

In addition to loving and community-building and motivating to piety and politics (i.e., to devotion and to the uses of one's powers for the glory of God and the good of the planet), *what are we religious leaders doing?* We are training devotees of the Creator of Heaven and Earth to connect, every here and every now, earth with heaven, little life with larger life, human life with its Source and Destiny, body with soul, today with yesterday and tomorrow.

1. In a whimsical way, many nursery rhymes teach the joy of connection-making by presenting nonsense as connection-play: "This is the farmer sowing his corn,/That kept the cock that crowed in the morn,/That waked the priest all shaven and shorn,/That married the man all tattered and torn,/That kissed the maiden all forlorn,/That milked the cow with the crumpled horn,/That tossed the dog,/That worried the cat,/That killed the rat,/That ate the malt,/That lay in the house that Jack built (and so on ad infinitum)." Always in such rhymes, interest is held by retaining just enough plausibility so that nonsense's victory is never complete--as (though here undeliberately!) in much theology I've heard and read. My point here: *Connection-making is fun*. If adults didn't get so all-fired bloody serious about it, it could be both more fun and more profitable to the project of becoming truly human. "Poetry" is the primary literary genre for connection-making, and thus I am speaking about religious leadership as an art (which is one of the things it is). You can tell a religious leader who's more training in philosophy than in art: the ideas s/he works with are soggy-heavy-deadly--dry-propositional.

2. Blind in old age, all Milton's connections for PARADISE LOST (1667) had to be made in his head/heart. The "epic" is the particular kind of poetry that strives to make all connections necessary for seeing/understanding/living life within a particular enchantment (in Milton's case, Christianity, as it was in Dante's; in Homer's, the shift-age from the old gods to glorying in man and man's powers). With awesome connection-power (shouldn't we use it as a model in theological education?), PARADISE LOST reveals depth-understanding of the impulse to freedom and of our rejection when the impulse steps out of bounds to become license....breadth of imaginative vision as the narrative moves from Hell to Chaos, from Pandemonium to Eden, from Heaven to Earth....sharp and accurate perception of the interrelations between morality and knowledge, individual and collective, experiential and historical, biblical and classical.

3. The Greeks had a word for the skill-art I'm talking about: metaphor, a transaction occurring when two people/things/ideas are brought together, connected. Rhetoricians were fond of displacing words from one context to place them in another, giving the word and context both fresh meaning. (A rhetor, orator, esp. good at this was called a metaphorikos.) Thus words are "portable" (metaphores), as Jewish and pagan titles were transported to Jesus in the heat and light of early Christian devotion: a more important linguistic fact than most christologies give it.

4. Depositum connectionis is the deposit-tradition of connections or metaphors from Scripture and historical theology. Scholastics (both Catholic and Protestant--Francis Schaeffer being an instance of the latter) consider this deposit inspired (though doctrinally, Protestant scholastics consider only Scripture inspired). Pascal, while evangelical, transcends both scholasticisms: you must read PENSEES!