

Diachronic Worldview Themes

1. History

2. Story and Myth

“God reveals himself to us not in a metaphysical formulation or a cosmic fireworks display but in the kind of stories that we use to tell our children who they are and how to grow up as human beings, tell our friends who we are and what it's like to be human. Story is the most adequate way we have of accounting for our lives, noticing the obscure details that turn out to be pivotal, appreciating the subtle accents of color and form and sense that give texture to our actions and feelings, giving coherence to our meetings and relationships in work and family, finding our precise place in the neighborhood and in history. Story relishes sharp-edged, fresh-minted details; but story also discovers and reveals the substrate of meaning and purpose and design implicit in all the details. Small and large are accorded equal dignity and linked together in an easy camaraderie by means of story (Peterson 1997, 3-4).

- too often we read stories and extract 'spiritual principles' and 'moral guidelines' or 'theological truths' and the corset ourselves in them to force a godly shape on our lives. As we enter story we enter and imaginatively participate, and find ourselves in a more spacious, freer and more coherent world. Story brings us into more reality, not less. It sharpens both sight and insight. It is the primary means we have for learning what the world is, and what it means to be human in it. From our childhood we demand stories.

What do these stories tell us about living this human life well, living it totally? Primarily and mostly they tell us that it means dealing with God. It means dealing with a lot of other things as well: dangers and parents and enemies and friends and But always, at the forefront and in the background of the circumstances, events and people is God. . . . And the God with whom we have to do can never be dealt with in an antiseptic theological laboratory as a speciality of heaven, but only on this earth--' (Peterson 1997, 4-5),

We can't be human without God. We can't get away from God: he's there whether we like it or not, whether we know it or not.

We have a harder time taking the human elements of Jesus' story seriously than the divine. We've had gods aplenty. We don't know what it means to be human. God in the flesh is too close for comfort. There are miracles and ecstasy and supernatural in the Christian life, but they're never an escape from our humanity, never a shortcut around our humanity. God reveals himself to us in our humanity.

3. Ritual and Drama