

Against Your Absence

Walter Brueggemann
Cincinnati, Ohio

All power, honor, glory be to you!
You...sometimes hidden, silent, absent, unresponsive.
We are so privileged that we seldom sense you
 hidden, silent, absent, unresponsive.
But we know people who do,
 we think of places where you do not appear.
We imagine you defeated,
 weak,
 held captive.
And we wait a day,
 two days,
 until the third day.
And then, most often then,
 quite reliably then,
 you appear then in your full glory.
This day we pray against your absence, silence, and hiddenness.
Come with full power into deathly places,
 and we will praise you deep and full. Amen.

On reading I Samuel 5/February 2001

Used by permission: *Prayers for a Privileged People*, Walter Brueggemann, Abingdon Press, 2008.

Beyond Survival: Easter Preaching when the Church Is in Survival Mode

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As I write this, my family is halfway through a six-month *trial* (in both senses) of a cable television subscription. The offer of free hookup and the “half-price for half-a-year” was too good to pass up; particularly given that I am told that *all* my kids’ friends have some kind of specialized TV that comes by cable, dish, or fiber optics.

One of my discoveries along the way is to observe that much of the programming one finds these days is devoted to themes about *survival*. Recently, I lamented this in the presence of my 12 year old. While he did not understand what I meant by apocalyptic television, he could relate when I reframed my observation to terminol-