

Occasional Reflections # 4

Paul Westermeyer

”All My Fresh Springs Are in You”*

Glorious things are spoken of the city of God which stands on the holy mountain. The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than the dwellings of Jacob; and the singers and the dancers say, “All my fresh springs are in you.”

Psalms 87 envisions a solemn procession to the city God sustains, with people from the whole world headed to the place of their birthright. The singers and the dancers lead the song: “All my fresh springs are in you.”

That’s a strange thing for singers and dancers—poets, musicians, and artists—to say. It’s a strange thing for preachers, evangelists, and writers to say. It’s a strange thing for everyone to say. Don’t our fresh springs come from our creativity, inspiration, hard work, study, practice, salaries, foundations?

“All my fresh springs are in you,” says the Psalm. In whom? In the city of God, that is, in the worship of God in the city, that is, in the very being of God—in whom everyone everywhere has a birthright.

God has founded the city firmly on a mountain, but the firmness has a strange character. It flows out from a cross in living streams of baptismal waters and in words, broken bread, and poured out wine, with singers and dancers who are often among the scorned, the outcasts, the vulnerable, the broken.

We can sing and dance the hard words of this strange God whose firmness flows in the gracefully fresh streams of a new creation. Or we can sell ourselves to the highest bidder whose firmness breaks us into brittle shards of fragmentary selfishness as we lose our creativity, vocation, being, neighbors, awe, adoration, and fresh springs.

“All my fresh springs are in you,” says the Psalm. In whom? In the alien Holy Three—the Rock of Ages, the crucified One, the Spirit who knits us all together.

*Originally written in honor of Emily Brink on her retirement from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, in response to a request from her co-workers and friends for hymns, tunes, prayers, devotional resources or similar pieces around the theme of the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic church” as resources for the church and to honor Emily. Various Psalms were suggested as foci, among them Psalm 87.