

## On Peace and War

We are aware, acutely aware in your presence,  
of the grind of tanks,  
of the blast of mines hidden against human flesh,  
of the rat-tat-tat of sniper fire.

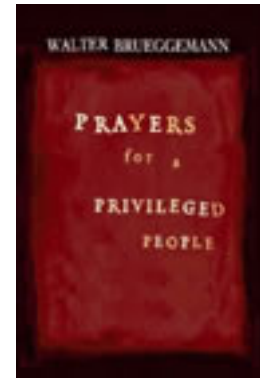
We are aware of the stench of death,  
bodies of our own military women and men,  
bodies of countless Iraqis,  
and the smell makes us shiver.

Such smells and sounds are remote from us,  
but not remote from us are bewilderment,  
and anxiety, and  
double-mindedness.

We are bewildered,  
whether we are liberators or invaders,  
whether they are terrorists or freedom fighters,  
whether we should yearn for peace or savor victory.

The world has become so strange,  
and our place in it so tenuous,  
where gray seems clearer than the white purity of our hopes,  
or the darkness of our deathly passions.  
There is so little agreement among us,  
perhaps so little truth among us,  
so little, good Lord, that we scarcely know how to pray,  
or for what to pray.

We do know, however, to whom we pray!  
We pray to you, creator God, who wills the world good;



We pray to you, redeemer God, who makes all things new.

We pray to you, stirring Spirit, healer of the nations.

We pray for guidance,

And before that, we pray in repentance,

for too much wanting the world on our own terms.

We pray for your powerful mercy,

to put the world – and us – in a new way,

a way after Jesus who gave himself,

a way after Jesus who confounded the authorities and

who lived more excellently.

Whelm us by your newness, by peace on your terms –

the newness you have promised,

of which we have seen glimpses in your Son

who is our Lord.

-Walter Brueggemann, *Prayers for a Privileged People* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), pp. 65-66. Used by permission.