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re Today's NYTS Sing-Sing on National Public Radio

We heard it, & our hearts leaped with joy & praise! Our children heard it, & phoned to tell us. The Mass. UCC Minister & President, Bennie Whiten, opened a clergy conference this morning with reference to it....Big NYTS PR event! I hope the seminary will use both the audio & the transcript....A few comments:

1 The segment said the program began "16 years ago." Seems to me more like 20: I was still full-time at the seminary, & we've lived on Cape Cod for 18 years.

2 I think it was 21 years ago that a doctoral student I was mentor to bought ten old schoolbuses (@ \$100) & put them between the walls of S-S for conjugal visits (1st in NYS prisons, though Cal. & Fla. preceded).

3 According to the Bible's **patronal paradigm**, Jesus both does something for us & in return expects something from us. The latter truth was crystal-clear in the witness of one NYTS S-S student (on the segment)--something like this: I thought Christianity was about Jesus as my personal Savior, and the seminary showed me that I was to pay attention also to what Jesus says I should do in the world, about the world.

4 That was the heart of my side in my '66 NCC Triennium debate with Billy Graham, whom I accused of Orphism, the mystery religion whose sole objective was to get the soul to heaven. Thereafter, Billy began to say things like, "Come to Jesus, go for Jesus."

5 Noam Chomsky rightly points to the grammar under grammar, the ontological base of linguistics. The patronal paradigm is the metaphor under the metaphors in the doctrine of God. In the worlds that wombed the Bible, the all-penetrating power/submission image was this: the patron (in every reach of life) has the power to bless, & the "client" (under the patron) has the obligation/opportunity to please the patron & so receive the blessing(s). (So, in biblical religion, pleasing--not appealing!--God is the central motivator for piety & ethics.)

6 Now see what happens when I correlate the patronal paradigm with G. B. Caird's list of the Bible's main metaphors for God (THE LANGUAGE AND IMAGERY OF THE BIBLE [Eerdmans/80/97], p177): "The language of human relationships furnishes not only the natural vocabulary for talking about obligation to God, but the indispensable vehicle for experiencing it. ¶ In the Bible, the five metaphors in most common use to express God's relationship with his worshippers are king/subject, judge/litigant (the one Walter Brueggemann makes central in his magisterial THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: TESTIMONY, DISPUTE, ADVOCACY [Fortress/98]), husband/wife, father/child, master/servant."

Let's visualize this:

PATRON	KING	JUDGE	HUSBAND	FATHER	MASTER
client	subject	litigant	wife	child	servant

7 As yesterday I was reading the Hebrew text of Ex.3, I noticed that its 1st section ends with God's telling Moses he's no longer his own man but is now an "ebed" (servant) of the Master: the substantival verb for "worship" (vs.12). Worship ritualizes Moses' (& his people's) inferiority to God (not to Pharaoh! not to the Egyptians!)....We who take Scripture seriously must deal with, not dispense with, this superiority/inferiority anatomical structure of our religion, a structure now being obscured (and in radical feminism outrightly denied).

Grace & peace,