Proverbs 8

Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?

2 On the heights, beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;

3 beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries out:

4 'To you, O people, I call,
and my cry is to all that live.

5 O simple ones, learn prudence;
acquire intelligence, you who lack it.

6 Hear, for I will speak noble things,
and from my lips will come what is right;

7 for my mouth will utter truth;
wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

8 All the words of my mouth are righteous;
there is nothing twisted or crooked in them.

9 They are all straight to one who understands
and right to those who find knowledge.

10 Take my instruction instead of silver,
and knowledge rather than choice gold;

11 for wisdom is better than jewels,
and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.

12 I, wisdom, live with prudence,
and I attain knowledge and discretion.

13 The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.
Pride and arrogance and the way of evil
and perverted speech I hate.

14 I have good advice and sound wisdom;
I have insight, I have strength.

15 By me kings reign,
and rulers decree what is just;

16 by me rulers rule,
and nobles, all who govern rightly.

17 I love those who love me,
and those who seek me diligently find me.

18 Riches and honour are with me,
enduring wealth and prosperity.

19 My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,
and my yield than choice silver.

20 I walk in the way of righteousness,
along the paths of justice,

21 endowing with wealth those who love me,
and filling their treasuries.

22 The LORD created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.

23 Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

24 When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.

25 Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth—

26 when he had not yet made earth and fields,
or the world's first bits of soil.

27 When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,

28 when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,

29 when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,

30 then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,

31 rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.

32 'And now, my children, listen to me:
happy are those who keep my ways.

33 Hear instruction and be wise,
and do not neglect it.

34 Happy is the one who listens to me,
watching daily at my gates,
waiting beside my doors.

35 For whoever finds me finds life
and obtains favour from the LORD;

36 but those who miss me injure themselves;
all who hate me love death.'

John 16:12-15

12 'I still have many things to say to you,
but you cannot bear them now.

13When the Spirit of truth comes,
he will guide you into all the truth;

for he will not speak on his own,
but will speak whatever he hears,

and he will declare to you
the things that are to come.

14He will glorify me,
because he will take what is mine
and declare it to you.

15All that the Father has is mine.

For this reason I said
that he will take what is mine
and declare it to you.

Reading Wisdom this Week

We're offered a whole chapter this week
(The lectionary reading is 8:1-4, 22-31)
Chapters 1-9 are the introduction to the collection
A 'sales pitch' to the student about why to learn the rest

Scholars say this is likely the editorial frame to the rest,
Last written, Persian (old as 500's) or Hellenic (new as 200's)
It uses the figure of Wisdom – a feminine face of God

In 'browsing' tours of the Hebrew canon,
I call these writings 'From Mom to MBA',
Both cradle culture and international skillsets

To a rigidly monotheistic faith, this is heresy –
Is this a competing divinity, a subordinate one?
Is it not clearly a feminine one?

Some read this as the feminine face of God,
Some as metaphors, figures of speech –
Do you 'hypostasize' it, make it concrete, a metaphysical claim?

How does this compare to indigenous language you've heard,
Or to pan-theism, 'god in nature', magical thinking –
Are we strict theists, with a transcendent divinity?

Is this the language of mysticism,
Of a living relationship with god in and through and beyond,
Pan-en-theism, *kataphatic* or *apophatic* paths to the ineffable

Or should this be subordinated,
Among the angelology of spirits serving the one god –
Or distinguished from the Word, or *logos*, in John?

Is this good news?

Reading the Fourth Gospel this Week

Once more we hear from the gospel of John,
In the 'longest after-dinner speech' colloquium
Jesus preparing the disciples at the last supper

Here it's 'Spirit of truth' – *pneuma alethias,* not *paraclete*
the same or different, a word or a new hypostasis?
Will it come soon or later, where, to whom?

Do you imagine an angelic intermediary,
Or a face or voice of the divine one –
Making a prediction, or sketching the shape of the real?

Sociologists read this kind of speech as
'anti-language' of a marginalized group,
'interpersonal rather than ideational'

What is this possessive 'unity'
Among disciples, with God, Jesus, Spirit,
Excluding who and what from that unity?

What is this 'glory'
Not simply of triumph and success,
But revealing something in apparent failure?

This Sunday in the church year is Trinity
After Pentecost, gift of the Spirit,
After Easter, Christ's resurrection

What meaning can you make of such talk,
Contributing a perspective, honouring alternatives,
Without demanding that one be right, others wrong?

What meaning will be lost,
If we surrender this trinitarian speculation?