

Passionate Language

by Mark-Robin Hoogland cp

When I mentioned to my professor in systematic theology that after my bachelor I wanted to study spirituality for a master's degree, he replied: "Maybe it is better to continue in systematics first, for a sound and firm spirituality is always rooted in faith and good theology." I have always taken these words to heart for my own journey, but also in finding ways and answers in spiritual crises of the people whom I have met during in my pastoral work.

To me it seems that we as a Congregation are quite sure about the spiritual identity of ourselves as Passionists: we take a forth vow, the vow of the Memoria Passionis, so as to keep the memory of the Passion alive in ourselves and make it the starting point of our community life, pastoral work and preaching.¹ But how do we express this? For, no matter how clear we find our identity, at the same time many of us have experienced in their novitiate and beyond, even until today, a certain emptiness when it comes to making this Memory the very heart of our life. As an elderly Passionist once told me: "On Fridays we pray the rosary with the commemoration of the sorrowful mysteries and after that we just go on with our lives."

Therefore, in the light of this, what I would like to do first today is focus on our language: how do we speak of the Passion of Jesus Christ? Because our language reflects our thinking, our willing and our loving. So, what does it mean what we say? Do we use a passionate language when we speak of the Memoria Passionis or are we rather speaking in templates? My presentation will be a theological discourse through which I map out some consequences for our spiritual life and thus for our community life and mission.

Steps: First I would like to look with you at some angles from which the Passion of Christ is approached and what language is used in this. Secondly I would like to analyse our language, in order to become more aware of how we speak and thus how we perceive His Passion. Finally I would like to focus on the Passion as the language of God.

1. The Passion of Christ: Different Approaches

The Tragedy of Jesus' Suffering

The Passion of Jesus Christ, His crucifixion, *was* a great tragedy. He Who did all things well [Mk 7,37], the Just One [1Pe 3:18], underwent the death of a criminal. No matter what meaning we give to Jesus' suffering, no one along the Via Crucis was singing "Halleluia! He is redeeming us!" Rather, we read that the women who cared, were very sad [Lk 23:27-31]. And in the Acts of the Apostles Peter leaves no doubt, when he, filled with the Holy Spirit, *accuses*

¹ Constitutions n.6

the Jewish leaders of crucifying Jesus Christ. After all, he continues, Jesus was the Messiah, the Redeemer, sent to us by God [Ac 2:36, 4:8-12]. A great tragedy indeed; “if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory,” as Paul puts it [1Cor 2:8].²

But there is more to it. If we only look at the so called “historical Jesus”³ or rather at Jesus as a good man just like many other good men, we would not get much further than comparing Him to other revolutionaries who tried to change the world for the better but failed. The testimony in our Book of faith, the Bible, gives way to a deepening of our understanding of the death that Jesus endured. Let us look at some more aspects of these Passion narratives.

The Passion as a Mystery

First of all, in Scripture the Passion of Jesus Christ is pointed out as a mystery, which means: we cannot fully understand what it is and what it means; no matter how much we know about His Passion, there will always be more to it for us to know. Even more, the more we know about a mystery, the greater a mystery it becomes for us. A problem, in contrast, is rather something to be solved. By inquiring, by knowing more and more about it we can actually solve the problem; it is then not a problem anymore, because we grasp it, fathom it, master it.

Since the Age of the Enlightenment we have learnt better how to solve problems. Science has found answers to questions that seemed irresolvable: the planets, nature and the human being were all under inquiry and it seemed/seems that in principle we can know everything, i.e. we can solve every problem. Moreover, science also is very practical; with scientific approaches we become successful with concrete results. Science and scientific proof is, therefore, very appealing. Many hold that all that we do not know yet, will one day be known.

The French philosopher Gabriel Marcel⁴ criticizes this attitude of our modern age already in 1950. When Marcel focuses on the human being, he argues that the human being should be approached as a mystery: personality, identity, friendship, family, good and evil etc. Mystery does not mean that we cannot say anything about it. Of course not! We may well approach it as we can. But the more we know about our human being, the more we realize that the very heart of the matter is elusive for us.

Since in our days more and more information and devices are digital, we feel the need to express everything in our life in zeros and ones. In view of Marcel’s insight it cannot come as a surprise that in human sciences we encounter the limitations of this digital approach. Likewise, if in theology the issues are being approached as mere problems to be solved, the consequences will be disastrous: in the end there will be no room for faith, for: either we

² I have quoted here from different Biblical traditions, in order to show that this is a commonly accepted view.

³ These words are in quotes, because for believers Jesus Christ insofar as He was the divine Son of God, was also historical.

⁴ Gabriel Marcel, *The Mystery of Being I* (London: The Harville Press, 1950), 211

know – or rather think that we know – or we do not know and then we have to label it as “not true” or “no longer true” or we must ignore it.

The need to distinguish between mystery and problem is as such not a new, modern distinction. We see how the Jews have always struggled with the Name of God, Who revealed Himself to Moses as YHWH. We cannot even properly translate the Name: “I Am Who Is” or “I am Who I Am” or “I Am Here” and the like. In for instance the Book of Kings we see how even the educated leaders with their councils are led astray, even though they know His Holy Name. Similarly we see how in the Early Church Christians sought for a right understanding of the Incarnation and the Trinity. In the Creed we find the conclusions of these struggles. The formulations in the Creed, however, give rise to more, new questions. This is in itself proper to a mystery; we try to find ways in which we can speak about it *as a mystery* (and not as we speak of a pack of sugar) and as we speak of it, we need to explain what it means what we say. In other words: we are not describing it, because we can't; we do not fully know it.

Kenosis and problem-solving

Just to give a relatively recent example of theology as problem solving: we find this way of thinking in recent so called kenotic Christology.⁵ The Greek word *kenosis* means emptying yourself. Kenotic theologians take Philippians 2:7-8 as their interpretative of Christ's life on earth. Here it says that Christ Jesus “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness and found in human appearance, becoming obedient to death even death on a cross.” By Christ emptying Himself kenotic theologians of the 19th and 20th century understand that the divine Son of God gave up His divinity or His divine attributes that seem incompatible with human weakness and limitations, so that Christ would be *purely* or *really* human, like us. Thus they are trying to solve the problem; Christ emptying Himself becomes comprehensible in a way; we can imagine this! For us, living after the Age of the Enlightenment, this is appealing. “Us” includes theologians, who are just like anyone else, children of their own time and age. In contrast, through the Scriptures, including this passage from Philippians, catholic believers understand the mystery of the life and death of Jesus Christ as follows: that God the Son (and not a divine person after laying down His divinity) Himself *fully* shares in our vulnerable life and *truly* suffers and dies with us as a man. Indeed, thus we get to know God's love as an other-oriented love, but this insight into the orientation of God's love cannot replace the mystery of our faith.⁶ The more we know about this mystery, the more we stand in awe.

⁵ Which is in fact parallel to the kenotic debates between arian and catholic Christians in the Early Church. In 1951 Pope Pius XII condemned this interpretation in *Sempiternus Rex Christus*.

⁶ Theologians like Thomas Jay Oord choose not to speak of kenosis anymore in terms of the incarnation, but only in terms of incarnate love (*Defining Love: A Philosophical, Scientific, and Theological Engagement*, Ada: Brazos Press, 2010).

What is the consequence for our speaking, our language, if we consider the *Kenosis* a mystery, a mystery of our faith, rather than a philosophical problem to be solved? First of all we should be aware that theologians do not establish what our faith is. Theologians are to explain what we believe. A mystery therefore must be explained as a mystery and not as something that we fully understand. A consequence of the catholic understanding of the Incarnation is, for instance, that we say that “God has suffered with us” and that “God has died with us”, when we speak of the Passion of Christ. For, because it is truly God Who became man, we use the human and the divine attributes for the one and the same person, Jesus Christ.⁷ This is how we understand Mary as the mother of God, as we pray in the Hail Mary – and not in a mythical Egyptian way nor in a metaphorical way.

Again, the catholic understanding of the *kenosis* of Christ makes that we speak of Jesus Christ as God with us [Mt 1:23], even in His Passion and death. Did the prophet Micha fully understand when he said: “Walk humbly with God!”? [Mi 6:8] It seems that the apostle Paul is urging all believers and those who seek to believe to be mystics, as he says: Be imitators of God! [Eph 5:1 cf. 5:2]. John of the Cross in *The Dark Night of The Soul* shares with us the paradox of his experienced insight that by emptying ourselves we become full. And when Martha addresses Jesus as Lord, *Kyrie* [Jn 11:21], the title of God [Is 37:20 etc.], we understand this address of hers as an expression of her authentic faith, and not as an exaggeration or as blasphemy. “You alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord, You alone are the Most High, *Jesus Christ*,” as we sing in the *Gloria*.

Solidarity: God suffers with us

Martin Luther and Lutherans after him (like Jürgen Moltmann⁸) take a ‘slightly’ different stand, with great consequences. To him Incarnation means that it is God the Son who undergoes everything *as God*. It seems that in this view “God” is much closer to the suffering people than in the catholic understanding. Whilst Jesus Christ suffers, God Himself is suffering as we do. It is, according to “the Lutherans” a sign of true love; a God who does not suffer, does not love either, is the line of reasoning.

There are at least three remarks to be made here. First, Lutherans and others who claim the above are in search of expressing the closeness of God to “the Crucified One and the crucified ones”⁹. Their intention is in tune with what we, i.e. all Christians, believe, namely that God is near, that He sees and listens to his people [Ex 3:7]; He hears the cry of the poor [Ps 34:7 etc.]. But, in their enthusiasm of expressing this nearness of God, and in confrontation with anti-religious science and non-belief (atheism) they have fallen into the trap theism.

⁷ This is what we call the communication of idioms (*communicatio idiomatum*). Nestorius, in contrast, may seem more pious as he speaks of one common appearance of Christ, like two stars that stand so close together that they seem one; according to him the divine and human nature had not become one in Christ.

⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (London: SCM, 1974)

⁹ This connection has often been pointed out by Group 72, a group of Passionists working in the margins of society and church who found inspiration in our Constitutions (1984) n.72. Nowadays these words are commonly used as a Passionist term which refers to this connection.

Theism is a philosophy of religion aimed at solving the problems in our faith. In brief, theism describes God as He is, or at least that is what they claim.¹⁰ Whereas this would be considered impossible by people who hold that (the divinity of) God and (the divinity and humanity of) Jesus Christ are *mysteries to be approached* rather than *problems to be solved*.¹¹ The mystery approach means that we cannot *describe* this nearness of God as it is.¹² After all, our words are only suitable to describe what is created and what is known to us. What can we say or how do we understand what we say? I will come back to this in what follows.

A second remark: the ultimate consequence of this idea of God suffering as we do when we suffer, is that God has a material/physical body. Marcel Sarot, a Dutch theist, claims fervently that God has a physical body¹³. Indeed, also Catholic Christians¹⁴ assert that God has a physical body, but Catholics believe that this body is the truly human body of Jesus of Nazareth – and no other body than this one. This is how we understand the Incarnation. This is also how we understand that God is spirit; and that no one has ever seen God; but that whoever sees Jesus, sees the One Who sent Him [Jn 4:24, 1Jn 4:12, Jn 12:45]. In other words, God has a physical body, but He is not a physical body.

Even more, the third remark: in the Catholic understanding of Passion of Christ God is nearer to us than we can imagine. We could only speculate about what divine suffering would be. But through our faith in the Incarnation we find in the Passion of Jesus Christ God suffering with us: as a man God undergoes human suffering, out of love for us. In the Eucharist the words at the preparations of the gifts refer to this mystery: “Water and wine become one; You shared in our humanity, so as to give us a share in Your divinity.”¹⁵ It is love beyond love. *In this way* we say that *God* suffered and died on the Cross.¹⁶ It is therefore that we can speak of the Passion in terms of solidarity; God is not only in the highest (heavens) touched or in anguish about what is happening to His Beloved. No, much more than this; He knows through His own experience what it means for human beings to feel pain, sadness, distress et cetera.

¹⁰ The term *theism* was first used by Ralph Cudworth in 1678. Theists “affirm, that a perfectly conscious understanding being, or mind, existing of itself from eternity, was the cause of all other things” in: *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* Vol. I (New York: Gould & Newman, 1837), 267. Recent advocates of theism are e.g. Richard G. Swinburne (Oxford) and Marcel Sarot (Utrecht/Tilburg).

¹¹ Theodicy is therefore a specific form of theism. It tries to harmonize God, the divine attributes and the reality of (human) suffering in the world by explaining God i.e. by *describing* God as He is and how this is related to human suffering. Especially God’s almightiness is the focus in this approach. Theodicy befits the frame of deism. Hume’s *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* summarizes the issue quite poignantly: “Is He willing to prevent evil, but not able, then He is impotent. Is He able, but not willing? Then He is malevolent. Is He both able and willing? Whence then is evil?” Richard Swinburne is a well-known contemporary advocate of theodicy.

¹² Because according to catholic theology God is not “a” being, God is not one of the beings, but rather being itself and the source and the aim of all being (Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae* I q.3).

¹³ Marcel Sarot, *God, Passibility and Corporeality* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1992). He comes to this conclusion as he dialogues with Thomas Aquinas. However, Aquinas, reasoning along similar lines in view of what we understand by *passio* (undergoing something), draws exactly the opposite conclusion.

¹⁴ Marcel Sarot is also a Catholic, but as he claims the passibility and corporeality of God, he is not reasoning along the lines of Catholic tradition; it is rather a philosophical path.

¹⁵ Or, in the official wording: “By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.”

¹⁶ See footnote 6: the communication of idioms.

In Deuteronomy we read: “For what great nation is there that has gods so close to it as the Lord, our God, is to us whenever we call upon him?” [Dt 4:7] Moses, who says this, refers directly to 1. the commandments and other prescriptions of the Lord, through which He teaches His people wisdom and guides them on the way and 2. the Lord Who purifies His people and protects them; He keeps them alive. For Christians it is not really far-fetched to see this verse and its context as also referring to Christ, as the Church Fathers have done. It is not in the first place a matter of *praesentia realis* in the Eucharist. And also did the Eternal One not ‘only’ share in our life in time (Incarnation), He even underwent with us our passion and death, even more: a dishonourable and ignominious death. He *identified* Himself with the ordinary people during His life on earth and with the outcasts in His death. How much closer would we want Him to be? How much more solidarity would we desire? And how does this translate in our own attitude, choices and actions as we keep the memory of His Passion alive?

In the Letter to the Hebrews we read about this and what it means for us: “[W]e do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help” [Heb 4:15f]. In other words, to Him we do not have to explain what we experience; He who sits on the heavenly throne already understands, not in the first place because He is “from eternity” “all-knowing” but also – and on another level: on the level of experiential knowledge – because He Himself has gone through the experience of human vulnerability. Hence, we do not have to be ashamed of who we are, what we feel, think or do; we can draw near to Him, with confidence in Him, with faith and trust in Him, for He is merciful, because He “knows”. In the words of the Letter to the Hebrews: “Because He Himself was tested through what He suffered, He is able to help those who are being tested” [Heb 2:18] in our day and age.

Purpose: “It is fulfilled” (Jn 19:30)

In Scripture kenosis and nearness/solidarity are thus key approaches to the mystery of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Another one is fulfilment; the Passion as the fulfilment of God’s plan: not in the sense of a rigid plan to be implemented – the cruel plan of a sadistic god – but rather as the fulfilment of a promise for the benefit of His beloved people. It must not escape our notice that the Scriptures emphasize that Christ freely chose to enter into the Passion: at the beginning of His mission He refers to Psalm 40: “My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish [accomplish] his work” [Jn 4:34 cf. 17:4]. And at the very end we read how He struggles in Gethsemane; “Your will be done” [Mt 26:39 cf. Our Father Mt 6:10]. This freedom is also clearly expressed when Jesus says that “No one has greater love than this, to lay down his life for his friends” [Jn 15:13]. Hence He acts out of love for us and thus He considers Himself free.

If we read the New Testament carefully, we literally stumble over the references to the Old Testament that reflect the view of Jesus' coming and going as fulfilment: Isaiah and the other prophets, Moses and David (Psalms) are cited many times. The risen Lord explains to His disciples on the way to Emmaus: "Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" [Lk 24:26] When Peter, prior to the event of the passion and death, objects to this idea, he is harshly rebuked: "Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do" [Mk 8:33]. In other words, let not our thoughts and imaginations be leading in this matter; let us listen and learn, for we do not fully understand.

The connotation of fulfilment is that the Passion of Jesus Christ was not an unexpected evil event, that the almighty God in His mercy turned for the better. The Passion is rather presented to us as an astounding part of the history of salvation. We see, in the letters of Paul, in the gospels and in the other writings of the New Testament how the early Church from the very beginning took this approach as an interpretative of this shocking event, even if the Old Testament texts are not explicitly quoted, for instance Wisdom 2:11-20 and 2:21-24.

Fulfilment may at first not be a very passionate approach. But if we reflect on it, we realize that it touches upon the heart of our faith: the situation is never out of God's control (not: "God is in control" or "All that happens is God's will"). Or, in other words, through the approach of Jesus' Passion as fulfilment we may find a profound trust in God and in life: it is not only that when people fall they all fall in God's hand, but also that it is God Who upholds our life, always, also in our distress, because He loves us. And that just as the Father had a plan for His Son, He likewise has a plan for all His sons and daughters. It may not necessarily and immediately give meaning to our suffering, but it introduces the idea of purpose; we too are a part of salvation history, of the story of God with the people.

Redemption

In the light of "purpose" we cannot overlook another key approach: the Passion of Christ as redemptive suffering. We find this interpretation more than once in the New Testament, not only in the Pauline tradition [Rom 3:24, Gal 3:13], but also in the letters attributed to Peter [1Pe 1:18, 2Pe 2:1], in the book of Revelation [Ap 14:3-4] and in the synoptic gospels as well [Mt 20:28, Mk 10:45, Lk 1:68, 21:28]. Through the centuries this aspect of the Passion was given much attention and especially in the interpretation of Anselm of Canterbury.¹⁷ Anselm took this out of the Jewish context of the scapegoat and temple rites and used a more contemporary image to exemplify this redemption. His approach may have been helpful for believers of his time, but as his interpretation became leading in the Church whereas times changed, his approach became alien. This is a great loss, since the aspect of redemption in the Passion of Christ concerns the power of evil and the power of God as well as Jesus' and our freedom (and merit) and our relationship with God¹⁸ - issues that we all are very passionate about, I am sure.

¹⁷ Anselm: *Cur Deus homo* (1098): the so called satisfaction theory.

¹⁸ E.g. Thomas Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae* III q.48 art.4-5, q.49.

Lonely suffering and our interconnectedness: the communal or ecclesial dimension

In the Passion narratives we find Christ suffering alone; all his friends had betrayed, denied and/or abandoned Him. Only a few women who had followed Him continued to be with Him as they could, even beyond His death. People who suffer alone recognize themselves in the cry of Christ on the cross: “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?!” [Mt 27:46 = Ps 22:2]. Indeed, He still calls upon God, a sign of hope or trust that He listens. After all, the Lord says that He will never to forget His people [Is 49:14-15]. Or moreover, do these words express a deeply rooted belief or even the promise that God will answer, as Psalm 22 continues? [Ps 22:23] Furthermore, how do these exclaimed words relate to the mystery of the Incarnation?

The story continues, after the Resurrection: the story of the body of Christ on earth – i.e. the mystical body – and the story of our suffering. Thus we are speaking of the communal and ecclesial dimension of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Speaking of a mystery: “*You* are the body of Christ and each one of you is of this body a member” [1Co 12:27], as the apostle Paul puts it. In Christ and through Him we, who believe and seek to believe, are connected, united in a way that we cannot fathom. Through baptism we are made one in a new, i.e. incomparable, way: “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit” [1Cor 12:13].

Deepening our understanding of this mystery is a spiritual as well as a practical journey. There is so much to do, that we may lose ourselves in activism that will exhaust us; “the poor you will always have with you” [Mt 26:11], as Jesus reminds and warns us. Yet at the same time we are called to *express* this union in a horizontal solidarity, as “faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead” [Jm 2:17].

But even more: “If one member suffers, all the other members suffer with it” [1Co 12:26]. Paul is not only speaking on the level of doing, but also on the level of awareness and of experience: a solidarity in suffering, because in Christ we are one. If our understanding grew of the profundity of this mystery of how we are united in the one mystical body of Christ, if this reality would be an experienced reality for us, how would that change our life (our inner life and our living together)? How would it change our world?

The solidarity of the Son of God thus has become ours or it is in the process of becoming ours. His participation in our *condition humaine* made us participants of one another’s life or we are in the process of taking part in the life of our neighbour: like the Good Samaritan who “was moved with compassion at the sight” of the half-dead man at the side of the road [Lk 10:33].and cared for him as he cared for himself [cf. Lk 10:27] – an example of mercy and compassion that goes beyond the boundaries of our faith.

“We shall be changed”

Of old the Passion of Jesus Christ is also seen in its eschatological dimension: it is pointing ahead to our final salvation. Paul writes to the Christians in Thessalonica that if we live with

Him and suffer and die with Him, we will also rise with Him [1Thes 4:14]. Our participation in the Passion of Christ is not only a matter of being connected with one another and being united with Him, but also is this partaking for our benefit, says Paul: for, through this we will participate in His resurrection as well.

The careful reader of the Scriptures notices immediately that Paul, when he speaks of this, does not find the exact words to describe what he means: the last trumpet, being changed et cetera [1Cor 15:51f]. Again, he is very much aware that he speaks of things that are incomprehensible, because they are incomparable with our life experiences. And yet he speaks of it, fervently, passionately; he cannot keep silent; he is full of it. Just as the visionary of the Book of Revelation who saw a new world where there is no room for tears, death, mourning or pain [Rev 21:4].

We may look at this eschatological aspect as something that does not really touch our heart. We may rather want to concentrate on the here and now, where the passion of Christ continues whilst so many people suffer – we cannot escape it – and leave the hereafter to the Lord’s mercy and justice. However, Paul shows that exactly because of the eschatological meaning of the Passion of Christ we are much better able to concentrate on the here and now, for instance as he writes: “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us,” [Rom 8:18]. This glory is in every way connected with the Passion and our passion. The eschatological approach makes that in our situation of suffering we receive a perspective.

In other words, the Passion of Christ and our participation in it summons us to a life of hope; “You may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope” [1Thes 4:13]. Exactly when our situation is desperate this aspect of the Passion becomes life-giving in the here and now. The awareness of this perspective becomes a source of comfort, strength and life energy.

2. Our language: speaking of a mystery

[omitted in the presentation, due to a lack of time]

3. The Passion as the language of God

But how about God’s language? Time prohibits me to enter deeply into this. But in faith we may well identify creation and grace as the languages that He speaks. The Passion of Christ itself then could be recognized as the language in which God has answered us [Ps 17:6-7], how He has answered to our situation; a language of love that was not heard of before [Is 64:2b-3ab cit. in 1Cor 2:9]. The Passion of Christ contains both these languages, creation and grace, as He shares in our *created* vulnerability and thus *graciously* brings along the gifts that make our humanity full [Jn 1:16, 10:10]. Only by living in faith, in love and in hope and through His Spirit we may come to understand this passionate language.

(Conclusion) Mind your words: Spirituality, theology and linguistic awareness

Sincere faith and ordinary life ask for a sound spirituality: how do we remain open to the Source of life and love; how do we pray; how do we live what we believe? And how do we live together; how do we in our suffering remain open to one another?

A sound spirituality asks for a sound theology. Good theology keeps our spirituality away from error and empty piety, that we may not focus on mere human feelings (experience) nor perceive human thinking (philosophy, psychology) as the main interpretative. Sound theology approaches the Passion of Jesus Christ as a mystery, so as to avoid the pitfall of solving it as a problem (theodicy) or abhorring it as something evil. Thus theology may revive our spirituality and give us a better understanding of what we believe and of our life all together.

Attention to language is in such a process pivotal. It is not in the first place a question of what we *could* say, but rather how we understand what Scripture *says* and what we already faithfully *are saying*. Passionate language reflects a passionate faith, a passionate spirituality and a passionate way of life.

Mark-Robin Hoogland C.P.