

The Commandments and Liberated, Liberating Bonding

Walter Brueggemann

Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia

The people of Israel had just departed from the Egyptian empire. They were clear on only two things. First, they would no longer submit to the brick quotas of the empire. Second, Yahweh the Holy God was the great new fact and force in their life. Indeed, it was precisely Yahweh who had uttered the liberating decree, "Let my people go" (Ex. 5:1, 7:16, 8:1, 20, 9:1, 13). And they had gone! Pharaoh had not wanted them to go, because they were cheap labor. But they had gone. Yahweh was so powerful that Pharaoh could not stop the power of Yahweh for liberation. Now they are free.

I

In saying, "Let my people go," Yahweh had also said, ". . . that they may serve me" (Ex. 7:16, 8:1, 20, 9:1, 13, 10:3). The Exodus was not an offer of unbridled, unqualified, unfocused freedom that had no projection into the future. The Exodus was to embrace a new bondage, that is, a new bonding (cf. Lev. 25:42).¹ The oppressive bonds of Egypt are broken. Now the liberating, covenantal bond of Yahweh is offered. Israel makes its way to Mt. Sinai for the new bonding, to be linked in a covenant with Yahweh that displaces its submission to Pharaoh. Everything for Israel is at stake in this exchange of bondage for bonding.

They arrived at Mt. Sinai. It was an awesome meeting, rooted in the awe of God's holiness. The meeting with Yahweh is enveloped in the terror, splendor, danger, and inscrutability of God's theophany (Ex. 19:16-25).² God comes powerfully into the midst of Israel. God's massive presence intrudes. God's overriding purpose pervades. Israel is caught up in a purpose more powerful than it can comprehend, in a presence more sovereign than it could imagine. The *awe of theophany* moves to the *offer of covenant*. The holy God of liberation commits God's own life to solidarity with Israel. This God is not ashamed from now on to be known as the God of Israel, to be with, care for, and preside over the life of Israel (Heb. 11:16). Yahweh's intention for Israel is not simply a moment of liberating, but an on-going life together in covenant.

But on the way from the awe of theophany to the offer of covenant, there are terms, conditions, stipulations. The centrality of law in Israel means that Yahweh has a determined moral intention for this relation. The God who goes with Israel is not merely an available patron, but a sovereign who will out-govern the empire. The ten commandments are the decree of the inscrutable God for the shape of the new bonded relationship. These commands as decrees

are to be taken as non-negotiable terms for this alternative to the empire. They are policies which require interpretation, but they set the character and shape for new life.³ They specify who God will be in Israel, and they make concrete the institutional life of this odd community whose destiny is in contrast to the empire.

The preacher's task is to set the commandments, the burden of obedience, in the context of the liberating memory. More than that, the preacher's task is to set the listening community in the context of the Exodus story, so that it becomes our story. We are the ones who have been offered a liberation from the empire. We are the ones invited to a new bonding in covenant. We are the ones who watch in awe for the inscrutable presence and power of Yahweh. We are the ones who have been graced with the terms on which new life is possible. That is why the commandments begin, "I am Yahweh who brought you out of the house of bondage." What an opportunity for the preacher, to invite the congregation to begin acting outside the loyalties and possibilities, policies and prospects of the empire!

On this beginning point for obedience, church people need help,

*in seeing that deliverance from imperial power which dehumanizes and crushes is now available for us.*⁴

*in knowing that the alternative to the empire and its killing brick quotas is not unqualified, autonomous freedom, but brings a new summons to obedience,*⁵

*in trusting that the terms of covenant law are an offer of bonding freedom which is the only lasting freedom that can be.*⁶

The crucial relation between Exodus and Sinai, between liberation and bonding, is at the center of our preaching task. This preaching now occurs in the American church between two mistaken temptations. On the one hand, there is the mistaken notion that we are rightfully and dutifully children of the empire, so that our proper destiny is to conform politically, submit economically, obey morally whatever power is in charge.⁷ The Exodus narrative refutes such a conformist posture, because we are destined for the liberation given from God from every such tyranny, political, intellectual, theological (cf. Gal. 5:1).⁸ On the other hand, there is the mistaken notion that having been made free, we are free to do whatever we want and be whomever we choose. The Sinai narrative refutes such a notion by asserting that the God who liberates is also the one who sets the terms for a human future. Preaching on these matters must attend to both mistaken notions, and on the central claim that true liberation is in trust and obedience to the God of the Exodus who binds us in a new bonding—outside the deathly reach of the empire. That is why the Lord of Sinai begins in self-identification with the Exodus: "I am the God who freed you from slavery."

II

The purpose of the decalogue is to confirm in social, sustained, institutionalized, community form what has been begun in the events of Exodus.⁹ The shape of the decalogue sets the perimeters for a new life that is not oppres-

sively conformist and that is not unrealistically autonomous. The Christian preacher with these texts may help the congregation to think through an evangelical alternative to oppressive conformity and destructive autonomy, an alternative that is experienced as faithful covenanting.

It is well known that the decalogue easily divides into two "tablets," first concerning relation to God, and second, concerning relation to neighbor. To sustain the new freedom initiated in the Exodus, these two relationships must be maintained faithfully, knowingly, and with discipline.¹⁰ If either relation is distorted, the covenant vision of Sinai is put at risk.

New life in covenant requires a faithful, undistorted relationship with God. The clue to this proper relation is to remember that the God of the covenant is the God of the Exodus. The God who there acted to liberate is the God who wills continued liberation in the community. The God who is to be honored and obeyed in covenant is none other than the one who had compassion for and solidarity with the slaves, and who had authority and power over the rulers of the empire. The covenant community willed by this God is a community that continues to practice compassion and solidarity, and which maintains vigilant criticism against every totalitarian agent and ambition.

Israel's life as a covenant community depends on a clear vision and a sharp memory of who God is. To forget this radical character of God is to engage in idolatry, to imagine a God who is not so free, dangerous, powerful, or subversive as is the God of the Exodus. Israel is tempted to tone down Yahweh's compassion for and solidarity with the powerless, to make God a bit more compatible to social "realism." Or Israel seeks to tone down the abrasive power of Yahweh against oppressive powers for the sake of some modest, provisional accommodation to the rulers of this age.

But the liberating, sovereign presence and purpose of Yahweh asserted in the commandments is not negotiable and must not be toned down. Idolatry consists in harnessing God for our purposes, regarding Yahweh as a reliable ally in our interests, so that God finally becomes useful to us.¹¹ That usefulness is a temptation of all zealous religion, conservative or liberal. The same usefulness is practiced by political ideology, for example, in Israel's old royal-temple establishment, or in some contemporary claims that God is "with us" and endorses our way.

The second (Ex. 20:4-6) and third (Ex. 20:7) commandments exposit this claim of the sovereign liberating God who will be obeyed but not used, who will initiate new life for us, but will not conform to our arrangements of life. To shun "graven images" means that God's power for life must not be captured in ideology or program or institution.¹² To avoid "using the name" means that God's power must not be domesticated by us and for us. Thus, positively these commandments assert God's faithful power which takes initiative for new life. Critically the commandments function as a warning against our temptation to "enlist God" in our best efforts to have life on our own terms. The recovery of the powerful freedom and free power of God is an urgent and critical task of the preacher in our cultural setting that on the right harnesses God to our social inclinations, and on the left trivializes God away from God's proper role in our life.

New life in covenant requires a faithful honoring and taking seriously covenant neighbors and the proper use of covenant property. New life entails sorting out who are persons to be honored and cared for, and what is property to be properly used. The "second tablet" insists that neither persons nor property are to be abused, that is, enlisted for other than their true purpose. Commandments five through ten are assertions about the kind of caring neighborliness that is indispensable for a community of covenant that will not degenerate into a society of abuse, disrespect, oppression, and finally brutality. The commandments are a line drawn against brutality. These commandments insist that persons do not *earn* standing in this community, but they are *entitled* to an honorable place simply because they belong in the community. Again the Exodus memory is decisive, for it insists that the first liberated slaves received a new option for life from Yahweh, not because of merit, but because Yahweh had freely entitled them to it, according to Yahweh's sovereign, compassionate decree. That same sovereign, compassionate decree of entitlement is and must be operative in the community evoked by Yahweh. This linkage of neighborliness as social policy and the Exodus is made explicit by Moses: "Love the sojourner therefore, for you were sojourners in Egypt" (Deut. 10:19).

The entitlement of communal dignity is extended to old people who have lost their usefulness to society: "Honor your father and your mother" (Ex. 20:12).¹³ The entitlement extends to the valuing of all members of the community, all of whom are to be given life and let live: "Do not kill" (Ex. 20:13). The entitlement extends to familial relationships, in which binding loyalties are to be honored and taken seriously: "Do not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14). The entitlement extends particularly to the poor and defenseless who are not to be confiscated into debt slavery: "You shall not steal" (Ex. 20:15).¹⁴ The entitlement extends to the right of all for justice, so that the courts are to stand as a defense and protection against distorted public power and public administration: "Do not bear false witness" (Ex. 20:16). Finally and decisively, old land boundaries of inalienable family land are to be honored and not perverted by sharp, commercial business or legal practice: "Do not covet" (Ex. 20:17).¹⁵ This climactic commandment is to protect the weak in their small landholdings against the great power of government or those connected with the levers of government.¹⁶

The neighbor commandments derive from the radical claim of God's holiness in the first three commandments. God's holiness must not be domesticated. Alternatively, the dignity and value of the neighbor must not be violated.

While we may think of other areas of community life that should be brought under the claims of covenant, commandments five through ten are an astonishingly comprehensive statement concerning dimensions of life to which the covenantal will of the liberating God is pertinent. The promise of the new liberating bonding is forfeited when persons are reduced to commodities, when the fragile social fabric of community is reduced to a set of technical transactions, when entitlements as free gifts from God are reduced to merit as a basis of worth or productivity.¹⁷ It is clear that the commandments envision a community that continues to be at work in liberating its members from all prac-

tices that cheapen, enslave, or brutalize.

In viewing the two tablets about a faithful, undistorted relation with God, and a serious concern for covenant neighbor and covenant property, we may observe the relation of the first and tenth commandments. The first (Ex. 20:3) concerns the truth of God concerning God's holiness, compassion, and freedom. The tenth commandment (Ex. 20:17) concerns right land relations in which the weak do not have their proper life-space taken from them. In considering the first and last commandments together, it is evident that Israel understood the close relation between the holiness of God and the humanity of the community. It is for that reason that the two "great commandments" are held together (cf. Matt. 22:34-40, cf. I John 4:20-21). Or negatively Israel understood that idolatry always leads to exploitative land policy (coveting). The preaching task is to make clear and understandable an inextricable relation between a distinct discernment of heaven (the character of God) and a distinct discernment of earth (the organization of social power in the community). Distortion in either of these leads to a dual distortion which ends either in death in a disordered community, or oppression in a tyrannical community which has returned to the dehumanizing ways of Pharaoh.

III

It may be observed that in the above analysis of the two tablets, I have not commented on the fourth commandment concerning sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11). That is because this commandment concerns both tablets and cannot be placed simply with either.¹⁸ Indeed, the sabbath commandment functions as the center and interpretive focus for the entire decalogue, and therefore as the center of Israel's ethical reflection. The commandment looks back to the *rest of God*. It dares to affirm that Yahweh (unlike imperial gods) is so well-established, so surely in charge, so greatly respected by creation, so gladly obeyed by all creatures, that God's governance is not one of anxiety or franticness. The world is confidently, serenely ordered as God's good creation. That affirmation can lead to a "basic trust" among us about our place in the world.¹⁹

The commandment also looks forward to the practice of the human community. It asserts that responsive to God's well-believed governance, the human process in the world is not, and must not become, an endless rat-race of achievement, productivity, and self-sufficiency. Rather the goal and crown of life in the community of covenant is the freedom, space, and delight of sabbath rest.²⁰ In keeping sabbath rest, the human community replicates and participates in the tranquility God has ordained into the structure of creation. Sabbath as that "sacrament of basic trust" is sociologically radical, for it invites all members of the community to be in well-being and peace, without reference to power or position. Indeed, the commandment envisions an act of radical egalitarianism modeling new social relations for in that day, "Your servant will be *as you*," that is, entitled to equal rest.²¹ One can hear in this commandment echoes of the powerful egalitarianism of the Exodus. In the empire there is no day when slave is like master, but in covenantal sabbath practice there is such a day for "as you," when all social class distinctions and differentiations of

power are dramatically criticized, jeopardized, and overcome. In this commandment, Israel acknowledges *the precious rule of God* which is not harsh or anxious, and *the precious possibility of human community* which, in imitation of God's generous governance, oppresses none. Taking this command as the center of the decalogue, we suggest that the entire decalogue proposes an ordering of heaven and earth which is radically different. It is not modeled after conventional modes of power, but after the astonishing transformation of the Exodus. The commandments envision a community so ordered that such liberating work goes on as the normal way of ethics.²²

IV

I suspect that the most difficult and most important task for the preacher with the commandments is to handle the absoluteness of the commandments, while at the same time doing the required interpretive work necessary to faithfulness.²³ It is clear that for biblical faith, the ten commandments are absolute and non-negotiable, taken as God's sure decree. It is, however, equally clear in the Bible itself that Israel and the church maintained and practiced amazing *interpretive openness* in order to keep the commandments pertinent to the on-going ethical burdens of the community in various changing circumstances.

Both points are important. The absoluteness and the non-negotiability must be stressed against a kind of moral softness or indifference that dissolves or trivializes the ethical claims of biblical faith. The non-negotiability must be insisted upon, even when it strikes some as authoritarian. Conversely, the need for interpretive openness must be stressed against every legalism and moralism that imagines all the questions are settled, and so makes the character of command cold and unresponsive to the realities of life. That interpretive openness must be insisted upon, even when it strikes some as relativizing the claims of the covenant.

Non-negotiability and *interpretive openness* must be held together in order to avoid both imperial absoluteness and destructive autonomy. I will take the fourth commandment on Sabbath to illustrate this point. It is clear that:

- a) The Bible takes this command with abiding seriousness, and
- b) The Bible continues to struggle with and reinterpret the claim and intention of the command.

As the Bible itself is engaged in an open interpretive process, so the preacher may seek to engage the congregation in an interpretive process to ask how the liberating will of the covenant God is to be enacted among us.

It is clear that the sabbath commandment is part of an ongoing interpretive tradition in which we can participate. The commandment is neither dismissed as unimportant, nor is it treated as flatly and absolutely obvious. It is and must be interpreted. Among the critical points in that on-going work of interpretation are the following:

1. The version of the commandment in *Deut. 5:12-15* already departs from the Sinai version of *Ex. 20:8-11* by articulating a new motivation. Now the reason for the command is not that God rested on the seventh day of creation,

but that Israel remembers the Exodus. Deuteronomy has handled the commandment in a sociologically more radical way by suggesting that sabbath is a sacramental reenactment of Exodus which delivers people from the imperial burden. This version focuses on community experience, not on the structure of creation.

2. *Amos 8:4-8* indicates how the commandment is taken up into radical prophetic analysis. In this passage the sabbath command is said to function as a protection for the poor against sharp economic practice. Sabbath is a cessation from commerce so that the needy have a brief respite from relentless exploitation. The command becomes a ground for criticizing public practices in Israel that have become as abusive as any in ancient Egypt before that Exodus.²⁴

3. In exilic and post-exilic thought, the sabbath became a crucial mark for the covenanted community, distinguishing it from those in the empire who had no memory of Exodus. *Is. 56:2* identifies sabbath keeping as a characteristic mark for a blessed person, that is, one who enjoys the benefits of covenant. Then in vv. 3-7, sabbath is made the qualifying mark to admit foreigners and eunuchs to Israel's worship. That is, the command becomes the not very demanding entrance point through which unqualified people qualify for the covenant. The sabbath is a vehicle for countering extreme legalism that wanted to make requirements a good deal more stringent.²⁵

4. In his ministry Jesus violates the sabbath for the sake of humaneness. In *Mark 3:1-5* he heals on the sabbath, and in 2:27-28 he gives his magisterial dictum that Sabbath exists for the sake of humanity. In Jesus' circumstance, the sabbath had become an oppressive practice of social control. Jesus' response is congruent with and derived from the notion of Exodus bonding, that is, acting against the commandment for the sake of liberation in the community. The commandment is valid, he seems to affirm, only insofar as it serves its intended witness to the Exodus as a mode for continuing life in covenant. Jesus' dangerous ministry is in rescuing people from many "houses of bondage" each of which has been constructed by commandments which have lost their Exodus orientation. Commandments which do not serve Exodus stand under harsh criticism.

The purpose of briefly presenting such a trajectory of interpretation for the commandment is to permit the congregation to see that while Israel takes the commandments with great seriousness, it practices interpretive openness so that the concern in each case is that the command be a vehicle for God's liberating bonding.

The contemporary church must criticize law and commandment which in fact enslave those who have been entitled. Thus the prohibition against killing, when read in the presence of the Exodus, sounds differently to oppressed peasants in Latin America. Or the command to honor father and mother is heard differently in a family where there is child abuse. Characteristically, serious evangelical faith understands the commandments as guides for God's liberating activity, and when they work against that liberating activity, they must be reconsidered, as Jesus does with the Sabbath commandment.

The purpose of such biblical preaching and teaching is not simply to ex-

hibit interpretive diversity in the Bible (which in itself is worth doing). It is rather to summon the congregation to join this conversation about the commandments, to see what now this command may “mean” in order that liberated obedience may take place. In recent time we have had to work against excessive restrictiveness practiced in the name of sabbath in a puritanical society. But now we need to be asking what the sabbath commandment means in a society that reduces humanness to technical transactions.²⁶ In such a society that reduces persons to commodities, the acknowledgement of God’s restfulness and the embrace of our own rest may make sabbath a crucial moral opportunity, and an important sacramental protest against the busy profanation of our common life.²⁷

It is my suggestion that a similar and more detailed history of interpretation for each commandment could be identified in the Bible, and beyond the Bible in the history of the church. The purpose of such historical recovery for preaching is to nurture the congregation away from moralism to serious bonding, away from self-sufficiency to serious liberating responsibility.

V

The decalogue is an invitation to evangelical obedience, that is, obedience rooted in the gospel, the practice of which is genuinely good news. Such obedience is good news because it replicates God’s own action in the world for us. It is good news because such obedience lets our actions come into agreement with our proper identity as slaves liberated by God, as children welcomed to the household of covenant. It is good news because such obedience makes a community of human bonding possible in a world dead set against serious human bonding.

The first task of the preacher, I suggest, is not explication of particular commandments. It is rather to show that the Bible believes that the liberating alternative set into motion in the Exodus continues to be a proposal for sustained, ordered social life. Because Yahweh is a different kind of sovereign, Israel is permitted to embrace a very different kind of obedience. This obedience is not the oppressive, despair-inducing obedience of the empire. Nor is it an obedience so rigid and narrow as that of some opponents of Jesus. It is an obedience rather, that is a genuine delight, because it makes humanness possible. No wonder Israel delights in the law (Ps. 119:97). Such obedience is not conforming, but transformative (Rom. 12:2). It requires our best intellectual effort because the intention of the commandments in every new situation requires fresh and careful, bold and daring articulation.

The preacher and the congregation can celebrate that we do not have to guess about God’s main intention for us. That has been disclosed. But such faith still seeks understanding. Such commands still await specific implementation. Such liberated bonding still awaits the concreteness of covenant community toward brother and sister, toward land and property.

NOTES

¹ On the implications of the new bonding at Sinai, see Martin Buber, *The Prophetic Faith*

(Harper Torchbooks, New York Harper and Row, 1949), chapter 5, and more fully, *The Kingship of God* (New York Harper and Row, 1967), especially chapters 7 and 8

² On this theophany, see Samuel Terrien, *The Elusive Presence* (New York Harper and Row, 1978), chapter 3

³ George Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh The Biblical Colloquium, 1955), especially 3 6, first saw that the decalogue constitutes “policy from which other law is derived

⁴ I have explored the grip the empire has on our imagination under the rubric of “royal consciousness” in Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Philadelphia Fortress Press, 1978), chapter 2

⁵ On the powerful temptation to autonomy and unmitigated freedom as an ideology, see Robert Bellah et al, *Habits of the Heart* (Berkeley University of California Press, 1985)

⁶ On the yearning in our society for more serious bonding, see Daniel Yankelovitch, *New Rules Searching for Self-Fulfillment in a World Turned Upside Down* (New York Random House, 1981) Remarkably, even William Masters and Virginia Johnson, *The Pleasure Bond A New Look at Sexuality and Commitment* (New York Little, 1975), have come to see that real “pleasure” requires some bonding

⁷ See Dorothy Solle, *Beyond Mere Obedience* (Minneapolis Augsburg Publishing House, 1970)

⁸ Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York Basic Books, 1985), has explicated the revolutionary impetus contained in the Exodus narrative

⁹ Walter Harrelson, *The Ten Commandments and Human Rights* (Philadelphia Fortress Press, 1980), has well explored the potential in the decalogue for matters of social policy and the institutional shaping of public life

¹⁰ Douglas Hall, *Imaging God Dominion as Stewardship* (Grand Rapids Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1986), has recently suggested a third decisive relation with the non human world While he is surely correct, that relation lies outside the explicit structure of the decalogue

¹¹ On the theme of “usefulness” as a distortion of God, see Walter Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination* (Philadelphia Fortress Press, 1986), chapter 4

¹² On the social power of contemporary idolatry, see Pablo Richard, ed, *The Idols of Death and the God of Life* (Maryknoll, N Y Orbis Books, 1983)

¹³ On the ethics of the elderly in the Bible, see Gordon J Harris, *God and the Elderly Biblical Perspectives on Aging* (Philadelphia Fortress Press, forthcoming)

¹⁴ Here I am accepting the persuasive hypothesis of Albrecht Alt, “Das Verbot des Diebstahls im Dekalog,” *Kleine Schriften I* (Munich C H Beckische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1955), 333 40 Alt argues on the basis of the texts like Deut 24 7 that the command originally had a direct object, “Do not steal a man,” and prohibited kidnapping in which the object was sold into slavery More generally on the commandment, see Robert Gnuse, *You Shall Not Steal* (Maryknoll, N Y Orbis Books, 1985) who relates the commandment more directly to economic policy and practice

¹⁵ On the commandment, see Marvin Chaney, “Thou Shalt Not Covet Your Neighbor’s House,” *Pacific Theological Review* 152 (1982), 3 13

¹⁶ Chaney takes Micah 2 1 5 as an important interpretive comment on the tenth commandment He follows the suggestive proposal of Albrecht Alt, “Micah 2 1 5,” *Kleine Schriften III* (Munich C H Beckische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1959), 373 81 More generally on Micah as a critic of rapacious social policy, see Hans Walter Wolff, “Micah the Moreshite—The Prophet and his Back ground,” *Israelite Wisdom*, ed John Gammie et al (Missoula Scholars Press, 1978), 77 84

¹⁷ Abraham Heschel, *Who is Man?* (Stanford Stanford University Press, 1965), has most eloquently articulated this crisis in our understanding of humanness in modernity

¹⁸ On the cruciality of the sabbath commandment in the decalogue, I am indebted to the discerning analysis of Patrick D Miller, Jr, “The Human Sabbath A Study in Deuteronomical Theology,” *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 6 (1985), 81 97

¹⁹ I am of course appealing to the poignant phrase of Erik Erikson, but I intend it not simply in a psychological mode but in a more inclusive way as “at homeness” in the world

²⁰ Heschel who has so wisely explicated our human crisis has also well and eloquently understood the alternative carried in the Sabbath, *The Sabbath Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York Farrar, Straus, and Young, 1951) For Heschel the sabbath is the source of any alternative to our rampant profanation of human life

²¹ See Hans Walter Wolff, *The Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 139-40.

²² Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), chapter 7, has presented a suggestive exposition of the decalogue, especially stressing its theonomous claim.

²³ On the need for interpretation to keep a timeless document timely, see David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), chapters 3 and 4, especially p. 102.

²⁴ See Bernhard Lang, "The Social Organization of Peasant Poverty in Biblical Israel," *JSOT* 24 (1982), 47-63, especially 58-59.

²⁵ On the intention of Is. 56 in contrast to a more rigorous alternative, see Elizabeth Achtemeier, *The Community and Message of Isaiah 56-66* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982), 32-37.

²⁶ W. Gunter Plaut, "The Sabbath as Protest: Thoughts on Work and Leisure in the Automated Society," *Tradition and Change in Jewish Experience*, ed. A. Leland Jamison (Syracuse: Dept. of Religion, Syracuse University, 1978), 177, writes: I therefore view the sabbath as potentially an enormous relief from, and protest against, these basic causes of unrest. Once a week it provides us with an opportunity to address ourselves to the who-ness rather than the what-ness of life, to persons rather than to things, to Creation and our part in it, to society and its needs, to ourselves as individuals and yet as social beings."

²⁷ Matitahu Tsevat, "The Basic Meaning of the Biblical Sabbath," *The Meaning of the Book of Job and Other Biblical Studies* (New York: KTAV, 1980), 49-50, says of the sabbath, "Every seventh day the Israelite renounces his autonomy and affirms God's dominion over him . . . Keeping the sabbath is acceptance of the sovereignty of God."