The Hour

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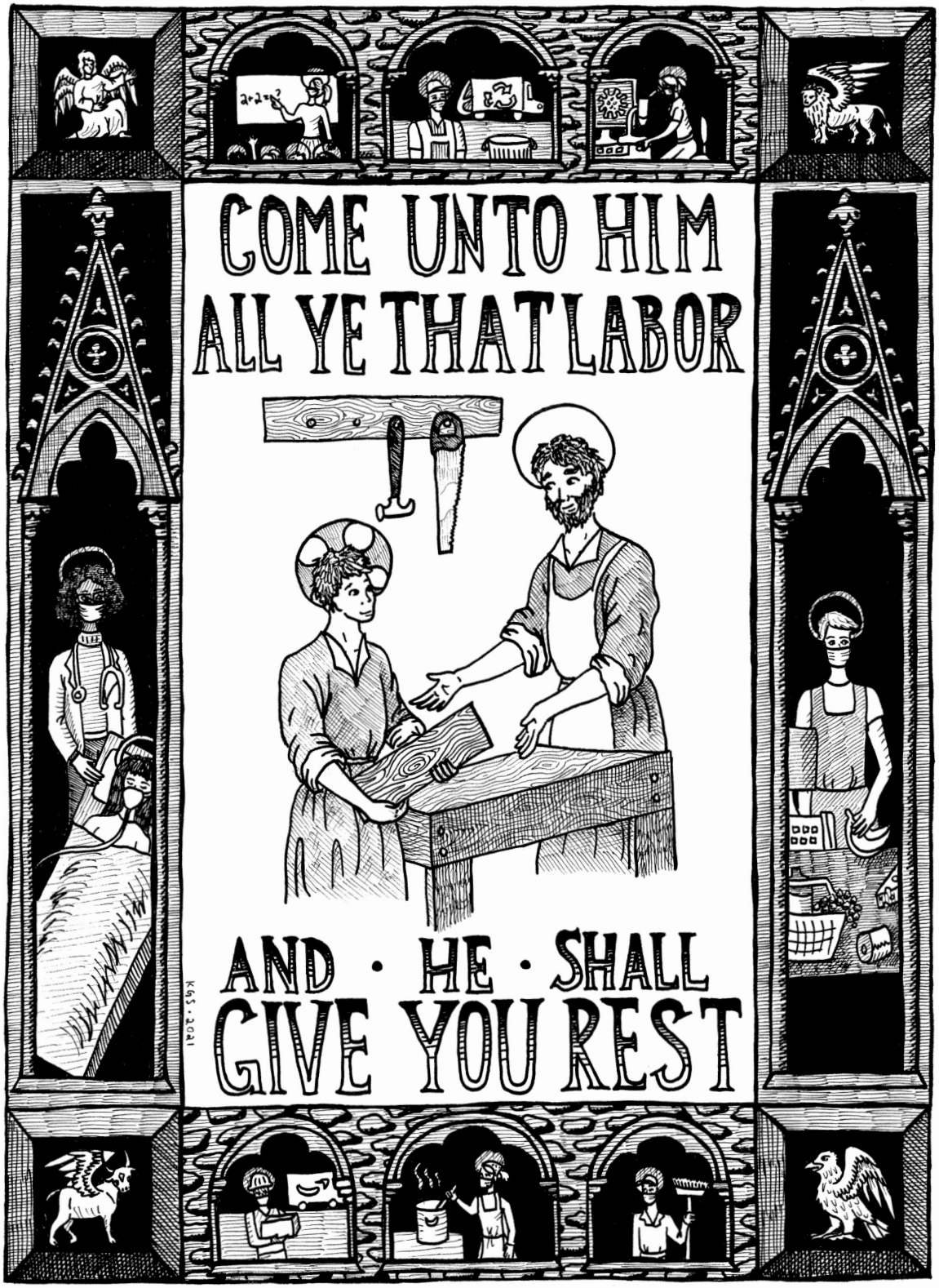

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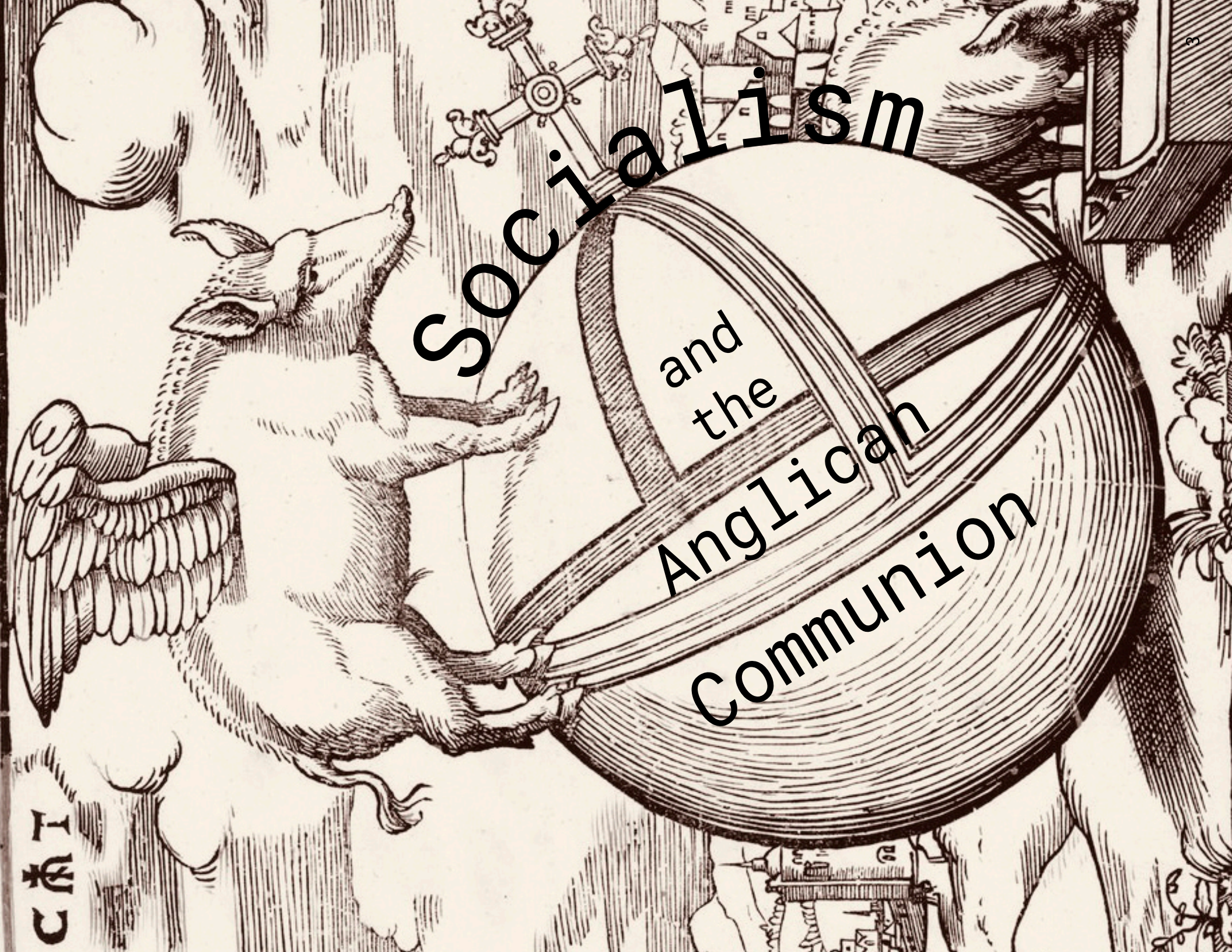

Socialism
and
the
Anglican
Communion

The Reverend Charles "Chaz" Howard is the longtime chaplain at his alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania, and a scholar and teacher of Black liberation theology. He is also a socialist, a position he feels called to take by the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. "I remember reading the passage about the members of the early church sharing everything in common, and it just struck me as such a deeply loving act, making sure everyone in the community had what they needed," he says. "It felt like a critical refutation of this very selfish, hyperbolic capitalist society here in America."

Howard was raised in traditional Black churches and was originally ordained nearly 20 years ago as a non-denominational minister. But, ever since his days in seminary, he kept finding himself worshiping in Episcopal churches. "I was of course attracted to the beautiful liturgy—the smells and bells and all that—but also to the openness that some other denominations did not have on a range of things, from LGBTQ issues to remarriage after divorce to who can be ordained as clergy," he says. "There is definitely a range of political viewpoints within the Episcopal pews, but in just about every Episcopal congregation I have worshiped in, there were people there who moved to the denomination in a quest to be in a more progressive space."

In 2019, Howard was ordained as an Episcopal priest, a personal step that in many ways characterizes the modern version of the denomination. Seven in 10 current Episcopalians come from different faith backgrounds, a phenomenon so pervasive that The Episcopal Handbook self-identifies the denomination as a "church of refugees."

Some of those refugees agree with Howard's economic and political views. "To me, the centrality of communion and the open table invitation in the Episcopal church today reflects the spirituality of socialism, even though there are clearly other words people could use to describe it."

True enough, but socialism is exactly the word that many Anglicans and Episcopalians before Howard would have used. They too pointed to the Acts of the Apostles' descriptions of the first Christian communities as being both profoundly socialist, and a fresh response to Jesus' teaching that we must love our neighbors as ourselves and see Christ embodied in the poor and the sick. The early Christians were also deeply familiar with the Hebrew Bible's many mandates to redistribute

wealth. Consider Deuteronomy 24:19-22's call to leave a portion of harvests available for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, and Isaiah 10:1-2's emphasis that the poor are not to be pitied and given alms—they have rights to be honored.

The scripture was not just aspirational: it reflected the law of the Hebrew communities, carried out in the Sabbath and Jubilee years of debt forgiveness and free access to harvests (Leviticus 25:10 and Deuteronomy 15:2). And it lines up with the consistent obligation tzedakah imposes for Jews of means to give their surplus to the poor—which many Jewish scholars say is more akin to a tax than to charity.

Not only did Christians of the Acts era live communally, their eucharistic celebrations centered around a ritual of those with abundance sharing food with those in need. The communal sharing legacy of the early Church endured for many centuries, and with it a growing engagement with the political and economic structures that dictate whether people go hungry or are homeless. As the 20th century Anglican priest and socialist Maurice Rickett said, "If you had told any typical Christian thinker in any century from the 12th to the 16th that religion had nothing to do with economics, he would either have trembled for your faith or feared for your reason. He would have regarded you, in short, as either a heretic or a lunatic."

The modern use of the term socialism dates to early 19th century efforts led by Francois Marie Charles Fourier in France and Robert Owen in England, who separately but nearly simultaneously aimed to create a society built on cooperation and shared resources, not competition. (Owen has a U.S. connection, too, founding in 1825 a short-lived utopian socialist society in New Harmony, Indiana.) This mission resonated with Christian socialists, particularly in France, Germany, and England.

Then and now, definitions of socialism vary. To the extent they were familiar with Karl Marx's work—much of the early Christian socialism predates him—most Christian socialists agreed with Marx's ground-breaking analysis of the devastating impact capitalism wreaks on working people. But they parted ways when it came to Marxist antipathy to religion, and they rejected exhortations to revolution by any means. Religious socialists across Christian and other traditions more often prefer nonviolent activism and the ballot box as their chosen instruments of reform.

Sometimes that called-for reform has been

the nationalization of key industries. But it just as often has been a demand for smaller-scale worker ownership of enterprises, coupled with state guarantees of universal healthcare, education, and housing. These life-and-death matters are too important to leave to secular institutions alone, Christians socialists insist. "The Church should be the primary social structure through which Christians seek to effect transformation—revolution—elsewhere in society," Anglican priest and socialist Kenneth Leech said.

Speaking to the Society of Catholic Priests in 2019 in an address reprinted in The Hour, Berkeley Divinity School dean and Anglican priest Andrew McGowan said that fulfilling this mandate calls for venturing far beyond the narrow bandwidth of current electoral politics, particularly in the U.S. "Late capitalism is not merely a system in need of tweaking, so that if we got (e.g.) gun violence, or racism, and a few other things sorted, all would be well," he said. "Late capitalism is essentially the rule of the bourgeoisie, or of capital itself, and while its ideology always pretends to offer equal opportunity it never will, let alone real equality in which it has no interest."

Much of the world breathes a sigh of relief at the departure of Donald Trump from the U.S. White House. But that means McGowan's warning against Christian complacency is all the more timely, particularly when Trump's replacement also comes from an avowedly neoliberal perspective. "The Church needs to remember, or discover, that being Church is actually much more radical than being a religiously-inspired faction of the Democratic Party," he said. "You may object that there is a great difference between Obama and Trump, and there is. But inequality in this country bounded ahead under Obama; detention and deportation bounded ahead under Obama. Obama was and is a person of almost infinitely greater appeal and deeper character than Trump - but this is not the point. The system over which they preside is the same."

The Episcopal priest, socialist, and venerable historian of religion Gary Dorrien agrees, linking the legacy of Christian socialism to its agenda going forward. "Christian socialism was liberationist a century before liberation theology had a name," he writes in the Anglican Theological Review. "It has a future as a form of liberation theology that includes everyone within the realms of grace, rights, and the beloved community."

Christian socialism has manifested itself across many traditions, notably in the Black Baptist, African Methodist Episcopal, and Quaker communities in the U.S., the Roman Catholic Church in France and the U.S., and Methodism in England. But the consensus among historians like Dorrien is that its most robust version can be found in the British Anglican tradition and the broader Anglican Communion in places like the U.S. and South Africa.

At first glance, this fact is surprising, given the Anglican church's official status in England and the fact that its membership has long been concentrated among members of the upper and upper-middle classes. In the U.S., too, the Episcopal church has been characterized as "the Republican Party at prayer." From such a foundation of privilege, how did a socialist tradition grow, often accompanied in England by equally scandalous Anglican anti-imperialism and demands to dismantle the Church of England?

Part of the answer is that most of the Anglican Communion socialist energy has come from within its Anglo-Catholic wing, which from its beginnings in the mid-19th century Oxford Movement was a departure from the Church's dominant culture. A distinguishing characteristic of Anglo-Catholicism is its embrace of the Church's pre-division roots and liturgical practices, including the centrality of Eucharistic worship. The rejection of Anglican orthodoxy led to even more separation: Anglo-Catholics marginalized from the more established precincts of Anglicanism planted churches in places where the Anglican tradition had been largely absent, especially impoverished urban neighborhoods. The locale-liturgy combination earned some Anglo-Catholic clergy the label of "slum priest ritualists."

Most leaned into it, committing themselves to addressing the here-and-now needs of their new communities. "The glories of Anglo-Catholicism," says Anglican priest and theologian Angus Ritchie, "Is its full-blooded engagement with the material world and actual (rather than idealised) communities and institutions as the place where God's word takes flesh."

That physical presence in poor communities helped create a sense of solidarity with the poor, often enabling Anglo-Catholics to bypass the common Christian trap of preferencing a charity-based response to class struggle, says Caleb Roberts, co-editor of The Hour. (Roberts

and his co-editor Tony Hunt were interviewed by the author before there was any intention of this article being published in The Hour.) "Rather than being born out of a paternalistic desire to go and serve the poor, the political activism seemed to grow up alongside the lived experience of being in a place like the East End of London," Roberts says. "At the same time, Anglo-Catholics' estrangement from mainline Anglicanism disconnected them from the whole 'chaplain to the state' Church of England model." Indeed, Father James Adderley, an Anglo-Catholic priest serving a poor community in London in the early 20th century, called the Eucharist "the weekly meeting of a society of rebels against a mammon-worshipping world order."

Just as Anglo-Catholicism's involuntary geographic concentration amongst the poor spurred engagement on a pastoral level, its separation from the Anglican church's power base enabled more adventurous political advocacy. "Since Anglican Catholics started on the margins as a minority within the church, already facing resistance and sometimes outright persecution, they were in a position where they were less afraid to take on political critique, too," says Tony Hunt.

That legacy of political critique helped attract left-leaning Americans like Hunt and Roberts to the Episcopal church. Hunt is the son of a Pentecostal minister, who himself tried to plant an Assemblies of God church before becoming an Episcopalian and enrolling in divinity student in St. Paul, Minnesota. Roberts is a fifth-generation Oklahoman who grew up in a Church of the Nazarene congregation and now is the rector of Grace Episcopal church in Ponca City, Oklahoma. The two met on Twitter, bonding over a shared desire to lift up the Anglican pastoral and socialist traditions they had come to embrace.

The result is The Hour, which features articles and analyses by current theologians and activists, alongside occasional reprints of works from legendary Anglican socialists like the British author R.H. Tawney and U.S. Episcopalian socialists like Vida Dutton Scudder. Scudder's 1917 book, The Church and the Hour, is the inspiration for the magazine's name. "Sometimes in the current era it seems that there is no way to get beyond capitalism," Hunt says. "So we think there is value in lifting up this internal church tradition that is both coherent and compelling, and points to the fact that Christianity can exist without capitalism because it has existed without capitalism."

Jesus as "A First-Rate Political Economist"

England's Christian socialist movement started in the mid-19th century, when Anglican lawyer John Ludlow and Anglican priest and theologian Frederick Denison Maurice felt called to respond to unprecedented urban poverty triggered by the rise of industrial capitalism. Inspired by witnessing first-hand both the French Revolution of 1848 and the British Chartist movement for universal male suffrage, the deeply religious Ludlow recruited Maurice to the socialist cause. They were aided by the Anglican priest and celebrated novelist Charles Kingsley.

Ludlow supplied the fire to their team, sparing no mercy when indicting the ravages capitalism was inflicting on his country:

> If it be necessary in English society that from 13,000 to 14,000 females should in London be engaged in slop-work, earning on an average two-pence-half-penny a day, of whom one-fourth, being those who have no husband or parent to support them, have no choice but between starvation and prostitution—if this be necessary, I say, in English society, then English society is the devil's own work, and to hell with it as soon as possible!

In both tone and agenda, Maurice was more moderate than Ludlow. For example, Maurice was not interested in giving uneducated working people the vote. But he was fully devoted to ensuring that society guarantee them adequate income, housing, and food.

To Maurice, a government devoted to that end was necessary to fulfill the Biblical mandate to create the Kingdom of God on earth. "I seriously believe that Christianity is the only foundation of Socialism, and that a true Socialism is the necessary result of a sound Christianity," he wrote in 1850. Maurice's writings had a significant influence on turn-of-the-century Social Gospel leaders in the U.S., in particular Baptist minister Walter Rauschenbusch. Rauschenbusch in turn made a deep impact on Martin Luther King, Jr., who made particular use of Rauschenbusch's description of the hoped-for Kingdom of God on earth as "the beloved community."

The earliest Anglican socialism was a departure from the French movement that inspired Ludlow, since the French version was not as closely tied to religion. Anglican socialism also predated any significant

Marxist influence in Britain. But it was radical enough to dramatically clash with the priorities of Maurice's fellow upper-class Britons, who were quite happy to benefit from the unequal rewards of capitalism. The more pious among them touted as justification for their riches the supposedly beneficial "invisible hand" of capitalism that Adam Smith had recently espoused in The Wealth of Nations. A typical response labeled Maurice's and Ludlow's work as "ravings of blasphemy . . . mischievous provocations clothed in oily phrases of peace and charity."

But, to these earliest Anglican socialists, the sacrilege was coming from the other direction. On capitalism's core philosophy, Maurice was blunt. "I do not see my way farther than this: Competition is put forth as the law of the universe, and that is a lie."

Maurice's conclusion would reverberate across the Anglican landscape for decades. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there were more than a dozen Christian socialist organizations in England. Many of the Anglican socialists of the era not only preached their beliefs, they applied them by creating settlement communities that provided housing, education, vocational training, and child care.

Two of the most influential English Christian socialist organizations were the Anglo-Catholic Guild of St. Matthew, led by Anglican priest Stewart Headlam, and the Christian Social Union (CSU), founded by Anglo-Catholics Henry Scott Holland and Charles Gore. Headlam was also a member of the mostly secular socialist Fabian Society, which counted among its membership the Irish playwright and Nobel laureate George Bernard Shaw. Shaw expressed vacillating views on religion, but that did not prevent him from finding socialism in the Gospel. "Decidedly, whether you think Jesus was God or not, you must admit he was a first-rate political economist," Shaw wrote in his preface to Androcles and the Lion.

Holland would go on to become a divinity professor at Oxford and Gore an Anglican bishop. The CSU had as many as 6,000 members, including a sizeable fraction of the Anglican bishops of the late 19th and early centuries. In 1888, 145 Anglican bishops signed an encyclical that condemned "excessive inequality in the distribution of the world's goods," calling for clergy to recognize "how much of what is good and true in socialism is to be found in the precepts of Christ."

One CSU member was Charles Freer

Andrews, an Anglican priest who is best known for his support for Indian independence and close friendship with Mahatma Gandhi. (Gandhi insisted Andrews' initials really stood for "Christ's Faithful Apostle.") But Andrews was also an avowed Christian socialist. "How to change human society from within, so that capitalism, with its money-greed, becomes a hateful thing to a Christian, just as usury was in the Middle Ages, and slavery was in the nineteenth century, and war is becoming to-day!" he said in 1937. "This is perhaps the greatest of all questions that the Christian who follows Christ has to face and answer in our own age."

Both the CSU and the Guild of St. Matthew adopted platforms that promoted aggressive redistribution of wealth and universal democracy. But the Guild of St. Matthew was more radical than the CSU, which one critic from the left, Anglican priest Conrad Noel, dismissed as being more talk than action: "Here's a pressing social problem: let's read a paper about it." Noel could not be accused of such hesitation. After the Russian Revolution of 1918, Noel founded the Catholic Crusade, a precursor of the liberation theology movements later in the century. The Crusade's official aim was "to encourage the rising of the people in the might of the Risen Christ and the Saints, mingling Heaven and earth that we may shatter this greedy world to bits."

"The Bible is a Socialist Book"

By the late 19th century, the socialism of the Anglican Communion had reached across to the United States. Episcopalian and Johns Hopkins professor Richard Ely set out to reconcile the economic theories of Marxism with Christian socialism. Like most religious socialists, Ely agreed with Marxist views on the ills of capitalism but refused to support violent revolution or subscribe to an inevitable dictatorship of the proletariat. A founder of the American Economic Association, Ely was a star economist of the day, so his case for public ownership of monopolies and cooperative ownership of private enterprises resonated widely. In his most influential work, the 1889 book Social Aspects of Christianity, Ely concluded that the lesson of the Gospels was that it is impossible to justify individual wealth while our sisters and brothers struggle for the necessities of life:

> If I love my neighbor as myself, my necessities are as important as his. True, but my comforts are not as important as his necessities, nor are my luxuries and superfluities as

> Luxury can never be indulged in by a Christian so long as he can minister to the real well-being of others.

The Episcopal Missionary Bishop of Utah Frederick Spencer Spalding agreed with Ely, and in 1914 in the periodical Christian Socialist delivered a call for the church to embrace socialism:

> The Christian Church exists for the sole purpose of saving the human race. So far, she has failed, but I think that Socialism shows her how she may succeed. It insists that men cannot be made right until the material conditions be made right. Although man cannot live by bread alone, he must have bread. Therefore, the Church must destroy a system of society which inevitably creates and perpetuates unequal and unfair conditions of life.

But socialism was never as widely accepted in the U.S. as in England, and some Episcopalian socialists paid a price for their views. Spalding's successor in Utah, Paul Jones, in 1918 lost his appointment over his socialism and resistance to World War I, at the same time socialist presidential candidate Eugene Debs went to prison for speaking out against the war. Jones would go on to help launch the pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation and run for Governor of Ohio as a socialist.

Vida Dutton Scudder more successfully navigated the Episcopal landscape of the time. After becoming a professor of English literature at Wellesley College, Scudder helped lead the U.S. settlement house movement and joined the Episcopal women's lay organization Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross. Historian Gary Scott Smith concluded that Scudder was the principal female leader of the Episcopal church during her lifetime. She is included in the Episcopal Church U.S.A. Book of Saints and is honored with a feast day on the church's liturgical calendar.

Scudder saw the struggle of the poor first-hand in urban centers like Boston, where she grew up, and in London, during her studies at Oxford. She also read Leo Tolstoy, Frederick Denison Maurice, and John Ruskin, who she heard lecture at Oxford. Her studies convinced her that the suffering she saw around her did not have to happen. Scudder invoked the Gospel of Matthew to call for a community of social equality and cooperation that would be "a city set on a hill."

Scudder used her position within the

church to push clergy and congregations alike to make personal commitments to ensure the well-being of all people. Her view of the Gospel message was characteristically unequivocal: "Woe is proclaimed to rich people. Possessions are described as subject to theft and corruption . . . We are distinctly bidden not to seek or accumulate them and are told it is all but impossible for a rich man to enter that social utopia, the Kingdom of heaven."

Fulfilling Jesus' mandate could not be achieved by mere charity, Scudder insisted. Philanthropy is "a sedative to the public conscience." Fundraising efforts only "squeezed a little more reluctant money from comfortable classes, who groaned and gave but changed not one iota."

Instead, she concluded, a full restructuring of society around socialist principles was called for. So, Scudder was active in the Socialist Party of America and supported striking textile workers. Following in the footsteps of 19th-century Anglican women's rights and anti-trafficking advocate Josephine Butler, she pushed hard for women's suffrage. Scudder said that women stood to gain the most from a cooperative society. They would leave behind the exploitation they experienced in their homes and in the workplace. And they would play a leading role in the new socialist Kingdom on earth, given their lifetime experience of building families and communities around a "cooperative method and spirit."

One of the ways Scudder worked to build the kingdom of God on earth was helping priest William Dwight Porter Bliss found the socialist Episcopal Church of the Carpenter in Boston in 1890. Bliss also organized the Society of Christian Socialists, flatly stating, "The Bible is a socialistic book." According to Bliss, a large majority of Episcopal clergy of his time also supported Christian socialism.

One of them was Bliss' fellow Episcopal priest, Irwin St. John Tucker, who opposed U.S. involvement in World War I and served as managing editor of the Christian Socialist. Tucker too explained his Socialist Party membership in Gospel terms. "A man is not a Christian who does not relieve his brother's physical distress . . . I can find nothing whatever about 'spirituality' in the teachings of Christ that is not intimately connected with helping others." That made for an inextricable connection between socialism and his faith. "Socialism without Christianity is a corpse and Christianity without Socialism is little better than a ghost," Tucker said.

Reviving the Label, "Christian Socialism"

Joshua Davis is the executive director of the Institute for Christian Socialism, which publishes The Bias magazine and hosts events highlighting activism and scholarship on religion, politics, and public policy. He also teaches Anglican theology and ethics courses at Drew School of Theology and also teaches in the Stevenson School for Ministry in the Episcopal Central Diocese of Pennsylvania. Davis became an Episcopalian after college, then went on to earn a doctorate in theology. But he decided not to pursue ordination, choosing instead to follow in the activist footsteps of socialist Anglicans before him. "I see our work at ICS as helping to revive this label of 'Christian Socialism' that started with F.D. Maurice and invoking the radical tradition that represents the legacy of Conrad Noel, Vida Scudder, and Stewart Headlam," he says.

As Davis' use of the word "revival" suggests, he does not see that tradition being widely represented these days. "My experience is that the U.S. Episcopal church is really dominated now by a managerial class perspective, which is a real contrast with the approach of Vida Scudder and others from prior eras," he says.

While there is not a deep recent Episcopal socialist tradition, a notable exception is Pauli Murray, who had a remarkably varied and deep career of activism and service. Many of the leaders of the U.S. civil rights movement were Christian socialists, including well-known names like A. Phillip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, and Martin Luther King, Jr., whose socialist beliefs were largely shielded from public view. Murray worked alongside Randolph in his organizing campaigns, helped devise the constitutional argument to overturn the doctrine of "separate but equal." She became the first African American woman to be ordained an Episcopal priest and co-founded the National Organization of Women (NOW). Thurgood Marshall called Murray's 1951 book, State's Laws on Race and Color, the Bible for civil rights lawyers. In 2012, Murray was elevated to the pantheon of Saints of the Episcopal Church.

More recently, Gary Dorrien, an Episcopal priest and Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary, has provided a far-reaching voice of Anglican socialism. Dorrien has written 20 books and 300-plus articles, many of them engaging with progressive theology and religious activism, including religious socialism. His award-winning volumes include Breaking White Supremacy:

Martin Luther King Jr. and the Black Social Gospel; The New Abolition: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Black Social Gospel; and Social Democracy in the Making: Political and Religious Roots of European Socialism. The latter includes rich descriptions of the work of Anglican socialists like Maurice, Ludlow, Headlam, et al. Dorrien is currently completing a book on the history of American democratic socialism. Cornel West calls Dorrien "the preeminent social ethicist in North America today," and philosopher Robert Neville says Dorrien is "the most rigorous theological historian of our time."

Dorrien is a longtime participant in the Religion and Socialism Working Group of the Democratic Socialists of America and serves on the advisory board of the Institute for Christian Socialism. He has written in favor of combining cooperative worker ownership of industry with government ownership of some large-scale enterprises.

But Davis can attest that worker leadership is not necessarily embraced at the highest levels of the church. In 2014, he was on the faculty of the General Theological Seminary in New York, the Episcopal Church's oldest seminary, when most of its full-time faculty members went on strike in protest of statements by its dean and president. All of the faculty who went on strike, including Davis, were subsequently replaced.

"That experience was formative in my political evolution, but I had already accepted the criticisms of capitalism: how enslaving capitalism is, the way it constrains our actions and is destructive of our environment and human vitality," he says. "Knowing all that, I had to ask myself, 'What does it look like to be a part of this church?' And this work with the Institute for Christian Socialism is the way I concluded was the best way for me to serve the church."

Anglican Socialists Creating the Welfare State

Davis and other Episcopalian socialists take heart in the impact that their counterparts in England had, particularly during the 20th century. R. H. Tawney and William Temple, classmates and friends at Balliol College, Oxford, went on to shape not just British Christian socialism but the nation's political economy. Tawney's 1920 book The Acquisitive Society was widely read and so impactful that it is credited with helping bring the Labour Party, in which Tawney had long been active, to power. The capitalist society the book's title calls out

corrupts everyone subject to its warped, un-Christian priorities. "It makes the individual the centre of his own universe, and dissolves moral principles into a choice of expediences," Tawney wrote. The remedy, he said, is an abolition of inherited wealth and income to be earned only by services, not by rents or interest on money lent.

When scholars and politicians then and now wring their hands over economic equality, they have their focus backwards, Tawney said. "What thoughtful rich people call the problem of poverty, thoughtful poor people with equal justice call the problem of riches." Later, in Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, Tawney chastised the church for allowing individual greed to govern society, thus "convert(ing) a natural frailty into a resounding virtue."

His friend Temple agreed. "Socialism is the economic realization of the Christian Gospel," he said. "The alternative stands before us—Socialism or Heresy; we are involved in one or the other." By 1942, Temple would come to occupy the highest role in the Anglican Communion, Archbishop of Canterbury. Along the way, he wrote Christianity and Social Order, invoking Thomas Aquinas' call for economic energies to be devoted first to common needs, not individual gains. That meant England must prioritize universal access to healthcare, education, and good housing, said Temple, who is widely credited for coining the term "welfare state."

Like Tawney, Temple's pen and voice helped create the political atmosphere for his goals to be partly achieved. It was a level of direct impact that Christian socialists have rarely enjoyed in the U.S. or other nations, Gary Dorrien writes. "The British Christian socialists played a valuable role in establishing a social democratic standard of social decency in Britain. They did it by sticking close to the ground, featuring their ethical convictions, being unapologetically political, and speaking theologically in public." Shortly after Temple's sudden death in 1944, the Labour Party he supported took control. It quickly adopted many of the socialist policies he called for, including the National Health Service, a progressive income tax, and a boost in housing support.

Shortly after Tawney's death, the Anglican priest, activist, and self-described community theologian Kenneth Leech began his ministry. "I became a Christian and a socialist at the same time," Leech said. "And, in my innocence, for a while as a

teenager, assumed that all Christians were bound to be socialists!" As a young priest living in an impoverished area of London, Leech decided that both his Christian and socialist identities demanded a tangible response to the human struggles all around him. In 1969, he co-founded in central London a homeless charity and shelter called Centrepoint, which continues to be a vibrant force for access to housing. "At the end of the day, the churches' authenticity and faithfulness to the gospel can only be judged in action," Leech said, citing Matthew 7:16. "It is by our fruits, not our words, that we will be judged."

Beyond the fruits created by direct service, Leech said the church's action must also call out the societal structures that cause people to be homeless and hungry in the first place. In fact, the name Centrepoint deliberately mimicked the name of an expensive high-rise that stood vacant in the neighborhood, shamefully looming over Londoners sleeping in the streets below. Capitalism is based on the moral sin of avarice, Leech said. "Today we are in conflict with a Mammon-worshipping world order which pays lip service to the residue of a Christian vocabulary, while denying its meaning and significance at every important point."

In an effort to flip that script, Leech and other Christian socialists founded the Jubilee Group. Among its members was Rowan Williams, who would follow in William Temple's footsteps to become an avowedly socialist Archbishop of Canterbury. This was the network that Leech and others leaned on as they spoke out against militarism and inequality in broader society, while also confronting discrimination on the basis of race, gender, and sexual orientation inside and outside the Anglican Communion.

Leech, like most of the Jubilee Group, was an Anglo-Catholic, and he was proud of its deep connections to the lived reality of real people. "Anglo-Catholic social vision has always been worked out in the back streets, in specific neighborhoods, in and through involvement with very concrete struggles," he said. But, characteristically, Leech did not hesitate to call out the sexist, nationalist, homophobic and hierarchical elements in its roots. And he decried what he saw as the erosion of the radical social and political character of the movement. In a 1994 article unsubtly entitled "Anglican Catholicism in Decay: The Trivializing of a Great Tradition," Leech expressed sadness at what he saw as a "ghetto subculture" replacing a shared commitment to justice:

> When George Orwell described

> Anglo-Catholicism as the ecclesiastic equivalent of Trotskyism, he was identifying something more profound than he realised. For in both traditions one sees the captivity to the past, meticulous devotion to the sacred text, the fetishism of correctness in all things, the utter conviction of one's own doctrinal purity, and the sectarian temptation to cultivate a world within a world.

In 2000, by then in his sixties, Leech mused that he had not strayed far from his teenage conclusion about both Christianity and socialism. "If I stopped being a Christian I would still be a socialist. I am not sure if I stopped being a socialist, I would, could, still be a Christian," he wrote. He concluded the essay by invoking the words of the martyred Polish activist Rosa Luxemburg: "And, by the way, I think that 'socialism or barbarism' is still the issue."

Nothing to Whisper About

The legendary Archbishop Desmond Tutu is best known for his leadership in the struggle against South African apartheid, followed by shepherding the nation through its remarkable truth and reconciliation response to its legacy of institutionalized racism. The Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town and Nobel Peace Prize winner is also an avowed socialist. "All my experiences with capitalism, I'm afraid, have indicated that it encourages some of the worst features in people. Eat or be eaten. It is underlined by the survival of the fittest. I can't buy that. I mean, maybe it's the awful face of capitalism, but I haven't seen the other face," he said in 1986. At the same time, Tutu has consistently opposed any Marxist approach that was based in atheism. "My political position is really quite simple. My own position is one that is due not to a political ideology. My position is due to my faith, my Christian faith and anything that I believe is inconsistent with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ I will say it is wrong and has to be condemned," he said.

That is the necessary, prophetic role for religious persons, Tutu said: insisting that political and economic systems live up to the ideas of our respective scriptures. "All I long for is a society that would be compassionate. A society that would be sharing. A society that would be caring," he said. "Now you can say to me, and I will admit it, that we have not seen an incarnation of that kind of society, the kind that you talk about. But we are ministers, we leave it to others to try to put flesh onto the dreams that we try to dream."

That is why Episcopal priest and campus chaplain Chaz Howard decided to join Tutu as an Anglican communion minister committed to dreaming of a better society. He, along with Tony Hunt, Caleb Roberts, Joshua Davis and others are taking their place within the wide range of political views in the modern Episcopal church. "Every Episcopalian I know would want to hammer home the existence of real diversity of political and social thought within Episcopalian pews," Howard says. "Clearly there are Republican Episcopalians, liberal democratic Episcopalians, socialist Episcopalians. I know Episcopalians who voted for Trump, and I know some who were hardcore Bernie Sanders folks.

"And that's a part of the Episcopal churches' goal to be this kind of middle way, big tent, which is very different from some churches' hardcore 'our way or the highway' approach. Which makes the church a place that is more open to liberal, leftist choices, including being a Christian socialist."

Howard points out that there is a lot of current momentum behind socialism in the U.S. Sanders won more presidential votes than any socialist candidate in history, and the Democratic Socialists of America enjoys record-high membership numbers. Religious socialists like Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Cornel West are national leaders in politics and popular philosophy. With the Cold War fading into the rear view and aggressive government responses forming the core of the Covid responses, majorities of young Americans and Americans of color report favorable views of socialism.

But Chaz Howard cautions that there is still a lot of fear and misunderstanding of socialism in the U.S. During the 2020 election season, one of Howard's neighbors posted a "Socialism Has No Home Here" sign. Howard noticed it, but he continued on. "The retort is that if caring for the poor and working for peace and to save the planet is socialism, then fine," he says. "It's not the sort of thing we need to whisper about."

Fran Quigley is the director of the Health and Human Rights Clinic at Indiana University McKinney School of Law, and the author of Religious Socialism: Faith in Action for a Better World (Orbis Books, Fall 2021).

Did you find it difficult, dear Simeon,

to speak without offense before you saw salvation?

Was silence the only description of your patience?

Or could you only pray in disturbance

When you arrived at the waiting room of the temple

Every morning?

departures

The promise revealed to Simeon "that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ" could just as easily have been fulfilled during his youth as in his old age. He would have seen the Lord's Christ before death either way. It is telling, however, that artistic depictions of Simeon nearly always feature him as an old man. The force of the fulfillment would likely have been blunted were he not at a moment of great need for his own consolation: a moment shortly before his death. His peace had to wait for his departure, and when the peace finally arrived, departure was the only thing left to do.

I resonate with the *Nunc dimittis* at Evening Prayer, but I suspect that it has less to do with the answer to his prayer than when his prayer was answered. My church, like Simeon on the morning of the Presentation, can also seem to be in its latter days. I can imagine myself and my parish joining him in his patient expectation for the fulfillment of the promise. And so the resonance has a way of inducing resignation even as it inspires my endurance. I can be left with a rather dissatisfying hope. Could my church at least decline in peace? I begin to wonder if the peace of God is waiting for the moment of my church's departure too. If peace is not something that will be found until the end.

> "The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear."
>
> —Antonio Gramsci

Pastoral care for the dead and the dying draws much of its compassion from the birth of the new that asserts itself against mortality. We find hope in the audacity of birth, hope that death itself could be a birth of its own. The temporality of death is not marked by the last tick of the heart on the hospital monitor. It is marked by the charity that endures after the neon peaks of life have flattened out into the monotone hum. If time was its own measure, it would be eternity. And so our knowledge that death is but a momentary affliction is only reassuring because of the hope that it is the prologue to glory.

Most of life is an act of forbearance in the meantime. It's one thing to set the birth of one next to the death of another and compensate between them. But that only works from the perspective of the observer who is neither the born nor the dead. We look to the lives of others in order to discover the meaning of birth and death because those are the two events we are not permitted to experience for ourselves. But it is only when we sense that death is near, however distant it may yet be in time, that we are compelled to search the lives of others. Death has to be in some way present for hope to be something more than sentimentality and denial.

Yet it is precisely when death has in fact come near that sentimentality and denial are often most pronounced. These are the morbid symptoms. For the observer who has ignored the lives of others, the prospect of death induces in them an acquisitive urgency to claim for themselves the new that belongs to another. The observer becomes a thief. And having snatched the newborns from whatever cradle they can find, they can forestall their death by disavowing the possibility of birth. They have no use for the new. Instead, they seek to enthrone themselves as the measure of the possible – a pretense of eternity – and the fact that this shrinks the window of possibility for the rest of us is the source of

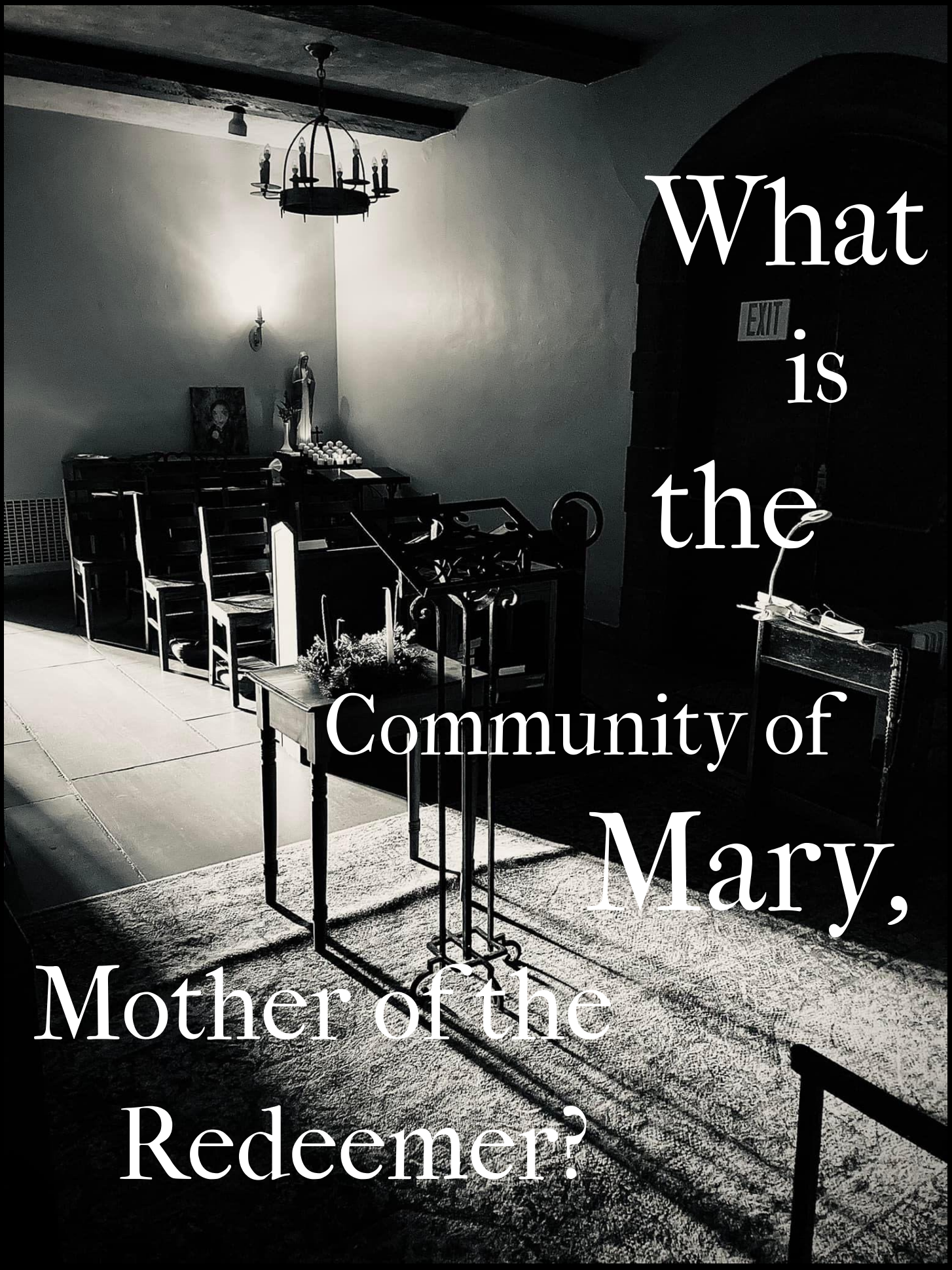
their tyranny. The old is dying, yes, but it's not so much that the new cannot be born as that the new cannot be acknowledged. The new must be declared a bastard. So the morbid symptoms can appear only when death has bound birth to itself. They arise when the old that is dying refuses to recognize anything but itself in the face of the new.

> "To practise one's peculiar civic virtue was not
>
> So impossible after all; to cut our losses
>
> And bury our dead was really quite easy...."
>
> –W.H. Auden, *For the Time Being*

If Simeon could only depart in peace after he had seen his salvation, then his presence could only have been maintained by perseverance. Whatever peace was afforded to him in the meantime came only in the form of hope – and hope rejects any proximate peace that may present itself before the proper time. Hope is therefore the preparation for a good death, because when the time of departure finally arrives, the only consolation worth having is the only one that is available. We need hope because it is definitely not easy to bury our dead; and yet our own death is easiest when we've refused to be deceived by the perverse consolation that it is.

Therein lies the secret of church decline, though. It is not a matter of death and dying that we are faced with today, but of denial. And denial longs for no peace beyond that which can be had without the inconvenience of hope. It resists all attempts at inspiration, for it can only see the birth of the new as a threat to its complacency. No need for the new when it is easy to bury our dead. And it resists even the offer of pastoral care, lest it gracefully forfeit its claim. Our predicament is a spiritual one. Despite the advanced age of our congregations, we are not to be found at the side of old Simeon on those temple steps. Where we are, in fact, to be found is hard to tell, but until departure is so foreboding that life demands the peace that surpasses it, our churches will remain content to bury our dead with ease.

Caleb Roberts, Ponca City, Oklahoma



What is the Community of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer?

Let's get the official description out of the way first:

The Community of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer (CMMR) is an emerging Christian Community of the Episcopal Church (Title III, Canon 14, Sec. 2). It is a society of Christians, open to all genders, all sexual orientations, and all states of life, in Communion with the See of Canterbury, who voluntarily commit ourselves for life, in obedience to our Rule and Constitution.

Led by the Holy Spirit and under the guidance of our patron, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, we long to participate in the Renewal of the Church as the Body of Christ Redeeming God's Creation from Sin and Death in all their forms. We practice this primarily through:

- regular corporate worship and personal prayer, and careful stewardship of the Church's liturgy and tradition.

- stewardship and spiritual care of the totality of Creation, i.e. people, all life, land, sea, and air, all redeemed and being redeemed by Christ the King from the power of sin and death.

- formation of the whole person, our Community, and the Church, called to proclaim, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in word, deed, and our shared life, Christ's redemption, to the glory of God the Father.

That's CMMR's official description. And it says a lot about who we are. It says that though we pray the Office and celebrate the Eucharist daily, submit ourselves to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church, and in many other ways lead a traditional monastic life, we are also open to the working of the Holy Spirit who is leading us into all truth, and have, for example, discerned that CMMR should be open to people of all genders, all states of life (single, celibate, married couples and families), and all orders of ministry as full members.

But what it doesn't say is that, though we are, in many ways very traditional (taking seriously the Church's scripture and theological, ascetical, and liturgical tradition, and embracing much of the traditional forms of monastic life), we also lean pretty radical (holding most of our goods in common, privileging prayer and worship over the capitalist work ethic, and trying to take seriously the ancient Sabbath and Jubilee traditions). And we don't see these as opposed to one another. We understand that radical vision to be a direct result of taking the tradition seriously. We believe that if there is to be a renewal of the Church, will come about, in part, by the reclamation of monastic values in the wider Church where, according to Acts 2 and 4, it seems that they began.

It also doesn't say that, as we try to learn to live very traditionally monastic lives and listen as best we can for the prompting of the Holy Spirit—as we try to let ourselves be formed in this Acts 2 and 4 life, we hear that Spirit not only in people like Mary of Egypt or John Cassian or Benedict or the Desert Mothers and Fathers or even Vida Scudder or Dorothy Day or Oscar Romero or Dietrich Bonhoeffer or William Stringfellow, but also in W. E. B. DuBoise, Malcolm X, Huey P. Newton, Angela Davis, David Harvey, Naomi Klein, Cornel West, Michael Brooks, Megan Day, and Chapo Trap House. Not, we hope, in a way that would compromise orthodoxy, but in a way that might deepen orthodoxy in the way that the Church's engagement with Hellenistic philosophy did in the early Church.

As we work hard to start a monastic foundation—the Abbey of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer—and begin to learn to live by the rhythms of monastic prayer, we are learning to hear what DuBoise and Malcolm and Angela Davis and those writers at Jacobin and the folks from Chapo are writing and talking about in the Daily Office when Saint Paul speaks to us about the powers and principalities or when Saint John in Revelation talks about the fall of Babylon. And it's becoming clear to us how when Evagrius or Cassian write about the "thoughts" that tempt us, these are alive and well and as close to us as the phones in the pockets of our habits.

None of what these ancient witnesses write about are abstract theological notions. They are living realities moving powerfully through the world in which we live. And none of what we study is "secular." There is no secular. Megan Day and Naomi Klein and Matt Christman are writing theology. They raise theological questions like "What if all the suffering, violence, and oppression in the world isn't 'just the way it is,' or the way it has to be?" Which push us to ask further questions like:

- "What if all that suffering, violence, and oppression in the world is in fact an aberration—an intrusion—into God's Creation, and it CAN be and even now IS being overcome?"
- "What if the deepest Truth was a community of non-violent, self-giving LOVE, and what if you could begin to live within the life of that Truth and share that reality right now?"

- "What if you could live such a life with a community of Sisters and Brothers who promise to love you and live into that life with you forever?"

Community of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer is too complicated to explain here, but it has roots in childhood fantasies about Shaolin monasteries and Jedi Knights and childhood experiences of a union family and the devastation of union power under Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and Bill Clinton (and keeps on going no matter which party is in power—which might explain why when I hear "bi-partisan" I get suspicious). It includes explorations of the spiritual power of ascetic and other personal disciplines set loose in the world in movements like those of Mahatma Gandhi, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X. It began to take a deeper shape in the spiritual rhythms of worship, prayer, work, and shared meals I experienced in seminary, flirted with New Monasticism, and was set on fire by a deep relationship that Sister Debbi and I developed with Holy Cross Monastery.

CMMR was formally founded in 2017 when the founders entered into a shared novitiate to learn to live under their Rule. On September 11, 2018, they took their first vows, and were clothed in the original habit of CMMR. The habit has changed, as has the membership. CMMR is still very much in its infancy. We've been living in the Abbey since the week before Trinity Sunday, 2021 and we're still learning what all of this means.

Most of our time at this point is taken up in worship—praying the Daily Office and celebrating the Eucharist—and doing ministry at Trinity Church and in Michigan City where the Abbey is located. But we're also deepening our formation, reading, writing, praying, and talking to each other about what we're learning and how to do all this better.

CMMR has always had a publishing ministry, the most substantial being SuperFlumina: a Journal of Theological Commentary and Crankyness. It's filled with pictures and poetry and a bit of snark, and it's intended to be a way for us to give people who don't live with us a sense of who we are and what we believe God is calling us to do and be. We have also published the Rule of the Community of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, which is currently being revised to account for recent changes (not least of which is beginning to actually live in a monastery) and we publish a monthly Abbey newsletter called Annunciation. We look forward to publishing the CMMR Breviary in the near future and publishing catechetical books, devotional books, books of poetry, and we have a bunch of Zines we'd like to publish. You can find free PDFs of the current Rule and all of our Abbey Newsletters, and can order SuperFlumina (the current issue, back issues, and subscriptions) on our website (cmmredeemer.org).

We have plans that include a retreat ministry at the Abbey, and possibly opening a branch of the Benedictine Service Corps (founded by our friend, Brother James Dowd, OSB at the Benedictine Way in Omaha, Nebraska) at the Abbey. We would

also love to lead retreats outside of the Abbey, and we will continue to develop catechetical materials.

CMMR has a a bigger goal, though. CMMR recognizes the world as God's Beloved Creation and human beings as stewards of it, charged for caring for Creation and loving it and to knowing God's own life and power revealed in it. We also recognize that it is in Empire's interest to separate us from that role, and from Creation, and, in that way, even from God, and that less connected we are to each other, to God's Creation and to God, the more power Empire has over us, so we resist that separation. Inspired in part by Peter Maurin and the Catholic Worker Movement's vision of Agrinomic Universities, and the current agricultural ministry movement, we will start gardening on a couple of lots that Trinity Church owns behind the Abbey. But ultimately the vision for CMMR is to found monastic farming communities as:

- contrast societies to Empire;
- models for a new way of being Church in service to the Church's renewal;
- testing plots for the Kingdom of God.

We are convinced that we are called to all of this (and more) as a way to resist the power of Death and the powers that serve it as they have worked their way into the political, economic, social, and spiritual structures of the world, oppressing humanity throughout history, and never more powerfully than today.

The complaint about politics in the Church is itself profoundly political. Everything is political. Everything is theological. All theology is politics. All politics is theology. And Jesus is the guerilla-general King leading a revolution that is liberating everything and everyone in heaven and earth—a revolution to liberate humanity and Creation from the powers that fight against God, humanity, and all of Creation. These powers include the power of Death itself. The Church is the ragtag army that's fighting the battle that Saint Paul describes in Ephesians as a "struggle… not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12) This fight is one in which we all need liberation even if liberation looks different for different people (the rich, for example, need liberation from a spiritual power like Mammon—which demands everything from us—in a very different way than the exploited working class needs liberation from it, even within the same economic system). The decisive victory in this war has already been won by Christ on the cross, and the standard of the new Kingdom that victory has established has been planted in Creation on Calvary, but now Christ's army, the Church, is taking the victory of that Kingdom into every corner of Creation.

If any of this makes sense to you, we would be grateful for your prayers. We would also love it if you would check out our website (cmmredeemer.org), read about us, and download all of our free stuff, and then

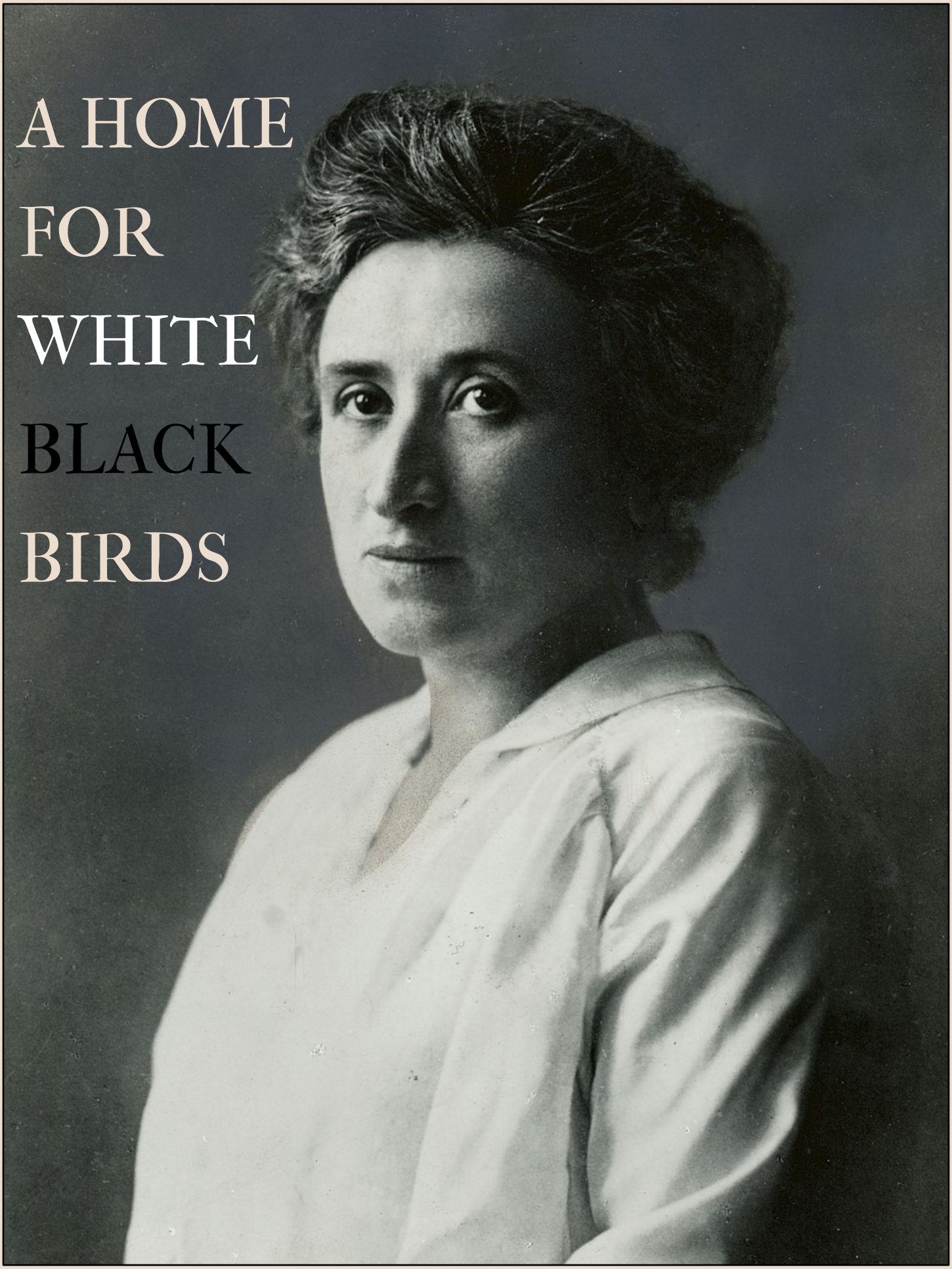
and then spread the word about us. And financial support is always welcome, either in the form of direct donations or by buying copies of SuperFlumina and other publications. Finally, if you feel so called, we hope that some reading this might want to become Associates or (if you live close enough, Oblates) of CMMR, or might even consider discerning a call to become a Sister or Brother in the Community of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer.

Please don't hesitate to contact us at cmmr.contact@gmail.com.

Fr. Robert Antony Rhodes, CMMR

Michigan City, Indiana

A HOME FOR WHITE BLACK BIRDS



Rosa Luxemburg once called the clergy and theologians who supported the working class struggle "white blackbirds," a rare species. Today, I feel she would be delighted to see that a once rare species is not so rare in the 21st century. I count myself as one of her "white blackbirds".

My own road to Socialism has always been founded by my faith. From sermons by Jesuit priests during Occupy, while I was in college, to my own questions of the political economy of the Kingdom of God, to being introduced to Marxism by an Episcopal priest, my road to socialism has always been a journey of faith. My participating in the socialist movement has been the living of my faith. I cannot look at the teachings of Christ without seeing in opposition to Mammon, that is to say capitalism. The history of the Church is replete of episodes of communal life from the Acts church to Benedictine monasticism and beyond. Thus I am proud to find myself in the footsteps of monks, mystics and disciples. For if we truly believe "thy kingdom come...on Earth as it is in Heaven", we profess socialism.

I joined the Democratic Socialists of America in July 2016, because I was attracted to how open they were to religious organizing. I have been a member ever since locally in Northern Virginia. In 2018 I had the honor of being the Metro DC's liaison to the Poor People's Campaign, attempting to link our organization with a faith based movement. Intellectually, as well as being a scholar of the early church, I have also focused on the attempts to reconcile Marxism and religion. This of course is a wrestling I deal with within myself being both Christian and Marxist. Of course this led me to discover the rich Anglican socialist tradition of the late 19th and early 20th centuries including the work and life of Vida Scudder, who like me tried to reconcile being both a Marxist and a Christian both with her own life and her activism. I also drew within my research to connect what the Social Gospel theologians were doing with what German Marxists, such as Karl Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg similarly, find an olive branch between religion and socialism.

This Spring I had the opportunity to connect with another Marxist Episcopalian and while at the April 2021 Religious Socialism Conference, the decision was to

organize by faith tradition as the best organizing consensus we all could reach. Thus was created the Episcopal Caucus within the National Religious Socialism Working Group of DSA. The basic hope I have for the caucus is to be a home for comrades of the Episcopal faith to represent our own tradition within DSA while also becoming an organizing force within the Episcopal Church. Being a caucus, we are free and fluid to chart our own path. We have discussed so far Scudder, Liberation Theology, the Episcopal Church's involvement in Indigious Boarding Schools. Our caucus and its tradition have been mentioned on the socialist Christian podcast *The Magnificast*. We also have brought in non-Anglican mainliner comrades into the caucus because of my belief to organize the unorganized.

It is my hope that the caucus continues the work of those socialist clergy and lay persons who have gone before us. It is also my hope that more people of faith, in particular clergy, become more comfortable with the socialism label, as the manifestation of the politics of God.

Eric Sommers, Tampa Bay, Florida

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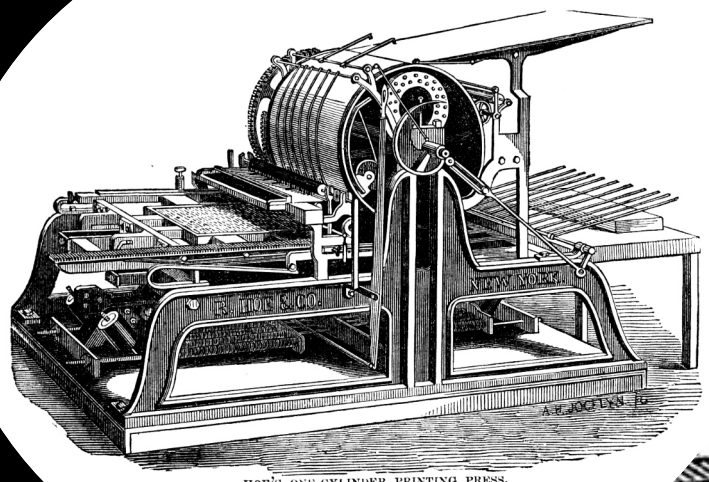

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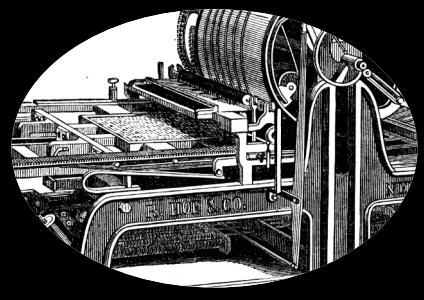

A Conversation with Seminary Street Press

Tony Hunt is talking with Christopher Poore, a seminarian, postulant in the Episcopal Church, and founder of Seminary Street Press, *a small operation releasing new editions of old Anglican works that are out of print. It is part interview, part conversation.*

T: So tell me about your background. Who is Christopher Poore?

SSP: I grew up in Colorado Springs and spent a large part of my childhood in a megachurch made for Gen Xers. It had couches and an old movie theater. It was slowly becoming a bit more of what we think of as a traditional megachurch, since the parents didn't want their children hurting themselves on the springs of the old couches.

When I was about 13 I had questions about suffering and about God. And I felt like I wasn't getting good answers. Artists, poets, people in the theater...they understand suffering, and for several years that is where I found meaning. I converted to Eastern Orthodoxy in my early 20s. It had art, beauty, and liturgy. It was grounded in God the Beautiful. There's a line in the liturgy that goes "Bless those who love the beauty of thy house." That prayer really sums it up for me. At that time I was asking questions about art, looking into American postmodern literature and wondering – what if this is all an illusion? What if we are just manipulating each other and love and beauty are just a phantom?

But I also felt called to the priesthood. In time I knew that if I wanted to be the sort of priest and pastor who I think God wants me to be I would have to do this in the Episcopal Church. I started a theology degree at U Chicago. Now I am doing an Mdiv at Virginia Theological Seminary

T: A guest from the East? I never went all the way myself but when I was nearing the end of my time in the pentecostal church of my upbringing, not knowing what I really believed, it was an Orthodox Easter Vigil that helped salvage my faith. I thought about swimming the Bosphorus but ended up in the Episcopal Church. I made the right choice for me.

So what did you study in chicago?

SSP: There was no thesis for that degree. There were basically two years of electives. I concentrated on Christian theology. Specifically I spent time with William Law, curious as I was about the transition he makes throughout his life from strict proto-methodism to wild bohemian mysticism; and how that was inspired by pastoral questions. I also spent time on women of the middle ages, in particular perspectives on suffering, especially Hadewijch, investigating what that might say about sexual abuse in the Church now.

T: When I became an Anglican I dove headlong into the sources. I very quickly came to have opinions about what was legitimate Anglicanism and what was not. This was just before Lambeth 2008. In my experience many converts have a similar path. Did you? Since you speak of not developing a canon at SSP, my sense is you did not have a similar path.

SSP: The first thing to say is that I really ended up in TEC at the right moment. I think of the words of the psalm "Lord you have shown us hard things." That was true of both my wife's spiritual journey and my own. To me, then, Anglicanism as I have experienced it has been a gift of hospitality. This welcoming in. This field hospital. Here there are people just pouring in with all their spiritual damage. And so to me that is foundational; and the gift of that means that I entered not feeling there was some norm that had to be kept. I didn't have a lot of –frankly my major goal was to survive in a life with God –so that was the minimum I was looking for. I didn't come in with a sense I needed to norm the tradition in some way. At the time I was going to several different churches. My wife lives here in Galesburg where she teaches and she remained here while I was in Chicago. So that's our home parish; and in Chicago I attended a very very high Anglo-Catholic parish – the first Anglican parish to reinstitute benediction of the blessed sacrament after the Reformation. I was soaking it in. The Orthodox person still in me needed that overflowing reverence and beauty. I was also helping at a college ministry. The necessities of my life did not allow me to have a lot of preferences

T: Lovely. So why don't you tell me what SSP is, and what inspired and motivated you to start it.

SSP: SSP is a little startup. I am currently editing a series called the Library of Anglican Theology. These are a series of books that I hope can enrich Anglican life in different ways. Some of them are going to be doctrinal, others ascetical. We should not be ashamed that a lot of our theology has been done in the pulpit. That is a patristic holdover, a nod to the ancient church. Theology is for the Church. Let's not turn away from that in shame in some way as if it's a failure that we've done precisely that.

T: Have you heard the old German joke about Anglicans?

SSP: I have not

T: Now keep in mind that I don't know the provenance of this quote. It could be a scurrilous rumor. But I've always loved the quote and don't hesitate to share it. It is said some German scholar, in wanting to deprecate the seriousness of Anglican theology said: "Anglicans do theology to the sound of church bells." The idea being that it is they who do the real work, where we are bound to silly traditions.

SSP: Oh hehe. Good one.

So on the question of SSP origins, it has something to do with the questions I was asking as I came into TEC. I do not recommend asking random questions on Facebook forums like "What does Anglican holiness look like? How are people taught to live holy lives in the Anglican communion?" One person said "Anglicanism doesn't have a distinct way of being holy. We just follow the Bible and that is all you need, I don't know why you need more than that." Little did I know there is an Anglican book called "Holy Living!" I'd ask people what theology I should read and the most I would get is a suggestion to read Rowan Williams. Rowan Williams is great, I love Williams, but that

was as far as I could get sometimes. I had a desire to read into the tradition. I would read in these books that "Richard Hooker says this," but there would be no citation, just things attributed to him. How strange? Twitter was a much better place to learn these things. There seemed to be many more people reading facsimiles of these older works online. From google or archive dot org [or anglicanhistory dot org] But it seemed to me that is such a depressing way to read a book. I'm sorry, but I can't finish a book that way. I don't retain it the same way reading it on a screen. I wanted to bestow on others the beauty of physical presence in our world. With that in mind, realizing just how much wasn't in print, even something like the Tracts for the Times... there isn't an issue out there.

T: Right?? Can you even believe that?

SSP: I cannot! It was both my surprise and my desire to help people find this path. So it would be easier than the path I took. Easy onramps to figures that might not be terribly well known. The Tracts might help us to access some of the voices we don't pay much attention to. Especially women of the catholic revival. I think they should be bigger in our accounts of the Oxford Movement and Ritualism. They are there, we just don't talk about them for some strange reason. What if we made the founding of St. Thomas Episcopal in Philadelphia just as central to our story of Anglicanism as the Oxford Movement. If you read some of these survey books, that's not the narrative that's presented. There's a chance to make our story more complex and more rich and that's one of the things I'm hoping to do.

T: You mentioned works people might not know about, but what's fascinating to me is that even popular, influential works can't be found! They're just not in print. Sure you can find a 100 year old copy of some Gore book, but what state will it be in? My Clarendon copy of Hooker is in bad shape, but the critical edition is $500! Who's got that? In doing my study of early Anglican socialism, primary sources were impossible to find except online. We don't have resources for historical Anglican works, but we don't push it. People are more excited to read Moltmann than Jeremy Taylor.

Here's a story I like to share. I am studying at a Lutheran seminary. The first day I walked onto campus we were given a welcome bag of stuff. In there was a brand new, glossy, fully-annotated edition of Luther's Freedom of a Christian, and On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church. Everyone got one. You're gonna need it, right? This is who we are. But do we have anything like this in Anglicanism? Not that I'm aware of.

But anyway, tell me about why you went with Jeremy Taylor for the first SSP book.

SSP: I will admit the first several books have been mostly of personal interest! But first off, it's a small book. Only 88 pages in the format I had. I thought "this will be manageable. I'll be able to test things like Greek transcriptions, layouts, etc. We'll see how doable this is with a work this brief." But beyond that I have found this tendency, just in the air so to speak, to declare that

just in the air so to speak, to declare that confirmation was a sacrament in search of a meaning. No one can tell me where that phrase originally came from. Urban T Holmes has a book from the 70s called "A Rite In Search of a Reason" that's as far as I've been able to trace it. As with all malicious rumors it had no origin. I wanted to press on that idea a bit. Goodness we've been confirming people for hundreds of years...really it's a meaningless rite? Seems like a bad strategy to invite people into our church with this kind of talk. Not even to mention its truth value. I thought well certainly someone has written about this. I had already read Jeremy Taylor so then I found out he had this book. Philip Tovey said in his book on Anglican confirmation that the problem is not that we don't have a theology of confirmation; the richness of Anglicanism lies in that we usually have several theologies of something. I was really excited to read this Taylor book and discover one theology of Anglican confirmation. What was it that happened to me in confirmation? What was God doing? What was the Church doing? And I turned to Jeremy Taylor to ask those questions with me. Now I want to note, though, my parish did a wonderful job preparing me for confirmation and reception into TEC. We had classes, it was taken very seriously. But that doesn't change what I've experienced.

T: But again your story points up the contrast between other traditions and our own. We don't readily talk about our own sources. Hooker: often referenced, rarely quoted. If I were in charge of an Anglican seminary everyone would at least read Books I and V of the Lawes before they graduate. Maybe we could get a glossy, annotated version. I even have all the Greek and Latin footnotes of Book I translated.

Ok, so why do you think your work is needed? What does it bring to the table? What by implication do you think is lacking in Anglican discourses?

SSP: So again, my orientation to TEC is basically one of gratitude. It's hard for me to feel that something is lacking when you think about the richness of what is going on at the moment. We have Williams, Sarah Coakley, Katherin Sonderegger, Kelly Brown Douglas, Kortright Davis... I can't even think of them all. There is an immense amount of holiness and wisdom being poured into our church right now. And we don't even know where it is going to go. What does it mean that three Anglicans, two of them women, are writing multi-volume systematic theologies right now? We just don't know. These are seeds falling into the ground. I think we're going to see something very rich in the coming decades.

As to why this is needed: I would love to get to the point that we can make those fancy annotated editions you were talking about. Right now I'm just trying to get affordable editions into the hands of people. The idea that people would discover things, they would invest their scholarship into making these sorts of things.

I think what I'm saying is I want to make our conversations and even our disagreements richer. I want to give a shared toolset for engaging in our

disagreements and our questions together. A good canon is a good conversation. But that isn't the first thing that comes to mind when most people think of a canon. They think a canon is going to close down conversation. Make a very specific person at the end. A factory of tradition that churns out uniformity. That is not the image Anglicanism asks us to think about when it speaks about tradition. Tradition is first of all about being in front of the other person. The other person says something, and you are allowed to respond, interrogate, ask questions. A canon just makes sure our conversation includes those that have bequeathed us our world now. It doesn't mean we need to take everything Charles Gore says about the Incarnation and say "this is what you must believe, you must be this uniform person." That is not what I hope for. Ellen Davis talks about this in her essay on critical traditioning. She says "what distinguishes a tradition from an ideology is the ability to preserve the atrocities of its past in a spirit of repentance." It's about trying to make our whole memories more like the memory of God. which sees both the person on the ash heap and the one who has been illuminated by the Spirit. God is able to hold both of these realities, and judge both of these realities. My hope is that our memories will become more and more like that.

T: It would be an odd canon to start with an obscure treatise on confirmation! I'm really excited about the William Douglas and Absolom Jones book. When I was looking up essays from these figures all I could find was the sermon of Jones on Thanksgiving.

That you did Gore's Bampton Lectures makes a lot of sense because of how important he was in shaping what was to come, and yet he too is not referenced much anymore. One of my favorite authors of the last century is Michael Ramsey. And Ramsey liked talking about Gore. But good luck trying to find much critical engagement since Ramsey these days.

SSP: I wrote a paper on Gore and the latest I could find was Paul Avis' from maybe the 80s. There's also an essay by Mark Chapman. A wonderful examination of what kenosis has to offer a church that is becoming weak. And what weakness has to do with the Incarnation.

T: Right. I found a few essays that reference Gore specifically for kenosis. Marilyn McCord Adams has a section in her "Christ and Horrors." And yet so often this lingering gesture toward Gore on kenosis seems to miss how the doctrine functioned for him. For him kenosis really began as a footnote in his essay in "Lux Mundi." It's an ad hoc way to account for historical critical examinations of the Bible. The "weakness of God in kenosis" is kind of there but the real thing is retaining Incarnation without needing to sacrifice serious critical history. James Carpenter is the only person who seems to get this. Shoutout to Carpenter. His book on Gore's theology is fantastic.

You mentioned a lot of our theology is from the pulpit. It's occasional literature, it's sermons. You said we shouldn't shy away from this. I wonder if that's another reason for the fact that our theology is so often neglected. At the same time, that feels like a

copout. Patristic theology is found in the same kind of literature, and people build entire trinitarian ontologies on it! But we don't extend the same critical engagement to our own sources. Maybe they feel too stited to some, in that lovely 17th-18th century prose? I dunno.

Anyway, what was your Gore paper on?

SSP: I was curious about the interaction between British colonialism and kenosis. 'Cause in Incarnation some of the metaphors he uses rely on a world built by colonialism. For instance one of his metaphors on kenosis is that it is like when the (presumably) white man accommodates his mind to the savage. I wanted to dig into that a bit and ask why he felt that way. I went into his experiences in India as a missionary and the way he interacted w/ the colonial classroom, and the way he despised the hindu temples he saw. That side of him that I haven't seen openly acknowledged. I focused exclusively on the Bampton Lectures. Yet he's mysterious in that there are these other passages where he talks about how avaricious imperialism has corrupted the imagination Christianity and rendered us unable to receive the doctrine of Christ. This is what I'm talking about, the ash heap and the person inflamed by the Spirit. These are the things held up, epicletically, asking God's judgment.

T: And if we had ready access to other sources we'd be able to see the ways Gore was rather violently anti-imperialist. In the time of the Boer Wars he wrote in to a newspaper with a bitter judgment against British actions. So bitter that a notable clergyman complained to his bishop about Gore. It was only too bad for this cleric because only a few months later Gore became his bishop. But the letter is impossible to find over here. It is referenced in literature on Gore, but I can't get access to it.

So the series you're working on is called the Library of Anglican Theology. Is this at all a reference to the Library of Anglo-catholic Theology of the Tractarians or...?

SSP: I am aware that that is what they called their series, and that mine is very similar. Their library was narrow enough that other people in the Church of England were like "no no no" and so the Parker Society made their series [Editor's note: The Parker Society's series was actually released first. The Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology was released in response]. It was much more polemical than what I am doing. I'm more interested in reading all of them. That's what makes it a conversation. Let's make sure it's all on display and everyone is invited to this rich feast. For me the Tractarians were a bridge from Orthodoxy. I had read a biography of Keble even before I became Anglican. I knew they liked patristic texts. I knew they liked liturgy. I didn't yet know there was a difference between the Oxford Movement and the Ritualists. But I thought it was wonderful that some of these things that I love, they love. But they have not been a major spiritual influence on my life. Again maybe because a lot of it isn't in print. I was inspired by the Orthodox who believed that the reading of old texts can reinspire the imagination of the tradition; light new fires

from the old. There's this profound image I found in Jeremy Taylor– He would be the other guiding light I look to. He has this beautiful apology for authorized and set forms of the liturgy where he talks about what it feels like to be in a world where the Book of Common Prayer has been outlawed. His mentors are dead. His king is dead. He speaks of what it feels like to be in a church that appears to the world to be a failure. Rome is dancing around the grave laughing 'ha ha, we told you so.' He says "[God] hath snuffed our lamp so near, that it is almost extinguished, and the sacred fire was put into a hole of the Earth, even then when we were forced to light those Tapers that stood upon our Altars, that by this sad truth better than by the old ceremony we might prove our succession to those holy men who were constrained to sing Hymns to Christ in dark places and retirements." And so this sense that the fire of the church – and Taylor is clear this is the judgment of God that is bringing this about – the fire is hidden, waning, almost snuffed out. But what do you do, then? What you do is light the taper. You decide what the fire is that is worth preserving. And you light the fire again.

Stephanie Spellers speaks of tradition by thinking about the woman who breaks the jar of ointment to anoint Jesus. That is what tradition is. It's not contained, it breaks. Every time we anoint someone with its richness it requires a breaking and a reevaluation of what is the ointment, and what the container. We are left with shards, and yet also we give the tradition in this abundant way so that their face might be gladdened with oil. That's what I want to do.

T: Your work almost reminds me of the Popular Patristics series...

SSP: Right! And what did they do when they started with the Incarnation by St. Athanasius? They started with an introduction by C. S. Lewis. They now have a new one from John Behr, but there was a time when it was the Anglicans putting the patristics into the hands of the people

T: Totally. Even before the original edition of the now ubiquitous grey hardback editions you can get from Hendrickson, the Tractarians were publishing patristic authors, some even in the original language, right around the same time Minge was coming out. I think they were called a Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church: Anterior to the Division of the East and West.

Which reminds me of how primary texts can complicate the easy stories we tell about ourselves. The Oxford Movement had always been sold to me as looking romantically to the Middle Ages, but they were publishing the early Church stuff, and post-Reformation Anglicans, not initially looking to Rome.

SSP: See that's one of the things I'm looking forward to. When we actually read texts, when they're more easily available, we might start telling different stories about these things. As I've been reading the Tracts I've noticed how often they refer to the documents of the Reformation. They really don't footnote or quote a lot of

medieval stuff. Patristics, Reformers... so then when I looked at Pusey's tract on baptism, it was not what I was expecting. He's quoting Luther, Gerhard, and other Lutheran thinkers. There's a more complex story to be told here.

T: Right. I went on a similar journey with Percy Dearmer. He was known to me primarily as a quaint aesthete, obsessed with the intricacies of liturgy and so on. I had no idea until I dug deeper that he was actually arguing against the ritualists, and he was a bohemian socialist who let sex workers stay in his home. Who is this strange, beautiful man?

Anyway, something I deeply appreciate about your work is that you aren't just reprinting faded pdfs. You're freshly typesetting and all that.

SSP: I wanted something more than a facsimile. This is the freedom of a duct tape operation. I get to do what I want to do. My work is a work in the present tense. To believe in the resurrection is to believe these people are alive in the Lord. Accompanying us in our work. You open to Nehemiah. They repented of their own sins and the sins of their ancestors. It's a work for the sake of the whole Church.

Tony Hunt, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Christopher Poore, Alexandria, Virginia

Becoming COMPANIONS

A Conversation on Formation and Whiteness

JB: Full disclosure, as they say: last November, I (Jack Belloli) pitched to write a review essay on Ghost Ship: Institutional Racism and the Church of England by Azariah France-Williams (London: SCM Press, 2020) and After Whiteness: An Education in Belonging by Willie James Jennings (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020). I wanted to reflect on what it might mean to read these books as I began training for the priesthood, as a white man at one of the Church of England's full-time residential colleges. In a year in which competing accusations of institutional racism and of "wokeness" within the Church have been particularly fierce and exhausting, this proved to be easier said than done. A number of partial drafts didn't stick.

It took me an embarrassingly long time to realise that one way out of this was to take the advice that Jennings gives for next steps at the end of *After Whiteness* to take 'beautiful steps' with (future) colleagues, and to see what might be gained by reading it together (157). So I asked Hannah Swithinbank, who read *After Whiteness* with fellow ordinands at her own theological college, if she'd like to have an email conversation about both books, so that we could tease out some of each other's unfinished ideas. What emerged was written over a week immediately after the end of a long, pandemic-shaped year of academic work and exams, and with differences in style left in which speak to our different engagements with the text so far. So it remains unfinished and a bit unpolished. But that, we think is part of the point.

JB: Maybe you could start by saying a bit about your experience of reading *After Whiteness*, as part of a regular reading group with fellow ordinands? This feels like it would've been very different from me reading it, rapidly, alone, at the height of the New Year COVID lockdown. If this is a book about 'forming people who form communion', how did that context shape your reading – and, if you're comfortable saying, how did the book reshape the community that read it?

HS: I read *After Whiteness* twice: firstly, as you did, over a couple of days just before New Year, and then for the reading group we did here at college — and they were definitely different experiences that I drew different things from. In my first reading the book really helped me name and process experiences and emotions I'd been dealing with through my first term back in university after a decade, in particular the ways I was finding myself wanting to prove myself. Jennings's discussion of the way western education pursues knowledge for mastery and control rather than out of curiosity, and the way that creates isolation and stress helped me to understand a lot of what I had been feeling.

In my second reading, I was reading a chapter a week, both re-reading and preparing to host a conversation about it with other ordinands, and I guess my primary lens for that was how the book might resonate with the form and content of our own theological education, as well as our previous educational experiences. What emerged really quickly, in a group that was nearly always all-white, British and well-educated (although with various other identities and characteristics intersecting with that), was an awareness that despite the fact that we we could all identify with the tensions and pains Jennings identifies, we had also largely benefited from and been privileged within the system in different ways. I suspect a lot of that awareness had grown over the past year or so, with the rise in the Black Lives Matter movement and discussion of racism and empire in the UK, but it helped us examine ourselves within our particular situation as ordinands in the Church of England. We talked a lot about how easy it would be for us to continue in and be a part of replicating this system, but also how difficult it can be not to do that as individuals and particularly at this stage of our lives. We talked about how to leverage power within systems, about compromise and incremental change, and the dangers of being co-opted by power and systems even as you're trying to pursue something different.

Whiteness that really describe the process of reading it in this group for me:

> "Talking together then is a practice aimed at eternity, and it matters more than we often realize for bringing our hope into focus..." (157)

> "Win needed friends who would discern with him the crumbling and live in it and toward it. He needed companions on a journey of building that together would discover what blueprints emerged from the overturning..." (128)

It was absolutely an experience of being formed for communion through the conversations we had about our hopes and concerns and the challenges we see before us and the church. We're all a part of a wider community at college and different groupings within that community, but we also have a particular tie with each other — committed to journeying together as we try not to replicate practices and behaviours that isolate and harm.

What's your experience of discussing After Whiteness been like after reading it solo? Have you found other people who have read it who you're able to share thoughts and ideas within your immediate context — or have you found people either resistant to reading it or 'just not getting around to it yet'? I guess I'm wondering how much it is getting traction with people who weren't already predisposed to read it.

JB: The short, embarrassing answer to this question is "not much!" There's a copy in our library here, which I know has been taken out, and some people have purchased their own. Part of it might have been out of a desire (very "mastery"-inflected, in its own way) to maintain an independent enough perspective to write about it. Last term, there was also a college-wide student-led process of reading the Living in Love and Faith documents (the Church of England's new teaching material on debates in gender and sexuality), which probably took up a lot of the energy that I and others had to put into reading challenging material together!

I suppose the reason that I've stopped short is the challenge of knowing what to do with "whiteness" when it's introduced into a conversation. Jennings is, of course, very good at anticipating and assuaging these reactions from the start: "white self-sufficient masculinity is not first a person or a people; it is a way of organising life..." (8-9). He's rigorously committed to the implications of treating it as an idol - as something which doesn't even exist as such.

The worst thing that this book and its readers could do would be to cultivate "critical white subjects", people who gain institutional kudos, or even personal pleasure, from reflecting sensitively and self-deprecatingly on their own whiteness, shielded from the most serious burdens that transformation and change might demand of them. Jennings's decision to build the book around fictionalised accounts of people in theological education is so powerful because, for me at least, they work counter-intuitively: I want to find models or counter-models for how to behave, only to realise that's not the point. I'm glad you brought up the story of Win, the example of the privileged future scholar who wants to avoid perpetuating that privilege. When Jennings says he "had waited all [his] teaching career for" him (127), that feels like something I want to aspire to. (Not least because, earlier in the book, he gives an account of gently turning away the kind of over-earnest seminarian who says they "like the model of the pastor-scholar, [and] would like to keep [their] hand in the academy" without being driven by urgent questions – and that feels more like the real me (34)!) But that turn from Win to the "companions" who would support him feels crucial: it's the cultivation of those spaces that are ultimately what's being longed for. And without that perspective, I fear that it'd be easy to become a figure at least a bit like Connor, who's tellingly the only person that Jennings ever actually describes as "racist": a Southern white man whose "respect" and love for black culture ends up manifesting in a desire to be the expert on it, as if he could redeem the situation himself (108-09).

This feels like it might be a relevant place to bring in a comparison with Ghost Ship, because in this respect their approaches feel quite different. There's a much clearer sense in Ghost Ship that white supremacy does inhere concretely in particular institutions, which need urgent action taken against them, before the joining can begin. If whiteness is an idol here, it needs iconoclastic destruction, which lies behind France-Williams's imaginative reappropriation of figures like Elijah and Samson throughout. And I keep coming back to France-Williams's decision to give the book's final word to the anti-apartheid activist Antjie Krog: "Reconciliation will only take place… the day whites feel offended by racism instead of feeling sorry for blacks" (cited on 209). It's a difficult invitation to know what to do with: displaying my own offendedness at racism doesn't achieve much, and can often have the effect of shutting down conversation rather than inviting other people in to share that experience of offence. When

either of these books have activated your sense of offence at the status quo, what have you done with that feeling?

HS: I think that's a really interesting and challenging question for me in a number of different ways. A part of my response is to want to think about what it means to be 'offended' by racism and injustice: am I offended on my own behalf because racism is also damaging to me in the way makes life together in the world so much harder, or because it does damage to people I care about, or am I offended on behalf of others, known or not? Am I comfortable with any of those feelings and are they generating some kind of positive or helpful practical response, or do they show me something about myself that I don't like and would like to see change? Where do I go with all of that next?

But also, it makes me ask what offence feels like to me as a reader of these books, and where and how — and even whether I felt it, or what else I did feel. And this flags up to me a danger I sense across my awareness of injustice, which is how easy it is for emotional responses to be blunted or processed away as you become familiar with the stories and history and damage that are the consequence of systemic racism and injustice. I say this is a danger, because I think it does affect how you act (or don't) in myriad ways, and also because it marks a kind of diminishing in our human ability to feel for ourselves and in relation to other people, which helps injustice become normalised. Moving from feeling to action can also be problematic too, but personally I find myself more in danger of failing to engage feeling. I suspect Jennings' line of thinking would link this to my education and its focus on reason and suspicion of emotion.

One of the moments in Ghost Ship that really did make me feel my frustrations with the system is when France-Williams is discussing the wariness of reporting prejudice and racism. He talks about the demand that the system places on evidence, rather than trusting human testimony, and how this demand compounds pain and trauma (76) and so deters people from saying something. It's definitely something I've seen happen, and it reflects a failure to attend to emotion as a vital part of human life. I really liked France-Williams' quotation of MLK: "There's always the danger if you cool off too much that you will end up in a deep freeze," (68). Is that who we want to be, or believe we were made to be?

One of the things I really appreciate about

After Whiteness is its move towards physicality, embodiment and the erotic as Jennings talks about the crowd and communion (in chapter 5): he focuses on God's desire, ecstasy, and the messy entanglement of life. These are all things I find challenging in different ways, so I think there's probably something for me to explore around feeling and attending to the feelings of myself and other people, and the ways the Spirit is in that. It feels self-involved, but I also think it's important in being part of spaces and communities that are for change and communion, because ultimately this should be about how people live, not just about fixing a system, right? I think Jennings' story of the friendship of Rachel and Louise (115) illustrates the importance and difficulty of this kind of attentiveness to self and other.

A lot of that seems quite interior, but I think that's only a problem if it doesn't go beyond self-reflection into practice and action, because self-awareness is also necessary to practice, and I think that's an argument both books would share. Perhaps we can come back to questions of 'doing' in a bit, but thinking about feeling offence at the status quo makes me curious as to what you think these two books are trying to do. Do you think they're trying to raise anger or offence, or some other emotion to move readers to response? Who are these books for — because I think they're for different people and have different aims — and what are they trying to provoke?

JB: I know you said you wanted to come back to "doing" but, if anything, I think that's my way into this question. What I value about both of them, even if it's explored in different ways, is how they imagine institutional action as central theological work. They invite us to sit with the implications of that reimagination, perhaps before we start acting anew ourselves.

I really appreciate that Jennings places "building" at the core of the book, and the principle that "[t]he creature builds as God the Creator builds" (77). Because I think a lot of the way we talk about formation for priesthood (which admittedly isn't quite the language that Jennings is using) assumes a need to purge our instincts towards doing or working, in favour of something like being or resting: a different mode of activity which allows us to participate more fully in the prior and more important activity of God, and which then nourishes our action. I get where that's coming from, but I don't think these spaces for rest are necessarily removed by suggesting that an apparently second-order act like "building"

does theologically go all the way down. It's the difference between saying 'I just need to learn to let go!' and coming to recognise that even this represents a kind of doing on my part: I'll always find myself self-consciously doing things for the sake of my soul or those in my cure, and it's a matter of being more open to how God inhabits or disrupts them. And this approach tempers a tendency you see a lot within the Church to frame certain kinds of necessary things we do as 'secular' or lesser or even fallen: I'm thinking of the whole range of structures, both within the Church and within higher education, which often get collapsed imprecisely into the intrusion of a new 'managerialism'. You don't get that much of that in After Whiteness, because Jennings is better able to locate capitalist management within the longue duree of "colonial design", which he has no choice but to fight from within (49). There's a willingness to see departmental meetings about language requirements, or hiring and firing, as aspects of the work of divine building, without treating them as mere tools for it which will eventually be discarded. That's what I hope gets heard, really. And I'm not sure if anyone in your context found the experience of reading a book that's nominally aimed at educators rather than the educated disconcerting, but keeping this broader "theology of action" in mind helped me to see the part that I might have in it too.

All this comes out more explicitly, and more messily, in Ghost Ship. The keynote of the book for me is the account that he gives of a retired bishop telling him not to let 'anger, pain, sadness or lament clutter your writing', as if that was necessary to legitimise its protest (52). The book itself feels (appropriately) cluttered, and it speaks to a church which is just as fragile and contingent, operating across "dioceses, parishes, primary schools, colleges" (69). I'm grateful, for example, for the way that the chapter you cite in your response draws attention to how the "authority" of diocesan bishops can end up entangled with, to the point of being appropriated by, that of large individual resource churches (72-73). We can't retreat to a confidence in what the Church, in its catholic order, just is, independent from how local organisations accrue and exercise its power. And it's striking how, in the "alternative future history" with which he closes the book, France-Williams imagines a church that has to draw from other institutions -the Labour Party, the Greater London Council, the BBC - to make change possible (200-02). This process compromises us as much as it liberates us: he notes the irony of the Church of England asking ordinands and

and employees whether they belong to 'any political party or institution that espouses racist values or ideas' (71). The irony actually goes a bit deeper: I found out earlier this year that the introduction of that question, long advocated for by the General Synod member Vasantha Gnanados, explicitly took up the example of the Metropolitan Police. Radical arguments about how we engage with the police given its own institutional racism tend to be less "advanced" in the UK than the US - and shouldn't be expected to advance along the same lines, anyway - but this feels like it might yet become a pressure point for the Church.

I guess this is a long way of saying that I hope the book finds an audience who accept that the Church of England needs to make concrete institutional changes. It can't rely on its inherited sense of "being church" to make that change, and "being church" isn't a neutral position. France-Williams emphasises people of colour's grief and anger at the material consequences of inaction: the lost possibility that there "could have been a movement" (80), the reality that it's the most marginalised who have already felt the effects of our supposed future 'decline' (34). It's that embarrassment at wasted time that seems to have carried over most strongly into the From Lament to Action report from the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce, and the publicity that's surrounded it: many of its suggestions are, pointedly, reworkings of ones from the litany of unheeded recommendations, stretching back to 1985's Faith in the City, that it lists in the appendix. But, for all its urgency, Ghost Ship does something a bit more subtle than just demanding action from those readers. Again, it's a working-through of the implication that 'action goes all the way down'. If we want to take seriously the fact that "the mistakes made back in 1985 cannot be revisited" (170) - that no action will completely cover over our lament – we need to reframe the history. To admit that what looks like the inaction of institutional indifference is, in fact, a form of violent action that we haven't had the lenses for: that's the effect of France-Williams's unsettling fables and allegorisations, in which, say, the proposal for a Commission for Black Anglican Concerns at Synod gets roughed up by bouncers (101). And, once you can be made to see that, you're more liable to see what kinds of action have already been going on without you, and all the more effectively because you haven't noticed them, where you might only have been an obstacle: hence the space that the book gives for presenting what Anglicans of colour have admitted and imagined

together within private networks, while making it clear that they don't have the safety to reveal everything. I appreciated that in much the same way as I became more aware of women's 'whisper networks', and the limits on my own relationship with them, as MeToo escalated in 2017. So the effect is one of saying: 'It's not like there's been no action - and that you, yes you, need to make up for it. This is the landscape of action that we've all already been in, and we're asking you to prepare to inhabit it differently.'

And this is, in my reading, where the poetry in each book comes in. Because poems, especially in devotional contexts, are often held up as discrete objects, bringing those who write or read them into "pure" or higher states, over against the business of the world: 'poetically man dwells', as Heidegger has it, rather than builds! But this elides the ways that poems are speech-acts with worldly consequences, and which are assembled out of the language that we use in a range of compromised contexts. The former is perhaps stronger in Ghost Ship, where the poems are (I think?) more clearly the product of spoken-word and performance traditions which attend particularly to what the poem does with and for the immediate social circle of those listening. The latter is clearer in After Whiteness, where the poems rework the linguistic environments of, say, orientation meetings and student sermons: the self that the speaker confesses is necessarily the self within an institution, shaped by its designs. That's what I've gained from the poems, anyway - how does it resonate with your reading? And what about the related question of prayer in each book: can that, too, be brought into the terms I've been setting out? (I'm thinking here about the full story behind the bishop who dismisses lament as clutter: he ultimately admits that he hasn't "taken many risks" in confronting racialised power dynamics, and this admission comes about in the particular spiritual 'neutral zone' of a Quaker meeting hall (63).

HS: I think that last point is a really important one to recognise — the fact that both France-Williams and the bishop are somewhere 'different' ultimately enables a moment that gets beyond their earlier tension. It's something that's helpful to have in mind as we think about doing or working towards reconciliation. It's so easy for those of us who belong in white church and educational spaces to think that by inviting other people in we're making space and enabling reconciliation, but actually, we have to break out of that space to build something different together. You see that

in the way both Jennings and France-Williams express frustration in their accounts of trying to get those who fit and who hold power to open up to something different.

And I think that is a part of what poetry does within both books as texts — it creates a different kind of space, so you can't just read them as purely academic works in a cleanly rational way. They want more of you and from you. You know how sometimes you'll read a book that isn't quite working for you, and you can make the choice to think that this is because of something in the book (the bluntest variation of this is that you think the book is 'bad'), or you can wonder about what it is in you that is making the reading difficult? For me that barrier is often that the book is in a style, or literary tradition, or frame of reference that I'm not familiar with, and I have to choose whether or not I'm going to continue with something that's a little alien to me. I think that's what's going on here: both books are doing something different with traditional forms of academic writing and Christian memoir that makes the reader pause and respond to it as they read because they're 'strange'. You do actually have a moment of acceptance (or rejection, I guess) where you decide to trust the writer and let the text do its work in you — and for me a part of what that eventually did was to help me bring my emotions to the table and be present to the stories in the book, so that they could work their way down into my being.

The connection you draw with prayer makes sense to me too, because I often feel that prayer, like poetry, helps make space for opening up to something beyond yourself: it's a thin place, essentially. For me one of the memorable images in After Whiteness is at the start of the chapter on design, where Jennings tells a story of a visitation he experienced while praying at the start of a semester. There's a malevolence in the laugh he describes that really sticks with me (47-8) and evokes the powers and principalities that are at play here. However you understand spiritual powers and dimensions, and conceive of what is going on behind or within the world that we see around us, it's important to recognise that this isn't all there is, and by being willing to open ourselves up, be it to the poetry of Jennings and France-Williams, or to the Spirit in prayer, we gain a greater realisation of both the evils of racism and injustice and the possibility and power of God's goodness and desire to overcome them.

I like the way that you question an idea of

formation that, as you describe it is first purgative and then passive, because that kind of understanding of formation (which I've also experienced) seems to me to be not wholly wrong, but it is also not wholly right — which is, in fact, how Jennings' describes a lot of the problems in education: ideas and practices that started from a good instinct but have been warped. There are things in ourselves that need to be dealt with, but also things that are to be used, and while rest and listening is important, so is being an active participant in our own formation, bringing our questions and concerns and desires into play. Bringing the ideas and stories in these books into spaces of prayer, I think, is an important part of our formation for leaning into them in everyday life. It helps those of us who have benefited from the system to be willing to enter into different spaces and risk what we have for something that we hope will be better.

And I think that brings me back to the matter of building or doing, which I absolutely agree, theologically goes all the way down. I found Jennings' ability to see all the different aspects of educational and institutional life as expressions and reflections of faith and love really helpful, because, as you say, it takes them beyond tools to be used or systems to be used or compromised with — it enables us to see them differently and to start to imagine them existing and operating differently, in a way that's generative for action and transformation. I think that there are two questions for me in this: firstly, how do we get comfortable with the fact that there are going to be multiple ideas about what reconciliation and rebuilding look like in churches and in theological education and multiple ways of going about it — because we love a simple action plan, right? And secondly, how do those of us participating in this do this with a grace for each others' inevitable failures? I see a lot of noise about the idea that 'wokeness' (for want of a better word) has created a mob mentality and 'cancel culture', coming from people who are, essentially, resisting this kind of change — and mostly I think it's a lot of nonsense. But I think that there is a complex dynamic at the moment in which our desire to be a part of change can get stuck in our fear of getting things wrong and of being perceived as a 'bad' person or of being unable to come back from a mistake. Do you see anything in these books that helps us to tackle these questions?

JB: I'm really glad you brought up how the difficulty of both of these texts tips you over into fighting the urge to call them "confusing" or "bad" -I think it's something

they both court, in different ways. Hence why I called Ghost Ship "cluttered", really: there's been a strain of Anglican politeness to the way it's been received in the UK, with few people commenting on just how many rules for writing books that it breaks - knowingly, and appropriately, for all the reasons you express so well! In both cases, I think it's an expression of the resistance that the authors face in writing a book, as individuals, that's nevertheless polyvocal: the new space that they open up is 'other' insofar as it is space that is open to others' voices. This is behind Jennings's project of "institutional gnosticism", attempting to tell a properly collective story of the theological academy by broadening his own memories through "exact fabrication" (20-22). And, in a more volatile way, behind France-Williams's insistence that he "can neither confirm nor deny that BraveSlave", whom the poems throughout are attributed to,"is an alter-ego and avatar to enable the author to say with force what he sees, hears and feels" (xx). As much as Ghost Ship is clearly motivated by a desire to tell a long-denied personal story of disenfranchisement, introducing this not-quite-avatar mitigates some of the risks that come with emphasising this desire alone: both the risk that France-Williams will be accused of just projecting his own experience, but also that, for someone so used to being "tipped out and filled up" with alternative versions of himself to fulfil the expectations set by whiteness (53), any autonomous self-expression that he makes might already be compromised. Ghost Ship will find its target when it's no longer read just as a personal testimony, but as one which is in constellation with those of other people of colour and which has found a place within a renewed Church, full of people willing to see how they too contain multitudes.

So it's through strategies like these that I think both books already anticipate your question about how we cope with different approaches, or different rates of response, to institutional change: if the actions that result from these books weren't polyvocal, contested, messily collaborative, they wouldn't be true to the terrain that the books stake. And both books, understatedly, look to the Eucharist as the model and telos of such actions: not only because it's one that we necessarily do together, but because it's one where we necessarily fail to make good on that collaboration in our own strength. Appeals to sacramental fellowship are often wielded as a distraction from anti-racist work - the claim that "we don't see colour, we see common baptismal identity", and so on - but I think both books point towards an antidote to that. There's a

vertiginous moment in Ghost Ship when France-Williams praises the white solidarity shown against apartheid by John Collins, as the work of someone who 'did not presume to come to this table trusting in his own righteousness'. The Prayer of Humble Access finds its fulfilment when we turn 'to the voices of the oppressed' and follow their lead, as well as when we turn to Christ at the altar (16). The difficulty we encounter in trying to "solve" racism finds its match, but also might come to rest, in the difficulty that we should face in feeling adequate to the Eucharist. I think it says a great deal that the narratives available to us of the Eucharist's institution, in 1 Corinthians and the Synoptic Gospels, all postdate its emergence as a repeated memorial practice of the early church, a practice that we know from Paul's letter was often practised irreverently and inequitably: what appears to be the pristine event that we're remembering is already shaped by recuperation. So whenever we come together as Christians, we do so in the understanding that, if any more tangibly 'political' reconciliation is to emerge out of it, it will be the work of Christ alone; but, as soon as we understand that, we might begin to see the particular places and people gathered among us through whom it's being manifest. We can change the institution, once we remember that the institution is his. I think that this dynamic, and its Eucharistic grounds, is made especially clear in After Whiteness's final poem. It's powerful in its assurance that the reconciliation can and should be felt as change, on everyone's part, not merely in everyone continuing to more or less get along.

> *He blessed it and broke open his dream,*
> *one part in each hand.*
> *To those on his left and those on his right,*
> *he said the same thing*
> *as he handed them his dream, "Eat this dream,*
> *and it will kill the dream that kills."*
> *Hands trembling, they wondered which of their dreams*
> *would die and which grow stronger.* (153)

So of course we'll fail, and part of that failure will include us being self-righteous and overcensorious and not seeing my opponents as future collaborators (or perhaps disavowing how they act like I used to!) Jennings admits to something like this himself, in that startling poem about how '[t]he wall between anger and hate broke' during his interactions with Connor, and he was left waiting for 'the waters of hate [to] recede' (109). The allusion to the imagery of the Genesis flood narrative feels important

here. It's a way to suggest that this failure, however regrettable, is somehow foundational and relationship-building. Just as we can't look back before the Biblical record of institution to a "pristine" Eucharist, or before the flood to antediluvian creation, we learn to be content with ourselves as constituted by our errors - and by God's gift of recovery from them. I think there's also something to be gained from following through on France-Williams's use of the Prayer of Humble Access: just as our inadequacy to receive the Eucharist isn't paralysing but liberating as soon as we recognise the fullness of God's mercy so - at least once we've reached a certain threshold of trust - we can ascribe the same patience, and the same ultimate agency, to those among the oppressed whom we see ourselves as allied to. If we're committed, as you say, not to playing host and setting up the space as white educated people, we have to accept that our influence on the narrative is pretty minimal: if any good that we do isn't going to make us the protagonists, neither does any obstacle we could set up need to end up being that severe.

This feels like the undertow of Jennings's decision to end After Whiteness with a chapter on friendship and desire. "Friendship is a real thing where people open their lives to one another," rather than worrying about achieving goals (147): it's the essential background environment which can end up concealed or instrumentalised within academic spaces, but also in activist ones. It's taken me a long time to appreciate that allyship and friendship don't overlap tightly: having correct opinions doesn't serve as criteria for friendship; the things that have most secured trust in me from my friends, including many more committed to political struggle than I am, are small inconsequential details, probably forgotten on both sides. And seeing and sharing my friends of colour's offence at racism should also be an invitation to look out for what's eschatological in their patience, their sense of perspective, even their sense of humour - which are harder for me to see and perhaps not mine to share. Again, there's a less satisfying version of this that you hear in the 'cancel culture' world, in which actively courting and sustaining friendships with people of opposite opinions is claimed as a virtue, something which should be striven for by good liberals (or good Anglicans?!) I think this can risk what Jennings calls a 'cruel communalism' (147), and that it stops us from treating such friendships as a grace: they are a foretaste of what all human relationships will look like when our differences are absolved, something which

the ends of both books associate with the eschatological horizon of Isaiah's holy mountain. Unexpected friendships – whether among the strange people we find ourselves training among, or on Twitter(!) – aren't really means of bringing this horizon about, but they might stand as inspiring articles of faith that it will come...

Jack Belloli & Hannah Swithinbank,

Cuddesdon, UK and Cambridge, UK

THE LIFE OF JESUS

by Conrad Noel

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CHAPTER IV

THE REDEMPTIONISTS

HEROD's bloodstained reign was drawing to a close when, one day, to his pretentious temple, blazing with gold and marble, there came a peasant family to present their first-born to God, and to obtain his release from the clerical duties of the sanctuary that he might serve in some secular calling in the larger world outside. By law the first-born son was claimed for priestly service, and the fee for his release was about a pound sterling.[1] Almost their last penny had gone in paying this, and they had nothing left over for the usual gift of the lamb, and had to content themselves with 'the poor man's offering.'

Mary, the young mother, might have been troubled at this, but trouble gave place to wonder when old Simeon took her child in his arms, and, convinced that he held to his bosom the longed-for Deliverer, exclaimed: 'At last, Lord, Thou art releasing Thy slave in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast made ready before the face of all peoples, a light to enlighten the nations, and the glory of Thy people Israel.'

Out of his age-long experience, he warns the maiden in her sanguine youth that her son, who is set for the fall of the mighty and the uprising of the meek, cannot come into his own without a sore conflict, for he shall be a battle-standard which shall be execrated, and the sword of that conflict shall pierce through her very heart that the thoughts of many hearts may be unmasked. Anna, knowing that the prayers of her long vigil have at last been answered, and that the dawn has come, bears the glad news to all them that looked for the redemption of their country.

They were looking for 'the redemption' of the country:

[1] Money throughout this book will be reckoned roughly according to its purchasing power at the present moment.

Joseph of Arimathaea for the Kingdom of God: Zacharias and Elizabeth for deliverance out of the hand of their enemies: and Simeon and Anna for the consolation of Israel, which they sometimes speak of as salvation before the face of all peoples. These phrases have been tortured out of their original meanings by the pietists: 'redemption' is the buying back out of slavery into that primal freedom that God intended for the man or the nation: 'the Kingdom of God' would be understood by the people of that day to be the golden age of their hopes into which men should be redeemed, when they had been delivered out of the hands of their enemies: consolation means the coming alongside to help, and suggests the Leader who should arise to lift them out of their miseries, and inspire them to establish the new age: 'salvation' means deliverance, and the saving health that should obtain in that divine commonwealth. The controversy as to whether these terms are spiritual or material begs the question. They are both, for they are sacramental. That is, that at the high-water mark of their meaning they imply a change of spirit, of will, of outlook, expressing itself inevitably in changed material conditions. They are the well-defined phrases of the Apocalyptic Hope[1] that was current in those days.

In the grave of Herod's murderous reign this patriot hope might well have been buried, but there remained a little group without a name—a group so insignificant that the great political and religious parties of the day would refuse to acknowledge its existence, and the life of the group was nourished by some secret hope that seemed inextinguishable. Swinburne might almost have been thinking of them when he sang:

> We are they that have to cope,
> With time till time retire,
> We live on hopeless hope,
> We feed on tears and fire,
> Time, foot by foot, gives back before our sheer desire. [2]

[1] Apocalyptic Hope. See F. H. Wood's *The Hope of Israel*, Chap. V.
[2] Swinburne's 'Marching Song' (*Songs before Sunrise*).

Liberty hard won is precious, but liberty lost after hard-won victory is in the memory more precious still. This alone will explain the unconquerable spirit of Simeon and Anna, whose extreme age is stressed in both scripture and tradition; these centenarians[1] were leaders of the little company who still looked for the redemption of Palestine, and beyond that to some dimly conceived community of mankind.

Extraordinarily bitter must their memories have been. Born into a Palestine which had at last achieved that independence begun for it under the strokes of Judas the Hammerer, they had shared that economic prosperity which came through the restoration of the land to the workers for, 'then did they till their ground in peace, and the earth gave her increase, and the trees of the field their fruit. The ancient men sat all in the streets, communing together of good things, and the young men put on their glorious and warlike apparel. . . . Every man sat under his vine and his fig tree, and there was none to fray them.'[2]

But, while yet children they had seen their country defeated by the Egyptians, and although Palestine was left a certain independence, it was not to see peace. The growing corruption led to fierce factions and to a six years' civil war, in which possibly Anna's husband was among the fifty thousand slain. Simeon would almost certainly have been called to the front in the civil wars, and perhaps was not demobilized before the war against the Greek cities in Palestine increased the miseries of the impoverished countryside.

[1] Simeon's age in early tradition is given as well over a hundred, and Anna, about thirteen when she married (the customary age), after seven years of married life, had been eight-four years a widow. Her age would therefore be about one hundred and four.—Luke ii. 36–7.

[2] 1 Maccabees xiv. 8 ff. The author is describing the reign of Simon, when 'the Jewish State reached its greatest prosperity.'—Hastings's *Small Dictionary of the Bible*. Palestine had acquired a seaboard and had extended into northern Galilee. It now had its own coinage. These conditions would still obtain in the long and prosperous reign of Alexander Jannaeus, 104–78 B.C. It was in this reign that Anna was married and after a few years widowed.

There was only a few years' breathing space before a fresh outburst of civil war, and it was not long before the fierce internal feuds induced a rich Jewish faction to call in the Roman Republic, and it was soon found to have been an easier thing to call the Romans in than to drive them out, for the republic was already at heart an empire and, like all empires, it was inspired by 'the white man's burden' of bestowing 'kultur' upon 'the natives,' while extracting from them the uttermost farthing.[1] Sometimes a great disaster pulls a nation together and helps it to get free of its corruptions, but Palestine was fast becoming a carcass from which the principle of life and cohesion had departed.

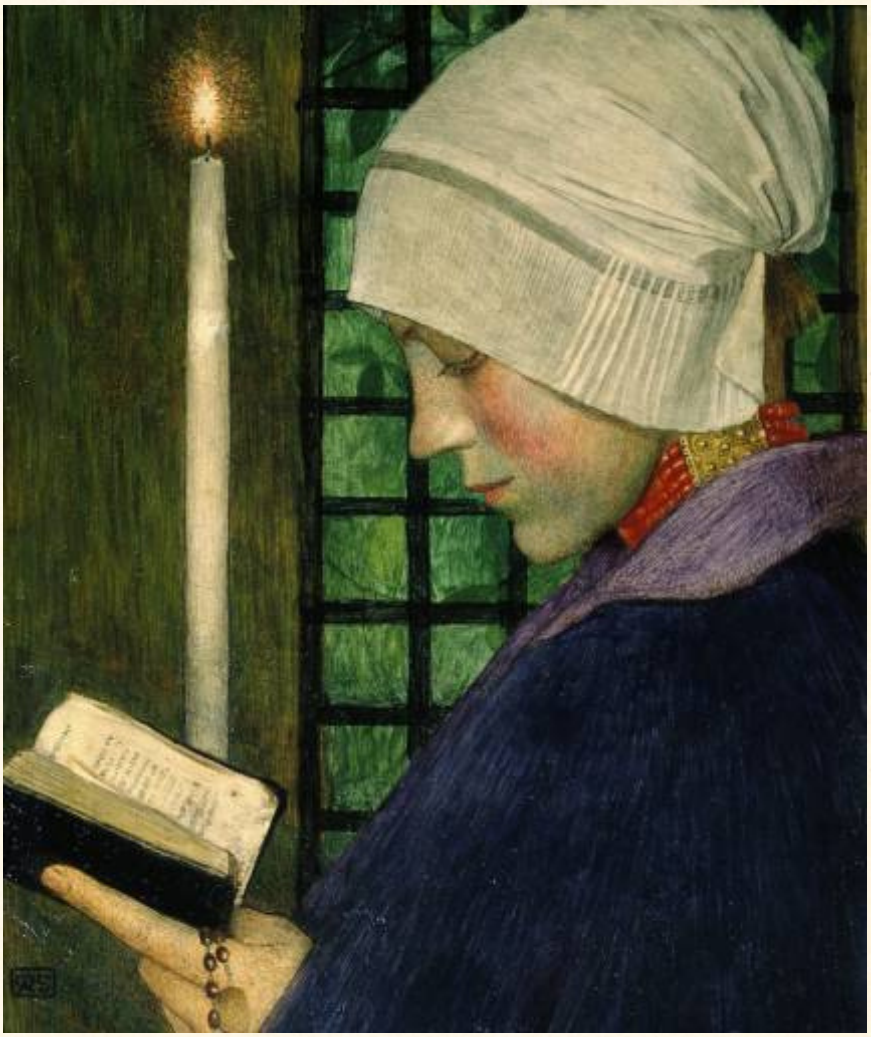
The small, but growing, militant party were as complacently blind to the national injustice and corruption as were the parties we have mentioned: they were out for the same rigorism as the pietists, and would have thrust out the imperial intruder in order that Palestine might itself become a world empire. It was not from any such parties that these irredentist leaders could have drawn their inspiration. From what well-spring was their hope refreshed?

There must have been moments when the infidel seemed to have triumphed, and God to have abandoned his world for ever. In such moments they would turn to the little group, which they themselves had helped to create, to Elizabeth and Zacharias in the hill country of Galilee, to Joseph in Arimathaea, to many another, and the ardent comradeship of such as these would rekindle in them the passionate hope, that they would not taste of death before they had seen the Lord's Christ.

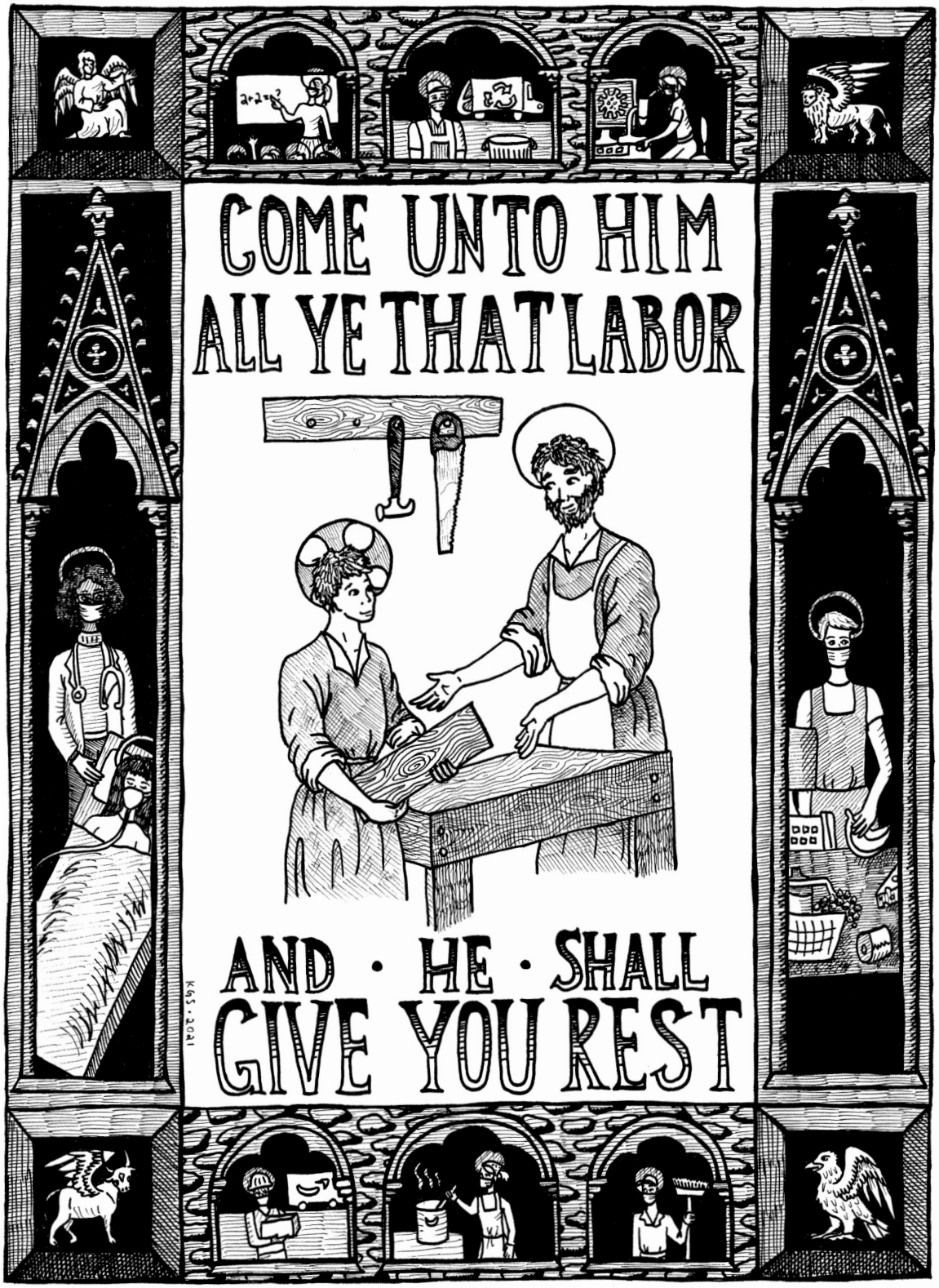
[1] It was 'morally' impossible for the empire to withdraw; such a withdrawal would only have meant that the half-civilized natives would have been at each other's throats! Compare India and Ireland.

But, above all, in moments of darkness, would they turn to Mary, the darling of that little company, the patriot maid of Galilee, whom they themselves had likely enough nurtured in the temple buildings, teaching her her letters, nourishing her on the old patriotic scriptures. As she grew up her single-mindedness and flaming faith would uphold them. When every patriot mother in Israel was praying that she might be worthy to bring forth the Lord's Christ, surely the eager heart of Mary, aflame with God's justice and God's love, would draw him down from the heavens that he might reign as the leader of mankind on the earth.

So when they saw Mary and her babe in the temple courts, they knew that they might sing their *Nunc dimittis*, for the day of the Lord was at hand.



Candlemas Day, Marianne Stokes


COME UNTO HIM
ALL YE THAT LABOR
AND · HE · SHALL
GIVE YOU REST