

John D. Caputo, *Weakness of God* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006),

## **Introduction: A Theology of the Event - 1**

### **Part One: The Weakness of God**

1. God without Sovereignty - 23
2. St. Paul on the Logos of the Cross - 42
3. The Beautiful Risk of Creation: on Genesis - 55
4. Omnipotence, Unconditionality, and the Weak Force of God - 84

### **Two Keys to the Kingdom**

5. The poetics of the Impossible - 101
6. Hyper-Realism and the Hermeneutics of the Call - 113

### **Part Two: The Kingdom of God**

7. The Seventh Day, or Making All Things New - 127
8. Every Day, or Keeping Time Holy - 155
9. Back to the Future: Remission of Sin and Changing the Past - 182
10. Forgiven Time: The Pharisee and Tax Collector - 208
11. Lazarus, Come out: Rebirth and Resurrection - 236
12. The Event of Hospitality: One Being Inside/Outside the Kingdom of God - 259

Appendix to Part Two: Newly Discovered Fragments on the Kingdom of God from  
the Gospel of Miriam - 279

Concluding Prayer - 283

.....

### **The Event of Hospitality: One Being Inside/Outside the Kingdom of God - 259**

In the world, one is always very flattered to be included on a guest list, to be part of the “inside crowd” who have gotten an invitation.

But in the kingdom, hospitality is weak force that leaves itself entirely unfortified. In the kingdom, it is the outsiders who are in.

In the world, hospitality moves within a strong chain of reciprocity; invitations circulate back and forth in a closed circle of the same, like a gift exchange. In the world, economy is always passing itself off as generosity, so that the very conditions under which hospitality is

possible, the invitation of the other, make it impossible, for the other is precisely the one who is *not* invited. One of the senses of a “community,” we should recall, is to build a fortified circle around oneself to protect against the coming of the other.

When we call for the kingdom to come, therefore, we are being called upon to push against these limits, to strain against these conditions, to practice a mad and unconditional hospitality, which is impossible. We are asked not just to welcome the stranger who comes knocking at our door, but to seek our casual passerby who had no intention of knocking – while exercising caution for kin and kind. We are pressed to put our own power at risk, our home and our community, to seek out the lame and lepers, outcasts, and outsiders. The kingdom is gathering of the ungathered, who are gathered by the event, an assembly of the dispossessed who are possessed by the event, under the several names that the **event** comes calling.<sup>1</sup>

### **The God who loves the stranger**

In the kingdom, the mark of God is on the face of the stranger, on the “other,” not the “same.” In the biblical tradition, In a world of desert wanderers, God is the one who comes knocking at our door dressed in rags in search of bread and a cup of cold water. The duty owed the wanderer and the stranger is holy and inviolable, and without it the world of wanderers would perish under its own weight. To provide a place of respite and refuge, to offer bread and water, even to take the food out of one’s own mouth in order to share it with the stranger – to make the other welcome – that is the law of the land and the law of God.<sup>2</sup>

Hospitality could very well be taken as the very emblem of morality in the biblical sense. The traveler who appears at our door bears the mark of God upon his brow. God has signed the face of the stranger, and placed him under divine protection. The one who receives the stranger, receives God, “the God who loves the stranger.” So when the stranger comes knocking at my door, it is not only the stranger **who has come calling, but the event.** The same idea shows up again in the beautiful story in the New Testament in which the disciples ask the master, when did we find you hungry and feed you, or find you in prison and visit you, and the master says, whatever you did to the least of mine, you did to me (Matt. 25: 35-40).<sup>3</sup>

### **Holy Undecidability: Being inside/outside the kingdom (277)**

The Kingdom of God. Who is in it? Not the insiders, who take the kingdom for granted. Not the card carrying members of the kingdom, who treat the kingdom as if it were an entitlement assembly of the kingdom, who have the papers to prove that they are paid-up members, which show their legitimate status. Of these card carriers, Amos has the Lord say

---

<sup>1</sup> John D. Caputo, *Weakness of God* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 262.

<sup>2</sup> John D. Caputo, *Weakness of God* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 263.

<sup>3</sup> John D. Caputo, *Weakness of God* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 263.

that he does not want to see their papers, he hates their solemn assemblies, their burnt offerings, and the noise of their songs: “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:21-24; Is. 1:11-17).<sup>4</sup>

According to Amos, Isaiah (1:11-17) and Hosea (6:6), or even Karl Barth or Dietrich Bonhoeffer, God is not interested in religion but in justice. **The Lord demands justice, or hospitality. Doing God, not saying God. Not saying “Lord, Lord”** – the name – but opening one’s house to the stranger at the door – the event. So then the insiders who swell the church choruses are, if not out, at least not necessarily in. The difference between the kingdom and the world cuts across the difference between those who are and are not card carriers, name bearers. One could be in the church yet still steeped in the world ( in salaries and power), which happens all the time, even as the kingdom is filled with people who never heard of the kingdom or do not want to hear about it, but who forswear power and swing wide doors of hospitality. It happens all the time.<sup>5</sup>

Who then is *in*? The outsiders are in, the ones who have no papers to present, whose names do not appear on any official guest list, who do not have an official address to which we could have mailed the invitation. The party that is being thrown in the kingdom is for *them*. The oxen and fatted calves have been prepared for “the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind,” Luke says(14:13).<sup>6</sup>

The kingdom of God is for everyone, good and bad. The kingdom of God is a community without community, a city without walls, a nation without borders, unconditional hospitality without sovereign power, where the decision for admission is based on a holy undecidability between insider and outsider.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> John D. Caputo, *Weakness of God* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 277.

<sup>5</sup> John D. Caputo, *Weakness of God* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 277

<sup>6</sup> John D. Caputo, *Weakness of God* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 278.

<sup>7</sup> John D. Caputo, *Weakness of God* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 278.