

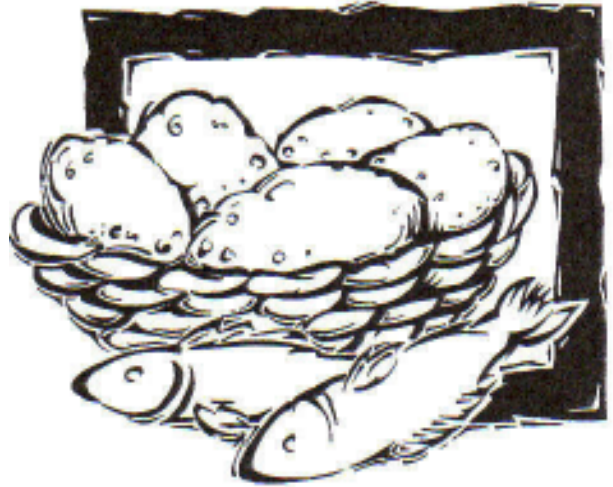
# PROPHETIC VOICES

Witnesses to Radical Faith

***Is not this the fast I choose:  
to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the thongs of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?***

***Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover them,  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?***

*Isaiah 58:6-7*



Together with the prophets of ancient Israel, Isaiah interpreted the events in his time against the backdrop of God's promises, commandments, and compassion for humankind. Especially during times of national crises, these Old Testament prophets continually called for social justice emphasizing that God's covenant with us carries obligations as well as promises. In our post 9-11 world where so much of life has become polarized and viewed through a lens of great fear and anxiety, we need more than ever to listen to these prophetic voices past and present. They call us away from our comfortable doctrines and cherished traditions. Like burrs in a saddle, they make us uncomfortable about faith without action, belief without practice. They remind us that we ignore at our peril a wounded world where hunger, poverty, and injustice continue to breed war, terror, conflict. They are God's challenge to us.

You will find here a collection of remarkable people whose courage and compassion echo both the ancient prophets and Jesus' call for justice-making, for peace-making. The voices of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mother Teresa, William Sloane Coffin, Dorothy Day, Desmond Tutu, Jim Wallis, Joan Chittister and so many others witness to radical faith, to "walking the talk," integrating faith with practice, making Christian responsibility for the common good a no-brainer. May their willingness to be unafraid, to be prophetic, to "go against the grain," inspire and compel us with the same courage to use our own prophetic voices.

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***This is what Yahweh asks of you, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.*** Micah 6

This collection is offered as an entry for shaping adult studies. As you begin planning for fall programs—adult education, Sunday morning forums, small groups—consider using this theme. In a time when we so often are tempted to despair, these are voices that keep us faithful. The following resources are noted by B (book), C (cassette), CDR (compact disc), DVD (digital video device), PR (printed resource), VT (video). Most are available for loan from the Eastern ND Synod Resource Center.

#### WILLIAM SLOANE COFFIN

*As for Christians, it is time we stopped retreating from the giant social issues of the day into the pygmy world of private piety. The chief religious question is not, "What must I do to be saved?" but rather, "What must we all do to save God's creation?"*

An American Prophet (VT2554)

Credo (B2960)

Letters to a Young Doubter (B3164)

A Passion for the Possible (B1985)

#### JOAN CHITTISTER

*Carrying on God's work in the world IS the spiritual life. We need to be aware of the cultural realities that are challenging the gospel now and decide how the gospel can challenge the culture if we are to be a holy people.*

Transfiguration Ministry to a Wounded World (VT2276=)

In Search of Belief (B2627)

Scarred by Struggle, Transformed by Hope (B2804) (VT2429) (C313)

What Does God Expect Us to Do About Evil? (VT1754)

The God They Never Told Me About (VT2244)

The Fire in These Ashes (B1591)

#### JIM WALLIS

*Our faith calls us to care for the widow and orphan, to welcome the stranger, and to act with justice and compassion for those who are poor. Indeed, our commitment to Jesus Christ is at stake in how we treat the ones he called "the least of these who are members of my family."*

Roots of Christian Conscience (VT657)

Let Justice Roll (C86)

Public Discipleship (C89)

We All Get Healed (VT2541)

God's Politics (B3119)

The Soul of Politics (B1572)



## MUNIB YOUNAN

*The greater the violence, the greater hunger for a word of peace. Not just a word, a witness. A total life commitment to peace and justice. A witness in word and deed . . . I can think of no higher calling than to be a witness for peace.*

Voices from the Holy Land (VT2321)

Witnessing for Peace (B2839)

Water from the Rock: Lutheran Voices from Palestine (2829)

Reformation Tradition from the Perspective of a Palestinian (DVD29)

Consider a congregational study or a series of Sunday forums on the topic of prophetic voices and the role of Christians in public life. As a beginning, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda's ***PUBLIC CHURCH: For the Life of the World*** (B2910) provides a good starting place. She writes about public witness as a way of life that grows out of our sacramental heritage. Each chapter concludes with questions for discussion. She also helps Lutherans hear Luther's voice as a reformer who calls the church to service and justice-making.

## DOROTHY DAY

*The physical world is what brought me to God . . . I felt that our job here was to make a better kind of world for human beings—that we were wasting our time thinking of pie in the sky.*

With Minds of Their Own: Eight Women Who Made a Difference (B1149)

People to Remember (PR79)

Dorothy Day: Champion of the Poor (B3222)

Great Women of Faith (B3223)

## MARTIN LUTHER KING

*I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all people are created equal."*

I Have a Dream (C87)

Strength to Love (B1119)

The Measure of a Man (B2735)

## ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

*. . . our concern is not how to worship in the catacombs but how to remain human in the skyscrapers.*

The Prophets I&II (B973,974)

I Asked for Wonder (B1671)

The Earth is the Lord's (B2021)

Quest for God (B705)



## DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

*Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without the living incarnate Jesus Christ . . . it is costly because it calls us to discipleship . . . it is costly because it costs people their lives.*

- The Wisdom and Witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (B2439)
- Who is Christ for Us? (B2739)
- The Cost of Discipleship (B1052)
- Who Am I? Poetic Insights on Personal Identity (B3095)
- Bonhoeffer: Agent of Grace (VT2174)
- Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Pacifist, Nazi Resister (DVD57)
- Letters and Papers from Prison (B2885)

## JULIAN OF NORWICH

*God wants to be known and loved through justice and compassion.*

- Visionary Women: Three Medieval Mystics (B2651)
- Retreat with Job and Julian of Norwich (PR434)
- Two Worlds Are Ours (B3088)

For helpful ways to highlight issues of hunger, justice, and peace in weekly worship, *Share Your Bread* (PR637) is a lectionary-based planning guide filled with reproducible prayers, litanies, reflections, hymns and more. It's a first-rate guide for experiencing the intersections between worship and faith practices and intentional about love of the neighbor as central to how we worship.



## WALTER BRUEGGEMANN

*Middle class Christians have learned to read the Bible in a very safe and spiritual way, a way that doesn't really touch the issues [of hunger and poverty].*

- Texts that Linger, Words that Explode: Listening to Prophetic Voices (B2404)
- Hopeful Imagination: Prophetic Voices in Exile (B1151)
- Using God's Resources Wisely: Isaiah and Urban Possibilities (B2875)
- Prophetic Imagination: Reading the Bible in a Hungry World (VT648)
- Reading Scripture and North St. Louis (VT72)
- The Problem of the Enculturation of the Church (C75)

## NELLEMORTON

*To be poor in New York City meant to be caught . . . my view of the church was shaken. To begin to do theology out of poverty and out of the lower rung of the ladder is a totally different thing than to theologize from the top rung.*

- The Journey is Home (B490)
- The Journey is Home (VT517)
- Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming

## DESMOND TUTU

*Just as we are all meant to be contemplatives and to hear the voice of God in our lives, we are all meant to answer God's call to be partners in transfiguring the world . . . this encounter with God is always to send us into the midst of human suffering.*

God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time (B2951)

No Future Without Forgiveness (B2648)

The Prodigal God (VT2247)

Now You Know that You Need One Another (VT2539)

There is no better resource for conversation around issues of social justice and how we worship than ***Liturgy, Justice, and the Reign of God*** (pr496) by Frank Henderson, Stephen Larson, and Kathleen Quinn. It's a practical study guide and it gives ideas for improving liturgical practice so that the intrinsic connections between worship and social action are better expressed. A quote follows:

*The celebration of the risen Christ by the assembly of believers is one of the most effective political actions [people] can perform in this world—if it is true that this celebration, by contesting any power system which oppresses [humankind], proclaims, stirs up and inaugurates a new order in the created world.* –Joseph Gelineau

## MOTHER TERESA

*I feel like a pencil in God's hand . . . God writes through us, and however imperfect instruments we may be, [God] writes beautifully.*

Mother Teresa: Woman of Compassion (VT2406)

Mother Teresa: Seeing the Face of Jesus (VT2311)

Retreat with Mother Teresa (PR624)

## REINHOLD NIEBUHR

*God give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things that should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.*

Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic (B770)

The Serenity Prayer: Faith and Politics in Times of Peace and War (B3019)

Remembering Reinhold Niebuhr

Pious and Secular America



## HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

*Human beings are vessels God has made and filled with the spirit so that the divine work might come to perfection in them . . . For although God bestowed great knowledge on humans, they raised themselves up in their hearts and turned away from God . . . but God endowed some with insight so that humankind should not completely fall into derision.*

Visionary Women: Three Medieval Mystics (B2651)

Hildegard of Bingen (VT1222)

An Introduction to Hildegard of Bingen (VT2266)

## OSCAR ROMERO

*This is the commitment of being a Christian: to follow Christ in his incarnation. If Christ, the God of majesty, became a lowly human and lived with the poor and even died on a cross like a slave, our Christian faith should also be lived in the same way. The Christian who does not want to live this commitment of solidarity with the poor is not worthy to be called Christian.*

Retreat with Oscar Romero and Dorothy Day (PR619)

Romero (VT921)

Martyrdom and the Politics of Religion

## MARTIN LUTHER

Finally, Martin Luther's prophetic voice can be heard: *As Christ gives himself for us, so we too are to give ourselves with might and main for our neighbor . . . We become hands and feet of Christ for the healing of the world.*

Martin Luther: A Man Who Changed the World (B3174)

Martin Luther: Exploring His Life and Times (CDR6)

Luther (DVD38)

Luther for Today (VT2190)

Speaking of Trust: Conversing with Luther About the Sermon on the Mount (B2836)

Martin Luther: Summer Lightning (VT1619)

***The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.*** –Walter Brueggemann

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