Digging deeper into

Being Prophetic ...

Simon Sutcliffe
(with a lot of help from Brueggemann)
“…the prophet is called to be a child of the tradition, one who has taken it seriously in the shaping of his or her own field of perception and system of language, who is so at home in that memory that the points of contact and incongruity with the situation of the church in culture can be discerned and articulated with proper urgency.”

—Brueggemann in Prophetic Imagination (pg2)
“However emphatically they may protest their independence from the ‘establishment’, their style, their knowledge, and their prominent role in society proved that they belonged firmly to the religious, political, and educational heart of ancient Israelite society.”

—Sawyer in Prophecy and the Biblical Prophets (pg24)
“The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.”

—Brueggemann in Prophetic Imagination (pg3)
“They characteristically perceive their time and place as a circumstance of crisis, a context in which dangers are great and life-or-death decisions must be made. Or perhaps it is better to say that the appearance and utterance of the prophets evokes a crisis circumstance where none had been perceived previously. That is, the prophets not only respond to crisis, but by their abrupt utterance, they generate crisis.”

—Brueggemann in Theology of the Old Testament (pg624)
“I believe that the proper idiom for the prophet in cutting through the royal numbness and denial is the language of grief, the rhetoric that engages the community in the mourning for a funeral they do not want to admit. It is indeed their own funeral.”

–Brueggemann in Prophetic Imagination (pg46)
“Hope is the primary prophetic idiom … because the prophet speaks to a people who, willy-nilly, are God’s people. Hope is what this community must do because it is God’s community invited to be in God’s pilgrimage. And as Israel is invited to grieve God’s grief over the ending, so Israel is now invited to hope in God’s promises.”

–Brueggemann in Prophetic Imagination (pg66)
“… Israelite women of the premonarchic era could have been integrally involved in the community’s economic, social, political, and cultural affairs – this because, in premonarchic Israel, the household was “the central institution for most economic, social, political, and cultural aspects of human existence” and because “ethnographic evidence specifically indicate the vital and active roles that females play in societies in which the household is the base unit of production and consumption. ”

– Susan Ackerman writing about Carol Meyers in ‘Why is Miriam also among the prophets? (and is Zipporah among the priests?)’ in the Journal of biblical literature (JBL 121/1 (2002) 47 - 80)
“... during periods of Israelite history where economic, social, political, and cultural matters were dealt with in a more public realm, an arena separated and differentiated from the domestic sphere, women's status and potential for the exercise of power declined.”

– Susan Ackerman writing about Carol Meyers in ‘Why is Miriam also among the prophets? (and is Zipporah among the priests?)’ in the Journal of biblical literature (JBL 121/1 (2002) 47 - 80)
“Hacket speaks persuasively of the potential for an elevation in the amount of status and power available to women during times of social dysfunction.”

– Susan Ackerman writing about Jo Ann Hacket in ‘Why is Miriam also among the prophets? (and is Zipporah among the priests?)’ in the Journal of biblical literature (JBL 121/1 (2002) 47-80)
Questions:

❖ In what ways is God inviting you to be ‘prophetic’?
❖ What is God offering you as the ‘alternative consciousness’?
❖ How easy is it to share, articulate and name the grief publicly?
❖ How easy is it to share, articulate and offer signs of hope publicly?
❖ What is the crisis we speak into? and what might be the crisis we evoke?