

World 4 Obsessio:
Condemnation and the Demonic –
The Fugitive

For citizens of this World the soul is diseased/demonic, for deep within the self is the will to dominate in order that I may survive. The disease is so great that just to be born is to be immersed in sin. So we “do” in order to justify ourselves – as if we must atone for being alive. This self-justification is acted out in rebellion against God.

Self-deception becomes the order of the day. We hide our motives from ourselves, although all around us are those who suffer from our willfulness. Our tendency is to drift toward arrogance, to play God by idolizing who we are and what we possess. In short we participate in hubris.



We have the courage to look at human duplicity without illusion, and see evidence of the Fall in the universal human pretentiousness to be something we are not: unstained and guiltless. We cannot will the change for this is pretentiousness, as the will can only will what it deems to be in its own self-interest since sin is embedded in the lining of the heart. The struggle with temptation and sin leaves us powerless, resulting in idolatry. Guilt invades our very depths and we are rendered fugitives by our fear of a just God.

World 4 Obsessio: guilt

World 4 Sin: willful, intentional, chosen, relished rebellion because it provides access to the forbidden

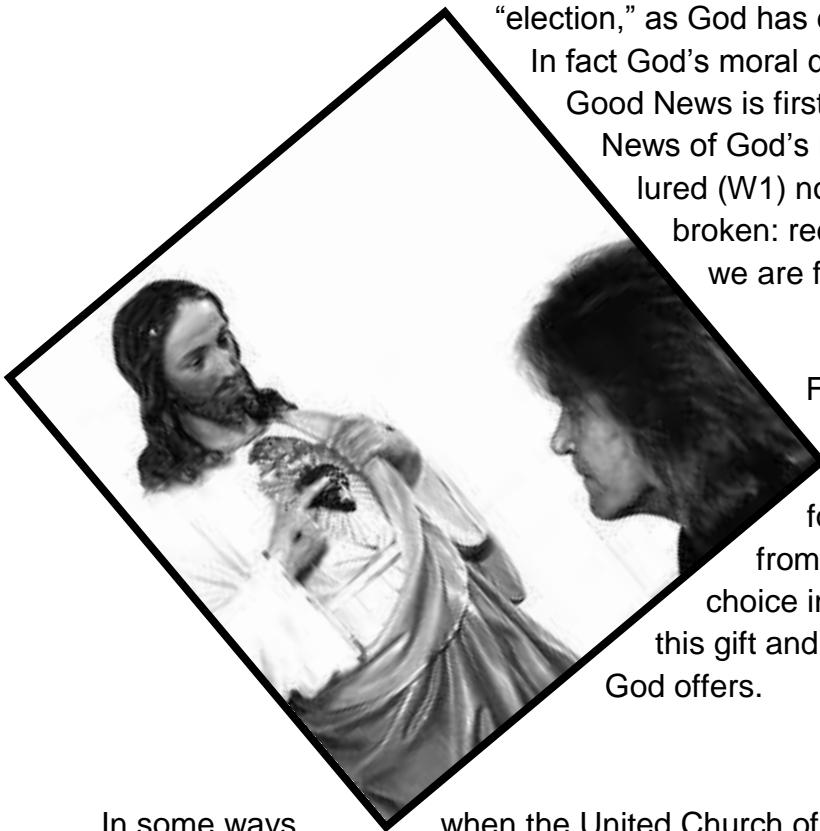
World 4 Gospel Truth: we can harm the relationship we have with God

World 4 Epiphania:

Forgiveness as Reprieve/Adoption

Guilt pushes us toward epiphania for there is no hope without confession of the need for atonement. Since I am powerless to change my attitudes and behavior only an intervention by God in the form of forgiveness can impact my life.

The resolution to the obsessio has no basis on our side, it is a gift. This is “election,” as God has every right to show no mercy. In fact God’s moral duty is to condemn. Often the Good News is first experienced as the Bad News of God’s reprimand. We are neither lured (W1) nor changed (W2). We are broken: recognizing and confessing that we are fugitives.



Forgiveness is the miracle of God’s willingness to restore us into relationship. While forgiveness comes as pure gift from God, we do have a personal choice in whether or not we accept this gift and participate in the salvation God offers.

In some ways when the United Church of Christ invokes, “No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here,” we invoke God’s offer of salvation, forgiveness, and restoration.

World 4 Epiphania: rebirth of an entire new life to replace the old sinful life

World 4 Christology: savior who redeems us from our sins

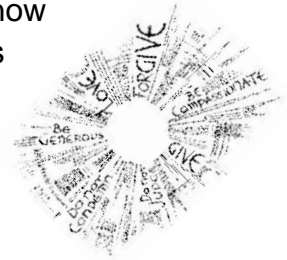
World 4 Gospel Celebration: our response is faithful obedience to God’s grace, not for self-realization (W3), but for self-sacrifice as a joyous response to God’s love

*World 4 Quest:
Forgiving the Unworthy -
To be Reconciled with the Truth*



The quest for World 4 is the most courageous of all, for it is in part a quest against the self. This quest is to turn self-deception into guilt, intensifying our frantic efforts at self-justification, moving us toward confusion. Occasioning chaos, this movement disrupts our duplicitous attitudes. The disruption allows for transformation as we come to see ourselves through God's eyes as both abhorred sinner and beloved child.

Our brokenness bleeds with irony for only in being forgiven, do we truly know ourselves as sinners. Only in being loved do we come to know the meaning of condemnation. Only when face to face with God's rightful anger do we realize that our destiny is in the hands of the Foolish Lover. Our drivenness to earn God's love gives way to being fed by God as we are given permission to be a child of God.



God's extension of justification/restoration by grace signals a new relationship. Our appropriate response to this gift of God is faith in, or trusting God to be gracious toward us. We are converted after the cathartic experience of grace, mercy, and tenderness when we realize we are loved in all our unloveableness.



World 4 Scripture: not a mirror, but a prism of God's truth. Scriptural authority raises the Bible above the duplicity and hubris of sinful humanity.

World 4 God: sits on the judgment throne named "the mercy seat"

World 4 Salvation: from rebellion to obedience

World 4 Movement: from Fugitive to Evangelist