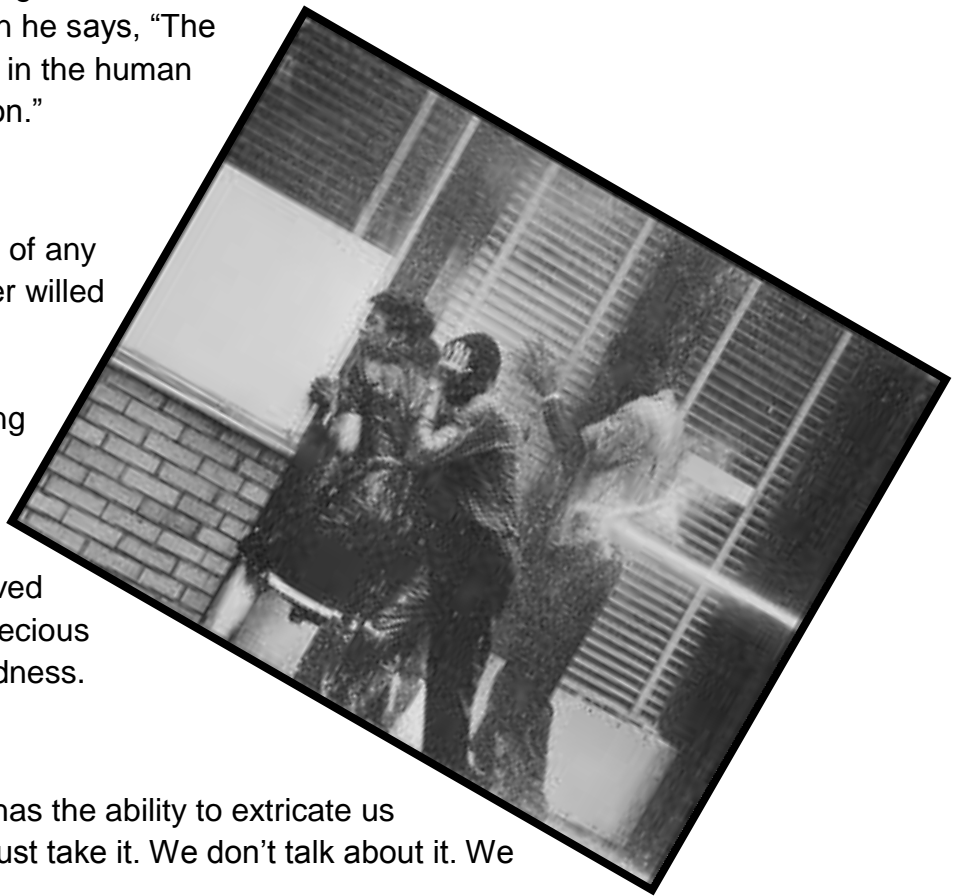


World 5 Obsessio: Suffering and Life - The Refugee

There is tediousness to daily living in this world. It seems that whatever can go wrong, will; whatever was troublesome yesterday will prove troublesome again today and the next day. In face of the onslaught or recalcitrant and intractable powers we feel we are sitting at the foot of a tsunami, existing on the edge of absurdity. The Jewish theologian Richard Rubenstein speaks from this world when he says, "The promise of a radical novelty in the human condition is a pathetic illusion."

In this World we are purged of any notion of romanticism. Never willed and rarely desired, we are transfixed by the sheer "givenness" for which nothing can be done. Life is a predator, or a plague, dealing out morally indiscriminate and undeserved suffering. Even our more precious moments are tinted with sadness.



Neither the self nor history has the ability to extricate us from our predicament. We just take it. We don't talk about it. We make do.

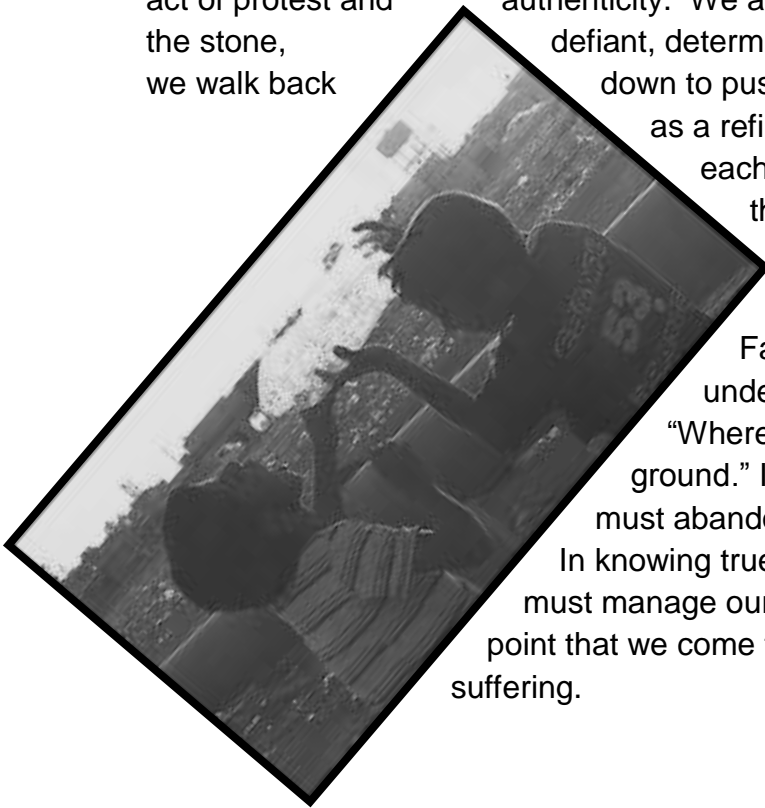
World 5 Obsessio: this is the way things are (givenness of recalcitrant powers)

World 5 Sin: giving up

World 5 Gospel Truth: sometimes even God is powerless

World 5 Epiphania: Endurance as Survival

In this World life is not a problem to be solved. It is an experience to be endured. It is in enduring that we touch wisdom. There is no radical reversal of our fortune, but rather a “keep on keeping on” in such a way that enduring becomes the very act of protest and authenticity. We are the contemporary Sisyphus rolling the stone, defiant, determined, courageous, and laughing as we walk back down to push it again. Suffering can be viewed as a refining fire for our inner attitude. While each day is the same, how we live through *this* day is our choice.



Facing intractable powers, we understand Oscar Wilde when he wrote, “Where there is sorrow, there is sacred ground.” If God is to make sense to us we must abandon a God with the power of influence. In knowing true forsakenness, we discover that we must manage our own lives without God. It is at this point that we come to know God as weakness and suffering.

All God can offer is companionship. “As we scream over the way things are for us, so God screams over the way things are for God” (W. Paul Jones). In this primal divine scream God becomes the unforgiveable, God becomes the unlovable, God becomes the unacceptable, and a true participant in human sorrow.

World 5 Epiphania: enduring is its own “overcoming”

World 5 Christology: Jesus is the suffering servant stretched out upon the cross of this world with us

World 5 Gospel Celebration: God is a participant – Emmanuel

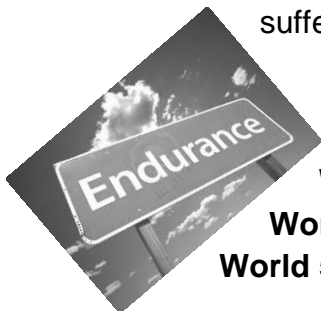
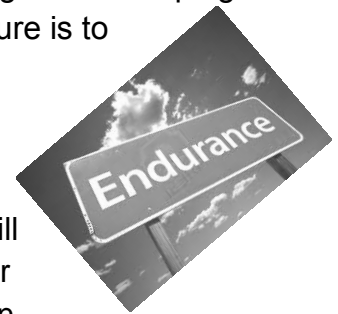
*World 5 Quest:
Outlasting with Long Suffering -
To Live with the Truth*



It is how we live out the “No” of recalcitrant powers that determines whether our life is – in the end – a “Yes.” The only question worth addressing is do I suffer alone? Am I the lone victim? The “aha” moment comes in realizing all of us are huddled, and all of us are scared, yet in being in it together – in sharing in the huddle – a love can be born among us. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer stated, “We must learn to regard people less in the light of what they do or omit to do, and more in the light of what they suffer.”

In this World we endure, and the essence of endurance is shared suffering. Redemption is experienced as compassion born of being in it together. “Keeping on” in the face of intractable powers is an act of nobility. To endure is to survive, and to survive is to triumph.

God is not “for” us (W2), but “with” us. Atonement occurs when the human plight is recognized as God’s own inner history. “I will help you O God... Only this thing becomes more and more clear to me: that you cannot help us, but that we must help you, and in doing so we help ourselves. That is the only thing that matters: to save in us O God, a piece of yourself. Yes, my God, even you in these circumstances seem powerless to change very much... I demand no account from you; you will later call us to account. And with almost every heartbeat it becomes clearer to me that you cannot help us, but we must help you and defend up to the last, your dwelling within us” (Etty Hillesum, Holocaust victim). God’s apparent “absence” must be wagered upon as presence, an echo of W1, but here connected to suffering.



World 5 Scripture: expression of integrity in relationships
World 5 God: Emmanuel who suffers with us
World 5 Salvation: enduring/outlasting
World 5 Movement: from Victim to Survivor