



# Paul Is a Fool

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**T**he cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, and God has made foolish the wisdom of the world. These pronouncements in the first chapter of Paul's long and wondrous correspondence with the church at Corinth are no less strange for being familiar. As often as they might be recited in public worship or read in private devotion, they cannot fail to puzzle and challenge.

Paul, ever the consummate preacher and letter-writer, does not open a letter with a paradox only to abandon it. Foolishness is the leitmotif that will run through much of the Corinthian correspondence. He does not, however, limit foolishness to the cross. Paul sets up cascades of fools and foolishness, and returns to the motif numerous times in his correspondence.

It works this way. If the *cross* is foolishness, so too is the *message* of the cross. So "the foolishness of our proclamation...save[s] those who believe" (1 Cor 1:21). If the *message* of the cross is foolishness, then so too is the *fool* who delivers the message. He considers his own call, his weakness, lack of rhetorical skill, and fear (1 Cor 2:1–4), and concludes that "we are fools for the sake of Christ" (1 Cor 4:10). The first domino has been tipped, and all the other fools stacked after it fall quickly—cross, preaching, preacher.

Paul returns to the motif in his second letter to the church in Corinth. Instead of backing off from what likely was regarded as a bit of hyperbole (who ever in the history of literature prior to Paul suggested the *weakness* of God?), Paul amplifies

*Shakespeare's Nick Bottom plays the fool and brings transformation through his Midsummer Night's Dream. Paul not only plays the fool, he is a fool for Christ. Wendell Berry calls us to practice foolishness as a way to practice resurrection. Foolishness is the way of the cross.*

the theme, and turns foolishness into a performance art. “Bear with me in a little foolishness” (2 Cor 11:1). “Accept me as a fool” (2 Cor 11:16). “I am speaking as a fool” (1 Cor 11:21). “I will boast of the things that show my weakness” (2 Cor 11:30). “I have been a fool” (2 Cor 12:11).

Paul is not alone in world literature in making use of his foolishness, maybe especially the foolishness of his speech, in order to win over his hearers. In this essay, we will take time to examine two other fools and their speeches, in order to shed further light on the fool’s speech in Paul’s Corinthians correspondence and its implications for Christian preaching today.

#### NICK BOTTOM AND A *MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM*

Theater is a ripe context for fools. Plays offer space for the imaginative exhibition of what might otherwise be censured or shunned. Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is especially robust in this regard, with fools and tricksters functioning as the catalyst for much of the drama and comedy.

It is especially intriguing—and this is certainly no accident—that the biggest fool in the play, Nick Bottom the weaver, is a type of Paul the Apostle. He is a weaver, echoing Paul’s trade as a tentmaker. In fact, his own name may echo the 1557 William Whittingham Geneva translation of the New Testament, which in a revised form became a part of the 1560 Geneva Bible. In this translation, 1 Cor 2:10 reads, “the Spirite searcheth all things, yea, the *botome* of Goddes secretes.”

Bottom frequently misquotes Pauline phrases from the Corinthian correspondence. And maybe most intriguingly, he awakens at one point with the head of an ass, similar in this case not to Paul, but to one of the earliest examples of Christian graffiti that portrays Jesus on the cross with the head of an ass.<sup>1</sup>

Nick Bottom’s transfiguration begins when he enters the stage with the head of an ass. His friend Quince announces, “Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated” (3.1.121),<sup>2</sup> then flees. Bottom, thinking his friends have fled in order to scare *him*, begins to sing, and in the process awakens Titania, the Queen of the Fairies. Titania, however, has had a love potion placed on her eyes by Puck, otherwise known as Robin Goodfellow. So, comically, Titania, the Queen of the Fairies, falls in love with Nick Bottom, the ass-headed fool.

Towards the end of Bottom’s night-time liaison with Titania and his playful engagement with her attendants, Bottom announces, again in a malapropism that refers to speech and writing, “I have an exposition of sleep come upon me” (4.1.41). When morning arrives, Bottom awakens, and it is precisely at this point,

<sup>1</sup>Harvey Cox, *The Feast of Fools: A Theological Essay on Festivity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) 140. For a graphic illustration, search the Internet for “Alexamenos Graffito.”

<sup>2</sup>The Shakespeare citations refer to act, scene, and line numbers (in this case Act 3, Scene 1, line 121). Since there is some variation in line numbers among the editions of Shakespeare, here we will use the Great Books edition: *The Plays and Sonnets of William Shakespeare*, vol. 1, ed. William George Clarke and William Aldis Wright (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952).

coming to at least some awareness of the fool he has been or appeared to be, that Bottom makes his speech that echoes 1 Corinthians:

The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called "Bottom's Dream," because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the Duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. (4.1.215–224)

Compare this with 1 Cor 2:9–10 from the 1560 Geneva translation:

But as it is written, The things which eye hath not seen, nether eare hath heard, nether came into mans heart, are, which God hath prepared for them that loue him. But God hath reueiled them vnto vs by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deepe things of God.

We have already been warned through Shakespeare's use of words like "translation" and "exposition" that Bottom's subversive foolishness will be articulated, if not actually articulate. Bottom's dream, the deep mystery he cannot speak, is that during the night, during his soiree with Titania and the fairies, he had the head of an ass. Although he will not speak the dream himself, he plans to have Peter Quince write a ballad of it to be performed before the Duke. Paul's mystery, by comparison, is God and God's preparations for those who love God. Paul performs this mystery through his letter to the Corinthians.

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Shakespeare, always in control of his material, takes this one step further.<sup>3</sup> Bottom's audience for his ballad is the Greek Duke Theseus of Athens and his Greek court. Corinth is not far from Athens; they are both Greek. Acknowledging this, we come upon a final connection between the play and Paul's Corinthians correspondence. Remember, it is Paul who writes that "the Grecians seke after wisdom. But we preache Christ crucified : vnto the Iewes, euen a stombling blocke, & vnto the Grecians, foolishness: But vnto them which are called, bothe of the Iewes & Grecians we preache Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser then men" (1 Cor 1:22–25). Paul's preaching is foolishness to the Greeks; Bottom's play is foolishness to the Greeks. There could not be a more clear parallel.

However, to this point we have only established that there is a connection between Paul's Corinthian correspondence and Nick Bottom in *A Midsummer*

<sup>3</sup>For the insight into Bottom's Greek audience, I am indebted to an essay by Steven Doloff, received by private correspondence, "Bottom's Greek Audience: 1 Corinthians 1:21–25 and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," *The Explicator* 65/4 (2007) 200–201.

*Night's Dream*. We have yet to examine the significance of this connection. I contend that Shakespeare's purpose in linking the two is to provide us with a playful illustration of how "the fool" (either Paul or Shakespeare/Bottom) makes sport of the wise. Theseus and his court have many (low) expectations of Bottom and his troupe of performers. Theseus the Greek rationalist has been least changed by the nighttime escapades of some members of his court, and so he is the most skeptical. "I never may believe / These antique fables nor these fairy toys. / Lovers and madmen have such seething brains, / Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend / More than cool reason ever comprehends. / The lunatic, the lover and the poet are of imagination all compact" (5.1.2–8).

Theseus and his court are more than skeptical, however. They are also influenced by consideration of status and class.<sup>4</sup> The nobles look down on workers trying their hand at the performing arts. It makes them uncomfortable, because it is disorienting, bringing folk of low status into a role suited more for those of greater status. Samuel Wells, in his splendid book *Improvisation*, remarks, "Most people are 'status specialists'—they feel comfortable with their accustomed status, but naked and vulnerable when forced into the 'wrong' status."<sup>5</sup>

Philostrate, a high-status courtesan, says of Bottom and his "rude mechanicals": "Hard-handed men that work in Athens here, / Which never labour'd in their minds till now, / And now have toil'd their unbreathed memories / With this same play, against your nuptial" (5.1.72–75). Theseus does not take Philostrate's recommendation not to view Bottom's play. Instead, he opts to hear the play for sport, "to take what they mistake" (5.1.90). It is a light amusement for Theseus, to beguile the "heavy gait of night" (5.1.375). Theseus never plans for the play to do anything other than amuse him. Although the play has been rehearsed in the fairy woods, where others of his court have been permanently transformed and changed in love, Theseus alone, rather than being changed by the imaginative context, feels the need to transform it. He must make use of his own imagination in order to set the play aright, for it is a foolish play. Theseus explains, "The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them" (5.1.213–214).

However, in thus making himself lord of a foolish play performed for his amusement in his own court, rather than subjecting himself to the powers of the night, of fairies and tricksters, Theseus is not transformed by the "midsummer night's dream" experienced by the other lovers; he may not, as a result, even learn to love. Love in this play is like an imaginative journey "from reality into a fantasy world created by the artist, ending in a return to a reality that has itself been partly transformed by the experience of the journey."<sup>6</sup> This is classic Shakespeare, two

<sup>4</sup>There are echoes, here, of Herod with John the Baptist, Agrippa with Paul, Pilate with Jesus, and Nebuchadnezzar with Daniel.

<sup>5</sup>Samuel Wells, *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2004) 88.

<sup>6</sup>David Bevington, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 4th ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1992) 147.

worlds contrasted, one of social order, the other of imaginative escape. Bottom, true to form, is only transfigured at night, but, as the play's consistent figure of the fool, he continues on as the fool upon waking. Theseus, similarly, is static as the representative of social order. It is the other lovers—Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius, and Helena—who, in traveling from the ordered social world of Theseus's court to the fantasy world of the wood and back again, undergo a transformation, perhaps even a conversion. And it is only through an encounter with the fairies and a trickster that this conversion is accomplished.

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*Bottom plays the fool in order to play the fools*

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What, then, is Bottom's role? He is not a malicious trickster. He is a plain old innocent fool. He embodies his foolishness in the woods (head of an ass and all) as well as in the court (through his foolish performance). He carries the role of fool across the boundaries. In fact, his foolishness draws attention to the truth in both worlds. The foolishness of Titania's love affair with Bottom reconciles (at least for a time) Oberon and Titania. Back at court, Bottom's bottomless play offers light entertainment for the wedding party. It is in this sense an embodiment of the transformation that occurred in the woods, but "translated" for the court and context. Bottom functions as a jester. And as Leszek Kolakowski observes concerning jesters:

Although an habitué of good society, [the jester] does not belong to it and makes it the object of his inquisitive impertinence; he...questions what appears to be self-evident. The jester could not do this if he himself were part of the good society, for then he would be, at the most, a drawing room wit. A jester must remain an outsider; he must observe "good society" from the sidelines, for only then can he detect the non-obvious behind the obvious and the non-final behind what appears to be final. At the same time he must frequent good society so as to know what it deems holy, and to be able to indulge in his impertinence.<sup>7</sup>

Bottom may be a jester only accidentally or incidentally, but he functions all the better for it. His outsider status in the court illuminates the truth. And as always in these comic dialogues, there is the nagging possibility that the "rude mechanicals" are even playing us, the reader, and are misusing language intentionally in order to convince us of their own inferior linguistic and intellectual skills. In this sense the fool plays the fool in order to *play the fools*.

On the other hand, the rude mechanicals may simply be playing their parts, seeking to curry the favor of the dominant class. Wisdom would dictate this. We must remember that "in the short run, it is in the interest of the subordinate to produce a more or less credible performance, speaking the lines and making the gestures [one] knows are expected."<sup>8</sup> But since it is in the interest of the low-status

<sup>7</sup>Leszek Kolakowski, "The Priest and the Jester," *Dissent* 9/3 (1962) 233.

<sup>8</sup>James C. Scott, *Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990) 2–4.

players to give a credible performance, the comedy of the scene is due either to their inability even to be credible (which may be ascribable to ignorance of what actually *is* credible) or, equally plausibly, they perform in this way in order to resist or subvert the dominant discourse. This could actually function on two levels. It may be a dynamic internal to the play. It may also be a dynamic of the play as it is performed and has an effect on its audience. Either way, it is just plain funny, and it offers us an example of what strange, foolish discourse might look like, and what a cultural product with clear Christian overtones might do.

#### PAUL'S CRAZY CRUCIFORM CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE

*The prophet is a fool, the man of the spirit is mad!*

—Hosea 9:7

The Apostle Paul, who considered himself the “least” of all the apostles (1 Cor 15:9), offers the most thoroughgoing argument for foolishness as the shape of the church’s mission. He grounds his argument in Christ, more specifically in Christ’s cross, and then applies the concept to his own mission and the mission of all those who follow Christ. One central point he makes repeatedly is that God has made foolish the wisdom of the world. This fracture between God’s wisdom/foolishness and the world’s foolishness/wisdom occurs in and through the cross. Consider:

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believed. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength. Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. (1 Cor 1:18–29)

For Paul, foolishness is a performance art. It is the deliberate maintenance of oddity through the proclamation of the cross. This is the first task of the preacher, as Walter Brueggemann tells us: “The maintenance of oddity—which creates freedom for life, energy for caring, and joy through the day.”<sup>9</sup> It is especially important

<sup>9</sup>Walter Brueggemann, *Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope: Contested Truth in a Post-Christian World*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000) 10.

to note that Paul is at risk of failing in his mission to Corinth. It is precisely in this context that Paul comes to a deeper realization of the power of playing the fool. It is, in retrospect, a stroke of genius precisely in the midst of virtual failure. Foolishness is a soft use of power—one which creates negative space for the consideration of truth.

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Paul plays the fool in both his letters to the Corinthians. Second Corinthians 11:1–12:13 is strikingly similar to the dramatic fool's speech tradition (*Narrenrede*), a form of speech that, as we have already seen in the case of Nick Bottom, can entertain while simultaneously serving as cultural critique.<sup>10</sup> However, it is important to realize that there is significant difference between a dramatic fool's speech and Paul's use of the form. The difference is simple: Paul is not just *playing* the fool. He truly presents himself as a fool, and precisely because of his christological insight. He is free to play the fool and *be* the fool because of Christ's folly on the cross. He becomes a "fool for Christ."<sup>11</sup>

Stoics might catalog their sufferings to illustrate detachment. Braggarts would list them to elevate themselves through a dramatic story. In Paul's culture, similar to our own, many would avoid cataloging them at all because our cultures prefer demonstrations of divine power and glory.<sup>12</sup> In fact, in the Greco-Roman world, emperors often published "achievement lists" that have many formal parallels with Paul's enumeration of his sufferings.<sup>13</sup>

Playing the fool, on the other hand, offers the negative space for Christ (and not Paul or the opponents) to be Lord. What is Paul doing with his catalog? He is demonstrating the wiliness of his opponents and their unwillingness to suffer. He says, in a sense, "I was too much of a fool to take advantage of you, when I could have done anything I wanted." In this way, playing the fool is necessary for there to be spiritual and not fleshly/worldly community. "This is perhaps the first time in world literature that anyone speaks of the weakness of God...power remains agency, but not that of one who is stronger than anyone else, but a power which overcomes through weakness."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Calvin J. Roetzel, *2 Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008) 103.

<sup>11</sup>Hans Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, 9th ed. (1924; reprint, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970) 395.

<sup>12</sup>Roetzel, *2 Corinthians*, 112–113.

<sup>13</sup>Thomas D. Stegman, *2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010) 256. One list, "The Deeds of the Divine Augustus," includes items such as, "I was twenty-one times saluted as emperor," and "Twice I received triumphal ovations." Compare 2 Cor 11:24–25: "Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea."

<sup>14</sup>T. J. Gorringer, *Furthering Humanity: A Theology of Culture* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004) 151.

## YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS: A CHURCH OF FOOLS?

*Is it true that perfect love drives out all fear?  
The right to appear ridiculous is something I hold dear...*<sup>15</sup>

—U2

When Wendell Berry returned to farm in his native Kentucky at about the age of thirty, he recognized that although his cosmopolitan journey as a writer and academic in New York and Italy had cultivated him in peculiar ways, it was for something different from the “good life” typical of someone aspiring to a literary and scholarly career. He was called, instead, to truly understand *place* and *home*, to steward a particular place rather than simply romanticize it and visit there; “he had begun to feel ‘called out of’ the typical institutions of American life.”<sup>16</sup>

Berry is important as our third fool here because I do not wish to overlook the context in which Paul offers his encouragement to be fools. Having encouraged the congregation in Corinth to avoid jealousy and quarrels, he emphasizes that, though they plant and build, it is God who gives the growth (1 Cor 3:6–15). Apparently, being deceived into thinking we are wise is, for Paul, one of the greatest dangers, and so he goes on, “Do not deceive yourselves. If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (1 Cor 3:18–19).

So playing the fool is somehow related to building up church unity. It has to do with humility and not lording our wisdom over others. I imagine that as a pastor part of my ministry plan needs to include not thinking I am wiser than I am or that my practices are necessarily wiser than others. I should not boast in my accomplishments, but rather in God who gives the growth and in Christ in whom all things hold together (Col 1:17). We are then, as Paul states, “servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries” (1 Cor 4:1). Playing the fool is intrinsically caught up in this servanthood and stewardship.

Matthew Bonzo and Michael Stevens, commenting on Berry’s worldview and especially his eschatological hope, offer a characterization of this that is in wonderful, if unintentional, consonance with this insight:

So, if the end in mind for Berry is healing, how must we adjust our lives in the here and now? First is the recognition of finitude, a limitedness that is bound up in particularity of place and community and interdependence in creation. This is a countercultural notion in every sense; there is no path toward healing in modern culture—economic or political or religious—that does not lead back to the difficult labor of recognizing and honoring our finitude. The structure of creation requires this. We cannot treat the ground beneath our feet, the bodies we dwell in, and the communities that shape us as indifferent nodes. Alongside these structural limits, there is a spiritual necessity of humility that can grow into hospitality. This is a stance of vulnerability—not of self-de-

<sup>15</sup>U2, “I’ll Go Crazy If I Don’t Go Crazy Tonight,” from the album *No Line on the Horizon* (2009).

<sup>16</sup>J. Matthew Bonzo and Michael R. Stevens, *Wendell Berry and the Cultivation of Life: A Reader’s Guide* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008) 21.



fense—since we can easily be displaced and trespassed upon. Yet healing cannot occur in a posture of self-protection, of impermeable boundaries. The challenge is world-shaping, radical, magnificently risky—and ultimately resonant with the call of the gospel.<sup>17</sup>

Being Christian means renouncing the notion of infinite accomplishment and infinite consumption and infinite well-being for a life that is finite and external—foolish. N. T. Wright has pressed, in a variety of contexts, for a form of *inaugurated eschatology*. In his *Surprised by Hope*, he defines eschatology as “the strongly held belief of most first-century Jews, and virtually all early Christians, that history was going somewhere under the guidance of God and that where it was going was toward God’s new world of justice, healing and hope.”<sup>18</sup> Later, Wright defines how he and others use the term, in comparison to the early church understanding: “We mean...the entire sense of God’s future for the world and the belief that that future has already begun to come forward to meet the present.”<sup>19</sup>

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Used in this fashion, we already have indication of why Wright then emphasizes *inaugurated* eschatology. His emphasis is not on the anticipation of Christ’s second coming, or specific interpretations of it. His emphasis is on the power that Jesus’ resurrection gives to live *now* in anticipation of how it will be.<sup>20</sup> We also have indication of how the foolishness tradition should have an integral voice in the conversation about how precisely Christ’s coming kingdom is inaugurated eschatologically. Living already now as it will be then is itself a form of foolishness, for it lives not from the news or how things are, but rather out of hope and anticipation. For proof of this, simply look at a church or congregation nearby. Does it not seem foolish to say that this place is the kingdom of God inaugurated? Such a statement only makes sense in eschatological perspective. It requires a unique worldview, a grounding in the broad arc of the biblical narrative, to be comprehensible. To speak confidently of the church or of ecclesiology as inaugurated eschatology requires considerable confidence and hope. In this hope, however, the church is able, as Gorringer points out, to “confront society with eschatological anticipation.”<sup>21</sup> Eschatology appropriately defined gives the church *chutzpah*.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 29–30.

<sup>18</sup>N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008) 122.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 222.

<sup>21</sup>Gorringer, *Furthering Humanity*, 21.

This kind of audacious foolishness is illustrated in no better fashion than in an early poem of Wendell Berry. “Manifesto: Mad Farmer’s Liberation Front” is an invitation to imagine a new world, or at least a new way of living in the current world. Written as a series of imperative sentences, the cumulative effect is inspiring and hope-filled, even as it challenges and provokes. It is holy folly in poetic form. It is a poem that sets the pole for our compass and frees our imagination. Consider this stanza:

So, friends, every day do something  
that won’t compute. Love the Lord.  
Love the world. Work for nothing.  
Take all that you have and be poor.  
Love someone who does not deserve it.  
Denounce the government and embrace  
the flag. Hope to live in that free  
republic for which it stands.  
Give your approval to all you cannot  
understand. Praise ignorance, for what man  
has not encountered he has not destroyed.<sup>22</sup>

I find deep resonances between this poem and another book by N. T. Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*. Wright offers a set of “intermediate tasks” with which he believes the church can, to use Berry’s apt phrase, begin to “practice resurrection” (the last words in Berry’s poem).<sup>23</sup> Wright’s first two tasks, prayer and holiness, are classic emphases of the church that Wright believes can find fresh vitality when examined from the unique angle of inaugurated eschatology. Berry’s poem is a kind of prayer, and it offers instructions for holy foolishness. Furthermore, Berry’s poem in content takes the reader in the direction of Wright’s final three intermediate tasks—politics and empire, penal codes, and international disputes. Consider other lines from Berry’s poem: “As soon as the generals and the politicians / can predict the motions of your mind, / lose it”; “Love someone who does not deserve it”; “Hope to live in that free / republic for which it stands.”

Fools speak strange poetry. I have learned that from Paul, Nick Bottom, and Wendell Berry. So I invite readers to read and memorize this poem or other fools’ discourses in order to internalize them and, when called upon, to perform them. However, we may also encourage in ourselves something that Wright suggests: “Let us encourage in particular those who have the God-given gifts to show us that [new] world, to inspire our imaginations, so that we may the more readily believe in and work for all that God wants us to attempt and accomplish.”<sup>24</sup> It is in open-

<sup>22</sup>Wendell Berry, “Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front,” in *The Country of Marriage* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973) 16–17. The full poem is available at <http://www.context.org/ICLIB/IC30/Berry.htm> (accessed August 8, 2010).

<sup>23</sup>N. T. Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God* (Intervarsity Press, 2006) 118–125.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 129.

ness to proclaiming the folly of the cross, to following Christ the fool, and to being fools for the sake of the cross that we are called to this kind of creativity, and it is in our individual ministries that we are called to live this out.

Be fools. Practice resurrection. ⊕

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