is a mark of the word-and-flesh game lawyers play that we are in it for the masking as well. We humans all need shelter, both from the True God who comes looking for us in His terrible wrath and the human self-made gods who come to look for our real selves; both of them seek to condemn us to death. Like Adam and Eve, we too seek shelter, not only against God, and not only for our sins, but also for our sexual intimacies and excretions, our exhausted vulnerability. If the True God or those human self-appointed gods are able to look upon us in all our nakedness, we *will* die. We'll die a real death at the hands of the real God; and when the human gods get through with us, the shame-death of being uncovered that they mete on us will seem like a thousand real deaths. So it is that we lawyers find ourselves in the business of hiding our Adams and Eves from the gods of state, community, spouse,

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9. *Luke* 18:1-8 (Oxford Annotated). In the story, the judge finally gives in to the widow, reasoning, "though I neither fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming." *Luke* 18:4-5.

10. See, e.g., EMMANUEL LEVINAS, *TOTALITY AND INFINITY: AN ESSAY ON EXTERIORITY* 194-204 (Alphonso Lingis trans., Duquesne University Press 1969) (1961).

or parent. With the banal masks of the right to privacy, rules of evidence, the right against search and seizure, we cover up our clients' secret sins, and we put figgy leaves over their most intimate human experiences. Our feebleness as protectors, though, is apparent: sometimes we can perhaps hide some of our clients' thoughts and words and closets and selves from John Ashcroft and the police, but though we try to stand up like Moses for our clients, we cannot hide our collective Gomorrohic sins from God.

This "hiding-work" is but one example of the way lawyers respond to the broken life the world may be made to give. Professor White notes that we bear a creative responsibility here. We *can* speak reality and thereby change it,<sup>11</sup> we *can* create what is just as real as real life, the institutions and practices which make it possible for us to have hope, to believe in an "otherwise," even if we cannot with the naked eye espy that "otherwise." Or, more darkly, as Professor Brueggemann describes, we stand, incessant as Abraham, not simply uttering a holiness which we can only imagine but also bartering with our God to relent on His plan to destroy our pitiful little world because of our evil, first for the sake of fifty righteous men, then for ten,<sup>12</sup> and then (as we push beyond the text) for just our own sake. Yet even though we cannot make a world as real as the words we speak toward it, even though we cannot know the really real world toward which we speak, we speak anyway, aware of our ignorance and uncertainty. Hear what both Professors White and Brueggemann say: without the tension embedded in our uncertainty toward the certain, the frayed tautness of rope joining our ignorance and understanding, there is no earthly hope.

In understanding this human hope, though, let us remember that word needs flesh just as flesh needs word, two tightly braided strands for strength. Without flesh, word makes idols, obliterating the tension between our creatureliness and our creativity. Because words can build worlds as Professor White suggests, not simply legal institutions but a whole imagination about how we live and breath and move and, indeed, about who our God reveals Himself to be, words need a corrective. Ethicist William May terms this "corrective vision."<sup>13</sup> But even vision, aided by gargantuan telescopes, can take in a whole universe, imagining through sight what cannot be touched or tasted. Without flesh, which is here-and-now, grounded in and bounded by what we cannot deny even if we cannot understand it, words can make the world of Adolf Hitler

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11. White, *How Theology Might Learn*, *supra* note 7, at 1010-11.

12. Brueggemann, *The Endless Task*, *supra* note 4, at 1024-25.

13. WILLIAM F. MAY, *THE PHYSICIAN'S COVENANT: IMAGES OF THE HEALER IN MEDICAL ETHICS 2* (2d ed. 2000).

into a Garden of Eden; words can convince some that others who recite Torah or Qur'an are monstrously evil, and still others that men who must eat each day or die are immortal beings.

Flesh defies word. The experience of bodily hunger breaks apart any ideology that human beings are gods whose meanings or selves are made of words. Mortal passion that obliviously gives birth to a squirming, demanding "other" wrecks precisely the kind of willful constructions of our world that Professor White describes as the lawyer's or theologian's work. Hitler's words made a world that almost destroyed more than a whole race of flesh, and he was not alone in history. But flesh, overcoming, has borne Jew upon Jew (and Roma upon Roma) into the world in utter contempt for the now crumbled world made of Hitler's words.

Flesh reminds us, too, of the impotence of words. My colleague Peter bounds into my office, his eyes wider than Christmas and literally leaping for joy like the lame man throwing away his cane at Jesus's touch. Our clients Wendell and Mary have won a great victory in the Indiana Supreme Court. The words of the opinion transform their legal condition as beggars dependent upon the largesse of the Indiana overseer of the poor into a right to survive! I read, disbelieving; Peter tries to contact Mary to tell her the good news. But Mary is nowhere to be found; the words that almost speak Brueggemann's "covenantal neighborliness"<sup>14</sup> to the poor outcasts of Indiana are as nothing to her. It seems that once she realized that she would get only words from this court, only promises that might someday be delivered, she went in search of real food and a real place to sleep for her husband and children. If we who are lawyers forget flesh, Mary and her family will not be fed, no matter how many life-changing words we manage to weasel into a court opinion.

So too, flesh needs to be challenged by word to hope. Sometimes it is flesh that looms Evil, cutting the fragile cord that binds reality to alterity, and lawyers *must* make words or people will die. Without lawyers' words, building a place of safety and hiding her within, Darcy stands hopeless against her batterer, watching the reality of his stone fist slam against her body even when she thinks she has escaped to a place of safety.

Of course, the world is harsh; sometimes words are only diffidatio, gestures of defiance and renunciation of the world that flesh makes. Juanita M. and I have come back from court where we have been trying to keep her on welfare benefits so she can finish nursing school, her only

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14. Brueggemann, *The Endless Task*, *supra* note 4, at 1027.

real hope of a better life. The judge has mocked her testimony, especially merry at the cross-examination that discloses that she belly-dances; then he has ignored her, fiddling with his adding machine. I am crushed by the court's scorn and defeated by my powerlessness either to spare her that shame or to shame the judge into humanness. Juanita tosses her Irish red hair in defiance. Oblivious to the fact that we have probably lost the case, she is jubilant because for the first time, she has been able to tell her side to someone who has been made to listen. Juanita's diffidatio bespeaks hope in the power of words that I cannot muster at that time, though as it turns out, her hope is more on target than my despair. When the opinion comes, it turns out that we have won. Professor White would say, an opportunity "to claim meaning for [her] experience on the [we might say very hopeless-seeming] conditions on which it is granted us to do so . . . ."<sup>15</sup>

In light of this sometimes impotence of words, let me return to the problem of speaking "we" with which I started, the problem Professor White more than Professor Brueggemann struggles with. If speaking is always relational and particular, then is Israel's experience of God only Israel's and no one else's?<sup>16</sup> Or is Jesus's baptism or my baby grandson's baptism only meaningful to the Christian community gathered around the word and water?<sup>17</sup> To ask the question a different way, if as Professor White argues, there is "no easy, authoritative way" to establish a universal truth, if there is no place from within our tradition that we can adjudicate its relation to another,<sup>18</sup> if there is ultimately no meaning in our tradition except within the circle of those who believe and assent to it,<sup>19</sup> then what is the point of the Christian lawyer's testimony after all?

Here I would follow Augustine (and, I think, Professor Brueggemann) on what is missing in the conversation. Augustine rejects the divorce of word from flesh, of experience and speaking from embodiment. He castigates the Stoic's or Platonist's futile attempts to disembody a pure soul but also rebukes those<sup>20</sup> "who are so inclined to sensuality that they cannot enjoy anything unless they can experience it with their senses."<sup>21</sup> Pronouncing that "the word made flesh" was both embodied and ensouled, Augustine puts forth a new duality: He who lives according

15. White, *How Theology Might Learn*, *supra* note 7, at 1011.

16. Compare Brueggemann, *The Endless Task*, *supra* note 4, at 1032-33.

17. See White, *How Theology Might Learn*, *supra* note 7, at 1014-15.

18. See *id.* at 1017.

19. See *id.* at 1014.

20. SAINT AUGUSTINE, *CITY OF GOD* 295-296 (Gerald G. Walsh et al. trans., 1958).

21. *Id.* at 296.

to the spirit lives not against his flesh, but according to the truth, that is, according to God. He who lives by the flesh lives according to himself, disparaging the Creator and his creatureliness, abandoning Goodness<sup>22</sup> "in pursuit of some created good."<sup>23</sup>

What is missing from our worrying about whether the language of "we" is an imperialism when it is employed in a story about God, or about whether theologians, even more than lawyers, are tempted to the idolatry of speaking outside of the practice of their own tradition and its assenting community, is our remembrance of *dabar*: what God speaks is done.<sup>24</sup>

What God speaks is *done* means first that, unlike human activity, God's speech, act, and fulfillment are not broken apart from each other. God does not, like lawyers, have to surrender to the fact that in court His speech does not immediately result in fulfillment, that He cannot move the unjust judge to compassion for Juanita M. God is not bent to the reality that even the speech-act of a breakthrough court opinion may not bring food to the table of Mary and Wendell and their children. God does not have to acknowledge the possibility, as we lawyers do, that our speaking/acting may not create meaning and hope in our client's lives, even with all of the successful courtroom victories we muster.

What *God* speaks is done: God's revelation is not just a foreign film for those who pay admission and are willing to read the subtitles. Jesus the Jew speaks in the synagogue, to be sure, but not only in the synagogue among the chosen. And God does not just show and tell; not only is the telling always *doing*, but God's *dabar* is as much hidden as revealed. We may have to be exceedingly careful to acknowledge that God is a trickster in revealing Himself,<sup>25</sup> and that we are also unrepentant tricksters, tricking even ourselves with claims about how and when God speaks. We must, with Professor Brueggemann, "protest[] against and resist [] every easy settlement, every positivism, every absolutism that seeks to close off dynamism of the will of the Holy God encountered

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22. *Id.* at 299-302.

23. *Id.* at 302.

24. MILNER S. BALL, *THE WORD AND THE LAW* 109, 119-20 (1993). Thanks also to Professor Diane Jacobson from Luther Seminary for reminding me of this concept.

25. See, e.g., Gerhard O. Forde, *Naming the One Who Is above Us*, in *SPEAKING THE CHRISTIAN GOD: THE HOLY TRINITY AND THE CHALLENGE OF FEMINISM* 113-14 (Alvin F. Kimel, Jr., ed., 1992). Forde eloquently describes one of Luther's key claims, that God is always "[l]ying] in wait for us in our attempts to speak of [H]im," and at the same time hiding Himself "from us in inescapable presence and so will not be caught or used by us. God . . . is . . . 'the absconder,' the one who will not to be seen by us in [H]is 'naked majesty.'" *Id.*

at Sinai."<sup>26</sup> But we must *also* avoid the temptation to make God as small as the "we" of particular communities. We must acknowledge that God's *dabar* cannot be contained within these communities. God *does* precede and shatter the conventions of any community, and every knee—not just the theologian's or the Christian's, but the philosopher's and the anthropologist's—must bow, not because coerced, mind you, but in wonderment at what is spoken, done, and accomplished.<sup>27</sup> Even if he or she does not bow at the name of Jesus, and I do *not* mean to suggest this to be a trivial difference, every Muslim who surrenders knows the wall-shattering thunder of the Almighty, every Jew who davens, every Anishinabe who offers tobacco to the Great Spirit, every evangelical Christian who lifts her hands to the sky.

Because what God speaks is *done*, God actually speaks-enacts holiness, as Professor Brueggemann says, that "will and energy for neighbor-building that grounds neighborliness in the deepest measures of reality."<sup>28</sup> Word and flesh are both vital in this project, on our side as well as God's. Take eating, a flesh-act. Mark Buchanan argues that Christians should fast because fasting "teaches us to have God's heart for the hungry, the oppressed, the naked, the homeless. When we taste a little brokenness ourselves, we have a greater sense of urgency to repair for others what is broken. Fasting is meant to scour our gut"<sup>29</sup> so that the idea "of being wholly nourished and sustained by God's word"<sup>30</sup> does not become "a nice, sweet and totally irrelevant idea."<sup>31</sup> In the same way, word can scour our gut and teach us how to have God's heart. So far, empathy. But is there more?

Simone Weil reasoned, "To live the death of a being is to eat it. The reverse is to be eaten. Man eats God and is eaten by God."<sup>32</sup> We who

26. Brueggemann, *The Endless Task*, *supra* note 4, at 1021-22.

27. See, e.g., Howard Lesnick, *The Religious Lawyer in a Pluralist Society*, 66 *FORDHAM L. REV.* 1469 (1998). Lesnick describes the

profound response to the experience of awe and wonder, that sense of the sacred embedded in the mundane, that . . . is at the heart of the religious consciousness. That experience generates an imperative, in religious terms a "call" or a "leading" to act, and the language of divine sovereignty serves to crystallize that feeling of being impelled, to keep its force in place in our consciousness, notwithstanding the inevitable ebbing of the immediate experience itself.

*Id.* at 1475.

28. Brueggemann, *The Endless Task*, *supra* note 4, at 1033.

29. Mark Buchanan, *Go fast and live*, 118 *CHRISTIAN CENTURY* 16, 19 (2001).

30. *Id.* at 16.

31. *Id.*

32. Alec Irwin, *Devoured by God: Cannibalism, Mysticism, and Ethics in Simone Weil*, 51 *CROSS CURRENTS* 257, 258 (2001) (quoting SIMONE WEILL, *OEUVRES COMPLÈTES* VI.2 454 (Paris: Gallimard 1997)).

are Christians sometimes forget that we eat God in the Eucharist because we do not want to feast on flesh; we want the words only. We do not want to drink “that blood, that cruelty, and that violence”;<sup>33</sup> we want it “leached off[,] [p]lared away[,] [h]idden behind platitudes or the commonplace appearance of a sweet, languid Jesus”<sup>34</sup> on the cross, not the blistering flesh, asphyxiation and the dogs eating away at dying flesh, oblivious to the cruelty.<sup>35</sup> We eat that flesh, no less than the dogs.

Is this no more than cannibalism, flesh sated for the sake of the flesh, the self, so that we are indeed thrown back on ourselves and our particular communities for meaning? Luther argued that the Eucharist was precisely *not* flesh-eating for the sake of our own individual or corporate flesh, our own desire to build up personal or collective god-muscles, any more than the Word is consumed for the sake of our own power, to make us lawyers the gods ordering our own justice or us theologians the gods creating our own salvation stories. Rather, the Eucharist both creates and shatters the boundaries of community. We eat God’s flesh with God’s Word (saying, doing, and fulfilling at the same time) for and with the absolutely other neighbor, as the neighbor does for and with us.<sup>36</sup> Again notice, this is *not* a human doing and *not* a chosen human community. This is *God’s* doing; the Word becomes flesh and dwells *among* us, a table to which we are all invited personally, Jew and Greek, male and female, Osama Bin Laden as much as Mother Theresa.

If we (those of us who are Christians at least) imagine the communities in which we live, religious or legal, as self-dependent and self-

33. Barry Moser, *Blood & Stone: Violence in the Bible & the Eye of the Illustrator*, 51 CROSS CURRENTS 219, 225 (2001).

34. *Id.*

35. *Id.* at 225-26.

36. See Kyle A. Pasewark, *The Body in Ecstasy: Love, Difference, and the Social Organism in Luther’s Theory of the Lord’s Supper*, 77 JOURNAL OF RELIGION 511, 514-15 (1997). Pasewark argues that for Luther, the

proper benefit of the sacrament is communicated to the recipient *not* as a *direct* result of the consumption of the sacramental meal but *indirectly* from the neighbor. Luther pointedly reverses the radicals’ position and constitutes the proper sacramental act as a triadic event between God, neighbor, and communicant, not a monadic act of the communicant or even a dyadic act between God and communicant. The other is placed at the heart of the social body. . . . Luther’s ecstatic theory of the Supper is able to account for participation in the inner life of another in social relations, to include difference and guilt in productive social relations, and therefore to attach to others in love *because* of (rather than in spite of) the neighbor’s real otherness.

*Id.* at 515-16.

referential, as “making no sense outside the circle of their own community” because they rely on the meaning their believers make out of assent and not on what God does, we will not only have to worry about the brokenness or tentativeness of the meaning we within our own interpretive communities can make. We will come to see that our communities are inescapably perverse, denying that word and flesh are *only* for the sake of God and the absolutely other neighbor, the one outside.

The miracle of the Christian Eucharist is that the words are no different than the words we use each waking moment to make our communal meanings, and the bread no different from our daily bread. Yet when they are God’s Word and God’s Flesh, those outside the walls of the community and those inside stop their enmity and make peace. To the extent that Christian lawyers need to hide flesh from violent flesh, to protect word from violent word, we have more than a figgy leaf of rhetoric, one human being speaking to another in hope for some glimpse of that alterity where justice flows down like waters. For the huge arms and welcoming voice of the Word made Flesh are there to hold our creatureliness. To the extent that word and flesh create worlds, we do not need to make a sturdy rope between reality and alterity. Here today and for all is the justice that God speaks and suffers as divine and human, here amidst the uncertainty, the incompleteness, the inadequacy. Hope becomes not longing, waiting for fulfillment, but fulfillment standing in solidarity with longing, even for lawyers.

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