

**Western
Theological
Seminary**

The Theotog

**A newsletter for theologically
inclined photographers**

**The Theotog,
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Change!

As editors of **The Theotog**, we (JH & KD) anticipated much **CHANGE** when we thought about this issue in October.

We knew that the USA would have a new President and that President Timothy Brown will be settling in as WTS President. The financial crisis became a familiar conversation topic.

Pres. Abraham Lincoln, an apparent favorite of Pres. Obama, once said: **"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew."**

Change is the invitation to think anew. Yet, systems inherently resist change.

We best accept the wisdom of Harvard University's *John F. Kennedy School of Government* professors, Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky who write: **"People do not resist change, they resist loss."**

Imagine that! **Change invites the work of mourning!** As pastoral leaders, we are invited by the Body of Christ to bring change.

Sadly, most of that change does not happen because the resistance to face losses assures that **homeostasis** will be maintained by the system.

But what if our creative imagination can

overcome our natural tendency to maintain what is and was?

How would you envision this question?

(Continued on p 2)



Special points of interest:

- **The face of God**
- **10 Tips**
- **Big Lake**
- **A day at the beach**
- **Pattern and geometry**

Change the way you take photographs

Photographs show **the face of God**, whether in nature, in people, or in the creations that are birthed through the creativity we

received from the Creator.

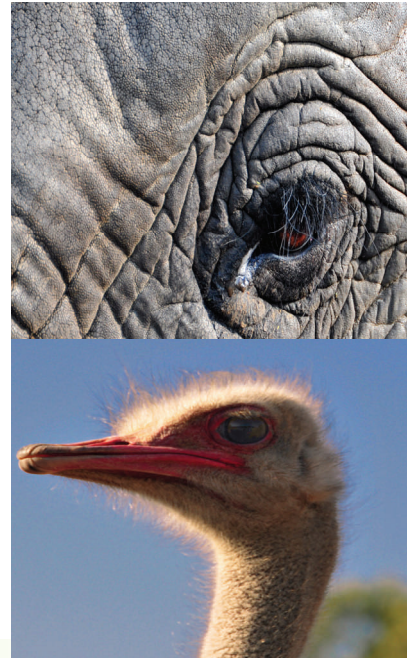
Knowing that our **point-and-shoot** (have you thought of the violence within the name?) or DSLR (if you ask you do not

own one :-)) reflects God as **Earth Maker**, as **Pain Bearer**, and as **Life Giver**, surely impacts the way we take photographs. **Turn the page to discover more!**

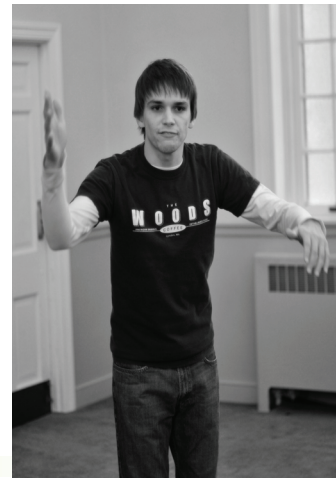
Change the way (cont.)

To **change the way** you take photographs, keep the following recommendations in mind:

1. Keep your camera within reach. **God's face** appears often and in unexpected places.
2. Take the photograph from an unnatural **angle**.
3. **Focus on the eyes of your object.**
4. Shoot **multiple** exposures; one will be closer to the ideal than the other.
5. Do not use digital **zoom**.
6. Take a **close-up** (macro photo). Forget about the whole.
7. Include the **whole**, forget about the detail.
8. Take a photo **15 minutes** before **sunrise** or **15 minutes** after **sunset**. Avoid strong sunshine unless you have a (polarizing) filter.
9. Use the **clouds** to create a "soft box" for your exposure.
10. Whenever possible, use a **tripod**, flexible tripod, or a beanbag to assure that your camera has a secure, **non-vibrating** foundation. (JH)



Naaman experienced change (Dr. Boogaart's Hebrew Class)



Change! (cont.)

When it comes to change, we best remember the words of Edwin Friedman, the wise rabbi who taught us about systems thinking:

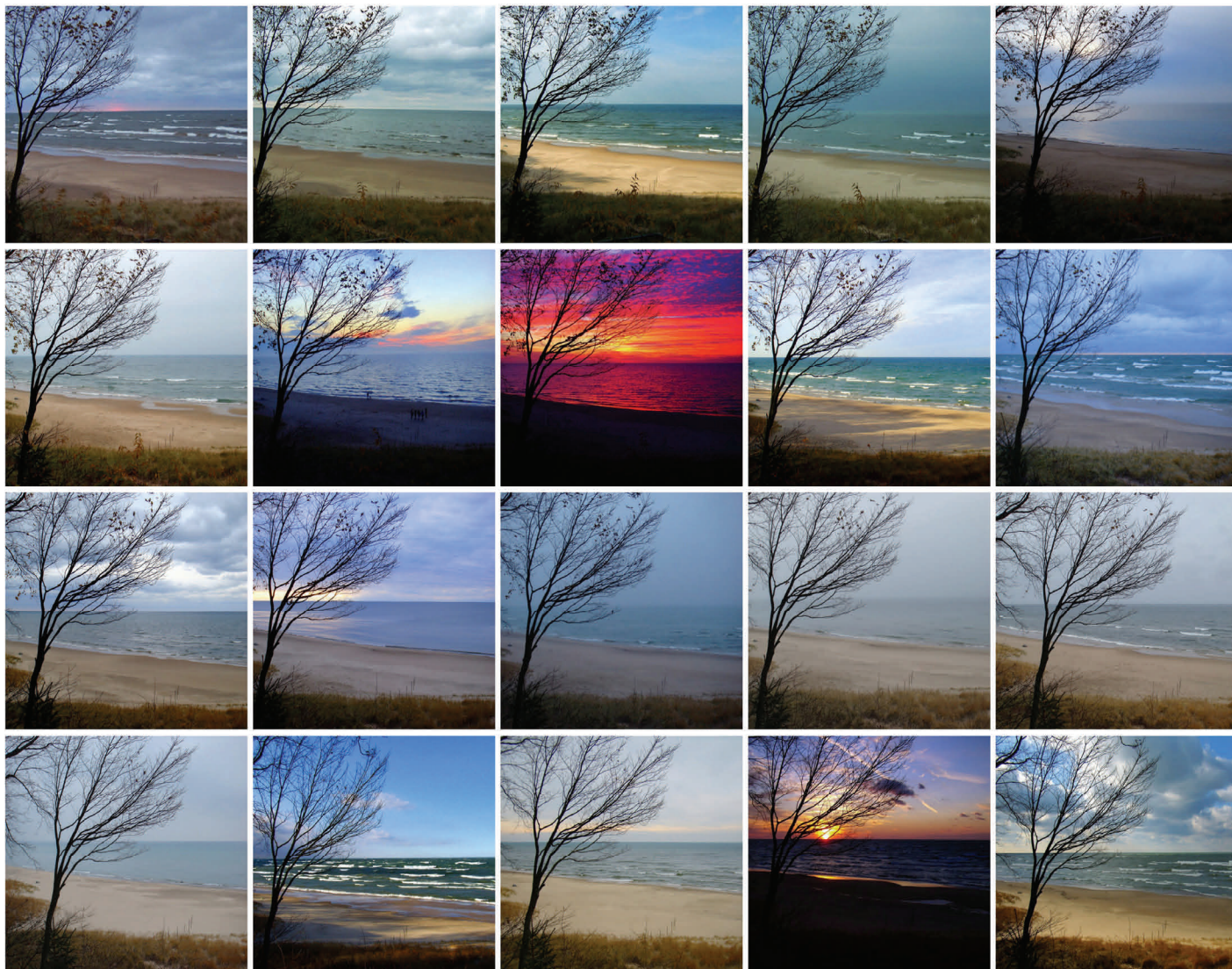
"The colossal misunderstanding of our time is the assumption that insight will

work with people who are unmotivated to change. **Communication does not depend on syntax, or eloquence, or rhetoric, or articulation, but on the emotional context in which the message is being heard.** People can only hear you

when they are moving toward you, and they are not likely to when your words are pursuing them. **Even the choices words lose their power when they are used to overpower. Attitudes are the real figures of speech.**" (ED: JH)

Big Lake,

by Ron Rienstra



“November [of ‘08] I spent a month in solitude at Lake Michigan. As someone who revels (sometimes too much) in choice and variety, I tried to be disciplined: I stayed in the same place, all by myself. Every day, every night: reading, studying, praying. I also took some pho-

tos that I think point to infinity and variety hidden in sameness. This prayer (modeled after some of my favorites from St. Augustine) come out of that experience:

Lord, let me be open to the changes you would see in me, and in the world through me. May I not mistake a passing

awareness for knowledge; or a familiar horizon for perspective. Teach me what you will; Keep me wide-eyed, open-hearted, wondering, worshipping.”

Ron Rienstra

Entering Sabbath, photograph/haiku by Matt Floding



Woods luminescent
Light plays on the darkness
Firmament proclaims!

A day at the beach on the shore of the Dead Sea

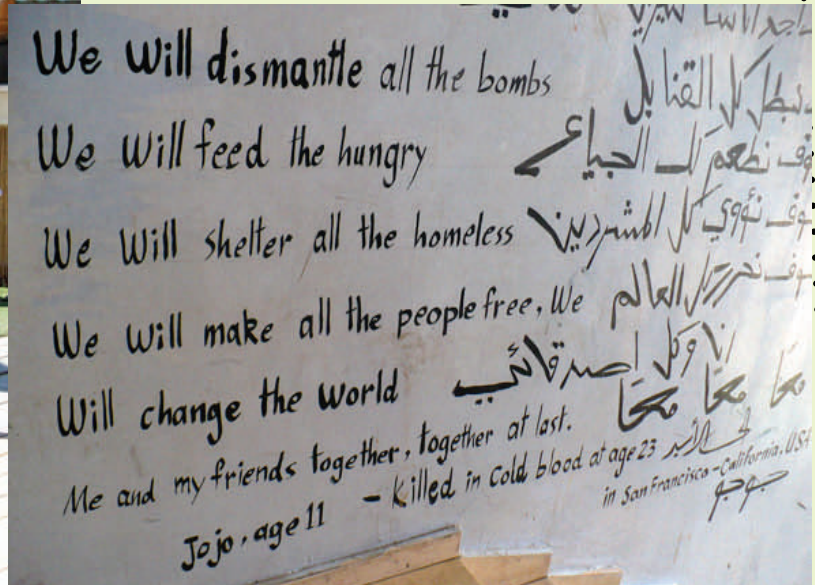
By, Marian Liggera and Laura Osborne



"This soldier has the Star of David tattooed on his back, and one can't help but wonder what it means to him. Here we see modern dress and recreation melded with the legacy of pain, the yearning for home and place, the vision of land as God's gift, transposed with the lived reality of armed occupation.

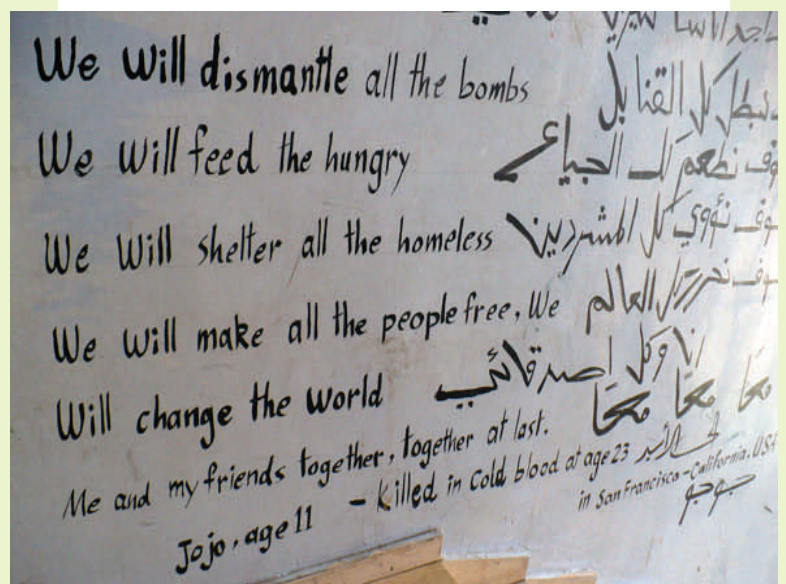
"Any claim to land apart from...Torah tradition is deeply suspect and open to profound critique"
Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise and Challenge in Biblical Faith*

While many of us are sympathetic to the desire of Zionists for Israeli possession of the land in its entirety as a biblical mandate, we must not overlook the means used to secure this land and the stark relief of God's love for the stranger, widow and orphan. May we join in prayer with the psalmist: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls" (Ps. 122:6-7)."



"The Wall - At a Refugee Camp on the Road to Hebron, West Bank

As of December, 2006, the United Nations reported 486,479 persons in refugee camps in the West Bank. "Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him, for you were aliens in Egypt" (Ex.22:21)"



Maple Tree, by George Brown



"...spiritual transformation does not always happen all at once..."

Like this Maple tree—changing from the top down from the green of spring and summer to an autumnal red—spiritual transformation does not always happen all at once, but

gradually and with well-defined boundaries. Sometimes transformation does start at the top and work its way down. Liturgically, red is the color of the Spirit's season

in the church. How appropriate that this seasonal change in nature should descend downward, like the Spirit at Pentecost. (GB)

Change through the lens of Holly Teitsma



From early spring through late autumn, any weekend trip into the city of Chicago promises a glimpse of a major change in at least two peoples' lives. With our

own newlywed days lingering longer than seems fair, and daily thanks being given to God for each other, we find these glimpses into other cou-

ples' beginnings delightfully photographable. We have a small but growing collection already. This is a favorite of mine.



The above two photos were taken during my second autumn back in the Midwest after eight years in Arizona. I miss the dramatic colors of the southwest greatly, especially the way the sun provides intense contrasts of light and shadow against the unusual hues. God's physical laws of pattern and geometry are easily seen there with the naked eye. Here in

the Midwest, though, neither that intensity of light, high contrast and bold color, nor that ease of witnessing the simplicity of some of His designs, is found with any regularity. However, for a few days last autumn the sun struck some of the spectacular fall leaves behind our apartment in such a way that caught my eye. It is in these fall leaves and post-autumnal equinox

afternoons that I am best reminded of my time in the desert and thus all the changes that I have gone through since then, changes well reflected in the differing colors, contrasts, and nuances of light and design. These pictures also reflect a stage of my transition. (HT)

Resurrection!

Our theme for the next issue of
The Theotog is
Resurrection.

Please submit your photographs with a brief
theological reflection to either Keith Derrick
or Jaco Hamman. We would like to receive
your images and reflections by
Monday, April 13.

We look forward to our next issue.

“I am the resurrection and the life”
(Jesus/John 11:25)

**“Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books
alone, but in every leaf in springtime”**
(Martin Luther)

**“Imagination has always had powers of resurrection that no
science can match”**