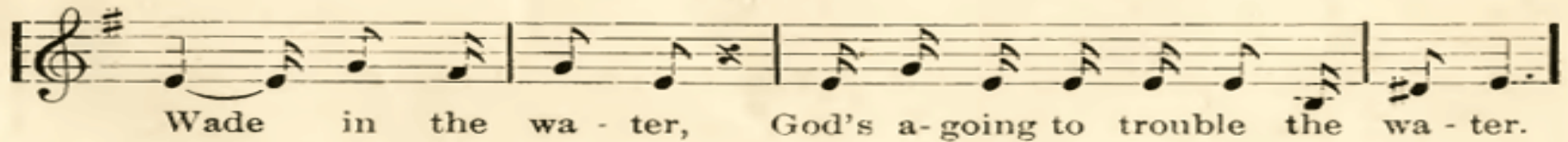
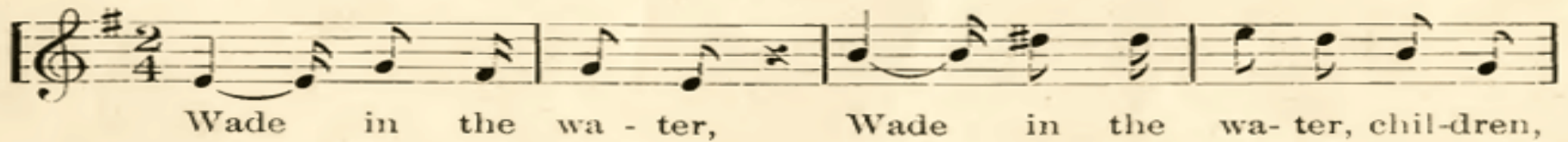


WADE IN THE WATER

(A favorite melody among Southern Baptists while a baptism is in progress.)



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Toxic Theology



Signs of Toxic Theology

- 1. Lack of humility**
- 2. Lack of critical reflection**
- 3. Lack of curiosity**
- 4. Lack of Introspection**
- 5. Unable/unwilling to identify biases**
- 6. Does not examine for relevance**
- 7. Lacks compassion & empathy**
- 8. Closed system**
- 9. Lack of creativity & imagination**

5 Considerations for Decreasing Toxic Theology

- 1. Engaging in pluralistic ministry, interreligious spiritual care, interdisciplinary consultation**
- 2. Cultivating a theology of radical hospitality and humility**
- 3. Clearing away violent thoughts, controlling behaviors (undermining others), conquest, co-dependency, overprotection**

Decreasing Toxic Theology (cont.)

- 4. Openness to wide range of encounters – God often reveals Godself through encounters with ‘strangers’, marginalized people, people of different cultures, languages and religious traditions**
- 5. Rather than acting according to strict literalism as applied to specific scriptures, dogmas, ideologies, or the maintenance of strong ingroup/outgroup distinctions; advance theologies that increase capacity for emotional expression (empathy & compassion) so that persons can caringly engage suffering, sorrow, grief and death.**

Pluralistic

Truth is not the exclusive or inclusive possession of any one tradition or community. Therefore, the diversity of communities, traditions, understandings of the truth, and visions of God is not an obstacle for us to overcome, but an opportunity for our energetic engagement and dialogue with one another.

Inter/Intra-Religious Relationships

- If our religious tradition is causing suffering and death, then we are doing something wrong.
- If our religious tradition is hurting and killing people of other religious traditions, then something of God is concealed from us.
- If our religious tradition is hurting and traumatizing our congregants (ecclesiogenic depression), then something is being exploited, oppressed, or causing moral injury in the name of God.

Inter/Intra-Religious Relationships (cont.)

- Theology wonders how this particular situation, at this particular time, expressed in the human situation of all people, and reflective of the wider local & global community is linked to presenting care needs?
- How can we turn our theology and religious practice to the well-being and good of others?

Restorative Theology

1. Anchored in collective care, mercy, justice, truth, freedom
2. Capacity to de-center self and prioritize another; not selfless, instead helps the self develop a solid center.
3. Divinely inspired.
4. Honors mystery, awe, a spiritual realm
5. Takes an ontological and epistemological care-being/care-knowing/care-doing stance.

What Does Restorative Theology Do?

- **Hears/Attends to the Story**

(notices what identities, capabilities, communities are being disrupted or constructed; names structures/persons doing harm)

- **Remembers/Sometimes Forgets**

(imaginatively reconstructs memory, imagination, and future story)

- **Brings us into Relationship with One Another**

(creates community)

- **Heals/Liberates/Truths**

(creates new reality based on wellbeing and justice)

