

A Report

Great Southwest Field Experience

Appalachian State University

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by

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I recently returned from a Southwest Anthropological Field Experience with a class that was ably taught by Dr. Harvard Ayers, Ph.D. under the auspices of the Department of Anthropology of Appalachian State University. The generosity of the boards and members of New Philadelphia Moravian Church made this trip possible. The purpose of this report is twofold. As the fulfillment my obligations to Dr. Harvard Ayers, it is intended to be read by him, and by anyone he chooses, especially by his students, present and future, young and old. As the fulfillment of promises made to the Boards of New Philadelphia Moravian Church is intended to be read by them, and all by other interested parties, especially those members of the church who have been wondering what their pastor did on his recent continuing education experience. The first group to which this paper is directed is a part of a great secular university; the second is made up of those persons who make up this author's faith community. Both groups are asked to read this report with the diverse nature of these two audiences in mind. I hope to do justice to both groups, as both groups have certainly done justice to me. Dr. Ayers, his students, and other members of the ASU community have been as accepting and respectful of me in allowing me to participate in this course of study, as the New Philly congregation has been generous in granting me time away and providing financial support. This report is divided into two sections.

I A Trip Diary: This is a record of the trip, from the time I met Dr. Harvard Ayers, through initial class sessions, and Great South West Field Experience. The actual Field Experience began at 5:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 4th, 2009 and lasted right up until our return to Boone, N.C. on the night of Sunday, March 15th, 2009.

II A Lenten Journey and Theological Reflection: In this section, I hope to pay my dues as a religious professional. As an ordained pastor in the Moravian Church in America, my faith community provides me with a salary so that I might give fulltime service to community, but also so that I might take the time for serious study and prayerful reflection. New Philadelphia Moravian Church graciously gave me the time and the money to make this trip. I wish to share with the boards, the congregation, and other interested parties those aspects of the trip that made it especially meaningful to a pastor in 21st Century America. At this juncture, suffice it to say that those students with whom I shared my field experience, and those living persons I met, whether Native Americans or Anglos, were as important to me, maybe more so, than our exploration of the Anasazi Culture.

I. Trip Diary

The Genesis of the Trip

The trip was born around a dinner table. In the fall of 2008, I was conducting a wedding for Brandon Vickers and Melissa Vargas at the home of Cartney Hagaman. Cartney is Brandon's father, and the son of Mac and Vicki Hagaman. I was seated with Harvard and Mackie Ayers. I knew Mackie to be the daughter of Mack's brother, his niece, and I had been told that Dr. Ayers was a professor of Anthropology at Appalachian State University. I told Harvard that in recent days I had paid closer attention to

anthropology, and would love the opportunity to study in his field. He asked if there were any cultures that especially appealed to me. I told him I particularly interested in the Native American Culture of our Southwest. To my delight, Harvard told me that he taught the very course that I was interested in, and invited me to participate in a Southwest Field Experience scheduled for March of 2009. I was later to learn that Harvard had made this trip 29 times before. Immediately, I told him that I was interested in participating on the trip as a part of my Continuing Education and would put the matter before my elders.

At our November meeting the Elders of the New Philadelphia Congregation approved the time and money, both already set aside in general, for The Great Southwest Field Experience in particular. The chair of our Trustees at the time, Mike Johnson, is an ASU graduate, and a former student of Dr. Ayers. He was particularly enthusiastic about the opportunity. I spent the next month forwarding transcripts to ASU in order be accepted as “a non-degree graduate student.” I was accepted, and was prepared to pay upwards of \$900 in additional fees when Harvard told me it was not necessary, as that program was designed primarily for those who would eventually seek a degree. Instead, I simply paid the Department of Anthropology \$750 dollars for the Field Experience. There were precedents. This fee covered all transportation costs, a number of nights in various motels, and several meals. I incurred c. \$750 dollars in additional expense as I paid for most of the meals on the trip out of pocket, and bought a number of books and additional materials that were used in the class. Incidentally, Harvard invited me to share a room with him, which I was glad to do, as we had a room to ourselves, while students slept four to a room.

Course Work Done in Preparation for the Field Experience

Dr. Ayers asked me to participate in at least two or three of the eight classes that met in preparation for the Great Southwest Field Experience. The classes met on Wednesday evenings from c. 6:15 to 8:30 p.m. and were preceded by a potluck dinner. The quality of the fare provided by my classmates was outstanding. We enjoyed a variety of homemade casseroles, and, on one occasion, shared fillets of wonderfully battered and deep-fried catfish. The fish had been caught in a river by the brother of the classmate who prepared the fillets. These students possess culinary skills far beyond those possessed by my friends and me when I was a undergraduate in the late 1960's and early 1970's. During one of the classes I attended, Dr. Ayers familiarized us with a timeline of the Ancient Southwest. He began with the pre-Basketmaker civilization that was in place long before the time of Christ, and continuing through the great disappearance of the Anasazi people c. 1300 A.D. He also covered the arrival of the Apache and Navajo peoples, both of which speak a form of the Athapaskan language of the far north. Finally, he touched on the dawn of Southwest history, which came with the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century. Here is a summary of that learning as it pertains to the Anasazi:

Pre-Basketmaker Civilization 1250 B.C. to 400 A.D.

Basketmaker II 400-700 A.D.

Pueblo I 700-900 A.D.

Pueblo II 900-1100 A.D.

Pueblo III 1100-1300 A.D.

Pueblo IV 1300-1600

Interestingly, the Basketmaker civilization was a mobile, hunter gather society. Only with the rise of an agricultural society and the building of permanent dwellings did pottery begin to be made. The Pueblo Civilization left Mesa Verde, Chaco, Canyon de Chelly, etc. at about the same time, c. 1300 A.D. This date has been firmly

established by dendrocronology, using timbers sampled from the various dwellings. It is almost universally suggested that a time of drought (1276-1299 A.D.) was responsible for the migration. However, extended periods of drought were not new to the area, and there may have been other causes. It is thought that the Anasazi migrated into the region of the Rio Grande or beyond, though at least some of their descendents became the modern Pueblo Indians.

Unlike the Pueblos, the Navajos and Apaches are descendents of the northern Athapaskan Indian tribes (As are the Inuit, which we call Eskimos). Scholars believe that the Navajos migrated into the area of the Pueblo's in stages between 900 and 1300 A.D. The Navajos in particular gained much from their interaction with the peaceful Pueblo people. Navajos call themselves "the Dine," or "The People." They gave the name "Anasazi" meaning, "the Ancient ones" to the people that preceded them in "the Dinetah," or Dine homeland. Many of the Navajo origin stories make mention of the Pueblo peoples. It has been suggested that these Navajo stories, like those stories of the Ancient Hebrews collected into the Hebrew Bible, include a great deal of *history* woven into their "origin myths." I have particularly profited by reading a book about Navajo origins by Raymond Friday Locke entitled, Sweet Salt: Discovering the Sacred World of the Navajo. It is available from Mankind Publishing Company, Los Angeles, California: ISBN 0--\87687-507-X.

Dr. Ayers also required some advanced reading. I particularly enjoyed a collection of articles provided to me by him in bound form, entitled The Great Southwest Experience. As I made my way through the bound readings, I came across the names of several leading archeologists and anthropologists of the Southwest, including those of Earl Halstead Morris and Richard Weatherhill. In future, I intend to read more about their life and work. The other text assigned by Dr. Ayers was a book of detective fiction by an

author I had read before, the late Tony Hillerman. The Hillerman book that Harvard selected for us to read was Thief of Time. Chief among the book's major themes was a story about people robbing Anasazi sites for pots and other articles which were then sold for personal gain at the expense of our collective historical knowledge. These "Thieves of Time," literally steal history for the rest of us. Interestingly, when we visited the Chaco Museum, there was a warning about "thieves of time" posted on a bulletin board. Reading Thief of Time made me eager to reread the rest of the Hillerman books. At present I am working my way through, People of Darkness.

Tuesday the 3rd and Wednesday the 4th of March

At 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3rd, we packed three ASU vans with our gear. Then at 5:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 4th, twenty-four of us left Boone, N.C. for the Southwest. We would not return until 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 14th. In company with Dr. Ayers and 22 students I rode, and sometimes drove, one of four vans a total of more than 4,000 miles. I had better explain that the van I drove did not belong to ASU. It was a rental that we were forced to hire when one of our original vans experienced steering problems. The rental was quickly dubbed "the Pimp Mobile" for its racy green trim, DVD player, and other extras. We finished the March 4th drive just before midnight in Fort Smith Arkansas, a traditional jumping off point for the American west. The first day we covered c. 840 miles.

Thursday the 5th of March

Day two, Thursday the 5th of March, we were up early and drove out of Fort Smith in high spirits. As we crossed over the Arkansas River into Oklahoma, Dr. Ayers, known to his students simply as "Harvard," favored our van with his rendition of the popular

Rogers & Hammerstein's hit, "Oklahoma." The words are reproduced here in part:

Oklahoma, where the wind comes sweepin' down the
plain
And the wavin' wheat can sure smell sweet
When the wind comes right behind the rain.
Oklahoma, Ev'ry night my honey lamb and I
Sit alone and talk and watch a hawk
Makin' lazy circles in the sky.

We know we belong to the land
And the land we belong to is grand!
And when we say
Yeeow! Ayipioeeay!
We're only sayin'
You're doin' fine, Oklahoma!
Oklahoma O.K.
O-K-L - A - H - O - M - A
OKLAHOMA!

That day we drove through Oklahoma and the pan-handle of Texas, arriving at Albuquerque, New Mexico in time for a meal at a local Mexican cafeteria. The food was not gourmet quality, but the quantity was there when we needed it and the price was low. On the second day we covered c. 720 miles.

In Albuquerque we were joined by Hannah Minick's brother Ben. Hanna had described Ben to us as older. He had been out of school for some years, and worked with the U.S. Government as a part of an archeological survey team. Ben lives and works out of a small town in a western state, where there is a dearth of people his age. The trip was a vacation for him as well as an opportunity to see his sister. When we picked-up Ben at the airport, I was disappointed to learn that he was only 25 years old. Knowing that the students

considered Ben “old” made me feel even more ancient than I already felt. I might mention here that Hannah and Ben have a Moravian connection through their Aunt, Jennifer Minick Myers, who once worked as a Christian Educator at Unity Moravian Church in nearby Lewisville, N.C. Ben proved to be an excellent fellow and a welcome addition to our trip.

Friday the 6th of March

On Friday the 6th of March we were up early. We met guest lecturer Ike Eastvold at the Petroglyphs National Monument at the West Mesa, just outside of Albuquerque. Petroglyphs are to be distinguished from pictographs. The former are made when the workman chips the darker layer of a rock surface to reveal designs in the lighter, inner layer. The latter are paintings produced on rock using natural pigments. Most of the Petroglyphs are the work of the ancient Anasazi people. Most of the pictographs are the work of the Navajo people who arrived after the Great Migration of 1296 A.D. There are more than 50,000 petroglyphs at the Petroglyphs National Monument.

Following a morning spent wandering among the petroglyphs, we mounted-up and drove, quite quickly I might add, to the Canyon de Chelly in the extreme northeast corner of Arizona. We arrived c. 4:30 p.m. just in time to hike down to the White House Ruin. This is the only hike that one can make in the Canyon de Chelly area without Navajo a guide. Harvard took the time to point out many interesting features of the ruin to our class. We made lots of pictures, and climbed out of the Canyon just as the sun was setting. We ate supper at a local motel, put our extra gear into two motel rooms, and pitched our tents in a nearby camping area. The camp was within easy walking distance of the motel. Using equipment borrowed from my son-in-law, Jason Berry, I slept like a baby. On the 6th we drove c. 248 miles.

Saturday the 7th of March

The next morning, Saturday the 7th of March, we were up at first light. After cleaning up our camp and eating breakfast at the motel, we mounted up for our extended hike in Canyon del Muerto, which is a part of the Canyon de Chelly system. We descended into the Canyon del Muerto via Pine Tree Canyon amidst swirling snow and freezing temperatures. We were led by Daniel, our Navajo guide, and his son, Donavan or Don. As we made our descent, we quickly shed layers of clothing as our bodies heated-up under the loads we were carrying. Harvard had warned us to be ready for temperatures from 10 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit, and, thankfully, my son-in-law, Jason, a through hiker on the Appalachian Trail, had instructed me on the importance of layering. Not long after we entered Canyon del Muerto proper, we stopped for a cold lunch consisting of food we carried in. I enjoyed a meal of summer sausage, bread, and an apple. It was good, but I did not enjoy the lingering smell of the summer sausage in my pack. After lunch most of us wandered around picking-up shards of pottery left by the canyon's previous inhabitants. Some of the shards were black and white, and some black and red. We looked to our hearts content, but left every piece so that future generations can still see what we saw. After lunch we hiked down to Mummy Cave, named because of the plethora of excellently preserved mummies discovered there in the late 19th century. At Mummy Cave Daniel told of us of life in the Canyon, touching on both the life of the Anasazi, and the life of the Navajo that moved into the canyon after them. By this time we had already started to see evidence of Navajo farm animals, including cows and horses. Daniel told us that in addition to domestic stock, many wild animals still frequent the canyon including, deer, bear, bobcats, mountain lions, and many smaller animals, such as rabbits, badger, etc. We saw many birds, including several raptors.

That night we pitched camp about 9 miles below the Chinle end of the Canyon del Muerto, our ultimate destination. Putting up the tent was easier in daylight than it had been the night before. After we had arranged the camp Harvard led several us, mostly second year students, Ben and me, on a short hike up the canyon wall. As we watched the sun set, we were treated to a glimpse of an ancient past, and our inevitable future. Harvard took us to the mouth of a small cave and showed us the skull and femur (or thigh bone) of a teenager who had perished at some point in the past. Out of respect, Dr. Ayers had never further disturbed the burial site or attempted to date it from artifacts that may, or may not, have been buried with the person.

That night we cooked our meal around a campfire. Aaron Drake, the son of a friend and colleague, Debbie Drake, who had also once served as an Educator in the Moravian Church, graciously permitted me to sauté an onion in one of his pots. Along with bread, the remainder of my summer sausage, an orange, and an apple, it made a fine supper. I also enjoyed a cup of tea made in water heated on Taylor Wall's portable stove. I myself had made no provision for cooking any food. After we had eaten, Daniel and his son Don joined us. Daniel treated us to several Navajo tales and songs. The sky was velvet, and the stars clearly visible. Harvard, an old Navy man, pointed out several constellations, and Daniel filled the night with a beautiful Navajo chant. He also responded to our questions about Navajo customs, and Don spoke of the festivities and rituals, including the Corn Flour Ritual, that surround his marriage which took place c. four years ago. I slept well the night Saturday, March 7th, mainly, because I was tired from the activities of the day. Though I was careful to leave all food in a tree outside my tent, if I had any apprehension that night, it was not over warnings of "wild animals," but over the hike the next day. Harvard warned us that we would have to ford several streams, and perhaps even walk an extended distance through the cold waters of a creek that, at several points, filled the

narrow canyon. At last I understood why Harvard had recommended we carry an extra shoes or sandals. Unfortunately, in order to lighten my pack, I had left my running shoes back at the motel with our extra baggage. I went to sleep remembering that my wife, Elayne, had suggested I carry my lightweight water shoes with me. I had declined.

Sunday the 8th of March

The next morning, Sunday, March 8th, we were up at sunrise. I woke up before the camp, and stowed my gear. For about an hour I lay on Jason's down-filled, air mattress, reading, fully clothed, and ready to strike my tent and take to the trail at a moment's notice. We moved more slowly than I anticipated. After the camp awoke, I easily finished striking and packing my tent ahead of most of the students. I then wandered up the hill to a fire, for which many early risers were grateful.

That morning we made progress in stages. Many of us left our camp as soon as possible and made for the bright patches of sunshine which were showing on the trail to Blue Bull Cave, the first destination of our morning. I followed our guide Daniel out of the camp, over the creek, and up the canyon toward the cave. I found it remarkable that though I was quite cold standing fully clothed in the shadows of the canyon wall, I warmed up as soon as I moved into a patch of sunshine. I started shedding layers.

Blue Bull Cave was home to a number of pictographs, both Navajo and Anasazi. I particularly enjoyed the fine Navajo horses and riders, and an excellent Kokopelli drawing, perhaps by an ancient Anasazi. Following our time at Blue Bull Cave, we engaged in a strenuous hike through the upper reaches of the canyon. It was not long before we found a road, such as it was, and we started encountering more frequent signs of human habitation, including fences, inhabited hogans, and livestock. Eventually, we even

encountered tourist sitting under blankets in benches rigged in the back of trucks. I sometimes labored under my pack, but I was glad not to be in their number. The children among them looked bored and envious of us as we walked the earth at a more natural pace. Given the opportunity, I suspect that at least some of them would have exchanged places with us.

Following our arrival at Antelope House, another Anasazi ruin, we were served an excellent meal of mutton stew and fry-bread. Members of Daniel's family prepared the meal, and they also offered Gatorade and other drinks for sale. Though I had practiced water discipline from the first morning in the canyon, I was near the end of my supply. I went through two large Nalgene bottles, each holding a quart, and I was glad to purchase two large bottles of Gatorade. It was at this juncture that Harvard gave us the option of sending our packs out by truck, so that we could make the final climb out of the Canyon del Muerto unencumbered. Harvard warned that we must climb a 750-foot vertical rise in a distance of c. 1500 feet. I have a torn meniscus in my left knee, and before starting the trip I had gone to the doctor to get a shot of cortisone in it. Deciding that discretion was the better part of valor, I opted to put my pack on the truck, and stacked it in the designated area. However, Harvard had previously extolled the accomplishment of carrying one's pack out of the canyon, at least once, and when a number of young women, including Amanda Brown, Elizabeth Stabler, and Eliza Jane Hagaman saddled up, I could not help but do likewise. I picked-up my pack for the last leg of our journey.

The walk to the final ascent out of the Canyon del Muerto was several miles distant. On the final stage of our march, we frequently took off our shoes and socks to cross streams. At last, the crossings became so frequent, and un-shoeing, and re-shoeing so tedious, that we simply walked barefoot, even over the dry-ground. Though the cold water quickly numbed our feet, sometimes to the point that we feared unknowingly injuring our

feet upon stones hidden in the water, the smooth sand of the path, often heated by the sun, gave a wonderful respite between crossings.

The final ascent was everything that Harvard said it would be. The ascent was rapid, most of the time approximating one foot of vertical rise to every two feet of horizontal progress, and sometimes it was steeper. There were times during the ascent when falling would have meant a fall of just a few feet. There were other times when a slip would have resulted in a long fall and a serious accident indeed, perhaps even death. Harvard does not coddle these students. He trusts them. He shows the way and he expects them to follow. I traversed several confidence courses while in the United States Marine Corps, and this climb while carrying a pack would have been worthy of inclusion in any one of them.

I must mention one incident that took place during my ascent. I carried a walking stick with me, which was intended to do double-duty as a monopod for my cameras. At one point I had to climb a c. ten foot vertical rise using handholds dug in a time now long past by the Anasazi, or perhaps the Navajo. Though I had enjoyed the stick, it was suddenly a liability. Just when I was at a loss as to how to proceed, Hannah and Ben Minick came to my rescue. At her behest, I tossed the stick to Hannah who made a nice catch. Then Ben reached back and gave me the hand I need to clear the obstacle. It was at this juncture that I told him Ben had earned the *North Face* cold-weather cap, with flaps, that I had loaned to him on the course of the trip. It had been given me by my friend Mark McSwain. I hate re-gifting, but I knew Mark would understand why I had given the cap to Ben.

It was not long, certainly less than three-quarters of an hour, before we reached the top of the Canyon del Muerto. We were met by our three vans, in this instance driven by a trio of very attractive Navajo women who applauded our efforts on the climb, and

offered to take our pictures. Following this ritual posturing, posing, and picture taking, we returned to the motel to pick-up the rest of our gear. After rearranging our personal items, and after meeting with another group from ASU that was in the area on a community building project, we left Chinle and the Canyon de Chelly National Park for Gallup, New Mexico. In Gallup we enjoyed a welcome supper, followed by a warm room in a comfortable motel. We drove perhaps 100 miles in the course of the day.

Monday the 9th of March

Early the next morning, Monday, March 9th, we traveled by van to the Zuni Pueblo. At Zuni we viewed an awesome collection of *kachina* or *katsina* paintings in the little 1629 A.D. Zuni mission church, Our Lady of Guadalupe. There we were privileged to hear about Zuni ceremonial practice from Alex Seowtewa, a Catholic Christian and a famous Zuni artist who once represented the USA in the Soviet Union as a cultural ambassador. Alex spoke for three and one-half hours. Some of us thought he spoke for only an hour or so, others, especially those who needed to go to the toilet, thought he spoke much longer. Einstein was right---time is relative! After church we went to lunch at a local restaurant, and briefly shopped for souvenirs. Then along with Dr. Ayers and a handful of second year students, I was permitted to visit Alex and his family in Alex's home. There we discovered that Alex had met Jackie Kennedy Onassis, who had viewed his work at the mission with enthusiasm, and that Alex had painted commissioned works for a number of celebrities, including film star Marlon Brando. By the way, Alex fashioned the headdress that he wears in the Buffalo Dance from a Buffalo he secured after it was slaughtered in the Kevin Costner film, "Dances with Wolves." I enjoyed meeting Alex, his beautiful wife, his equally beautiful daughter, his handsome grandson, and his stunningly beautiful granddaughter and her friend. I purchased from Alex a picture that he painted of the Buffalo Dance, and I am delighted that he drew a picture of a

cross in the margins, addressed it to me, and then signed his own name. On March 9th we traveled c. 76 miles.

Tuesday the 10th of March

On Tuesday the 10th of March we left Gallup, New Mexico for Chaco Canyon. Chaco is located just outside of Farmington, New Mexico. Fajada Butte is a central geological feature of the canyon, and it greeted our eyes immediately upon our arrival.

We had an opportunity to visit the excellent museum and bookstore, where we had an extended interview with the archeologists in residence. After that interview we toured Pueblo Bonito, a truly magnificent Anasazi ruin on a grand scale, and the Great Kiva, the single largest kiva in the American Southwest. Most of the ruins featured kivas, a round room dug deep into the earth which most scholars think were used for worship and other community activities. The Anasazi lived in square rooms, but gathered for worship in round ones. Indeed, because of its several prominent kivas, many scholars think that Chaco may have been a religious, trade, and cultural center for the Anasazi people, and postulate that its population, usually as small as 50 to 100 people at Pueblo Bonito, may have swelled up into the thousands from time to time as people from other locations came to Chaco to worship, to trade, etc.

It was at Chaco that our group divided. The night of the 10 March 2009 was to be exceedingly cold, with temperatures dipping below 10 degrees. We were given the option of camping at Chaco or returning to Farmington and a motel. Part of the group still wanted to camp in the canyon. Others, especially those who were sick, or older, chose to return to Farmington to stay in a motel. As an additional incentive, those who went into Farmington would have an opportunity to visit nearby Aztec and the restored kiva that is a part of the museum there. The downside for those who went to

Farmington was that we would miss a morning hike around Chaco, a distance of c. 4 miles. Since I was Harvard's roommate, I spent the night in Farmington.

On Tuesday evening, 10 March, I enjoyed a supper of beef brisket and chili at the Three Rivers Brewhouse and Eatery, one of the best restaurants we visited in the Southwest. Our company included Harvard, myself, Anita Kinney, Hannah and Ben Minick, and Maury Giustini. The meal was superb in every way, and the company most enjoyable.

Wednesday the 11th of March

On Wednesday the 11th of March, we enjoyed our trip to Aztec. The town is unfortunately misnamed because the Spanish explorers who discovered the ruins there thought they were the work of the Aztec Indians from Mexico. It was not so---the ancient inhabitants of Aztec were Anasazi. At Aztec we toured an excellent museum which occupies the house built by the noted archeologist, Early Morris. Morris built his house in front of the Anasazi ruins, and those ruins must have given Morris immeasurable pleasure as well as easy access to his work. Morris somewhat controversially restored a kiva at Aztec, the only restored kiva in the Southwest. Today, that would probably not be done. However, the truth is, despite the possibility of some minor discrepancies between the restoration and the original, Morris has provided us with a vision of how the people worshiped and lived that is unequalled anywhere else.

On the afternoon of Wednesday the 11th, we enjoyed several hours free time in Farmington. I wandered through The Navajo Trading Company where I visited with several Navajo women and men and purchased two pots, one for my wife and one for my daughter. Later on, I visited a local hardware store. As I looked over their wares, I wondered what it was like to be a rancher or framer in

New Mexico. That evening, our reunited group toured the Three Rivers Brewhouse, and again enjoyed supper food and drink in their Eatery. This time I had a delicious Black Bean Burrito with pulled beef added, and a side of Green Chili Chicken Soup. Following the meal, Harvard and I walked a mile or so back to our hotel room. Harvard watched a little TV, and admitted to being a news junkie. I read a little in the Psalms, then picked up James A. Michener's Pulitzer Prize winning first book, Tales of the South Pacific. Michener wrote that book when he was a Navy officer in the Pacific during the 2nd World War. It is the book upon which the famous musical *South Pacific* is based. As I made a study of an ancient culture very different from my own, I was reading about the clash of cultures that took place in the South Pacific during our war against the Japanese. It was not just the U.S. against Japan, it was also the U.S. culture set within, over, and sometimes against a confusion of cultures as American soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen tried to adapt to life in those tropical islands.

Thursday the 12th of March

On Thursday the 12th of March, we packed up the vans and drove to Aztec where we enjoyed a big breakfast at the Aztec Restaurant, a change from the meal bars I usually ate for breakfast. We then drove up to Mesa Verde in Colorado. There, nestled among the grandeur of the Rocky Mountains, on a high "Green Table" we visited Spruce Tree House, and had a chance to tour the very best museum of our trip. The museum operated at Mesa Verde by the U.S. Park Service was filled with information about the ancient Anasazi people, and featured a good bit about Navajo culture, too. It featured a number of displays: 1) There was a display on hunting and gathering, including a collection of the local flora and fauna that would have been eatable. 2) There was a display of tools and weapons, including tools for skinning, sewing, preparing food, etc. It featured atlatls, bows and arrows, and a variety of stone knives and axes, the later more useful for "crushing" wood than for

actually cutting into it. 3) There was a display of baskets and other woven articles, including sandals. 4) There was a display of weaving and textiles, including items woven from cotton and flax. 5) There was an agricultural display, including corn, squash, etc. 6) Most interesting of all, there was a pottery display, including beautiful monochromic designs in black and white and in black and red. The Anasazi made cups, pots, canteens, ladles, dippers, etc., etc., and then made all of those aforementioned items as miniatures for their children. They were amazing potters. Following our time in the museum and nearby gift shop, we visited other nearby ruins by car, including the Cliff Palace Ruin, though we saw it only from a distance.

From Mesa Verde we drove back down the mountain into Durango, Colorado. Some of us ate a full meal in Durango. Others, especially those who ate lunch in Mesa Verde, only snacked. I ate a chicken and salsa wrap from McDonalds and enjoyed a coffee from Starbucks, a Misto. I browsed the stores, and bought a Jemez seed-pot for my wife. Harvard read the *New York Times* and enjoyed a full meal in a nearby Mexican restaurant. That evening, at 5:00 p.m., or a little after, we started for Santa Fe, New Mexico. Driving down the mountain we saw herds of elk and mule deer. We drove fast, and the roads were narrow, and it was dark, making the trip seem longer than it was. We arrived in Santa Fe, at the *Motel 6*, at the very tag end of the evening, just before midnight. Many of us went to bed without supper, surviving on just what we ate in gas stations along the road. I slept the sleep of the relieved, if not quite the sleep of the just.

Friday the 13th of March

Friday the 13th of March was a free day in Santa Fe. I was up early. Harvard took Ben Minick in the van c. 70 miles to the Albuquerque airport. I rode with them, as did Hannah, Ben's sister, and Anita Kinney, a graduate student and Harvard's Trail Boss on

the trip. I made pictures of Ben and Hannah's parting. I was sorry to say good-bye to Ben, and noted with some satisfaction that before he left he asked Harvard to make inquiries about archeological work on the East Coast. I hope, and pray, his every success.

By 10:00 a.m. we were back in Santa Fe. Harvard took some of us downtown by van and dropped us on the square, just opposite the Indian Market. I enjoyed a good meal in the local hotel, drank a decent cup of coffee, read Michener in the square, and talked at length to a number of interesting people, including an amateur archeologist who worked in a trading post. I would later call back and place an order with her for a small Acoma seed-pot. The van picked us up at 4:00 p.m., and we returned to the motel. Harvard and some of the students ate at an Indonesian Restaurant; I walked across the road for a barbecue salad.

Saturday the 14th of March

After taking two nighttime Tylenol tablets to help me sleep, I went to be early on Friday night. It was not to be. At 1:30 a.m. on Saturday the 14th of March, Harvard woke me. There had been trouble. A man with an attitude and a large Pit Bull in tow had approached several of our students as the young men stood on the balcony of the motel smoking cigarettes. The man with the dog wanted to buy drugs. The students told him they were in Santa Fe to study, and did not have any drugs. The man insisted they were lying. He threatened them. When they retreated to their rooms, the man beat upon their doors. He disturbed other students in other rooms. Eventually, one of our students called the police. When the police arrived, the man who had caused the disturbance was obviously drunk, and the police arrested him. Unfortunately, before the man with the dog was arrested he had managed to call his friends. His cronies arrived in a van without plates. The police had brought a drug dog with them, and they used the dog to search

the rooms of our students. Naturally, they found nothing. Knowing that our students were the good guys, the police suggested we leave the motel. The people at *Motel 6* graciously offered to refund our money, and offered us lodging at another *Motel 6* just a mile away. When Harvard woke me, I was in a fog. I got up quickly, and packed; but I just wanted to find another bed. I was grateful that our trip was to be a short one. Unfortunately, not long after we arrived at the second *Motel 6* the van of bad guys showed up again. A second vehicle with several occupants, a car that was also without plates also showed-up. The police came to our rescue a second time. This time there were three or four cars, each carrying a single officer. There was a division among us. Some of the students felt threatened and wanted to get out of town. Others just wanted to get back to sleep. We all thought it wise for at least one of the police officers to stay. They declined. Harvard went outside to talk to the officers. One officer explained to him that the *Motel 6*'s in Santa Fe were a haven for drug users, drug dealers, and thugs in general. Harvard came back and told us we were leaving. Most of the students were pleased. The infantry officer in me hated to abandon a secure place, to take to the road where we might be easily waylaid and attacked. The tired man in me wanted to get back to sleep. It was not my call. After weighting all the facts he could gather, Harvard made the best decision he could. He was our captain. We mounted up and headed our three vans for the desert. Initially, I rode on a van driven by Taylor Wall. After first break, I spelled Harvard at the wheel of the rental. In the course of that night, I drove c. 5 hours into the rising sun, downing three 16 oz. black coffees to overcome the effects of the *Tylenol PM*. We finished our journey of the 14th at Fort Smith, Arkansas. We arrived just before the dinner hour, c. 5:00 p.m. Harvard and I walked a mile or two by way of exercise, and then ate supper at a local Chinese buffet. Hanna Minick celebrated her 21st birthday. That night I snored, or so said Harvard. On the 14 March we drove c. 740 miles.

Sunday the 15th of March

At 3:00 a.m. on Sunday the 15th our phone rang. "It's time to get up, it's time to get up, it's time to get up in the morning." We were supposed to leave at 3:30 a.m. It would be our final day, a long one. I volunteered to drive the first leg in the rental, as I was one of the few drivers old enough to spell Harvard on that machine. Some of the students were not called, and we were late. We pulled out, without coffee, a little after 4:00 a.m. We drove a considerable distance before we stopped in Conway, Arkansas for breakfast. I had a McDonald's sausage biscuit, orange juice, and lots of coffee. Later that day, in Memphis, we returned the rented van. Our old van was just half-fixed. It was still hard to drive, and Anita Kinney made the plea that the lead vans keep as near as possible to the speed limit. We drove across Tennessee. It is a long state, and it was a long day. We entered North Carolina from Johnson City. We drove right through my old haunts in Banner Elk, where I attended Lees-McRae College. I thought of a graduation party I had attended at Elk Park Falls in May of 1969. I thought of my old friend and classmate Steve Nixon, who died some years ago of a brain tumor, but only after he returned to Banner Elk, and rented a house in which to spend his final days. I thought of Brent Lee, my old roomy of whom I have lost track, and of Dough Peacock, Steve Nixon's roomy, whom I now see with regularity, after not seeing him for more than thirty years. It was 8:00 p.m. on Sunday night before we made it back to Boone. My wife Elayne, my daughter Edyth and her husband Jason Berry were there, waiting for me. I was glad to see them, but sad, too. Sad to be leaving a community that was forged among strangers and friends because of our personal choices and common objectives. I collected my gear, and left, looking forward to our group's brief reunion already scheduled for 15 April 2009. I had been there, and I was back again. On Sunday 15 March we traveled c. 840 miles.

II. Lenten Journey and Theological Reflections

I promised the Board of Elders at New Philadelphia Moravian Church that I would make my Southwestern Field Experience with Dr. Ayers and the students of ASU a “Lenten Journey,” and “a time of theological reflection.” In this section I make note of thoughts that occurred to me on the trip. Many of these notes have resulted in additional thought, and I have already mentioned some of this material in my teaching or preaching. I offer these thoughts here, according to topic, in rudimentary form, and in no particular order. It is my intention to continue to develop these lines of thought (and action) as a part of my normal duties at the church, whether preaching, teaching, or writing for publication.

Lent in the Desert

In the Moravian Church, as in all liturgical churches, Catholic or Protestant, the season of Lent is a season of introspection, in which believers are challenge to think critically about our lives and our discipleship. Let begins on Ash Wednesday and continues for six weeks until Easter, the final week being called “Holy Week.” Holy Week begins on the Sunday with the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, includes the Maundy Thursday Communion, continues through Good Friday, the day of Christ’s Crucifixion and Burial, and culminates with Easter Sunday, the Day of Christ’s Resurrection.

The Gospel Lesson for the 1st Sunday in Lent invariably includes a reading of the Temptation of Jesus that followed his baptism by John. Mark version is the shortest. He says only that:

12 The Spirit immediately drove (Jesus) out into the wilderness. 13 And he was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him.” (Mark 1:12,13)

I thought it fitting that at least a part of my Lenten Journey would be in a desert. I was certainly among the wild beasts, as we saw plenty of them. According to the book of Hebrews, angels are not only “ministering spirits sent forth to serve,” but also “strangers unaware.” I have no doubt that I was ministered to by angels in the form of those ASU students who, though hardly more than strangers to me, went out of their way to help me along the way, especially in Canyon del Muerto. I hope I helped them a little, too. And how about Satan---was Satan present, and, if so, how was the Tempter at work? If to believe in Satan is “to believe that Evil is greater than the sum total of its parts” (C. S. Lewis), or “to believe that the possibilities of Evil are not exhausted by purely human evil”(Emil Brunner), then Satan was certainly present, albeit more in the form of “an angel of light,”(2Cor. 11:14) than as “a roaring lion” (1Pet. 5:8). My temptation on this trip was most certainly to envy the *youth* of the ASU students who stand at the very dawn of their adult lives. Some people say that they would not want to relive their lives. I am not one. If it were possible, I would do it all over again. With a few minor exceptions, I would do it again exactly as I have done it. One exception is the matter of applying myself to my studies. I was a good graduate student, but a terrible college student. I am envious that so many of the students who were my companions on the trip have discovered the sheer joy of study and learning at such an early age.

The Navajo Vision of Evil

We Christians have many ways of describing evil in its various forms. Since we can make enemies of no living person, we speak of our “spiritual warfare,” and of doing battle against “the principalities and powers” that express themselves in the collectives of this world, especially those that have become vicious circles of evil. (Ephesians 6) I have already mentioned how the book of 1st Peter describes Satan “as a roaring lion, seeking

someone to devour.” Traditionally, Navajos and some other tribes, too, believe in witches and shape-shifters that take the form of animals, coyotes, wolves, dogs, owls, crows, and the like, in order to harm individuals. One day, as we were driving along the highway, several of us saw a black dog running at great speed through the sage, chasing nothing, just running, flat-out. A black figure in a gray landscape, the dog looked almost surreal. Seeing that dog running with a purpose that seemed almost human made it easy to understand how the ancient peoples of that place---and at least some of their descendants, could suspect certain animals to be alternate shapes assumed by *evil* human beings. I do not suspect that dog of evil, but did see a brief vision of evil in the vicious circles of poverty and hopelessness that we saw in several of the communities we visited. For instance, one Native American woman told a student that seventy-five percent of the males on the Zuni reservation abuse alcohol. How should this news affect me, a member of the dominant culture they envy so? I remember how Jesus once looked at Peter, and said to him, “Get behind me Satan, you are not on the side of God, but of men.” Am I a part of the solution or a part of the problem? Is there a third option? Can any of us content ourselves with merely observing an evil and do nothing about it? Whom do we serve? Whom do I serve? It is a fitting question for Lent. I desire to be a servant of Christ, who came to be a servant of all. In serving others, we serve him. “How can we love God whom we have not seen, if we do not love our brother whom we have seen.” (1st John 4:20) Of course, the question then becomes, what can I, a resident of North Carolina, do for the Zuni of New Mexico who live at such a distance? Even though Harvard lives 1,600 miles away, he has done much to preserve the history and sacred spaces of these Native Americans. He has done it through legislation. He also works hard to see that some members of the local economy, like Alex and his family, receive some profit from his ASU trips in the region. He was most generous with Alex. What can I do in the present to insure there is some temporal hope for these people in their future? Is there

something I can do politically, or must it all be personal?
Sometimes even the small things are important.

Anthropological Concepts

On my trip, in lectures, and especially in my private conversations with Dr. Ayers, I learned several important concepts that underlie a general study of anthropology. Though I once knew them only intuitively, I now know them more cognitively and formally. To name what one has known but never named is learning at its best! The section that follows is brief, but I do hope to enlarge upon this area of learning in the years to come. I would mention three anthropological concepts that I think are so important that they will certainly inform my thinking in future.

1) We learned about the psychic unity of humankind, that all human beings have similar responses to similar stimuli and circumstances. This is akin to the Biblical doctrine of our human solidarity first in sin (Psalm 14, Romans 3), then in Christ (Romans 5). I often found myself reading the Psalms, thinking about how universally human they are. The ancient Hebrews had writing and history. They worshiped one God, and were capable of careful albeit scientifically innocent reflection on their place in the world. By contrast the Anasazi had no writing, and no written history. They worshiped, but they had no word for religion. In the language of *Faith Development* pioneered by James Fowler of Emory University, they were trapped in a “mythic literal world” in which they actually lived in the rituals and stories that sustained them. When they wafted ground corn to the images of their kachinas we know as petroglyphs, they expected those images to sneeze. No doubt, sometimes they sneezed with them, and perhaps for them. For additional reading in this area see Dr. James Fowler’s book, The Stages of Faith. First published in New York by Harper & Row in 1981, it has passed through many additions since. By the by, Dr. Fowler writes about a very generic kind of

“faith” or “trust” that is not specific to any one religion, but to all. Anthropologists would find his concepts useful.

2) We learned about the sufficiency of language. This means that language in any society is always sufficient to the needs of that society. As conditions change, and as technologies develop, the language of a people grows to accommodate those changes and developments. Of course, the sufficiency of language does not mean that we always understand each other, even within relatively homogenous societies. Misunderstanding is legion. This is about all I want to say on this for now. On a more positive note, in my view, the concept of the sufficiency of language means that, in so far they speak of purely human concepts and conditions, the language of the Psalms of the Hebrew Bible, our Christian Old Testament would not have been foreign to the Anasazi. One desert people could certainly have appreciated the challenges of life in another desert. The two peoples, the Jews and Anasazi were separated by half a world, but bound together by their psychic unity. When I read certain Psalms it is almost as easy for me to set at least some parts of them in Chaco as in Jerusalem.

3) We learned about the distinction between sociology and anthropology. Sociology studies “we”, meaning our society, and anthropology studies, “they”, meaning some other society, ancient or modern. One of the most important aspects of my trip was the fact that I had an opportunity to live and work in close contact with a outstanding group of 21st Century college students. I wonder if they studied me as intently as I studied them?

Ecological Warrior

Once Harvard asked me to drive our rental van while he talked by cell to a lawyer about legislation before the N.C. House that would prevent the use of mountain top removal coal by energy companies in the state as a substitute for conventionally mined coal. The cost

of using conventionally mined coal is inconsequential compared to the destruction of the habit caused by mountain top removal. *I felt useful*. Later, Harvard spoke several times of his desire to forge alliances with faith based environmental groups. I told him about Bonhoffer's statement that "to despise the creation is to despise God the Creator, while to despise the story of redemption is to despise God the Redeemer." Christians can afford to do neither.

Balance & Moderation

The Navajo's speak of balance. That is always a good thing. We Moravians also advocate "moderation in all things."

Holy Ground

Ike Eastvold reminded us that the Petroglyphs site is holy ground to modern Pueblo's in the same way that it must have been to the ancient Anasazi. I desire to be respectful of anyone's sacred spaces. Yet, the situation in Palestine has made me a little skeptical about Holy Ground. Jews and Muslims are fighting over holy ground in Palestine, and we Christians once took part in the fight, and, arguably, still do. This despite the fact that Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world," and the writer of the Hebrews said that, "here we have no lasting city." Does that mean we despise this world that God made and pronounced, "Good?" No, I agree with Rabbi Abraham Heschel who wrote that "...wherever we live, we live in a holy neighborhood." How can it be other wise. The whole world is holy, set apart by God for us to "till and keep." (Genesis 1:15) Our stewardship must improve!

In Backpacking and in Travel, Less Is Often More

The ancient Anasazi people got by with just a few things, and we assume that they made a good life. We, too, can live quite comfortably with a minimum of comforts. One of the great things

about travel in general and backpacking in particular is that it forces us to make decisions as to what is and is not important. How nice it would be if we could apply a similar dictum to our often crowded, wasteful everyday lives. Interestingly, in the Bible, the Hebrew word for “wealth” and “weight” is one and the same. The wealthy man or woman carries a burden that those with less affluence do not carry. Often it is a burden of choice, but it is still a burden.

Table Fellowship & the Sacrament

The New Testament places a huge value upon table fellowship, especially that between Jesus and his disciples, Jesus and sinners, etc. Once we eat with someone, our relationship is never again quite the same; it is lifted to a higher plane. We enjoyed great table fellowship on our trip, at restaurants, over fine meals, and in the van, as we shared peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. As Christians we enjoy a different kind of table fellowship when we partake of the Sacrament, sharing the bread and the cup. In the Holy Supper we commune with the Risen Lord, and with the members of God’s Church in all places and ages. “I believe in the communion of the saints,” declares *The Apostle’s Creed*. On our trip through Canyon del Muerto some students buried various canned items, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and ears of corn in the coals of our fire. In roasting that corn they were imitating the ancient Anasazi, and also the modern Navajo, as one of Daniel’s trail meals consisted of ears of corn, still in the husks, roasted by the fire. As I watched people shuck and eat the roasted corn, I thought it almost a communion of sorts, human beings sharing a human experience across the divide of eons come and gone, and cultures, too. This is one more example of the psychic unity of human kind.

Communing with the Dead

There is a line from the movie *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* that I cannot forget. An old root doctor, a woman, speaks to a young, skeptical reporter saying, “In order to understanding the living, you got to commune with the dead.” Perhaps that is why the ancient Anasazi fascinate us so. We seek to commune with them because we want to understand the living, especially ourselves.

The Skull in the Canyon del Muerto

I talked to Harvard about the skull in the canyon. I had read somewhere that Navajos sometimes bury their dead in secret places among the rocks, hills, and canyons of their reservation. Citing this fact, I postulated that the skull might belong to a Navajo. Harvard said that he had never sought to finally determine if the skull were Anasazi or Navajo, as it would result in disturbing the grave. I would now add to this conversation. Though I did not think of it at the time, it is worth noting that the little burial cave faced the sunset, not the sunrise. The Hopi and Zuni which most believe to be lineal descendents of the ancient Anasazi people have a highly developed concept of life after death. Most peoples who believe in life after death, including Christians who belong to the Moravian Church, of which I am one, orient the graves of their departed to the east, to the rising of the sun. The Navajos adhere to a doctrine of death’s finality. Was this grave oriented toward the setting sun as a sign of life’s finality, or was it merely a favorite spot, or view, of the one whose bones we found? Either way, the Psalmist is right, “His place knows him no more.”

Ministry as Vocation

My denomination has always thought it prudent to set apart certain people for fulltime Christian service. At present, I am one of those

people. Unlike the Apostle Paul who worked as a tentmaker to support his ministry, I am paid a salary. Reflection is one of the things I am charged to do, but I never take the opportunity for granted. The New Philadelphia Congregation has shown me a special kindness in allowing me to participate on this trip. I hope I can pay the kindness forward.

People Are Watching

The young adults of today are sophisticated in ways that their parents and grandparents were not. If we don't tell them the truth in small things, they will never listen to our big truths. We must also be consistent in our actions, and kind. They are watching us to see if our faith makes a difference in the way that we act.

Mystery

The late C. S. Lewis rightfully observed that the world needs a little mystery and magic. Christians do not consider God's intervention on the plane of human history "magic" in the traditional sense of this word; but God's action in the world does always possess qualities of mystery and wonder. Those who rule out the idea of God's occasional intervention on the plane of human history live in a smaller cosmos than those who do not. I realize that science has continually explained for one generation what a previous generation regarded as "magic," but there are still plenty of things that science cannot explain. "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Walking in the Steps of Ansel Adams

As I viewed the magnificent canyons, I remembered many of them were photographed by Ansel Adams, the great 20th Century Photographer. I also recalled an incident from Adam's youth in

San Francisco. It is recorded in Adam's autobiography, and goes something like this. Adams returned to his home having found what he believed to be a dinosaur bone. His tutor in Latin and Greek, a Fundamentalists minister, told Adams that God did not make dinosaurs, but dinosaur bones to lead astray those who were not among the elect. Adams was incredulous. Though always "spiritual," it was after this incident that Adams turned his back on organized religion. What a shame that many still associate the Christian Faith with similar backwardness.

Evolution

Harvard and I talked a little about evolution and the Christian faith. Of course, evolution is an established fact for archeologists and anthropologists. I told him that as the method by which God created, evolution makes perfect sense. Even the Pope has said as much. It is only when God is left out that I would object to the theory. My favorite creation story is in John chapter 1, or perhaps in Colossians, where the apostle writes:

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; 16 for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Colossians 1:15-16

The Nicene Creed picks up on this verse when it declares that God is the maker of all things, "visible and invisible," or, as we might say today, *known* and *unknown*.

I was pleased to learn that Harvard invited a local Baptist Minister who thinks as I do into his class to speak to those class members who were concerned that accepting evolution might rob them of their faith. How wonderful that a professor in a public university would be so respectful of faith, and free to do as Harvard has done. Go, Appalachian!

Genesis

In the creation story of Genesis 1 the sun and moon are not created until the 4th day. This is not poetry, but theology. In all the cultures that surrounded Ancient Israel, the sun and moon were worshiped as gods. The author of the Genesis says, “No, the sun and moon are a part of the creation.” The Zuni’s occupied a middle ground. They believed that certain “gods” were assigned to carry the sun and moon. It is not surprising to me that so many of the Pueblo’s have adopted Christianity, this despite the incongruous and unchristian way in which they were treated by both the Spanish and the Anglos.

Parent or Grandparent?

I found it interesting that some of the students told me stories about their parents, while others told me stories about their grandparents. I suspect that those with older parents identified me with their parents, and those with younger parents, with their grandparents. I am certainly at least two generations removed from some of them, yet, to borrow a phrase, we still have “a psychic unity,” and still worked to a common purpose.

On Walking Barefoot in Winter

As we walked through the icy waters of Canyon del Muerto in bare feet, I found myself feeling less sorry for those persons in the world who often go without shoes in bad weather because they are too poor to own them. *I do not mean this cavalierly.* Of course I wish everyone had shoes; but I never cease to be amazed by how adaptable we human being are. Though I am spoiled with regard to my feet, I think that, if I had to, even I could adapt to going without shoes. How much can we do with out, and survive, our full humanity intact? I suppose our ability varies. Upon my return to Winston-Salem, I went with several of my Elders to take desert

and hold devotions at the *Bethesda Center for the Homeless*. One homeless man told me that one had to be strong to be homeless, and that not just anyone could handle it. I agreed with him. Just now I recalled that, for a time, Jesus was homeless. “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no where to lay his head.” (Matthew 8:20)

The Reality Is Usually Not as Bad as the Dread

As we walked through the water in bare feet, it also occurred to me, and to several others, that the anticipation and dread of a hardship or trial is usually worse than the trial itself.

Carrying One’s Pack

Reaching the top of the Canyon del Muerto was an accomplishment for this fifty-nine year old man. I am glad I carried my pack. My ascent from the Canyon del Muerto means much to me, as it gives me the hope that this grandfather has a number of good years ahead. I have always exercised, and feel younger than my chronological age. I hope and pray that I can delay the frailty that comes to each of us as we approach the last leg of our journey called a human life. I recall how, according to the 4th Gospel, the risen Christ once spoke to Peter, predicting a time when Peter would “stretch out his arms and be carried where he did not wish to go.” According to the same passage Jesus said this to signify the death that Peter was to die. However, this saying has almost universal application. Death waits for all of us, and infirmity, the precursor of death, waits for many of us. Blessed be those who escape infirmity. In my view, a quick or even sudden death is but a small price to pay for the privilege of possessing at least a measure of vitality to the end. A dying man once said to me, “Worth, never give up, never give up, never give up.” I hope to live out his advice. Of course, the choice is not always ours to make.

The Wise Old Man

The Wise Old Man and the Wise Old Woman are among my favorite Jungian Archetypes. The Bible says, “Rise up and honor the head covered with frost.” (Leviticus 19:32) Our society places a premium on youth. That is as it should be, but we should not forget those who are older. I am a poor example, but even I know so much more now than when I was young. But who will profit from my knowledge? Perhaps, for a little while, I can; but at this juncture, I would also like to pass it along. Harvard seems to be doing this in remarkable ways. If I had another life to live, I might enjoy being a professor of anthropology!

Mutual Respect

It is refreshing how the students who were on the Great Southwest Field Experience readily identified themselves either as Christians, or as non-Christians, all knowing full well that I was a Christian pastor. There was no pretense, no falsity among them. I was always treated with respect, and tried to return the compliment. Therefore, most of the time, I just listened to my fellow travelers. I recall how the prophet Ezekiel once set by the waters of Babylon, and listened to the people of Israel who were captive there. Only then did he speak. Occasionally, I had an opportunity to speak to individuals about some aspect of my own faith, but only after someone asked something specific. Of course, on several other occasions I listened as guest lecturers like Ike Eastvold, or Alex Seowtewa, or one of the students themselves spoke either to individuals, or to a group about their own faith. This was always encouraging.

The Magnificent Middle

I never felt compelled to make an explanation of my faith. However, as I listened to what my fellow travelers were saying, sometimes about themselves, sometimes about their friends, I was saddened with this thought: Few of this generation people have seen a presentation of Christianity other than the radical right, Fundamentalist's approach that they skip quickly over when looking for a radio station or a TV program. Or, perhaps, the presentation or the radical left, 'almost nothing remains of our faith' position of the Jesus Seminar and their followers whose books are now used in the study of comparative religion. I sometimes fear that the magnificent middle of historic Christianity has almost disappeared for the radar of the young. It is a pity, but Jesus himself asked, "Will the Son of Man find faith on the earth when he comes?"

Misinformed

Since my return from the Southwester Field Experience, I have enjoyed a book about the Navajo religion by Raymond Friday Locke entitled, Sweet Salt: Discovering the Sacred World of the Navajo. In it the author makes a point about the oral tradition of the Navajos by comparing it with the oral tradition of the Bible. He states categorically that the Biblical documents were not written down until 200 to 400 years after the fact. When it comes to the New Testament documents he is patently wrong. The genuine and undisputed letters of Paul---such as Romans, Galatians, Philippians, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, etc., date from c. 50 A.D. until c. 64 A.D. This at the latest, as Paul probably died during the Neronian persecution, c. 64 A.D. As to the Synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of Mark was certainly written before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 64 which event it does not mention. Matthew and Luke both mention the event and certainly date after it, but most scholars would date them before 85 A.D. One scrap of the Fourth Gospel,

certainly the last gospel to be written, the John Rylands Fragment, has been dated to c. 100 at the earliest to c. 160 A.D. at the latest. Of course, earlier copies of the gospel may have been in circulation years before. Tradition dates the 4th Gospel c. 96 A.D. at the end of Domitian's persecution. There is a good article on the John Rylands Fragment at www.wikipedia.com. Locke is right about the documents of the Bible being written down after a period of oral tradition, but wrong about his dates re the early Christian documents. Unfortunately, he is blissfully ignorant of his error. I wonder how often I have been blissfully ignorant of some fact that challenges a position I hold?

The Tenuous Position of Alex Seowtewa

The position of Alex, who tries to live in two worlds, Zuni and Catholic, though championed by anthropologists, has been challenged both by conservative Catholics, and by practitioners of the traditional Zuni religion. In an interview, Parker Wall, a second year student, asked Alex how he related his Catholicism to his Zuni religious practice. Alex responded with a story in which he answered the same question. He bumped into a woman in a grocery store. She had seen Alex participate in a Buffalo Dance one Saturday night and a Catholic Mass the next morning, Sunday. She asked Alex which of his two faiths was the most important to him. Alex responded that when he danced in the Buffalo Dance, he did so with his Cursillo Cross* sown into his heavy headdress, and thanked his Father Above for his Zuni heritage. Alex's point was that he was always "under the influence of the cross." To my mind, this was a humble and worthy answer; but I suspect that it will satisfy the Pope more than it does a Zuni traditionalists.

*.[*Note: Cursillo is a Spanish word meaning, "a short course," and it signifies "a short course in Christianity." Cursillo is a retreat weekend that has long been popular among the Catholic laity, and has spread into the Protestant denominations, especially*

the liturgical denominations like the Anglican Church. Some Moravian Churches have participated.]

In either case, Alex is a brave man to hold his Christian faith and his Zuni ancestry and pride in a dynamic tension. That he bothers to do so speaks of his large heart and great soul. Alex seeks to include, never exclude. He is a model Christian from whom many well-meaning missionaries in many parts of the world could learn. Of course, he is not alone. I heard one of our own Moravian pastors and teachers from Tanzania, Tuntufeye Meninsongoli, express a similar large heartedness in regard to his own faith. Although Tuntufeye's father was a Christian before him, his more distant ancestors were animist. In Tanzania there is a constant competition between the Christian faith and the Muslim faith as people abandon their traditional religions in droves. Tuntufeye told me that an African would never embrace a faith that "cut him off from his ancestors."

Those of us whose families have been Christians for generations should be mindful those like Tuntufeye and Alex who occupy a more difficult place in the world. I think the New Testament makes ample allowance for their concerns. For instance, many reputable scholars think that it was concern on the part of first generation Christians for those former generations of family and friends who had lived, and probably died, before the Good News about Christ was preached that prompted the people in Corinth to baptize for the dead. Though Paul did not institute this practice, he did understand and permit it. We find this out in 1st Corinthians 15 in a passage in which he is arguing in favor of "the resurrection of the dead." He writes:

29 If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?

Today, only the Mormons permit baptism for the dead, and Catholics and Protestants reject the practice, rightfully I believe. Never the less, in certain areas of the world, a progressive church still “baptizes” certain *customs* into the faith, especially when they do no harm. The universal adoption of the German Christmas tree is a good example. We now display them even in our sanctuaries. The kachinas Alex painted in the sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe is another good example. The priest who encouraged him in the work understood that the kachinas played the same role for the Zuni people as the saints play for people who have been Catholic for generations. One could also see them as “ministering spirits sent forth to serve.”

So Near, Yet So Far

It occurs to me that those ancient Anasazi, particularly the Basketmakers, were Christ’s contemporaries in time. However, they were separated from him, and from the Evangelists who preached the Good News of his Resurrection by an unimaginable distance. No person of theological bent can resist the question of how the ancient Anasazi participate in the gospel. We invariably contemplate their fate, and wonder how they share in the Christian hope. We Protestants tend simply to trust to the grace and goodness of God. Paul spoke of those without the Law being judged without the Law. (Romans 2) At Vatican II the Catholic Church answered this question using *The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats* that is found in Matthew 25. In this parable people are admitted into the kingdom of God not because they have faith in Christ, but because they have done some kindness to one of the least of Christ’s brothers (and sisters), something as seemingly insignificant and human as sharing a cup of water. The text does not limit this kindness to the disciples that Jesus appointed to be with him. In the context of Matthew’s gospel, Christ is ever and always the brother of those who are in need, regardless of who

they may be. “In the poor, the sick, the hungry, and the oppressed we meet him.” I reproduce the parable here in its entirety.

31 “When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33 and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. 34 Then the King will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35 for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ 37 Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? 38 And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? 39 And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?’ 40 And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’ 41 Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; 42 for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ 44 Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?’ 45 Then he will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.’ 46 And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” Matthew 25:31 - 46

As I marveled at the remnants of that ancient Anasazi civilization I assured myself that though they did not believe in God by the same name I do, the God I believe in believe in them. I say “believes in them,” rather than “believed in them,” for, as Jesus said, “all live to God.” (Luke 20:38) I was reminded, too, of Acts 17, wherein Paul says to the philosophers of the Areopagus in Athens, that “God made from one blood, every nation of humankind that they might feel after God, and perhaps find God.”

Vatican II called peoples like these ancient Anasazi “Disciples in Ignorance.” I am not sure that we should claim discipleship for peoples who could not or cannot claim it for themselves. They may object! Never the less, I suspect Vatican II was trying to say the same thing I recently heard a respected theologian say. He said, “Though not every path leads to God, God has a way of finding us along every path.” Or, as the late E. Stanley Jones once said when asked about the fate of those who lived before Christ, “No one lived before Christ.” He then quoted John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Some members of my congregation may ask, “What then is our motivation for sharing our faith?” There is only one answer to that question. We share our faith because we believe that Christ commanded it. We are bold to believe that the Christian faith can make a positive difference not just in the world to come, but in this life. Oh how I wish that all people of all faiths would remember a tenant common to all doctors. “The first rule of the physician is to do no harm!” Oh how I wish this rule had always been exercised by Christians as we came into contact with other cultures. Maybe, then, in the summer of 1629, the Zuni would not have been forced to leave their fields to build a church, and would not have starved that winter.

The Kiva at Aztec

The restored kiva at Aztec is a wonderful, reverent space. Though I photographed it out of a desire to have a record of its appearance, once I had made the pictures, I found myself turning to prayer, and to the Psalms. We know of the Anasazi religious practice. Yet, I found myself wondering how many of the ancients wandered out of that kiva at night, only to look up at the sky, and echo, with necessary variations, the exclamation of the Psalmist:

3 When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast established; 4 what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him? Psalm 8:3-4

Communities in Conflict or Cooperation

The proximity of the many communities of Mesa Verde caused me to wander about how these ancient communities interacted with one another. How did they compete? How did they cooperate? It amazes me that the petroglyphs often feature images of the parrot. The Anasazi could only have secured parrots through trade with the tribes of Meso-America. In his book, The Word Is Flat, Thomas Friedman says that *globalization* will bring our world increasingly together, in cooperation. He says that no two countries with a McDonald's have ever gone to war with one another. I hope he is right. But what about scarcity and the competition it breeds?

History in the Southwest

Oh how nice it would be if these ancient peoples had left some written record describing their life, as did the ancient Hebrew People. Unfortunately, history did not come to them until the Spanish came with their written language.

Learning from Anthropologists

Militant atheism has become quite fashionable, especially in scientific circles. Richard Dawkins book, The God Delusion, is a good example. I marvel that anthropologists, though scientists to the core, have resisted this movement. Perhaps because they merely study the world as it was and is, without trying to make it over into something more agreeable to them. We Christians could learn much about respect from the professional anthropologists, though, to be honest, we cannot help but dream of a world where Christ reigns over all. Such a dream is the absoluteness of our particular that we cannot shake. (Matthew 28:19f) However, Christians can move our agenda forward only by practicing mutual respect and dialogue, not bigotry and close-mindedness. Kirster Stendhal, a Lutheran pastor and theologian who once taught New Testament at Harvard, wrote that we Christians are not ready for sharing our own faith until we are ready to be converted to the truth of another. A lack of respect grows out of feelings of fear and inferiority as easily as it grows out of feelings of bravado and superiority. What are we afraid of?

The Religion and History of a People

Today, many anthropologist like Raymond Friday Locke are want to say that the Navajo history is preserved in their religious stories, just as Ancient Israel preserved her history as she told her story of encountering the God of Abraham and Sara, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Miriam, and the Prophets. Did I say this already? It is worth saying again.

Knowledge of the Anasazi

Often, the best guesses we can make about the Anasazi are based upon the idea that the Pueblos of today are, in some measure at

least, their decedents and near relatives. We learn by comparing and contrasting. What is the same? What is different? I will wager that they were a lot like us. “No man had to tell Jesus what was in man, for he knew what was in man.” (John 2:25) “One cannot gain knowledge of one’s self without also, simultaneously, gaining knowledge of the whole human race.” (Abraham Maslow, The Farther Reaches of Human Nature.)

The Modern Pueblo Tribes

The Pueblos live in a very different environment than the Anasazi did. Their environment has made more dangerous by the encroachment of Spanish and Anglo civilizations. How different it must have been for those ancient Anasazi who completely dominated the human society in which they lived. Did they pass their lives in hope or in fear?

Embarrassed

I had dinner last night with a dear friend who identifies herself as an agnostic, though she does profess to “love New Philadelphia Moravian Church,” and attends every time she comes to visit her friends in Winston-Salem. I told her about my trip with ASU. She herself studied anthropology. She told me that when one studies anthropology one immediately encounters all the harm that religion can do. She is right. We heard of many examples on our trip. One stands out. I was particularly saddened when Alex told us how the Zuni were called out of their fields by the priests to build the mission church, then starved over the following winter. Protestants are as guilty in this matter as Catholics. We, too, have made mistakes. I believe that God is grieved by such behavior. Jesus himself said that not everyone who called him Lord, or spoke in his name truly belonged to him. (Matthew 7:21) One of the students on the trip was reading The Poison Wood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver. I read it some years ago. It is about

missionaries gone way, way wrong. I liked that book, as it contains much truth. However, I found myself wishing that Ms. Kingsolver had known Bishop Iobst and his late wife Helen, or the late Joe and Lahoma Gray, all of whom were missionaries for many years among the Miskito Indians in Honduras and Nicaragua. How different these Moravian missionaries were and are from the characters in Kingsolver's book, and from those priests in Zuni. For instance, way back in the 18th century Moravian missionaries in the Caribbean went to the slaves rather than to the plantation owners. A radical idea at the time.

Leaving in the Middle of the Night

I did not want to leave Santa Fe in the middle of the night, but I was asleep through most of the major events of the evening, and I never saw the drunken man, or his Pit Bull. I think that I saw his friends, not in the van but in the car. Did they bring pistols to what once would have more likely been only a fistfight at worst, or, more likely, a shouting match? I don't know. Discretion is the better part of valor. What a world we live in. Can a sophisticated, affluent city like Santa Fe really be so violent? Unfortunately, it can. Even here in the east, in Winston-Salem, we have been warned that many of the Hispanic immigrants are bring their gangs with them to the Promised Land, to America. One gang even marked a building on our church property with their symbol, as part of their turf. So, the gangs that grew elsewhere have come to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and to Santa Fe, New Mexico. I wonder if the Anasazi had to fear those who were somehow different from them? It is interesting to note how friendly the Pueblos and the Navajos were with one another. Several of the Navajo origin myths tie the Dine to the Anasazi who were here before them, especially in the Chaco Canyon area. Who were the first people to bring their gangs into the southwest? Who were the enemies of the ancient Anasazi? It was certainly the Spanish, and

Anglos, like me, who brought guns, germs, and steel to bear against the Indian tribes.

Spiritual Not Religious, Reprise

I had several students tell me that they were not formally religious, but that they were spiritual. I do not consider myself a particularly religious man, in the sense that I have never just sought after a religious “feeling.” I am the Christian son of Christian parents, but ultimately hold on to my faith not just because it feels good, but only because I find it intellectually the most satisfying answer I can find. I approach the sacred scriptures in the same way that those belonging to the history of religion school might do, however I do not start with the same presuppositions. I leave room for revelation and God’s direct action in the world. The scriptures speak to me, compellingly so. If I were not Christian, I doubt I would be religious. The only God I can believe in is the God of the cross. If God is not like Christ, then I am not sure I want anything to do with God. The late P. T. Forsyth, an early 20th Century Scottish theologian once wrote that the cross of Christ is “for the justification of human kind before God, and also for the justification of God before human kind.” In Christ God makes “atonement” or “at-one-ment” between God and humankind. In the incarnation and death of the Eternal Son, God takes the side of humankind, irrevocably. Given the prominence of human suffering, if God is not Christ-like, then God has a lot of explaining to do. Of course, I believe God is Christ like. “He is the image of the invisible God.” (Colossians 1:15)

What Students Asked

Many of the students eventually asked me about the church I serve. Not one of them asked whether we used contemporary or traditional music in our service. They did not ask me how long I preached, or whether we had a Sunday school. They invariably

asked me about some program of action. They wanted to know if our church is active for good in our community and world. They wanted to know how are we making a difference.

Prayer vs. Magic

I don't practice sympathetic magic, as did the ancient Anasazi, but I do pray, and ask God's intervention. I believe prayer to be more than magic. Have I ever seen God's intervention? Does prayer change things? That is a good question. The ancient Hebrews said that no prayer was sincere unless the one who prayed the prayer was willing to be a part of the answer to the prayer. In such a case, prayer does indeed change things, especially the one who prays. Of course, I believe prayer does more. Here is an example of how I *believe* prayer works. On this trip I asked God to protect me from sickness so that I would not be a burden to those with whom I traveled. I *believe* that prayer was granted, perhaps in part because I washed my hands at every opportunity. Never the less, I do not believe that what I did for myself constitutes the *whole* answer to my prayer. I leave room for God's action. I did not get sick, and I thank God for that. I cannot justify my faith with logic, but I am pretty sure I don't really need to. "The heart has reasons that reason knows not."

Despite what I have said, though I tend to be a rational person, more given to thinking than feeling, prayer, in all its many forms, just *feels* right. Prayer is its own reward.

Travel and Travail

If I may borrow a phrase from J.R.R. Tolkien, the author of The Hobbit, and The Lord of the Rings trilogy, it is always good to go "there and back again." The English word *travel* comes from the same root as the English word *travail*. At one time, *travel* and *travail* were closely associated. One never travels, or passes

through travail, and comes home the same person. After *traveling*, we are citizens of a wider world, and we have personally grown through experience. So, too, when we pass through *travail* we become stronger, better suited to life and to the challenges it brings. “That which does not kill us makes us stronger.” (Friedrich Nietzsche) The blessing of going “there and back again” is just as real for a man rapidly approaching his sixtieth year, as it is for those young students, one-third his age, that go out to meet life with joy and expectation.

True Community

Another group from ASU was in the Southwest for the purpose of studying community. They might well have studied our group. Nothing creates community like a common enemy, or, better, a common and shared challenge. One cannot participate in something like The Great Southwest Field Experience without feeling very much a part of a community.

Criticisms?

They say that every good reports contains an element of constructive criticism. This brief paragraph contains mine. I raise three objections against our trip. 1) Sometimes drivers followed too close, *and I was one*. 2) Sometimes *we* were late turning out for a movement, *and I was too*. 3) Finally, on our hike through Canyon del Muerto, we moved as individuals rather than as a unit. Thus, when we took a break, those at the front of the column had a long break, and those bringing up the rear a short one. As one who believes that one good critic is worth 100 dotting, uncritical admirers, I would offer this thought: In the military, especially in the infantry, the main body of a unit always starts and finishes a movement *together*. If a unit encounters an obstacle that takes some time to pass, the first persons over, around, or through the obstacle, wait at a convenient staging area, until the last person in

the unit over, around, or through. Only then does the unit resume the march. I think adopting this practice would build additional teamwork, and make a hike through Canyon del Muerto an even richer community building exercise.

Leave-Taking at the End of our Journey

All the students on the trip were most cordial and helpful. They welcomed me to their group, and they cheered my progress, especially when we climbed out of Canyon del Muerto. I received aid from many, and I hope I shared aid with some.

The Southwest Field Experience with Dr. Ayers was the single best continuing education even I have ever attended. I thank God for Appalachian State University, for Professor Harvard Ayers, for his students. As I quit this section of my paper, I pray for my fellow travelers, and for their professor, the same thing I pray for each child I baptize back here at New Philadelphia. I pray that they might be, “as beautiful as they were in the Mind of God when God first thought of them, and that all the good possibilities of life might become realities for them.”

I was sorry to say good-bye to my fellow travelers. Harvard suggested we might do it again sometime. To my delight, Adam insisted on hugging me. Aaron came over for a final handshake. I wanted to introduce Anita to my family, as she was such a good Trail Boss, but did not have the opportunity. Liz stopped by the car and said, “Hello.” I am sorry that I could not introduce everyone all around. There is a paragraph at the end of Out of Africa in which the author, Isak Dinesen, a *nom de plume* used by the Danish author Karen von Blixen, wonders if the hills and the people of Africa will remember her after her departure as she certainly remembers them. That line of thought has always intrigued me. It powerfully denotes a special relationship on the part of the author with both a place and a people. In similar

fashion, I wonder if I have left any evidence of my passing in the majestic Canyon del Muerto. “Leave only footprints, and take only memories,” is good advice, but seems a little one sided, as the land belongs to a people. Likewise, I wonder if those who passed through the Canyon with me will ever think of me in future, as I will most certainly think of them. I hope so. The trip is over, but my Lenten Journey continues, toward the sacrifice of the Cross, and toward the hope of the Resurrection.

Postscript

After my return from the Great Southwest Field Experience I showed a digital slide show at the church. People were uniformly enthused about all aspects of the trip. In the course of the presentation I mentioned that Alex Seowtewa played the baritone horn in a band of some kind. Members of our church band insisted that we send Alex a recording of our Moravian brass, along with a full set of band books, and a conductor’s guide. I sent them to him with the hopes that he and his fellow musicians would enjoy them, though I gave him the freedom to use them or pass them on as he saw fit. Is this the only gesture we are to make, or will others follow. I once had a member take me to Honduras, simply so that I could make friends with members of the Miskito tribe. He believed that it was friendship between individuals that could turn the tide in the nations.

Postscript II

I have also plunged back into the Tony Hillerman books. I made a tremendous find at *Edward McKay Used Books and More*, fourteen of the eighteen Hillerman books about the Navajo, all for less than thirty-one dollars! I just finished People of Darkness. In it I discovered that the Navajo always knock a hole in the north side of a hogan in which someone has died, so that the *chindi* or *ghost* can escape. According to Navajo belief, unless the *chindi* is

disturbed in some fashion, like people speaking his or her name, after four days it disappears, and with it the person's consciousness. According to Navajo belief, when you are dead, you are dead. For the most part, in the Hebrew Bible, especially in those texts written before the Babylonian Exile, when people's bodies are dead, they are dead. It is interesting that the Navajos, a desert people, agree with the majority opinion among the ancient Hebrews, also a desert people, on the matter of death. I suspect both had formed "a scientific opinion." They saw the deterioration of the dead body: "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

Of course, in the case of the Hebrews, hope finally emerged, especially in the case of the Pharisees, and, ultimately, of course, in the case of those Jews and Gentiles who embraced Jesus as the Crucified and Risen Messiah.

Along the same lines, I cannot get out of my head the vision of Harvard, in Canyon del Muerto, holding that skull in his hands. I thought of it again on Sunday, April 4th, when I taught Sunday School here at New Philly. My class was looking at the passage from the 37th chapter of the Book of Ezekiel in which God tells the prophet to prophesy to a valley of dry bones that they might live again. There follows a vision in which sinew, muscle and flesh once again cover the bones and life returns to the dead. It is hard to imagine sinew and flesh coming back onto that skull. We need not. The New Testament Doctrine of Resurrection is different from what Ezekiel describes. In the New Testament, resurrection is not just the *resuscitation* of a corpse, but *transformation* of one who has died into a whole new order of being.

*It is sown a physical body; it is raised a spiritual body. 1
Corinthians 15:44*

If this earthly tent we dwell in is destroyed, we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 Corinthians 5:1

As we noted on in class, the New Testament doctrine of Resurrection is also very different from the Greek doctrine of an eternal soul imprisoned in a body. In Greek thought, especially in Socrates as related by Plato in *The Phaedo*, the body is the enemy, and at death the soul is set free of its bodily prison to return to the great universal soul that is God. The soul of the individual survives, but not as a *personality*.

In the Bible, the human body, like the cosmos itself was made by God and pronounced *good*. In the Bible, it is *death* that is the enemy, not the body, and certainly not life. According to the Biblical doctrine of resurrection, the soul survives not because of some special property, but because God remembers the individual and calls the individual back to life. The resurrection is about survival of the individual, for in resurrection the individual personality survives. The Risen Jesus is the supreme example of this.

I have tried to view my recent studies through the eyes of a scientist. What can we say, scientifically, or at least historically, about the doctrine of resurrection? Well, though we cannot historically establish the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus, in that its proofs remain a matter of *faith*, we can historically establish the faith of the first disciples, who were the contemporaries of Jesus, and, of course, that of the early church. The evidence is compelling. The earliest witness to the resurrection of Jesus in the New Testament is found in chapter fifteen of St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, which most scholars believe to have been written more than decade before St. Mark, the earliest gospel. Paul writes about the tradition that he "received," possibly during his conversations with Peter as recorded in Galatians 1-2. He also

writes, albeit all too briefly, about his personal encounter with the Risen Christ. Those who think of Paul as “the creator of Christianity,” need to spend more time with this text, and in the Galatians texts, and in Philippians 3, as all these texts and others beside reveal that Paul considered himself, “late to the party.” I would mention that all legitimate scholars, liberal and conservative, attribute all the texts I have mentioned in this paragraph as original to Paul. In Chapter 15 of 1st Corinthians the Apostle writes:

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ *Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.* ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me. ¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed. 1
Corinthians 15:3-12

Final Thoughts Written on Good Friday, April 10, 2009

The Psalmist says that we are like the grass, and the flower of the grass. When it dies, its place knows it no more. On the trip, it occurred to me that the reverse of this saying is also true. As we traveled I saw license plates from forty-two different states, the District of Columbia, and four Canadian provinces. We have become like tumbleweeds that wander hither and yon, and some of

us have lost a sense of place. I love my travels, and sometimes feel that I would like to be “a tumbling tumbleweed.” Yet, for now, I am happy to be back where I belong, in my place. The Psalms were my frequent companion on my journey. I would close with a personal favorite, Psalm 16. Verse four may be a hard read for some. Please understand that psalmist is saying that *he will not offer sacrifice to other gods*. He does not say that *he will not pray for the people who worship them*. Prayer for others, especially those of other faiths is always appropriate.

¹ Preserve me, O God, for in thee I take refuge. ² I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.”³ As for the saints in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight. ⁴ Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows; their libations of blood I will not pour out or take their names upon my lips. ⁵ The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. ⁶ The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. ⁷ I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. ⁸ I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also dwells secure. ¹⁰ For thou dost not give me up to Sheol, or let thy godly one see the Pit. ¹¹ Thou dost show me the path of life; in thy presence there is fulness of joy, in thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.

Respectfully Submitted,

Worth Green