

*Re-Enchanting the
Text: Chapter 7*

Foundations of the Enchanted Text of the Holy Scripture

The Tale of Two Churches
A Tale of Two Sacred Spaces
Chartres & Igreja Pentecostal Deus de Amor

“We are realizing that there are multiple dimensions to the Bible, and each dimension radiates with its own integrity and light.”

Cheryl Bridges Johns, pp. 119-120

Comments?

... on the multidimensional Bible?

Liminal Spaces

Church as Metaphor and Thin Place

- “Research from the Journal of Environmental Psychology has indicated that liminal spaces may appear eerie or strange because they fall into an uncanny valley of architecture and physical places.”[1] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liminal_space_\(aesthetic\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liminal_space_(aesthetic))
- I would like for us to imagine the Bible as a liminal space.
 - Come into the presence of God by reading the Word.
 - Read the Word as if God is speaking to you, us.

Foundations of the Enchanted Text?

What is she trying to do with the Chapter?

- According to the book, those foundations cannot be any particular interpretation of the Bible, or devotion to the Bible, or some mode of reading it, but rather . . .
- We need to encounter God in some human space, and Johns offers a clue to the purpose of the Bible in the two churches Chartres & Igreja Pentecostal Deus de Amor.
- That place cannot strictly be associated with a system of theology, or a liturgy, or any other method, but a holy, sacred space.

Triune Life, Spirit-Word, Revelation

“Here, I will point out three **interconnecting rooms** that together form a triadic **ontological support** system for the **enchanted ethos** of the Bible: . . .”

Cheryl Bridges Johns, 120

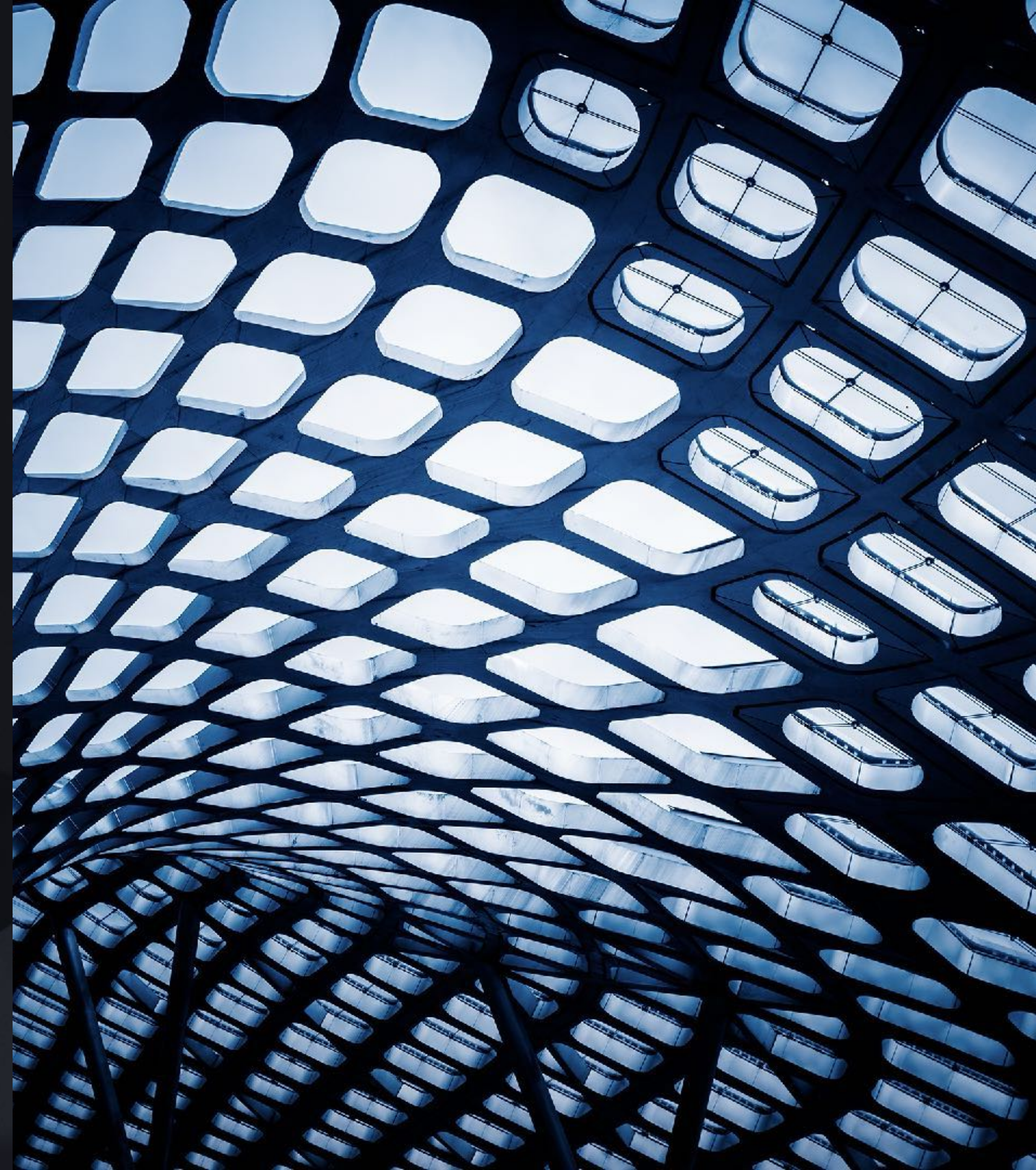
Comments?

... on the multidimensional Bible?

Outline

An Architecture of Enchantment

- The Triune Life
- Spirit-Word
- Revelation
- Conclusion



The Triune Life

Doug Olena 11/11/2023 - 21:35

The Triune Life

The gift of God: or how to live the Christian Life

- “The disciples would not be left alone.” 120
 - Through Pentecost, the disciples would enter into that life shared by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- She equates revelation with the very presence of God. God revealing himself is the same as the presence of God.

The Triune Life

The gift of God: or how God reveals himself in the Scripture

- Johns cites Catherine Mowry LaCugna to draw a distinction between God's economy and God's being.
- "The doctrine of the trinity is the attempt to understand the eternal mystery of God on the basis of what is revealed about God in the economy of redemption." 121
- The focus on God's being has led to an increasing abstraction of God.
- However a focus on the ontology of Scripture places its purpose in the economy of God.

The Triune Life

The gift of God: or how God reveals himself in the Scripture

- Economy is equated to mission as in the 'economy of God's mysterious plan of Salvation.' She quotes a variety of people to this effect.
- But the root of oikonomia is oikos which means house. Oikonomia is how you run your house, a perfect segue from talk about the presence of God in Chartres and Igreja Pentecostal Deus de Amor to the presence of God in the Scripture.
- Johns gets around to this but I think loses the connection to oikonomia.

The Triune Life

The economy of God: or how Scripture is the house of God

- In the crypt in Chartres, Johns finds a “space wherein we were ushered to a table of divine-human fellowship.” 123
- Her argument is subtle, but the takeaway of it is her concluding statement in this section:
 - “The Bible is our Spirit-filled ethos and guide into the joys of the divine life. It is time to remove any of our idols to the Enlightenment Temple of Reason [that Chartres was turned into during the French Revolution] and experience Pentecost.” 123

The Triune Life

The economy of God: or how Scripture is the house of God

- There is much more here I am not looking at because I think in some ways the argument gets lost in the economy of God as the will and purpose of God in salvation instead of the house of God we enter into by Scripture.
- I also did not try to wring out the trinitarian features from the section because of her convoluted reasoning.
- But the point is taken that by Scripture we enter the presence of God.

Spirit-Word

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The Bible as Spirit-Word

or, how God inhabits the Bible

- Jesus and the Bible: “Just as the Spirit was active and present in the incarnate Word, so is the Spirit active and present in the inscripturated Word.” 124
- “The presence of divine Word existed fully in Jesus, and he is present whenever ‘the biblical message is delivered in the power of the Spirit.’” 124
- Johns cites Smart: “The Word and the Spirit are inseparable, which is just another way of saying that the Word of God is not a series of words, ideas, beliefs, or propositions, but is God himself in his chosen way of coming to man. . .” 125

The Bible as Spirit-Word

“The divorce between Spirit and Word is costly.” 126

- “When Word is elevated above Spirit, the result is a rigid foundationalist interpretation of Scripture in which ‘Word’ is collapsed into ‘text.’”
- “When Spirit is elevated above Word, the result is often a reading of the Bible that collapses Spirit into experience.”

The Bible as Spirit-Word

from Brueggemann 126

- God-less Torah — legalism
- Torah-less God — romanticism
- Spirit-less Word — rationalism
- Word-less Spirit — subjectivism

The Bible as Spirit-Word

Fundamentalism and Experience

- In the difficult cultural present, people are “giving up the marriage of Spirit and Word” for “fundamentalism’s ‘plain reading of the text.’” 127
- “While we know the Holy Spirit through experience, the Holy Spirit cannot be collapsed into experience.” 127

The Bible as Spirit-Word

The Word of God conveys the presence of God.

- “There is no such thing as Word without presence.”
- But, is it fair to equate the Word of God with the presence of God?

Revelation

Doug Olena

Revelation

or, reattaching Word and Spirit

- “The divorce of Word and Spirit has created . . . a ‘disorderly ontology, an isolation of the Bible from its place in God’s revelatory activity and from its reception in the community of faith.’” 130
- Inspiration should be subordinate to revelation in general.
- Collapsing revelation into Scripture and revelation into inspiration produces a Bible that is an “inspired product”, set apart from the divine presence.

Revelation

or, reattaching Word and Spirit

- Inspiration, in the context of revelation, “is a mode of the Spirit’s freedom, not its inhibition by the letter.” 131
- “The process of writing and reading is . . . an active response to God’s self-revelation.” 131

Revelation

or, her text and argument is more detailed

- It appears to be impossible to detail her argument in less than the space it took to write it. Summary brutalizes her text.
- Sorry.

Conclusion

Full Circle: Sacred Space and Pilgrimage

Doug Olena

Return to the Oikos

or, a container for Johns' reattachment of Spirit and Word

- Her final meditations in Chapter 7 return us to a meditation on the two churches, Chartres and Igreja Pentecostal Deus é Amor.
- The differences between the temple of the poor and Chartres do not prevent the Spirit-Word from inhabiting both spaces.

Summary

or, (really just the summary)

- The multidimensional nature of Scripture is a beautiful, Spirit-filled ethos." 138
 - But I ask, why not pathos or logos?
 - "It invites us to enter the Pentecost mystery built upon the foundations of the triune life, Spirit-Word, and revelation." 138
- read last two paragraphs 138.