

goddess: “Be reconciled to me” (3.8.9). Then near the end of the novel, after the resolution of the problems, Callirhoe again speaks to the goddess in a prayer: “Now you are reconciled with me” (8.4.10). In Paul’s milieu, then, God was reconciled to humanity, not humanity to God. In Paul, however, humans are reconciled to God (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18-20). This comes about through the death of Jesus (Rom 5:10). It is a gift that humans receive (Rom 5:11). Reconciliation is but a different metaphor to describe the same reality as justification (Rom 5:9-10). The parallelism of the two parts makes this clear:

justified (a) reconciled
 by his blood (b) through the death of his Son
 we shall be saved (c) will we be saved

If we have been reconciled in the here and now in spite of our being God’s enemies, “much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved (= on Judgment Day) by his life (= his risen life; cf. 4:25)” (v. 10b). Again, the believers’ future hope rests on God’s actions within history in Christ’s death.

Having spoken of the believers’ future hope based on God’s acts in Christ’s death and in the gift of the Holy Spirit to us, the apostle concluded with a renewed focus on the present. “But much more than that, we even boast (rejoice) in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation” (v. 11). Boasting of human achievement is excluded by the revelation of God’s righteousness (3:27). If believers are to boast, it must be in God who has manifested righteousness (= saving activity) in Christ.

CONNECTIONS

Some feminist theologians contend that suffering can never be redemptive, only abusive.¹⁰ The Christian theology of atonement based on the suffering of Christ, they say, encourages martyrdom and victimization rather than healing.

What is new is that many . . . are recognizing the role of christology in particular in justifying and perpetuating abuse. It is no coincidence that already scores of Christian feminists see the problem and