CONCLUDING DOXOLOGY
A Very Explicit Te Deum

From the beginning, we Christians\(^1\) have believed ourselves to be living, moving, and having being in the threefold All-Encompassing, All-Penetrating Presence: God, Invisible Origin, Fountainhead, Beginning All-Holy; God, Arch-Image, Arch-Likeness, Word Eternal All-Holy; God, Fire of Majesty, Flow of Bounty, Glow of Love All-Holy.

And so we say, pray, profess:

YOU,

One God, One Alone, Living and True,
Loving and Faithful,
world without end.
Amen.

Hidden God
yet nowhere and never leaving yourself without witness,
Hidden God
and yet to Israel unveiled:
all the more hidden for being so manifest.

God of all gods, LORD of all lords,
God of the army of unalterable law,
all the more incomprehensible for being so present,
so close, so awesome, so demanding, so simple.

You
Nameless, yet knowing your children by name,
You
Lover, Father as dear as a Mother,
You
Difficult Friend
To us, difficult people:
You are Brothers and Sisters to us, and Houses galore,
You are infinitely more than we can take, yet never enough,
You make us proud, You make us conscious,
revealing to us,
darkly, as in a mirror,
our own immemorial depth, only faintly remembered;
Our dim inner light reflects You, dazzling, invisible Light.

GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, GOD OF GODS
YOU ARE and YOU ARE and YOU ARE:
YOU ARE
Not a Lonely High and Dry Thing Everlasting,
Not a Deity privately sunning itself under the lamp of its own glory,
not a Cipher, a Monad, an Item, an Article, an Ace;
YOU ARE
GOD ALONE yet not Alone;
by dint of Eternal Communion
YOU ARE
Known and present to us here and now in your Word:
דְּבֵר, ΛΟΓΟΣ WORD;
WORD of WISDOM:
BEING ITSELF,
in the Everlasting Act of seeking only Your Glory;
WORD:
Empty of Self, and thus Full of You;
From eternity Living off You, Living GOD;
WISDOM:
Projection of Love making measureless Room for LOVE—
for a Worldful of Eloquent Being;
WORD:
GOD, Your Silence Made Speech;
Word of no one but YOU
Word calling us out of Unbeing, into Being for YOU;
WORD:
not a mere echo,
vague, impotent, ineffective, losing itself in the void,
but Say-it-all Answer to You,
out of Your Silence kindly appealing to us,
making us, speaking of nothing but You,
Alive for us, out of You and with You,
world without end.
Amen.

WORD:
Word returning to You,
Response Everlasting;
and so,
GOD from You, GOD,
Light from You, Light,
Splendor, Reflection, Revelation, Intimation, and Symbol of You.

WORD:
Word creative and ordering, Word relieving and liberating,
Word utterly spoken, Word unheard, yet constantly speaking,
Word written in time, in ink in the Book, yet with YOU before the ages,
Word Key to Creation and Crown of it all,
Word faithful Witness to You,
Word with a Bang,
Word running into billions,
Word running like wildfire,
Word irresistible as a grain of wheat,
Word with a whisper,
Word still as a painting, as a taste, as a whiff of perfume, a touch,
Word going softly, delicately, “with trickling increment,”
from virtue to virtue,
in the Great Chain of Being,
in the cosmos and in all its invisible powers,
the rocks and the plants and the trees and the animals,
and finally,
in the first fullness of time,
in us,
humankind.

Word of God,
silent Voice,
voice swinging
between breathtaking majesty and breathtaking intimacy,

*Word*

heard with a vengeance, caught in the wind, felt, ever so faintly surmised,

by Abraham in Aram,

by skeptical Sarah smiling in a dark tent corner,

by bright-eyed Rebecca at the sight of the camels,

at the stone set up at Bethel, by Jacob, the fighter, the limper,

by Moses in the desert, at Sinai, at the Tent of Meeting,

by Joshua at the Jordan and Jericho,

by Rahab the whore saved from the massacre,

by Elijah in the light breeze,

by David and Solomon, in all they were up to,

by Isaiah, awe-struck in the Temple,

by Jeremiah, pilloried in the Temple,

heard by prophets, singers, priests, and sages,

heard by pilgrims in droves, tired of talking to each other:

*Word* inside words, *Song* inside songs, heard

in ever so many words, ever so many ways,

by Israel’s martyrs, lost, wearing sheepskins, famished, sawed in half,

by its poor, harassed, adrift in the mountains,

by its suffering wayfarers in search of *God’s City*,

JERUSALEM, vision of peace.

*Word* undefined, yet defining,

*Word* heard in the mind, in the crowd,

by Socrates,

by Heraclitus,

By Lao-Tze, by Gautama the Buddha,

by Moses ben Maimon, by his friend Ibn Rushd,

by Great Soul Gandhi and Great Soul Hammarskjöld,

by seekers and thinkers and just people and lovers of Mystery everywhere.

This All-Holy *Word*,

always and everywhere present and calling for presence in return,

*Word* “Come-to-me-all-of-you”

*Word* “Come-and-see”

This *Word of God*
came to a head,

_in the second fullness of time,_

_in Jesus the Christ:_

Temple, Torah, Word, Wisdom Incarnate,

Tent of the Meeting not made by human hands,

Temple at home in the Temple,

Questioning Child, hearing the lessons of teachers,

Question of God, manifest in the flesh,

Young blood, yes,

(yes,

flesh and blood are weak and frail,

susceptible to nervous shock,)

so young, so old,

Jesus God’s Child,

Kid, Lamb slain from the beginning of the world,

Man of Truth, of Service, of Sorrows,

Child of Mary the Virgin,

born of woman by the Spirit of Holiness,

yet given his Name by the Father, by a Messenger, in a Dream,

Jesus, Savior,

plunged in the Jordan by John, a second-rate preacher

(an odd type, a loud man,

you know, a bit of a menace, brimstone and fire,

the frightening, self-diminishing type,

prepared to go down on his knees,

but let me tell you, a drawer of crowds, a critic of vice in high places;

it earned him both Herod’s attention and a taste of his prison,

where he lost his head to the lily-livered king—

who, like the damn fool he was,

got himself mated, in front of the court, by a tart queen,

plying a girl too wise for her years as a pawn;

in any case, later on, they thought John had been Jesus’ own cousin;

he might have been, Jesus himself

thought the world of him, called him a prophet),

Jesus, Savior,

Ἄντις, Πάῖς.3
like Moses a Servant, yet Key to Creation and Crown of it all,
House-Boy, Key to the Household of God
(a mere boy, a child, really),
House-Boy, charged with the Housekeeping
(“See Me, I’ll talk to the Owner”),
House-Boy in charge of the Household
(“Talk to Me, take my Word, the Father himself loves you”),
Child, Boy, House-Boy, Servant, Kid, Lamb of God,
innocent as strawberries,
inspired by the Spirit, at work by the Spirit—touch of the finger of God—
healer powerless and wounded, truth-sayer slandered and silenced,
worker of wonders,
(in league with the devil?
out of his mind?)
talker, walker, walk-in guest at odd tables.

Toward the end, embarrassed with far too expensive a gift,
in far too maudlin a mood,
by a woman of poor taste, who loved and who knew
that he was a dead man, as good as buried—
nailed to a cross, a mere thirty years old,
a slave, a blasphemous fool and a rebel,
a snake on a pole, a dead wayward kid come to terrible grief,
yet faithful and true (and we did not know it),
true to his Father (whom we did not know);
Witness Faithful and True, Amen to God,
free giver, in life, of the Bread of Life, of the Wine of the Wedding,
free giver, in death, of the Spirit of Freedom,
Messenger of Life to dead Adam and Eve (that is,
to the countless held in suspended animation in the Cosmic Prison),
vindicated in the Spirit,
wrestler with all the powers that be,
cracking for good their hold on the universe,
opening for good the gateway to God,
preached among the nations, received in the world as God’s Son,
taken up in God’s Glory,
now Lord, clearly, and manifest,
Son of God in power
(final justice is coming at last)

And so, LORD JESUS, LORD OF GLORY
You are present around us, among us, within us,
yet gone and away
till the third fullness of time;
we await YOU in prayer and watchfulness around the Table,
Bread of Life and Peace for the world,
Wine of abandon, drink of the Kingdom,
Vine of the tendrils, Shepherd of the sheep,
Door of the sheepfold, Head-stone of the building,
Head of the body, Writer in the sand,
Rock of the house, First Walker on water,
Justice of God for the living and the dead,
Assurance in person of the Kingdom to come,
God knows how, God knows when,
We in You, and You in us,
Now and forever.

And so,
DEAR FATHER, DEAR SON,
DEAR LOVER, dearly BELOVED,
God of the Word, God-Word of God:
YOU ARE.

You are here and now,
You are there and then,
You are here and there and everywhere,
You are now and then and always,
YOU ARE ONE,
inseparably One:
YOU are ONE in the Wild Exuberance of Majesty,
ONE in the little Flame, in the Kindling of Love Everlasting,
ONE in the Presence Untamed in the World You have fashioned,
ONE in the Barely Felt Touch of Affection,
ONE in the רווחה, the Πνεῦμα ἁγιόσύνης, the SPIRIT OF HOLINESS.4
And so, ALL-HOLY SPIRIT,
as close as a lover’s breath felt on the cheek
as wild as the wind, free to go where it goes,
SOVEREIGN LOVE:
YOU are and have been, from the beginning
hatching World out of Chaos,
coaxing words out of Prophets, by hook or by crook,
Giver of Breath, of Love,
Maker of God’s Hidden Children:

Your whisper is Life, endless Life.
YOU
Protector of the Poor
Giver of Gifts
Light of Hearts
Best of Comforters
Cherished Guest of the Soul
Delicious refreshment
Respite in toil
Breath of fresh air in the heat of the day
Comfort amidst Tears:
Please wash what is dirty
Shower rain on dry grass
Heal what is wounded
Bend what is rigid
Fondle the frigid
Set straight what is crooked.

SPIRIT, YOU are
CHRIST and his FATHER around, round about us;
SPIRIT, YOU simply ARE
Our BROTHER CHRIST and his FATHER around, round about us.
You are in us, we are in YOU,
and so we are
alive to the FATHER as dear as a Mother,
alive to Jesus the LORD as dear as a Brother,
alive to each other
In YOU.
SPIRIT OF GOD, 
Mother of Charity, Sister of Majesty, 
Make us, remake us, 
make of us a living offering to GOD, 
Make us ONE, make us evermore ONE, 
One, evermore ONE in the Body of Christ, 
One, evermore One 
in the shedding of our lives in the name of the Blood shed.

And so, 
IN THE NAME OF † THE FATHER AND † THE SON AND † THE HOLY
SPIRIT.

We believe in the Church, 
One and to be One, 
Holy and to be Holy 
Universal and to be Universal, 
Sent out by the Son, forever to be Sent out by the Son.

In dread of the Fire, we acknowledge one Baptism in Water; 
we await the forgiveness, once and for all, of our sins.

Headed for death, we hunger and thirst for justice, 
final justice for all.

Still headed for death, we anticipate life beyond death, 
the new heavens, the new earth, life of a world yet unseen.

And so, 
 jclass="highlight" xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml"

A VERY EXPLICIT Te Deum / 343

Too much, too much, enough said (though never really enough). Yet 
for now, enough, enough words. Time to be silent. Silence! At least half 
an hour (Rev 8,1). Let your words die into GOD; they will live.
For CHRIST’s sake, let us die into GOD. We will live. Hush now. Close your mouth, try not to talk. Close your eyes, do not try to see. Do not be afraid of tears. If you feel like a desert, stay there for a while. Contemplate. See. Trust the dark inner vision; live to see the Invisible. That’s the SPIRIT. Hear the silent WORD. Love. You are being guided, shepherded, carried, seen, loved.

You ARE. Are Mine. I AM WHO I AM.
YOU WILL BE LIKE ME. IN ME.
IN MY BELOVED, MY SON,
MY ADORABLE
CHILD.

Amen, Marana tha.

LORD JESUS, come.
AMEN.
AMEN.

LORD JESUS, have mercy on me, a sinner.
AMEN.

LORD JESUS, come.
AMEN.
Come.

Notes

This is the second half of a piece published as “A Very Explicit Te Deum: A Spiritual Exercise, To Help Overcome Trinitarian Timidity.” Horizons 25 (1998): 276–91.

1. Cf. Acts 11, 22–26: “Now word came to the ears of the church living in Jerusalem about these things, so they sent Barnabas to Antioch. On arrival he saw the grace of God at work, and was glad at it, and encouraged them all to stay with the Lord with loyal hearts. Yes, he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, so a fair crowd joined the Lord. Then he went to Tarsus to retrieve Saul; he found him and took him to Antioch. And what happened was this: they rejoined the church for as much as a year and got to teach a fair number; and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.”

2. Both Hebrew dabhar and Greek logos mean “word.”
3. Aramaic *talya*’ (cf. Heb恢复正常 (כַּלֶּה) means “tender, young person or animal,” and so, “kid” (i.e., the young of a goat), “lamb” (i.e., the young of a sheep), “child,” but also “boy” (also as used for a servant). Greek *pais* means “boy,” both in the sense of “male child” and “servant” (cf. French *garçon*).

4. Hebrew *ruach haqqodeš* and Greek *pneuma hagiosyns* mean “spirit of holiness.”

5. Hebrew *kabhod* and Greek *doxa* both mean “glory.”