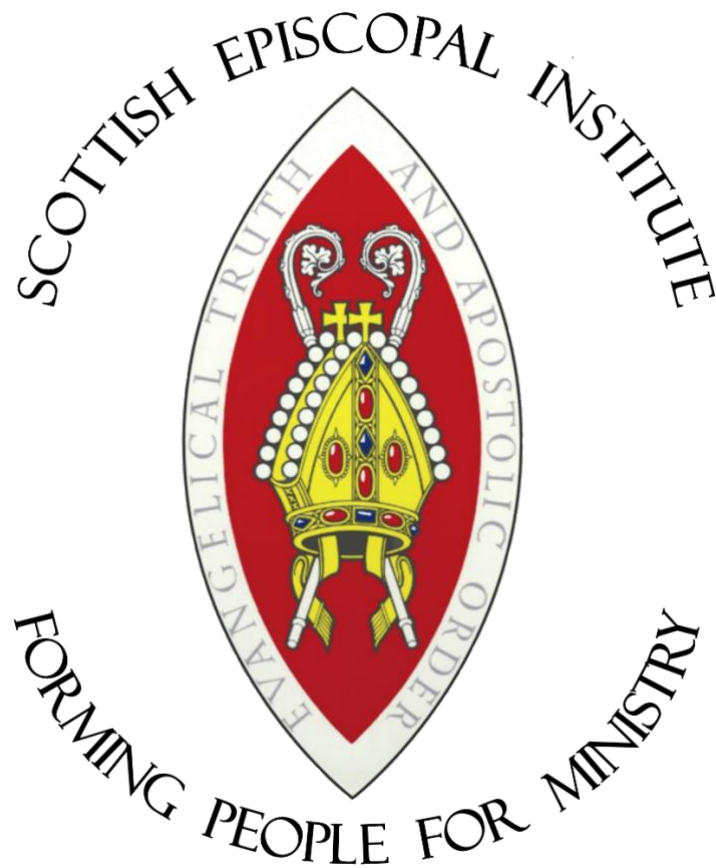


# Scottish Episcopal Institute Journal



Autumn 2021 — Volume 5.3

*A quarterly journal for debate on current issues  
in the Anglican Communion and beyond*

ISSN 2399-8989

# Scottish Episcopal Institute Journal

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## AUTISM AND LITURGY

*A special request regarding a research project on autism and liturgy*

Dr Léon van Ommen needs your help for a research project on autism and liturgy.

Léon is a lecturer at the University of Aberdeen, a member of St Ninian's Church (Aberdeen) and a member of the Liturgy Committee of the Faith and Order Board.

Léon is conducting a research project on autism and liturgy. He is looking for participants. If you (self-)identify as autistic/on the autism spectrum and are willing to share your experience of worship and liturgy, please get in touch with him at [leon.vanommen@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:leon.vanommen@abdn.ac.uk). People anywhere on the autism spectrum, including non-verbal, and of all ages, are welcome to join.

The project is based at the Centre for the Study of Autism and Christian Community, at the University of Aberdeen. Ethical permission has been obtained from the University. Please email Léon for more information, he would love to hear from you.

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# Introduction to Part 1: Climate Change

JENNY ANNE WRIGHT

Associate Priest, Christ Church, Morningside  
Convenor, Church in Society Committee

It is impossible to ignore the devastating effects of climate change on our world. Wildfires, deadly storms, famine and drought ravage the world; the poorest nations and peoples bearing the full force this. Christian theology has long been engaged with thinking about God and the world. In *Earth Community, Earth Ethics*, Larry Rasmussen critiques the 'environmental crisis', writing about hope in the face of the 'eco-apocalypse'. That was in the 1990's, drawing out how we think about ourselves in relation to the earth – not so much 'humanity *and* nature' as 'humans *in* and *as* nature'.<sup>1</sup> Already here our attention is focused not only on the ecological part of the crisis, but on the division it is creating, exacerbating the divide between poor and rich, and the need for justice, a theme that continues through much ecotheology.

Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, public theologian and current Bishop of Bavaria in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, writes about 'public theology as liberation theology for a global civil society', speaking generally in relation to justice, particularly in relation to ecotheology:<sup>2</sup>

Churches are connected in a unique worldwide network and can be a strong force in the move towards a global ecological reorientation of civilization and the political changes which are involved in it.

This network, or global community, offers us the opportunities to share stories from around the world and to be closely connected to the lives of others, particularly those on the margins, the women and children who are adversely affected by climate change, the people whose lives do not mirror our own; close-knit communities offer a space where interaction, participation, respect and self-respect can develop.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Larry Rasmussen, *Earth Community Earth Ethics* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996) p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, 'Public Theology of Ecology and Civil Society', in *Religion and Ecology in the Public Sphere*, ed. by Heinrich Bedford-Strohm and Celia Deane-Drummond (London, England: T&T Clark, 2011), 39–56, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Frits De Lange, 'Having Faith in Yourself: Self-respect and Human Dignity', *Scriptura*, 95 (2007), 213–23, p. 223.

It is increasingly apparent that while the physical effects of climate change are devastating and indeed deadly, climate justice offers a way to talk about this that goes beyond the scientific and technical. It is here that we can draw on Martha Nussbaum's capability approach, which argues that everyone needs to have access to resources that allow life to flourish.<sup>4</sup> In addition to such philosophical concepts of justice, climate justice can build on the long history of Christian concepts of social justice and its foundation in the inherent dignity of every person as created in the image of God. To love God and to love neighbour comes with great responsibility; we cannot think of these commands without recognising that we are called to feed the hungry and to clothe the poor, to remember that what we do for the least of the people we do for God. Of course, arguments for this cannot be separated from economic, political and social life; but we also cannot separate our calling from seeking climate justice. The interdependence of all people and our dependence on the whole of creation needs to be carefully evaluated in light of the climate crisis; all our actions have consequences. The positive framing of this is recognised in Nussbaum's argument for the causal properties of capabilities:

Health contributes causally to employment; education contributes causally to almost everything else on the list. Protecting women's bodily integrity from violence in the home enhances their ability to participate in employment and in politics.<sup>5</sup>

If we are truly concerned about the climate crisis, we need to engage with change in a way that cultivates virtue and seeks common goods; it is not only about the political and economic sphere (although these are undoubtedly important), but it is also about the formation of moral and just people who recognise their reliance on neighbour and cosmos. Part of our reliance on each other demands that we develop a theology of enough; while all people

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<sup>4</sup> See Martha Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (London: Belknap Press, 2009); and A. Sen, *Development as Freedom* (London: Oxford University Press, 2001). For discussion specifically relating to climate justice see Nussbaum, 'Climate Change: Why Theories of Justice Matter', *Chicago Journal of International Law*, 13.2, (2013), art. 9

<sup>5</sup> Nussbaum, 'Climate Change', p. 483.



require physical comfort and security it should not be enjoyed by some to excess, while others lack it entirely.<sup>6</sup>

A theology of enough will require us to carefully develop a language of sacrifice; some, particularly the rich and powerful, and many of those living in wealthier first world countries, will need to sacrifice at least some of their power and wealth for other – our demands of fossil fuels for heat, of having once-exotic fruit and vegetables year-round and cheap holidays in the sun all come at cost to someone, to peoples elsewhere, who become mere pawns in the supply chain while the ecological damage to their home is rarely taken into account. To accept that human beings have inherent value and non-instrumental worth is essential to a justice which does not only seek to give to each person what they deserve or are entitled to by the rules, but to fully appreciate their potential to participate in the community.<sup>7</sup> Climate justice asks that we go even further; it is not only the dignity of people that needs to be taken into account but the necessity of considering the whole of the created order in order. One way of thinking about this is ‘compassionate justice’, which does not stop at a legal justice, but instils an ‘ethos of compassion and sacrifice’ which in turn ‘bring forth a life of justice and dignity for all humans and the environment’.<sup>8</sup>

When talking about climate justice, there is the danger that it will be the voices of the rich and powerful, those who suffer least but have much to lose (in terms of wealth and power), that will dominate; the educated and the wealthy, those most able to protect themselves from the impact of climate change must not be allowed to silence the voices of the victims who offer a ‘primary and privileged insight into the nature of injustice’, into the devastating effects of climate change and experience first-hand the harsh reality of changing weather patterns. It is imperative that those with the power (or even the perceived power) recognise the suspicion with which they may be met, given the close links between power, wealth and carbon emissions; this necessitates looking outside of the locus of the white western world for creative responses to climate change, where theology actively engages in inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary dialogue that

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<sup>6</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. 1, Human Nature* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001 [1941]), p. 191.

<sup>7</sup> The rationality upon which we base this concept of human dignity has recently been contended because of the superiority which it appears to give us over animals. To argue that human beings deserve dignity because of their rationality excludes those non-rational animals.

<sup>8</sup> Nico Koopman, ‘Theology and the Fulfillment of Social and Economic Rights: Some Theoretical Considerations’, A. J. Van der Walt, *Theories of Social and Economic Justice*. (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2005), 128–40, p. 135.

encompasses science and theology, psychology and law. Climate justice is about taking the science of climate change and reacting to it with the whole of our lives – political, economic and ideological (for Christian theology, rooted in the goodness of God’s creation and the hope of a renewed creation with flourishing life for all).<sup>9</sup>

This climate justice issue of the journal is an initial attempt to broaden the theological discussions around climate justice. The diversity of the articles attests to the varied approaches of theology when talking about the created world and the rich contribution which is offered from the Christian tradition:

Alice Hague presents an overview of ecotheology, creation care and climate justice that can be used quite differently in different context, while all offering theological approaches to the relationship between the earth and humanity. She discusses this from the perspective of faith-based environmental engagement, situating this contextually in Scottish churches.

A voice from the global south comes from Rachel Mash, who writes of the impact of climate change in Southern Africa and how the church has responded to this, with the realisation that ‘the foundation for our climate justice work needs to be spiritual, which then forms the basis for the local actions and the advocacy’.

John White reflects on his call to establish a community garden church. With roots in the ancient monastic communities, this provides a space to worship God in the midst of creation, using and reusing all that has been given to us. It is an invitation to reconnect with creation, recognising our interconnectedness with nature, remembering that we are mortal creatures dependent upon finite creation.

James Currall offers a Christian perspective on the inequalities of climate change. It touches on different interpretations of the account of creation in Genesis 1 and possible problems arising with regard to the relationship between humanity and nature. Currall offers lament as one approach to the climate crisis, not forgetting that the search for justice and equality needs to be considered too in any discussion on climate change.

CL Nash addresses the issue of climate change and food supply, with a critical discussion of the story of Ruth. She emphasises how climate justice needs to be looked at in relation to poverty and argues that justice is needed

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<sup>9</sup> See Hilda P. Koster and Ernst M. Conradie, eds, *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Theology and Climate Change* (London: T&T Clark, 2019) for a collection of interdisciplinary essays that discuss climate change from a Christian perspective and offer a theological interpretation of the climate crisis.

for women in particular; the role that the church can play in honouring the Biblical mandate for *mishpat* needs to be taken seriously to combat apathy.

Ryan Turnbull focuses on rewilding, offering a theological assessment of wilderness ideology in early-modern colonial Protestantism, in particular the concept of *terra nullius* (empty land) as a basis to argue that we need to prioritise learning how to live well with all our relations by rejecting colonial modes of 'return' allowing humanity and nature the opportunity to flourish.

Richard Tiplady and Anne Tomlinson offer insight into 'greening the curriculum', moving from adding one more subject area to integrating environmental material throughout. They speak specifically of the Scottish Episcopal Institute's model of theological education and how it is focused on formation, and with particular regard to the climate crisis, enable students to become ministers who are committed to creation care.



# Practising Climate Justice in the Local Church<sup>1</sup>

ALICE HAGUE

The James Hutton Institute, Aberdeen

A few years ago, I undertook research in Edinburgh, seeking to understand why churches engage in environmental action within their congregations and communities. Working with churches that are members of Eco-Congregation Scotland, a Christian charity concerned with climate change and environmental conservation (and partner organisation for the SEC), I was interested in finding out what motivates people to engage with climate and environmental activity in the congregational context, and how such action is put into practice in the life of the church community. My research involved spending over a year participating in the community life of three congregations (Church of Scotland, United Reformed Church and a Catholic parish), and carrying out additional interviews with representatives of other churches in the city, including four SEC churches.

## ***Faith-based environmental engagement***

In May 2014, Christiana Figueres was Executive Secretary to the UNFCCC (the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the organisation under which annual COP meetings (such as COP26 in Glasgow) are held (COP being the ‘Conference of the Parties’ to the UNFCCC)). Ahead of the COP21 meeting in Paris, Figueres, the person who at that time was charged with corralling the world’s governments towards a climate change treaty, wrote an article calling on faith leaders to ‘find their voice’ on climate change, emphasising that climate change is an environmental, economic and social issue — as well as a moral and ethical one.<sup>2</sup> Yet Figueres’s call follows a significant level of engagement from faith-based organisations in environmental issues since the 1960s and 1970s in particular. The World Council of Churches (WCC) was calling for ‘a sustainable and just society’ in the context of environmental concerns as early as 1974, over a decade before the term ‘sustainable development’ was brought to public attention with the

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<sup>1</sup> The research in this article was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Research Grant number AH/K005456/1 and was conducted when the author was based at the University of Edinburgh.

<sup>2</sup> Christiana Figueres, ‘Faith leaders need to find their voice on climate change’, *Guardian*, 7 May 2014.

publication of the Brundtland Commission report,<sup>3</sup> for example. And in the USA, a 1987 report by the United Church of Christ (UCC) on 'Toxic Waste and Race in the United States' is widely acknowledged as an important foundation for the environmental justice movement, identifying the location and impact of toxic waste sites in the US on poor, predominantly African-American communities.<sup>4</sup> More recently, development organisations such as Christian Aid and Tearfund have been emphasising the impacts of climate change in the countries where they work, while other organisations and groups such as Operation Noah, Eco-Congregation Scotland, and Green Christian, have been working with churches and churchgoers in the UK to take action in their local context.

There is a large body of academic literature studying different aspects of faith-based environmentalism. Theologians and biblical scholars have led and contributed to discussions in an area known as ecotheology,<sup>5</sup> a field of study which South African theologian Ernst Conradie considers now has two sides: 'an ecological critique of Christianity, and a Christian critique of environmental destruction'.<sup>6</sup> Conradie speaks of an 'ecological reformation' underway in some Christian traditions, and highlights the integration of wider concerns and discourses including the WCC's language of a 'just, participatory and sustainable society' within ecotheological discussion. Conradie also highlights multi- and interfaith engagement around ecotheology as a fruitful area of study.

In addition to the field of ecotheology, a second body of academic inquiry takes a more social scientific approach, seeking to identify links, or otherwise, between religion (to date mostly Christianity, although increasingly looking more broadly as well) and environmental attitudes and behaviours. The vast majority of this research has been undertaken in the USA with inconclusive findings: some studies suggest that there is a positive

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<sup>3</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development, 'Our Common Future', 1987.

<sup>4</sup> J. Agyeman, D. Schlosberg, L. Craven, C. Matthews, 'Trends and Directions in Environmental Justice: From inequity to everyday life, community and just transitions', *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 41 (2016), 321–40.

<sup>5</sup> See for example R. Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the community of Creation* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010); Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*.

<sup>6</sup> E. Conradie, 'Christianity', in *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, ed. by W. Jenkins, M. E. Tucker and J. Grim (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 70–74.

relationship between religion and environmentalism;<sup>7</sup> other studies find a negative link,<sup>8</sup> while many also find no relationship, or inconclusive results.<sup>9</sup> Research in the UK is not as extensive, and suggests that in the UK, Christians and non-Christians do not necessarily have a different response in terms of attitudes to the natural world.<sup>10</sup>

Insights from qualitative research studies, often involving interviews with church leaders, or analysis of denominational statements about climate change or calls to action from local churches, often emphasise a biblically-grounded call to action about the need to include environmental concerns within a theological framework on the ground, but studies also show that church members often struggle to see a connection, or fail to see the need to take action, on such high-level statements, even from their own denominations. These findings emphasise the importance of delineating what a denomination or church leader says publicly from what is practised on the ground.

There is of course a great deal of engagement at the level of the local congregation on environmental issues and climate change, as well as on related issues such as sustainable consumption and fair trade. For those churches that are seeking to integrate environmental action into their everyday life, the language of *Creation Care* is probably the major theme discussed about religious environmentalism. This includes literature with an academic focus,<sup>11</sup> as well as literature aimed at a lay audience.<sup>12</sup> Creation care is an ethic that often includes the language of both creation care and ‘stewardship’ interchangeably and developed as a theme through the work of scholars seeking to understand the term ‘dominion’ as expressed in Genesis 1. 26–28, where ‘dominion’ is interpreted not necessarily as God

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<sup>7</sup> For example, T. Macias and K. Williams, ‘Know Your Neighbours, Save the Planet: Social Capital and the widening wedge of pro-environmental behaviours’, *Environment and Behaviour*, 48 (2016), 391–420.

<sup>8</sup> D. M. Konisky, ‘The greening of Christianity? A study of environmental attitudes over time’, *Environmental Politics*, 27.2 (2018), 267–91.

<sup>9</sup> For example, P. A. Djupe, and P. K. Hunt, ‘Beyond the Lynn White thesis: congregational effects on environmental concern’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 48 (2009), 670–86.

<sup>10</sup> B. C. Hayes and M. Marangudakis, ‘Religion and attitudes towards nature in Britain’, *British Journal of Sociology*, 52 (2001), 139–55.

<sup>11</sup> See for example, S. Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> For example, M. Hodson, and M. R. Hodson, *A Christian Guide to Environmental Issues* (Abingdon: The Bible Reading Fellowship, 2015).

giving humanity authority to 'rule over' the Creation, instead emphasising the necessity to 'till and keep' or 'care for' creation,<sup>13</sup> and developing from an ethic that is grounded in love for God, which should be inseparable from love for creation.

Another common driver for understanding environmental engagement in faith communities is an approach that focuses on fairness and equity and 'a just and sustainable existence for all of God's creation'.<sup>14</sup> This understanding is an inclusive ethic, grounded in concern for those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged, and is strongly linked with traditional social justice issues of concern to the Church. The WCC adopted the language of justice for environmental issues within their terminology of 'justice, peace and the integrity of creation' and continues to form a basis for their engagement in climate issues in recognition of the societal injustices caused by climate change. Indeed, as the impacts of climate change are increasingly affecting areas such as agriculture, health, food security, water and poverty, climate change is being recognised a social justice issue in a range of ecumenical contexts.<sup>15</sup>

The concept of climate justice is used differently in different contexts, including at the international level, where issues of historical responsibility, such as who bears blame for damage caused by climate change so far and thus who should contribute most to paying the cost today, feature in the international climate negotiations. Climate justice at the local level however has foundations both in the Church and in secular organisations, with common concerns about how the impacts of climate change are already felt by many who are vulnerable and who may lack resources to be able to respond to the effects of climate change, as well as how actions being taken both to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change can have a negative impact on some people more than others, and can leave some groups behind.<sup>16</sup> While both secular and faith-based environmental organisations draw on the concept of justice to support their calls for climate action, a study of narratives of action of Christian organisations (including Operation Noah and Eco-Congregation Scotland) and campaigning calls

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<sup>13</sup> L. Kearns, 'Saving the Creation: Christian Environmentalism in the United States', *Sociology of Religion*, 57.1 (1996), 55–70.

<sup>14</sup> S. McFague, *A new climate for theology: God, the world, and global warming* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> W. Jenkins, E. Berry and L. Beck Kreider, 'Religion and Climate Change', *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 43.9 (2018), 1–24.

<sup>16</sup> P. Hawken, *Blessed Unrest: How the largest movement in the world came into being, and why no-one saw it coming* (New York: Viking Press, 2007).



from secular organisations (e.g. WWF, the World Wide Fund for Nature), showed importantly that Christian organisations draw on concepts such as hope, responsibility, care for neighbours and connectedness across time (intergenerational connectedness) whereas non-faith-based organisations focused more on an immediate, urgent, and often apocalyptic presentation of concerns.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Researching climate justice in Scottish churches***

In each of the churches studied in-depth in my research and in interviews with other churches across Edinburgh, concern for justice was a strong driver of environmental activity. As I introduced myself as someone doing research about churches and the environment, people would regularly make reference to the fair-trade movement, mentioning things like the use of fairly traded tea and coffee in the church and at home, and highlighting fair-trade stalls in the church as ‘right up my street’, and pointing to their ‘climate champions’ notice which encourages parishioners to ‘shop ethically.’ On one occasion, I attended a service that included a particularly topical and strongly worded sermon about how society treats refugees as told through the perspective of a letter written to the prophet Amos. The minister described how the situation to which Amos had spoken thousands of years ago was perhaps not all that different from what is happening in Europe today, with the message that Christians who claim to care about people suffering should stand up and speak out on such issues. Despite there being no mention of climate change during the service, one of the church members I spoke with over coffee that day pointed out that the sermon was ‘exactly the kind of stuff you are interested in; social justice, fair-trade, and the like’.

Churchgoers at the Catholic church in my study emphasised the need to base their environmental engagement firmly within the context of the *option for the poor*, one of the key concepts of Catholic Social Teaching. Participants from this parish sought to create a community gardening project, encouraging churchgoers to learn about gardening and attempt to grow vegetables in the gardens and allotments, with the express intent of donating produce to the soup kitchen associated with their parish. And while this particular idea struggled to be put into practice, not least given the challenges of the Scottish growing season, the underlying sentiment was clear, as another interviewee commented ‘I find the justice and peace and the eco things are crossovers — you can’t really separate the two [...]’. The third church in my study grounded their decision to invest in solar panels in

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<sup>17</sup> E. Bomberg and A. Hague, ‘Faith-based Climate Action in Christian Congregations: Mobilisation and Spiritual Resources’, *Environmental Politics*, 23.5 (2018), 582–96.

terms of being the right thing to do to consider future generations, as well as a response to a denomination-wide initiative to reduce carbon emissions; connections with an international development partner congregation in Kenya raised awareness about water use in their own church buildings and encouraged the church to install water-saving devices throughout their building as a gesture of solidarity with their ecumenical partners.

Examples of churches and churchgoers expanding their understanding of social justice to include climate justice continued throughout my research. At a climate march ahead of the COP negotiations, I met with churchgoers walking with placards proclaiming, 'Love justice, do mercy, walk humbly' (Micah 6. 8) and 'Justice and Peace: Save our Earth'. Another churchgoer hosted a 'fashion exchange', encouraging re-use and recycling of clothing while also fundraising for a local charity — with an explicit commitment that proceeds would be put towards the purchase of energy-efficient lightbulbs for 'home-starter boxes' for previously homeless people setting up in new homes. One interviewee emphasised the work of Christian Aid in presenting the impacts of climate *injustice* effectively; I heard a sermon about the practice of fasting, encouraging parishioners also to reflect on the food waste in their homes as a reflection of empathy with those who do not have enough to eat; and another emphasising the value of a 'walk to church week' that went beyond reducing car miles travelled to church gatherings and instead spoke to proclaiming the Gospel message: 'In the global scale, your walk to [church] might seem like spitting in the wind of global warming; and yet it will mean everything, for it says, "I will not give in to you, despair and resignation: I'm a child of God."'

While growing food, reducing water use, and supporting the fair-trade movement might not be considered climate-related issues in and of themselves, we are increasingly recognising the interconnected nature of climate, consumption, food production and the like. Engagement in fair trade, is recognised within the auspices of the Eco-Congregation Scotland award scheme as a way of raising wider issues about trade and consumption, and about connections between Scotland and the wider world, and placing climate concerns within a strong social justice framing that considers issues beyond the natural environment.

### **Discussion**

The churches and church members in my study were motivated to engage in environmental issues in their congregational context through an understanding of justice that includes how the impacts of climate change are likely to be most strongly felt by those with the fewest resources to respond. Yet despite the framing of climate change as an issue of justice, not many of my research participants discussed 'climate justice' explicitly. In most cases,

a broad understanding of social justice and concern for others was the most important driver for engaging in environmental and climate change action. Given the increasing understanding of the impacts of climate change on those without resources or ability to respond, churchgoers in my study broadened their understanding of 'justice' to include concerns raised by climate change — concerns about the impacts of extreme weather events, flooding, food security etc. and how they are already affecting people with fewest resources to adapt. Building on concepts of social justice in a broad sense can be a useful way of integrating concerns about climate justice and climate change into congregation life in contexts where environmental issues are not familiar themes in the life of the church community.

Much of the intentional framing about climate justice in church contexts has been driven by development organisations such as Christian Aid and Tear Fund, based on their experiences in countries where the impacts of climate change are already significant. The calls for climate justice are rightly focused on those who will be most impacted, with climate change creating drought, threatening crops, sea level rise affecting island communities' very existence, and increasing heat making places uninhabitable. Yet with this summer's flooding in Germany and extreme heat across western US states such as Oregon and Washington, the practice of climate justice is a concept that should be considered in the domestic context as well. Already, we are seeing the impacts of wild weather events and flooding in Scotland, with long-lasting psychological and emotional impacts on people and communities, as well as practical challenges and questions of 'community resilience'.<sup>18</sup> As Donald Bruce reported at the General Synod in 2021: as the climate changes, some parts of Scotland will get wetter; others will get drier; the weather will become more unpredictable including more storms, flooding, wind damage, landslides, and crop damage, among other impacts. All these factors will create impacts on housing, heating and cooling buildings, fuel poverty, and food production, among other issues, and will raise questions of who in society has the ability to react and respond, and who might be left out, or left carrying the cost.

Statements and commitments by the SEC in recent years demonstrate a strong commitment to acting on climate change. A commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2030,<sup>19</sup> a change in the ethical investment policy of the

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<sup>18</sup> L. Philips, G. Dowds and M. Currie, 'Long-term impacts of flooding following the winter 2015/2016 flooding in north-east Scotland: Comprehensive Report' CRW2016\_02 (Scotland's Centre of Expertise for Waters (CREW), 2020).

<sup>19</sup> For example, SEC Synod 2021: Church in Society Committee.

SEC to divest institutional investments from fossil fuel companies (agreed at the 2019 General Synod); and the introduction of a ten-point plan for climate action by the church at all levels (at the 2021 Synod), are all strong statements that the SEC will play its role in ensuring positive action for climate justice. The challenge is to consider how to put those commitments into action.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> For further information see [Eco-Congregation Scotland](#) and [Scottish Episcopal Church Action Plan on Climate Change to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030](#).

# The Anglican Church of Southern Africa and Climate Injustice

RACHEL MASH

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The Anglican Church of Southern Africa is prioritising its response to climate change. Archbishop Tutu has called it 'the human rights issue of our time'. In this article we will explore the impact of climate change in Southern Africa, the response of the Church and consider what might be some of the learnings for other Provinces.

## ***The impact of climate change in Southern Africa***

In Southern Africa, we dreamed of one day making poverty history, but climate change is making poverty inevitable.

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa consists of six countries — South Africa, Eswatini (Swaziland), Lesotho, Angola, Mozambique and Namibia. Across Southern Africa, the impacts of climate change are reversing developmental achievements, as drought, sea level rise and extreme weather events are pushing more people into poverty.<sup>1</sup>

Namibia, the driest country south of the Sahara, suffered a devastating drought in 2019. In the North of Namibia, many people do not have a bank account, their herd of cattle is how they save — for the children's education, the daughter's wedding, their pension scheme. The government declared an emergency, advising people to slaughter their cattle before they became worthless. It was reported that older men became suicidal as they lost their entire life savings in one fell swoop.<sup>2</sup>

On the East of our Province, in March of 2019 Hurricane Idai slammed into Mozambique, destroying almost ninety percent of the city of Beira —

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<sup>1</sup> Alberto Ansuategi et al., 'The impact of climate change on the achievement of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals', *CDKN* (2015) [accessed 21 June 2021].

<sup>2</sup> Emilia Inman, Richard Hobbs, Zivanai Tsvuura., 'No safety net in the face of climate change: The case of pastoralists in Kunene Region, Namibia', *PLOS ONE* (September 2020).

which will go down in history as the first major city to be completely devastated by climate change.<sup>3</sup>

Why was the impact so severe? As the oceans warm, they create more evaporation, warmer air holds more water vapour, and so the intensity of rainfall is increased. Cyclone Idai produced nearly a year's worth of rain in just a few days. A severe drought over the last few years had hardened the soil, increasing run off of flood waters. In addition, over the last century since the city was founded, the ocean has risen nearly 30 centimetres, leaving Beira now below sea level. Aerial photographs of the devastation showed a vast inland sea, which took weeks to soak away, leaving harvests completely rotten and homes and belongings destroyed. In addition, the huge levels of commercial deforestation allowed the floods to rush through denuded soils. Faced with massive infrastructure damage, Mozambique borrowed heavily and is now stranded in an ever-increasing spiral of debt.

For Mozambique and Namibia, there is no safety net in the face of climate change.

Drought, severe weather events and sea level rise are the immediate effects of climate change. Climate change pushes those who are on the brink of survival into devastation, pushing many to leave their land and seek for work elsewhere. This leads to migration where they often face xenophobia in the South African cities where they go looking for work.<sup>4</sup> Climate change has severe health implications, affecting the fundamental requirements of safe drinking water, clean air, sufficient food, and secure shelter.<sup>5</sup>

Climate chaos is impacting severely on food security. A decade ago, many rural communities had fertile soil, plentiful supplies of maize, vegetables and fruit and the rivers were full of fish. In some places the rains were so predictable that festivals were fixed on the same day to celebrate the planting of seed, and the months were named after the seasons. Now life is dramatically different, crop yields have collapsed due to flooding, drought and extreme temperatures, rivers have dried up and are polluted, and fish is a memory.

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<sup>3</sup> A. Zacarias, "The First City Completely Devastated by Climate Change" Tries to Rebuild after Cyclone Idai *IPS* (March 2019) [accessed 21 June 2021].

<sup>4</sup> Miriam Moagi et al., 'Mozambican immigrants to South Africa: Their xenophobia and discrimination experiences', *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 28.3 (2018).

<sup>5</sup> J. Myers et al., 'A public health approach to the impact of climate change on health in southern Africa – identifying priority modifiable risks', *South African Medical Journal*, 101.11 (2011) [accessed 9 September 2021].

There are many indirect effects. Fewer children are in school due to malnutrition. Many people are leaving for the towns, and young people may drift into crime out of desperation. Girls are at risk of sexual harassment, walking longer and longer distances to find water.

Here at home, in Cape Town, we recently experienced a devastating drought, becoming the first major city to face 'Day Zero' when all our taps were to be turned off. Capetonians responded incredibly, changing our lifestyles and reducing water usage by fifty percent. The biggest impact was on the poorest of the poor as 30,000 casual labourers lost their jobs in the agricultural sector and food prices shot up.

People say, 'We are all in the same boat'. We are not. We may be in the same storm, but some are in yachts, and some are clinging desperately to a sinking log.

### ***Response of the church***

What then has been the response of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa?

I used to think the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought that with 30 years of good science we could address those problems. But I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy [...] [...] and to deal with those we need a spiritual and cultural transformation and we scientists don't know how to do that.<sup>6</sup>

We have realised that the foundation for our climate justice work needs to be spiritual, which then forms the basis for the local actions and the advocacy.

### ***Spiritual response***

The starting point for our ministry is a spiritual change. The Fifth Mark of Anglican Mission is 'To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.'<sup>7</sup>

We must start with lament, recognising that the integrity of creation is being destroyed, the web of life is unravelling. We need to recognise that the devastation of God's creation has taken place with the undergirding of a Western theology that came with colonialism, that saw creation as a

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<sup>6</sup> We scientists don't know how to do that – what a commentary [accessed 9 September 2021].

<sup>7</sup> The Five Marks of Mission [accessed 21 June 2021].

resource to be exploited, rather than a web of life to be treasured and protected. The first commandment that we were given (Genesis 2. 15) was to work the land and take care of it. This we have failed to do and now living topsoil is eroded, forests have been cut down and the rivers polluted.

We are being called to 'renew the life of the earth'. Embracing this mission, we are running ecotheology seminars and eco-retreats for clergy. Recognising the key role of young people, we have developed materials for Sunday school — Ryan the Rhino,<sup>8</sup> and youth — 'Care for Creation'.<sup>9</sup> We provide liturgical resources for important environmental days such as World Water Day, World Environment Day, and others.

One of the most significant actions that we have taken as a Province is to embrace the Season of Creation. In our liturgical calendar we have times of the year when we consider God the Son — at Easter and Christmas, and God the Spirit — at Pentecost. But when do we delve down and discover what Scripture is telling us about Creation? For the last eight years we have been celebrating the Season of Creation, and more and more churches are coming on board. What used to be seen as fringe is now becoming mainstream — we are beginning to impact the spiritual 'DNA' of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa

Because of the threat of drought, we have looked again at the meaning of baptism — for we become members of the family of God through the sacred waters of baptism. There are 722 verses in the Bible that talk about water. Water revives, restores, heals, and cleanses. Water is for us, then, our sacred element, to be protected and guarded. To waste or pollute water is indeed a sin.

We have looked with new eyes at fasting during the Season of Lent, realising that for many it is a time to abstain from a personal luxury such as alcohol or chocolate. We have called for a Fast for the Earth, a carbon fast, where we abstain from practices that cause damage to the Earth. Each year we provide a calendar of 40 actions on different themes showing ways in which we can reduce our footprint. For many people, once they have done a specific action for a month, it becomes part of their lifestyle going forward.

In our worship, we remember that God speaks to us through creation, even though we are often so enclosed in our four walls that we do not listen, 'The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech, night after night they reveal knowledge' (Psalm 19. 1-2), and so we encourage people to take services

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<sup>8</sup> Rachel Mash, '[Ryan the Rhino, Caring for Creation](#)' (2015) [accessed 21 June 2021].

<sup>9</sup> Rachel Mash, '[Care for Creation – Youth Manual](#)' (2019) [accessed 9 September 2021].



outside — holding Church in Creation. This has been a particularly important step during COVID as it increases the number of people who can attend church and keeps the congregation much safer.

### ***Local action***

Once people have made the connection spiritually and realised how clear the call in the bible is to care for creation, the parish or diocese is encouraged to take local action. How do we get churches to see environmental actions as part of their call as Christians?

Nelson Mandela once said, ‘if you speak in a language that a person understands, you speak to their head, but if you speak in their mother tongue, you speak to their heart’.<sup>10</sup> This is true also of our spiritual language. When we speak of ‘eco-system restoration’ or ‘environmental actions’ people wonder what that has to do with God’s call. But when you speak of ‘renewing the face of the earth’ or ‘caring for creation’ you speak to their hearts.

There are many actions that can be taken to combat climate change, we need to be involved both in mitigation — reducing our carbon footprint, and in adaptation — adapting to the changes which climate change has already caused.

Tree planting: what we have discovered is that we need to move from tree planting to tree growing. Trees need to be nurtured and watered for two years until the roots reach the water table. And so, we have linked tree planting with spiritual rituals — for instance young people have a tree sapling blessed at confirmation, trees are planted at baptism, marriage, birthdays, and patronal festivals. This year memorial trees have become very important as so many people were not able to attend funerals. We have indeed discovered that ‘the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations’ (Revelation 22. 2). Some dioceses are creating seedling nurseries so that planting trees becomes accessible and affordable.

Reduce our footprint: churches are encouraged to do an audit and to reduce their water, petrol, electricity, and paper usage. COVID has assisted us greatly in reducing our air miles for meetings — since people are travelling much less. Many dioceses are successfully going paperless for meetings and churches are sending the bulk of their pew leaflets electronically.

Catering: we are encouraging environmental practices during church catering that will showcase ideas for cooking at home, reducing meat consumption, reducing waste, and composting.

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<sup>10</sup> Istiar Lakar, ‘Mandela was right — the foreign language effect’, Mapping Ignorance, (2014) [accessed 21 June 2021].

Food gardening: during COVID, with the huge challenges of food security, we realised again that church land should be used for food security, and many churches are training people to grow their own food. It is important to teach that this is also part of our spiritual life, not something that we just 'do'; made in the image of God, we are co-creators with God. Organic farming which doesn't use artificial fertilizers heals the soil and the land begins to function as a carbon sink.

One of the most significant actions we have taken was to 'Green the Canons', this means that environmental ministry has now been added to the role of the task of the Incumbent, church wardens and parish council. A report must be given at vestry meetings on the environmental actions of the parish.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Advocacy***

Within our region two of the most burning advocacy issues involve fossil fuel companies. In Northern Namibia a start-up Canadian company called ReconAfrica bought the rights to drill for oil in more than 35,000 square kilometres of the Kavango Basin. This environmentally sensitive, protected area supplies water to the Okavango Delta, a World Heritage and Ramsar Wetland Site, a Key Biodiversity Area and one of the seven natural wonders of Africa. Grave concerns were expressed about the potential damage to groundwater in this water scarce country as well as the rights of Indigenous peoples being abused. The public participation process was not followed, and most Namibians woke up to hear that the drilling had already started. The local Namibian paper that broke the story was threatened with being sued by ReconAfrica.<sup>12</sup>

The Bishop of Namibia, Luke Pato, brought the issue to the attention of the church and a petition was drawn up, signed by all the bishops of Southern Africa as well as two archbishops from Canada. The petition was handed over to the Namibian consulate and the headquarters of Recon Africa in Vancouver by an interfaith partner, Kairos Canada. A silent protest was also held on the steps of St George's Cathedral in Cape Town. This generated quite a lot of press coverage as they were able to report on the Kavango threat, via the bishops' petition without getting sued!<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Anglican Church of Southern Africa, 'Canon 28.4(a) on pastoral charges' [accessed 21 June 2021].

<sup>12</sup> Tuyakula Musheko, 'Canadian oil driller threatens to sue the Namibian', *Namibian*, (16 Feb 2021) [accessed 21 June 2021].

<sup>13</sup> Sheree Bega, 'Stop oil and gas drilling in Namibia's Kavango basin says the Anglican Church', *Mail and Guardian* (8 March 2021) [accessed 21 June 2021].

At the same time in Northern Mozambique, severe violence has broken out, as an insurgent group called 'Al Shabaab' has terrorized local villagers in the areas of drilling by Total.<sup>14</sup> Ernesto Manuel has called for investors to take their money out of fossil fuels and invest in renewable energy:

Fossil fuel investments increase climate change and impacts on those most vulnerable, and also destabilise communities. We have seen how over 700,000 people in Northern Mozambique have been displaced — many fleeing for their lives in terror from insurgents. Dozens have been beheaded, even children as young as 12. This violence only occurs in the areas where gas prospecting is taking place. Locals are not consulted and nor do they benefit, only suffering the impacts of rising prices, pollution and loss of land. We plead with the international community — take your money out of fossil fuels and invest in renewable energy which is decentralised, benefits local people and does not contribute to climate change.<sup>15</sup>

Advocacy is often defined as to — 'Speak up for those who have no voice' (Proverbs 1. 31). In reality, all people impacted by climate change and fossil fuel extraction have a voice, the problem is that no one is listening. Our task is to amplify their voices so that they can be heard.

### **Conclusion**

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa has been able to mobilise the Church on many levels to combat climate change. We have re-examined our theology and liturgical year. We are acting on a local level, both to mitigate and reduce our own carbon emissions, and to adapt to the changes which we are already experiencing. We have changed our canons, to incorporate issues of the environment into the DNA of the church.<sup>16</sup> And we are acting to advocate for countries threatened by the continuing exploratory drilling by fossil fuel companies. We have been able to do this because we do not see

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<sup>14</sup> 'Bishop Manuel live on BBC World News', *MANNA* (March 2021) [accessed 21 June 2021].

<sup>15</sup> James Buchanan, 'Faith Institutions divest from fossil fuels and call for just recovery ahead of G7 and COP26', *Operation Noah* (17 May 2021) [accessed 21 June 21].

<sup>16</sup> Anglican Church of Southern Africa 'Canons of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa' [accessed 21 June 2021].

climate change as an environmental issue but as a human rights and social justice issue — the key one for our generation.

# A Reflection on Creating a Community Garden Church

JOHN WHITE

Head of Hazelnut Community Farm

The idea for a community garden church had an unexpected beginning ten years ago when my family and I went on a day trip to Melrose Abbey in the Scottish Borders. Walking through this sacred space, long since abandoned by the religious community, I was fascinated by the descriptions of the life and ministry of the monks who lived there. The signboards described community life that was governed by rhythms of prayer and a lifestyle that was based on growing food, providing education for the community, offering hospitality, and supplying medicine and basic medical care. In its day, the Abbey was the heart of the community, providing nourishment for soul and body.

What caught my imagination was how practical and holistic this communal life had been. It was a religious community that did not only offer worship and prayer but engaged with the local population as a living witness to the Gospel, caring for mind and body as well as heart and soul. I left with the question reverberating in my head: What if we could create spaces like Melrose Abbey, for our time? This led me on a journey to engage with others who are writing and thinking about the wealth of wisdom from past religious communities and how their witness can impact the Church today.

Eight years later, after much reading about the religious life and studying new forms of monasticism, I found myself in my first year of curacy (in the Church of England) still thinking and pondering about how I might create a sacred space that had the flavour of Melrose Abbey. With these thoughts in the back of my mind, I took my children to visit Windmill City Farm in Bristol on a free afternoon. Built on a site that had been bombed during World War II and left to be overrun by rats until the council decided to tarmac it for parking, it was eventually saved by the local community who fought back to reclaim the space, ultimately building a beautiful community farm in the middle of the city.

It was a beautiful warm day when we visited, and I took great pleasure in watching my children climb trees and run around the allotments. I felt deep joy as I stood there, taking in the beautiful green space that had been created in the midst of an urban environment. I recognized that this modern city farm had many of the elements of the historic abbey life. It is a hub for the community to gather together around food and education. The only thing

it lacked was a sacred space, where people were able to encounter and connect with the Creator.

On that day I had what Pope Francis would call an 'ecological conversion',<sup>1</sup> a change of heart and mind when thinking about the world and our relationship with it that is inspired by a rediscovery of the deep wells of our faith. This conversion opened my eyes to the beautiful and unique ways in which the earth declares creator God and convinced me that the climate emergency is the biggest issue facing the Church today and one that will need swift, radical, and imaginative solutions. Plans grew in my mind for a church plant that would have as its core a church rooted in nature; a sacred space that engaged deeply with climate emergency.

Fast forward two years and we are well on our way to seeing this vision become a reality with two community gardens in Bristol and an ever-increasing network of supportive growing projects. Despite the original motivation of the climate emergency for meeting in nature, it is here that we have encountered Christ and one another in a deep and meaningful way; unforeseen and yet completely welcome. Here are a few reflections from the establishment of Hazelnut Community Farm, a community garden church.

### ***A lost image***

Norman Wirzba, a professor at Duke Divinity School with an interest in ecology, agrarian and environmental studies, writes about *ecological amnesia* that manifests itself physically and existentially.<sup>2</sup> This amnesia is a loss of connection with creation and its rhythms from our daily lives. As we disconnect from creation and its provision of food, air, and shelter we believe that there is an endless supply of resources to which we are entitled. We commodify the earth, intent that it will provide for our every want at the click of a button. We are disconnecting from our very selves as we are unable to understand our context as creatures within God's creation and our home on earth becomes foreign to us as we strive to live as gods, seeking infinity and life without limits. Our entertainment is watching the wealthy (a habit perpetuated in the media and reality television and exacerbated by social media), and this escapism brings with it the belief that morality and superiority, both so closely linked to wealth, are inseparable from consumption on demand. Our churches mirror this loss of connection to creation. We have given in to living a gnostic life where we strive for spiritual

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2015), p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Fred Bahnson and Norman Wirzba, *Making Peace with the Land: God's Call to Reconcile with Creation*, Resources for Reconciliation (Downers Grove: IVP, 2012), p. 28.

revelations from our worship music, liturgies, and sermons, looking to charismatic and famous faith leaders who will lead us toward revelation through their platitudes — affirming the belief that wealth and a limitless existence are nothing less than what we are entitled to. We have lost the image of creation that roots us in our humanness, an image that expresses our humanity as mortal creatures with needs that are dependent upon a finite creation. In this view, people become commodities alongside the natural world, with intrinsic value inseparable from economic and commercial value.

Wirzba goes on to describe the loss of the image of creation as leading to the loss of the image of each other:

Our growing separation from the land and our lack of understanding of the land's integrity results in a growing separation from people. Just as we view land abstractly — as a pile of natural resources — we also come to see people abstractly — as fodder for the growing economy. People cease to matter except if they contribute to a business plan.<sup>3</sup>

As we lose the image of the earth, people, and the Creator we are set adrift from our image and context, turning to consumption and power to fill the void. It is this disconnect with the natural world, and indeed with ourselves as creatures, that makes it impossible to respond to the climate emergency despite knowing how pressing it is. Before we can act, we need to give up the gods that we have created.

With what then are we left? I suggest that the journey back to finding the images we have lost is through the creation of 'ugly churches' and 'cathedrals of earth'.

### ***Ugly church***

The main idea of ugly church is that the Church needs to be a place of active redemption and biodiversity. Ugly church seeks to model redemption by taking the discarded and abandoned materials of consumerist culture and transforming them into a sacred space. Ugly Church takes its inspiration from an unpublished reflection on the journey of Samuel Ewell, an ecological missionary in Birmingham, toward ecological conversion. He writes about a conversation in Brazil, where he encountered a new monastic community, called Casa da Videira. Ewell recalls a conversation with Claudio Oliver, a member of the community:

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<sup>3</sup> Bahnson and Wirzba, *'Making Peace'*, p. 33.

We understand that what Jesus offers to us is this sensation of being alive, enjoying life, living abundantly. All this starts when we look to those pieces of life, sent to die as garbage and reintroduce them into the cycle of life, respecting them as part of creation. It's a process that begins in the soil and ends at our tables. We harvest our veggies from this cycle, we breed our animals inside of it [...] Where the world sees garbage, we see nourishment; where the world sees death, we see life; in a world of loneliness, we discover community.<sup>4</sup>

In a broken world that has lost the image of creation, community, and Creator there is an opportunity for the Church to see the discarded things of this world, as the very things that God wants to make beautiful. What the world calls ugly and worthy of discarding we see as beautiful and worthy of bearing the image of God in redemption.

The theology behind the idea of an ugly church is taking materials that are not shiny and new but instead recycled, reclaimed, upcycled, and donated, using them to build a worshipping space that is placed at the centre of the land. The ugly church is a physical symbol of Jesus's redemption for all of creation. Jesus can make beautiful and whole that which is ugly, discarded and broken. Ugly church is a sacred space that is literally living lament as we watch the cycles of death, decay, and rebirth. We grieve the waste of a throwaway culture, while also seeing its transformation into places of life and growth, such as flower beds, play areas, fire pits, and pizza ovens.

These ugly spaces are the logical hubs of community in a world dealing with a climate emergency. On 25 June 2019 a UN climate report stated that the world is heading for climate apartheid, drawing attention to the stark reality that:

Climate change will have devastating consequences for people in poverty. Even under the best-case scenario, hundreds of millions will face food insecurity, forced migration, disease, and death. Climate change threatens the future of human rights and risks undoing the last fifty years of progress in development, global health, and poverty reduction.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Sam Ewell, '[Caring for our Common Home](#)' (20 July 2020) [accessed 8 September 2021].

<sup>5</sup> United Nations, Human Rights Council, 'Climate Change and Poverty, Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights', (2019), p. 1.



Current political and economic models are not prepared for this level of poverty and the accompanying migration, as people move from a place of death and destruction to seek food, shelter, and life. The Church must prepare for this coming 'climate apartheid' with '[b]old and creative thinking from the human rights community, and a radically more robust, detailed, and coordinated approach'.<sup>6</sup> Ugly church is not just a fresh expression of church, designed to increase numbers of churchgoers; it is a way of preparing now for a future where parishes will face challenges of food shortages, increased migration, and poverty. By creating sacred spaces for communities that can grow fruit and vegetables to sustain life as well as building structures out of waste encouraging us to be more mindful of what we use and how we use it, we expand our faith, our worship, and our relationship with God into new territory. Ugly church is an experiment in an alternative way of being church for a time of climate change that is coming and will challenge the way we live. Not only is this community inviting us to new ways of being as part of creation, but it is also creating a place for those on the margins of society who feel that their lives are too ugly to fit into pristine churches.

### ***Cathedrals of earth***

As a response to the awakening at Windmill City Farm, my family and I began to plant and grow vegetables at home. I was surprised by the joy I felt in planting seeds with my family — being part of the earth, getting our hands dirty, delighting in the first green shoots, patiently waiting for the harvest. With gardening and eco-initiatives on the rise through the Covid pandemic, many other people are having a similar experience. Could this be a sign that there is a hunger for a different approach to church?

The UK has historically been rooted in an agrarian culture. Traditionally, after a long day working the land, people would yearn to go to a dark, cool, beautiful church or cathedral to experience holy spaces and transcendent worship completely different from the backbreaking work on the farm. However, the church, with historic and sometimes inaccessible buildings, is increasingly seen by many as an institution that they feel uncomfortable attending, as valuable as the presence of the building in the community may still be. I would argue that contemporary cathedrals, especially for a world in the midst of the climate crisis, are not made out of stone and glass but out of earth and seed. As people are returning to work the land and enjoy the earth in a very practical way, they are rediscovering

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<sup>6</sup> Human Rights Council, 'Climate Change and Poverty'. For more on climate apartheid, see also Jennifer L. Rice et al., 'Against Climate Apartheid: Confronting the Persistent Legacies of Expendability for Climate Justice', *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space* (March 2021).

the images that have been lost to our technological, consumerist culture. The awe and wonder that is all too often found in buildings, gadgets and the plethora of 'stuff' that accompanies life in the twenty-first century is no longer found in the earth. Already in the middle of the last century, Bonhoeffer addressed this issue of modern living. He wrote about the ability of technology to become the master of humanity, and, as a result of this 'we lose the ground so that the earth no longer remains our earth, and we become estranged from the earth'.<sup>7</sup> We become friends of the earth not through new technology but through engaging directly with the earth. Getting a bit of dirt under your fingernails is the liturgy that we have been longing for.

The unexpected encounter with nature and with ugly church led to the establishment of Hazelnut Community Farm. There are five 'Cs' that shape the values of Hazelnut: community (all are welcome), Creator (rooted in the Christian faith), creation (modelling new ways to live), construction (making beauty out of the discarded pieces of a throwaway culture) and creativity (taking seriously the joy of new creation). At Hazelnut the entire time is immersive and involved. We find lost images emerging from unlikely places. Birdsong as the backdrop for our prayers, unexpected conversations over a raised bed, standing around watching bees and counting their stripes, finding awe and wonder. The entire garden is a sacred space. In fact, it is our church, and we get to grow the walls of our church. This is a church that changes with the seasons, showing us the seasons and patterns of life and thereby helping us to discover new rhythms in our lives. Sharing from the produce of our worship, a sweet strawberry, a head of lettuce, or a bouquet of sweet peas makes worship tangible and bridges the gap between the hospitality of the altar and the hospitality of the dinner table. Caring for creation has helped to develop a community for Hazelnut Community Farm that encompasses God, people, and ecology:

Gardening is the art of creating and facilitating beneficial interactions in the ecology of relationships; I would argue that the same could be said about the relationship between ecological conversion and mission. We must value the edges in the local ecology of relationships, approaching them as privileged sites for

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<sup>7</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, translated from the German edition, ed. by Wayne Whitson Floyd, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, III (Minneapolis, Minn: Fortress Press, 1997), p. 67.

reimagining mission and life together with neighbors in our shared garden.<sup>8</sup>

Lives lived together become diverse, like a shared garden, where those on the fringe become those at the centre. The Gospel is propagated through caring for each other and visibly seeing life lived another way.

Words of Pope Francis sum up the theology of holy biodiversity and capture the vision for Hazelnut Community Farm as we begin our wonderful pilgrimage of rediscovering our lost images:

Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river, and mother earth.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Samuel Ewell, unpublished.

<sup>9</sup> Francis, *Laudato Si'*, p. 47.



# From Climate Crisis to Climate Justice

JAMES CURRALL

Priest-in-Charge, Dornoch, Tain, Brora, Lairg and Tongue

The climate crisis, which has been creeping up on us for years, is a reflection and a cause, of deep injustice in our world. This crisis arises from the abuse of God's creation, and our broken relationship with our neighbours worldwide and especially the poor and those in less developed parts of the world who are already suffering most from its consequences.

Over the last four or five decades, prophetic voices have been speaking of the dangers of environmental degradation and climate change. It is however only in the last decade or so that these subjects have become a prominent element in political discourse, as the tangible effects of global warming, changes in rainfall patterns, loss of habitat, changes in species distribution and crop failure have become only too apparent and are now having a serious economic and social impact around the world.

Before we start, we should acknowledge that many of the most difficult and seemingly intractable issues in our world today are highly trans-disciplinary in nature, there are few simple solutions and input is needed from a wide variety of disciplines. This is no more true than in the case of climate change. There are obviously scientific, technical and engineering aspects, but solutions require more than 'technological fixes'. There are inherent inequalities involved which raise ethical and justice issues and significant behavioural changes are needed, requiring insights from psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

This piece primarily considers the issue from a Christian perspective — from a faith rather than a secular point of view, but if we do that to the exclusion of all else, we run the risk of appearing to be burying our heads in the sand and failing to acknowledge our individual and collective responsibility to act and to change. As Gandhi said:

If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. This is the divine mystery supreme. A wonderful thing it is and the source of our happiness. We need not wait to see what others do.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works* (1913), XIII, p. 241, often misquoted as 'Be the change that you want to see.'

As Christians, our approach starts and ends with God, so prayer and reflection should be an integral part of the way that we respond to these issues. However, everything that we do is likely to have consequences beyond our primary intention, so prayer and reflection are also central to discerning what actions to take, so as not to increase injustice and inequality.

When the climate crisis is discussed in churches, the focus is often on changes to how we do *the same things* to reduce their environmental impact. However, much the same conversation would take place in any organisation. So what does a Christian perspective bring and what can such a perspective add to and interact with the approaches and contributions of other disciplines? In this paper, we start by looking at the root of the problem and consider its underlying cause. We then consider the history of the Church's attitude to creation and how also God's people have responded to and continue to respond to crises, loss and grief, in prayer and lament and the role that has in a Christian response to the climate crisis.

In groping for solutions to complex problems we often become rather myopic in our approach, focussing on one aspect whilst ignoring all else, or adopting practices that whilst aiming towards one goal actually take us further from others. This can have serious ethical consequences particularly if a scientific or technical 'solution' directly or indirectly increases inequality and injustice. Similarly, one way for a country to appear to be having less impact in the world, is for it to export either its waste or its pollution. We will consider these aspects and the ethical and moral issues that they raise.

Whilst some of the detail may seem a little esoteric, the consequences for many of our sisters and brothers around the world are anything but. In our response to the climate crisis, there are many important ethical principles at stake and although many practices may be well intentioned, that is no guarantee of good results or just outcomes. In discerning what actions to take we all need to develop a questioning and critical awareness of vested interests and 'quick fixes' that seem to allow us to continue as normal but with a green twist, rather than real changes to behaviours and patterns of consumption.

Finally, we focus specifically on the injustice and inequalities that lie at the heart of the climate issue and the prophetic voice, speaking truth to power, that the Church needs to contribute, as the world struggles to find ways to deal with what is a rapidly developing crisis.

### ***The root of the problem***

Many books and reports have been written on climate change, ecological crisis and environmental over-exploitation since the early sixties.<sup>2</sup> The majority of these present figures and graphs and many rather dry ‘facts’ and even though they offer an analysis of what needs to be done and when, they do not generally make a connection to the lives of ordinary people, let alone engage busy political leaders. This literature shows us the historical trends and provide forecasts of the dire consequences if action is not taken soon. However, for most of us the scale of the environmental problems seems far beyond our ability to make a difference, leading to what has been termed ‘Climate Anxiety’.

At the heart of it all, global warming and other forms of environmental degradation are caused by over-consumption, primarily in the developed world. This is an inconvenient truth that is frequently glossed over by politicians and commentators, largely because it would mean real change, rather than attempting to ‘green’ business-as-usual. The awkward reality is that there is no solution that is not underpinned by substantially reduced consumption in the developed world. Dealing with that demands difficult decisions that are likely to be deeply unpopular and within the timescales of the political cycle, would require great courage. It is far easier to set targets well beyond the timescale of one’s political ambitions and thus make delivery someone else’s problem.

In its recent report, *Planes, Homes and Automobiles: The Role of Behaviour Change in Delivering Net Zero*, the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change concludes: ‘behaviour change is unavoidably a much more important part of the response to climate change than has been the case to date’. Consumption is a ‘behaviour’ for which we are all responsible. Everything we buy has a carbon footprint, everything we use has a carbon footprint and everything we consume has a carbon footprint. That footprint results from the sum of a number of links in a chain of activities. It starts with the *extraction* of raw materials, used for the *manufacture* of the goods and commodities, which are then *transported* to where they are *purchased* and

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<sup>2</sup> Two of the most influential were Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* in 1962 and Kenneth Mellanby’s *Pesticides and Pollution* in 1967. What both these works did was to ask the unthinkable question — ‘Are some of the chemicals being used in the name of agriculture having a lasting and damaging effect on the environment?’. What both of these authors did, was to write in a style that was accessible to a lay audience. Both these books were prophetic, and their warnings are as relevant now as they were over half a century ago.

*used*. A period of use follows and finally there is the *disposal* of items when they are no longer required or broken beyond repair.

The only real solution is a reduction in consumption for each of us individually and for us all collectively. How we actually do that depends very much on our circumstances as individuals, communities and nations. Whilst we all have choices, for some the scope of choice is wide, but for other individuals, communities or nations it is a struggle simply to provide sufficient food, let alone have choices as consumers. It is incumbent on those who have the resources to be able to afford to make choices as consumers, to exercise what discretion they have wisely.

Fortunately, reduction in demand for goods and commodities is something that we as consumers can each take responsibility for. We can also influence the distance that goods are transported by our buying habits, the circumstances in which they are produced, and we can ensure that items that we no longer use can find a new home if they have not reached the end of their useful lives.

### ***The church and creation***

In 1967, Lynn White Jr. a medieval historian, wrote an article in which he argued that a Western theology of 'dominion' based on the creation myths in Genesis (and in particular Genesis 1. 28) had fuelled an ecological crisis. Technological and scientific advances in the Christian West and the ecological crisis that they had precipitated, had resulted from conceiving humanity as superior to and dominant over the rest of the created world:

Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen. [...] Man shares, in great measure, God's transcendence of nature. Christianity, in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia's religions (except, perhaps, Zoroastrianism), not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends.<sup>3</sup>

The fact that most people do not think of these attitudes as Christian is irrelevant. No new set of basic values has been accepted in our society to displace those of Christianity. Hence, we shall continue to have a worsening ecologic crisis until we reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Lynn Townsend White, 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis', *Science*, 155.3767 (1967), 1203–7 (p. 1205).

<sup>4</sup> White, 'Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis', p. 1207.



These are bold claims, and to validate them one would have to show that scientific and technological advances had occurred predominantly in Christian countries over the last two millennia. As Peacock argues,<sup>5</sup> this is manifestly not true. Human beings exploited their environment long before the writing of Genesis; the rapid development of science and technology has proceeded at a different pace in different parts of the Christian world and such advances have occurred in parts of the world with little or no Judaeo-Christian history. None of that invalidates all of White's arguments, but his expertise is as a medieval historian rather than as a theologian although a key element of his argument draws directly on Genesis 1:

Finally, God had created Adam and, as an afterthought, Eve to keep man from being lonely. Man named all the animals, thus establishing his dominance over them. God planned all of this explicitly for man's benefit and rule: no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man's purposes.<sup>6</sup>

This reading of the Creation myth of Genesis is not one shared by theologians such as Horrell,<sup>7</sup> Rogerson,<sup>8</sup> and many others, who argue for a much more nuanced approach to the interpretation of scriptural texts and in particular in the case of Genesis 1.

Using interpretations of Genesis 1. 28 as a stick to beat ourselves with is neither justified nor helpful to our purpose. It is however important to understand that although theology in the Eastern Orthodox Churches has a long tradition of theological reflection on creation, with a strong sense of humanity as part of creation, sharing in creation's praise of God, Western theology has had other preoccupations. The Western view of redemption is that it is primarily an ethical matter and in the writing of, for instance, Augustine and Anselm, humanity is seen as apart from the natural world. Consequently Christianity (and salvation) is primarily concerned with

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<sup>5</sup> Arthur Peacock, 'On "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis"', in *Man and Nature*, ed. by Hugh Montefiore (London: Collins, 1975), pp. 155–58.

<sup>6</sup> White, 'Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis', p. 1205

<sup>7</sup> David G. Horrell, 'Human Dominion over Creation', in *The Bible and the Environment: Towards a Critical Ecological Biblical Theology* (London: Equinox Publishing, 2010), pp. 23–36

<sup>8</sup> John W. Rogerson, 'The Creation Stories: Their Ecological Potential and Problems', in *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Perspectives*, ed. by David G. Horrell and others (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2010), pp. 21–31.

personal and social existence, with little to say about the destiny of the universe.

The Eastern view also embraces the physical or natural world and sees humanity at the heart of the natural world. Orthodoxy in both Hellenistic and Oriental cultures (so far as language defined a cultural difference) was essentially united on this point. So, Hellenism, and Platonism in particular, do not account for different Christian positions on humanity in relation to nature. Patristic writing sees salvation more holistically as Personal and Cosmic, Social and Universal.<sup>9</sup>

Before the Reformation in Europe, there was an element of balance between nature and grace in the Roman Church's understanding, but after the Reformation, the Protestant Churches increasingly emphasised grace to the exclusion of nature and so the differences in approach became more clearly defined. Increasingly in the West, nature became the domain of science and grace of religion:

Calvin stressed that the creation is not God, and his immediate disciples and successors perhaps exaggerated and oversimplified this into a dichotomy which leaves nature godless and seems to free man from any inhibitions towards it. Luther, by contrast, insisted that the creation is God's creation and is therefore worthy of respect because it is the divine handiwork.<sup>10</sup>

Harold Oliver summarises the situation in the West as follows:

After the breakdown of the medieval synthesis and the rise of the Protestant religion of grace, the Roman Catholic interpretation of 'nature and grace' became increasingly focused on soteriological and anthropological issues [...] The Western Church in its main manifestations lost sight of the larger vision of the place of humanity in the cosmos.<sup>11</sup>

If we see the Creation purely as a past 'event' and its result, we will have a very different view of the relationship between God, nature, and humanity

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<sup>9</sup> A. M. Allchin, 'The Theology of Nature in the Eastern Fathers and among Anglican Theologians', in *Man and Nature*, ed. by Hugh Montefiore (London: Collins, 1975), pp. 143–54.

<sup>10</sup> *Man and Nature*, ed. by Hugh Montefiore, p. 24.

<sup>11</sup> Harold H. Oliver, 'The Neglect and Recovery of Nature in Twentieth-Century Protestant Thought', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 60.3 (1992), 379–404 (p. 379).

than if we understand creation as a continuing process, in which both God and humanity are intimately involved with nature. In short, is present and future evolution a result of the way that the created world was designed or a continuing part of the process of creation and thus part of the revelation of God?

In the forward to the *Man and Nature* report of a Church of England Working Group chaired by Hugh Montefiore in 1975, Michael Ramsey writes:

Amidst much practical concern and action about the 'environment', and much exhortation on behalf of such concern and action, there has been the need for a presentation of the Christian understanding of the matter.<sup>12</sup>

In 2019, Hannah Malcolm won the first Theology Slam organised by SCM Press and the Church Times.<sup>13</sup> The purpose of the, now annual, Slam is to 'find the most engaging young voices on theology and the contemporary world'. It aims to 'encourage a new generation to think theologically about the world around them — and to encourage the church to listen to what they have to say'.<sup>14</sup> What Malcolm had to say in her 2019 presentation on *Climate Chaos and Collective Grief* showed that she was well able to think theologically about the world and provide a 'Christian understanding of the matter' and that it is something which the worldwide Church would do well to listen to:

Much of the Western Church is finally catching up to the idea of caring for this planet we call home. But, along with this responsibility to defend what remains, we cannot ignore those already lost, and those we are now powerless to save.

For once, I am not going to ask you to respond to climate breakdown with a list of things to do. Instead, I am going to ask you to sit amid the grief that you may already feel about our dying planet; and to mourn the brilliant, beautiful lives — both human and non-human — now extinguished by our violence and greed.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Man and Nature*, ed. by Hugh Montefiore, p. 1

<sup>13</sup> See Tim Wyatt's article in the *Church Times*.

<sup>14</sup> See the *Church Times* for details.

<sup>15</sup> See *Chaos and Collective Grief* and the text published in the *Church Times*.

It is to this that we now turn.

### ***The response of God's people***

The climate crisis is a difficult and complex problem. It has been developing since at least the industrial revolution in the mid-eighteenth century. When faced with difficult and complex problems, the people of God have historically turned to God in prayer and lament. In an age where much of the prevailing narrative is that humanity is able to overcome almost all problems by scientific endeavour or technological advance, it is counter-cultural to suggest that perhaps an important part of our response is to turn to God rather than engage in ceaseless activity.

Many organisations, not least churches, seek to address the climate crisis through lists of actions, to be taken by the organisation as a whole and/or by its members individually, but as Malcolm argues this may not be the appropriate starting point for a Christian response. Suggesting that it is not only appropriate, but essential, that the people of God engage with their God in prayer and lament, isn't to imply that action to tackle the climate crisis isn't urgent — far from it — it is far more urgent than the rather unambitious targets that governments and most organisations set for themselves or that are likely to come out of COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021.<sup>16</sup>

Lament is the exercise of spiritual agency in the face of loss. As a spiritual practice it helps us to incorporate the experience of loss into the broader story of our lives before God. Where grief threatens to close our hearts in despair, lament re-opens our hearts to the possibility of a recovered sense of wholeness. Lament doesn't internalise our pain, sorrow, or loss, but helps us to call out to God. So, it's not just an expression of deep emotion resulting from loss, it calls to God for action and ends in praise to God. In the current crisis, much has been lost, is currently being lost, and will continue to be lost in the created world around us and in the lives of people around the world.

In many ways that is what Malcolm's collection of essays, *Words for a Dying World*,<sup>17</sup> is engaging with. In short, it is a very different approach to thinking about what is often called 'climate change' or 'global warming' both of which sound relatively benign, but more recently has been referred to as 'climate breakdown' or 'ecological collapse' which quite rightly sound rather more dramatic and urgent. It is essentially a collection of individual stories, written by people of faith from many parts of the world, coming from many

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<sup>16</sup> See for instance Kevin Keane's interview with the Climate Activist Greta Thunberg, *Scotland not a world leader on climate change*.

<sup>17</sup> *Words for a Dying World: Stories of Grief and Courage from the Global Church*, ed. by Hannah Malcolm (London: SCM Press, 2020).

different perspectives. It very much lives up to its sub-title, *Stories of Grief and Courage from the global Church*.

The refreshing thing about it is that Malcolm and the other thirty-five contributors turn to the ancient practice of lament in their thinking and writing about their climate and ecological grief and sense of loss, referred to also as solastalgia. This also helps us to see that this is a global problem, that affects individuals and communities in a whole range of different ways that the rest of us can only imagine. Climate change knows no territorial boundaries, nor does air pollution or what any one country dumps into the sea or other waterways.

Given this lack of boundaries, the effects of environmental pollution and damage are often felt far from where they are caused. In the preface to her report on the *Injustice of Climate Change* for Christian Aid, Paula Clifford begins:

The starting point of this report is the fact that climate change is above all a justice issue. The people who are already suffering most from global warming are those who have done the least to cause it, and have the least resources to do anything about it. So the basic question underlying the theological statements made here is not 'why should Christians care about the environment?' It is 'why do Christians care about injustice?'<sup>18</sup>

That question about injustice is one that should be central to a Christian response to the climate crisis, and we will return to the issue of justice by way of a consideration of how some of our 'solutions' actually take us in the opposite direction.

### ***Solution by myopia***

When we start to look for solutions to environmental issues, it is very easy to adopt too narrow a focus and attempt to reduce the environmental impact of one isolated factor, and in the process increase the impact of another. For instance, Gordon Brown, the then UK Chancellor introduced a tax incentive for people to switch to diesel cars in 2001 as part of the UK's response to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, especially carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). The rationale was that they emit less CO<sub>2</sub> than petrol cars, are more efficient and produce less carbon monoxide (CO) and unburnt hydrocarbons. The move was entirely focussed on reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions,

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<sup>18</sup> Paula Clifford, *All Creation Groaning — a Theological Approach to Climate Change and Development* (London: Christian Aid, 2007), p. 2.

but what has since become clear is that diesel engines not only emit more nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), but also more particulates, both of which have proved particularly harmful to health in urban areas and particularly in the lives of people who can do little about it.<sup>19</sup>

In April 2021, a news headline proclaimed that two polar adventurers were planning the *First Carbon Negative Expedition to Antarctica*.<sup>20</sup> What new technology had been developed that could move people over the surface of the planet whilst at the same time sequestering carbon from the atmosphere? Sadly, that was not the story. This was a rather extreme case of a practice called ‘Carbon Offsetting’ where one anticipates future environmental sinning by doing penance in advance in the form of environmental good works.

Before the young people go, they will ‘pay it forward’ – not with cash but by committing to take part in initiatives close to home. This will include rewilding projects, removing plastics from saplings, helping clean rivers, beaches and green spaces; they will also share with others the incredible nature and environment that’s on their doorstep, becoming local ambassadors for the environment. The entire team will be planting enough trees to ensure that their trip to Antarctica will be 100% carbon neutral and, in time, carbon negative.<sup>21</sup>

According to popular tradition, on 31 October 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to a church door in Wittenberg. These were intended to serve as a basis of reform of the Catholic Church and started the Protestant Reformation in Europe. Luther focused on two main points. The first is that the Bible — not the church leadership — is the true authority for Christians. The second is that people obtain salvation through their faith rather than through their actions or good works. Specifically, Luther’s document addresses the sale of ‘letters of pardon’ usually referred to as

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<sup>19</sup> As examples see for instance: S. M. Platt and others, ‘Gasoline Cars Produce More Carbonaceous Particulate Matter than Modern Filter-Equipped Diesel Cars’, *Scientific Reports*, 7.1 (2017), 4926; Paul Nieuwenhuis’s piece, ‘Fact Check: Are Diesel Cars Really More Polluting than Petrol Cars?’; or Stephen T Holgate, “‘Every Breath We Take: The Lifelong Impact of Air Pollution’ — a Call for Action’ in *Clinical Medicine*, 17.1 (2017), 8-12.

<sup>20</sup> One telling of the story is ‘2041 Climate Force Antarctic Expedition Environmental Impact, Considerations, and Outcomes’.

<sup>21</sup> See Jazz Noble’s article in *Outdoors Magic*

indulgences. He states that ‘Every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without letters of pardon.’<sup>22</sup> Carbon offsetting is simply a reinvention of that which Luther was so exercised about in 1517 — buying off an environmental sin by doing environmental good works. However, in this case that sin is being planned meticulously, well in advance and a ‘measured amount’ of good works are used to compensate for the harms anticipated.

There are a number of aspects of this that are morally troubling, but the one that stands out is that the people indulging in this practice are making their positive environmental contribution conditional on their doing environmental harm. Doing such good works is admirable, unless of course one is only doing them because one wishes to undo them again in the near future.

From a scientific point of view the practice of offsetting is ‘trading’ in only one aspect of the harm that the ‘offsetter’ is doing — namely CO<sub>2</sub> emissions — and ignores all the other harms that the action of flying, cruising, etc. may do (something largely ignored also in the Tony Blair Institute report referred to earlier). Interestingly this similarity between offsetting and indulgences has been identified by economists and business ethicists for some time.<sup>23</sup>

Goodin strikes a theological note when he writes:

Many environmentalists, of course, would take a vaguely spiritual attitude toward nature. For them, the analogy between the sacrilege of selling nature’s benefice and that of selling God’s grace might be felt particularly powerfully.<sup>24</sup>

Goodin goes on to discuss the moral issues concerning a number of grounds for objecting to the sale of indulgences: ‘selling what is not yours to sell’, ‘selling that which cannot be sold’, ‘rendering wrongs right’, ‘making wrongs all right’ and ‘indulging some but not all’. Whilst many people may be

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<sup>22</sup> ‘Martin Luther Posts The Ninety-Five Theses: October 31, 1517’, in *Global Events: Milestone Events Throughout History*, ed. by Jennifer Stock, Europe (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, 2014), iv.

<sup>23</sup> See for instance: Robert E. Goodin, ‘Selling Environmental Indulgences’, in *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings*, by Stephen M. Gardiner and others (Oxford University Press, 2010); Emmanouela Mandalaki and Patrick O’Sullivan, ‘Organisational Indulgences or Abuse of Indulgences: Can Good Actions Somehow Wipe out Corporate Sins?’, *M@n@gement*, 19.3 (2016), 203.

<sup>24</sup> Goodin, ‘Selling Environmental Indulgences’, p. 234.

tempted to the view that it's better that the polluter at least pays something in terms of reparation, Goodin points out that this is to set polluter paying against the alternative that the polluter pollutes but doesn't pay, when the alternative should be that the polluter doesn't pollute.<sup>25</sup>

Given the fact that the manufacture and disposal of goods can consume large quantities of energy and other resources, it does not follow that dumping one type of car, washing machine or other appliance that is more polluting to use, and acquiring one that is less polluting to use, results in an environmental improvement. The environmental impact of such decisions can often be finely balanced. In such circumstances, reduced use of a more polluting item might contribute less environmental harm than replacing it with a less polluting one but continue with the same level of use.

On a visit to an 'eco-church' a decade ago we were proudly told that, amongst other things, all the 300 light bulbs in the building were 'low energy'. What seemed less clear to our very welcoming hosts, was that having rather fewer turned on (especially during the day) might actually save even more energy!

### ***Exporting the problem***

Offsetting is one of a number of ruses for individuals, organisations and government to claim to be working towards or achieving what is referred to as 'Net Zero'. This term is intended to indicate that the individual, organisation or government is sequestering as much CO<sub>2</sub> as they are releasing in their activities. Leaving aside the myopia of concentrating on just one pollutant and sacrificing all on the altar of 'Net Zero', there are a variety of ways that governments, organisations and individuals strive to achieve this.

One of the most common offsetting activities is planting trees, which we saw above in relation to the Antarctic expedition. Young trees sequester relatively little CO<sub>2</sub> they do not contribute significantly until they have grown to maturity. In the calculations of the offsetters their planting schemes assume a rate of sequestration equivalent to mature trees, which may not be achieved for one or more decades. The pollution that they are causing now is not being paid off as they might imagine and as a result the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration of the atmosphere is not being ameliorated in the rather simplistic way that it is claimed to be. Global warming won't pause because there is some reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> going to happen at some unspecified time in the future. Is this a failure to understand, or simple dishonesty?

There are two ways to measure emissions: those produced directly within a particular locality (territorial emissions) and those produced by

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<sup>25</sup> Goodin, 'Selling Environmental Indulgences', p. 242.



consumption within a particular locality (consumption emissions). Some have criticised the UK — and other countries — for focusing on territorial emissions. These are the basis for the UK's net-zero target and also what countries are required to submit to the United Nations.

So, another way to achieve 'net zero' is to have most of your goods produced in other countries so that the manufacturing emissions don't count towards your country total. No wonder that climate activist Greta Thunberg has accused our government of 'creative carbon accounting'. They are falling short by not considering how to reduce emissions both inside and outside the UK. This is one form of 'offshoring' CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, though there are a number of other ways in which emissions can be added to another country's account rather than appear on your own balance sheet.

This dishonesty was highlighted when Conservative MP John Redwood made this remark about Germany on BBC Radio 4's Today programme: 'It's only going to work if Germany, which puts out twice as much as we do, starts to take the issue seriously and closes down its coal power stations.' What he was failing to take account of was the fact that much of the difference is made up by a difference in population size between the UK and Germany and the fact that we import far more manufactured goods from Germany than they do from us.<sup>26</sup>

Emissions 'trading' is just one way in which we 'export' our environmental problems. A practice which many people do conscientiously to help reduce environmental damage is to recycle as much of their rubbish as possible. Although this is collected by local councils, what actually happens to it is less clear. Councils sell the waste on to recycling companies many of which actually only sort waste and then sell it on again, often via brokers, and much of it finds its way overseas.<sup>27</sup>

Sadly, many of our environmental problems are being dumped on other countries, often in less developed parts of the world. This approach by the developed world is unjust, unethical and in our earnest desire to do our

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<sup>26</sup> An analysis of the truth behind Mr Redwood's claim can be found in the [BBC Reality Check](#).

<sup>27</sup> As [Diego Vazquez-Brust and Regina Frei report](#):

The UK exports large quantities of plastics to other countries, including Turkey, Egypt and Malaysia, as China stopped importing waste in January 2018. These countries lack the facilities to recycle their own plastics, let alone plastics from elsewhere. Little wonder that most plastics Turkey promises to recycle are actually burned or dumped.

bit to address the environmental and climate crises, we are all complicit in it.

### ***Justice***

The wider problem is not simply about carbon budgets or even environmental degradation, the real problem is about justice. Those that are most affected by these matters are the poor, the disadvantaged, those who live in less developed parts of the world. Many of the approaches that we are taking in the West to the climate crisis are as we have seen actually exacerbating injustice and inequality. We should therefore use the term Climate Justice, which helps us to stop thinking primarily in scientific/technological terms and looking purely for scientific/technological solutions. We need to reflect on how our decisions affect others in our own society and our brothers and sisters around the world and also how they will affect our children and grandchildren.<sup>28</sup>

As David Rhodes says at the start of his book *Climate Crisis: the Challenge to the Church*:

The world is in serious trouble. The lives of millions of people are blighted by poverty, injustice and racism. But, overshadowing all this, the emerging crisis of climate change is rapidly destroying God's creation and threatening our survival as a species. Our poorest neighbours are already suffering acutely but it will be our children and their children, who will bear the full impact of the disaster.<sup>29</sup>

If the Church understands the climate crisis not primarily as a scientific/technological problem, but as a problem of justice, then it can start to address it in the way that it addresses other issues of justice, something that it has a long history of.

Drawing on the duty to care for the weakest members of society that is very evident in the Old Testament,<sup>30</sup> the ministry of Jesus sees the restoration of justice is an important facet of life in God's kingdom. The injustice inherent in the effects of pollution on climate is only one of a range

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<sup>28</sup> Very much the subject of Adrian C. Armstrong's book, *Here For Our Children's Children? Why We Should Care for the Earth* (Imprint Academic, 2009), which tries to explain why agreement on such matters is very hard to achieve.

<sup>29</sup> David Rhodes, *Climate Crisis - The Challenge to the Church* (Stowmarket, Suffolk: Kevin Mayhew, 2020), p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> See for instance Deuteronomy 24. 21.

of injustices that result from the over-consumption of the developed world and in particular amongst the well off in those societies.

Over the last few decades, poor countries have been adversely affected by a variety of major world issues, in particular the international debt crisis, unfair trade rules, unjust labour practices, pollution of the atmosphere and seas, natural disasters, infectious and respiratory diseases, and environmentally triggered health problems. On top of that, they are more susceptible to damage from climate change than their richer neighbours in the same regions and have fewer resources to help them cope with and recover from its effects.<sup>31</sup> It is unsurprising that the world is seeing increased numbers of economic migrants, which many Western nations are struggling to manage.

The need to see the climate crisis as a people issue is emphasised by Christian Aid:

Climate change makes a double demand on us: first to recognise the link between human-induced global warming and poverty; and secondly to formulate a just response. The first has been hindered for years by a reluctance to view climate change as a 'people' issue rather than a purely environmental one, while the second raises ethical issues that have barely begun to be considered.<sup>32</sup>

During the UN General Assembly's High-level Meeting on the Protection of the Global Climate for Present and Future Generations in March 2019, Mary Robinson, the former President of Ireland spoke about climate justice.

Climate justice insists on a shift from a discourse on greenhouse gases and melting ice caps into a civil rights movement with the people and communities most vulnerable to climate impacts at its heart.

Now, thanks to the recent marches, strikes and protests by hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren, we have begun to understand the intergenerational injustice of climate change.

Referring to the problem as climate justice and not climate change or global warming, reframes the debate on such matters in the Church and allows the

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<sup>31</sup> UN Economic and Social Department, *World Social Report 2020: Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World* (United Nations, 2020).

<sup>32</sup> Clifford, *All Creation Groaning*, p. 5.

Church to play to its strengths, rather than trying to become a rather poor relation to organisations that specialise in environmental activism, such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth or Extinction Rebellion. That does not of course mean that Christians shouldn't be involved in environmental activism, as they may feel called to join in the activities of these organisations independently of what they do in conjunction with other members of the Body of Christ.

Rowan Williams hinted at the distinctiveness of a 'Christian' response when he commented:

The most immediate concern is very simple: who is actually paying the price of our global crisis? The answer is painfully clear: it is the poorest in the human family, those with least resource to meet the appalling demands that a warming world places on all of us. And this is where the question of justice most plainly arises, and where any Christian perspective will tell us that we cannot let this go unchallenged. As Christians we believe that anyone's suffering or danger is everyone's challenge — and potentially everyone's loss.<sup>33</sup>

A changing climate is a global justice issue, which knows no boundaries. Although it will ultimately affect us all, those who are already being affected are often the poorest people in the world, those who actually contributed least to the problem. They are the ones who are losing their land to the sea, as global warming and melting icecaps result in sea-level rise, whose crops are failing because of changes in rainfall patterns and who are becoming more vulnerable to a range of diseases.

As we have already seen, at the root of the climate justice problem is over-consumption in the developed world. There is a radical inequality in how the earth's resources are used, and in the lifestyles that result. The developed world has a high rate of consumption and contribution to environmental problems whilst the rest of the world faces the consequences.

In their now classic work *The Spirit Level*, Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett draw on a wide variety of sources and situations to explain why inequalities are ultimately not good for anyone.<sup>34</sup> They point out that living standards cannot be improved for ever and that it is not wealth and possession that ultimately lead to people living satisfying and happy lives.

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<sup>33</sup> Quoted by Susan Durber in the Christian Aid Report *Song of the Prophets: a global theology of climate change*.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why Equality Is Better for Everyone* (London & New York: Penguin, 2010).

Recently we have seen that a global pandemic cannot be brought under control by vaccinating the people of one nation, without also ensuring that the people of the rest of the world have adequate access to vaccines — vaccine nationalism has little long-term effectiveness.

Much of Jesus's teaching, and in particular his parables, tells the same story. The Good News of the gospels is concerned with community and that is underlined by the Golden Rule.<sup>35</sup> Jesus brought new hope to the poor and marginalised, not only by what he said, but by what he did. It is that legacy to which Christians are heirs and why Christians should discern the injustice that lies at the heart of our present climate crisis.

### **Conclusion**

Responding to the climate crisis and the injustice inherent in both its causes and effects, it is much easier to make one or two minor lifestyle changes, and thereby feel better about it all, than to engage with the real problem. The former is simply a mechanism to 'greenwash' our consciences and is, as we have seen, likely to have little or no effect and may actually do a great deal of harm. What is actually needed is repentance, a turning away from excessive consumption and back to God. Rowan Williams put it very simply when he wrote, 'we need to regain a sense that our relationship to the earth is about communion not consumption that we are not performers on a world as a stage, but that we are fully part of it and it's our duty to steward and share its bounty with everyone.'<sup>36</sup> What is needed is nothing short of salvation, and not just a narrow salvation of self, but a salvation of humanity and the whole of God's Creation. The enormous challenge we face was described rather neatly by George Newlands when he wrote:

Salvation is a work of love. Where there is salvation there is love, and perhaps even where there is love there is salvation. Salvation is an idea, a vision, and an at least partly embodied reality. It encompasses forgiveness and reconciliation, and at the same time it cannot ignore evil and injustice. It is accomplished through agonizing conflict at many levels, intellectual, physical, political, spiritual. It relates to specific historical events in the

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<sup>35</sup> As found for instance in Matthew 7. 12 and Luke 6. 31.

<sup>36</sup> Rowan Williams, 'Changing the Myths We Live By' in *Faith in the Public Square*, Reprint Edition (Bloomsbury Continuum, 2015), pp. 175–184 (p. 180).

past, to present reality, and to eschatological promise and expectation.<sup>37</sup>

If this all seems too vast, too difficult, and rather overwhelming, then the first step should perhaps be to turn to God in prayer as Christians have done for two millennia in:

- Lament for what has happened, what is happening and what will happen to God's earth
- Expression of our grief for the state of God's earth as an expression of our love of God, creation and humanity
- Expression of remorse for our complicity in what is happening and seek forgiveness
- Acknowledgment of the injustice of the causes and effects of climate change
- and in the light of these reflect on all aspects of our lifestyles and as a result renew our relationship with God, with humanity and with the whole of creation.

Out of that lament, grieving and repentance, springs hope, so elegantly described by Hannah Malcolm in the conclusion of *Words for a Dying World*, entitled 'World Without End':

So much of the death around us springs from gainful dishonesty, dishonesty about the sanctity of each creature, dishonesty about the likely consequences of our actions, and covering up those consequences when they happen. If we cannot bring ourselves to be truthful about our broken histories, or the current trauma we face and perpetuate, we cannot begin to heal.

Survival, compassion, honesty. These are all good reasons to grieve. But the conviction that Christ's resurrection marked the death of death also contains the hope that our works of love in the present are not consigned to destruction. They participate in a transformed future.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> George Newlands, 'Salvation — Personal and Political', in *The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology*, ed. by Andrew Hass, David Jasper, and Elizabeth Jay (Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>38</sup> Malcolm, *Words for a Dying World*, p. 208.

Christians have a responsibility not only to take action to contribute less to the problem, but to be prophetic voices in the world. In the words of Walter Brueggemann, they have a threefold prophetic task: 'The prophetic tasks of the Church are to tell the truth in a society that lives in illusion, grieve in a society that practices denial, and express hope in a society that lives in despair.'<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Reality, Grief, Hope: Three Urgent Prophetic Tasks* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2014).





# Don't Glean in Another Field: Profound Poverty and the Church's Role

CL NASH

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According to the *New York Times*,<sup>1</sup> climate change has threatened the food supply with less viable ground for growing produce and weather disasters which have destroyed crops. The United Nations urges that the opportunity to counter this crisis is rapidly closing and is addressing this threat with the UN Food Systems Summit in New York on 23 September 2021. Up until now, the efforts to stymie the food shortage have not adequately met demand.

The Christian Church, broadly construed, can and should engage with the practices which will help create better food outcomes for us all with a focus on how we can best serve those in need. As we seek to solve these problems, we must ask if the choices of a privileged few create food insecurity and limit food choices for the most vulnerable in society? If so, what type of impact does food insecurity pose for those most at risk, and what would it take for the Church to become better advocates for a world where we are all able to be fed by the Earth's bounty? While local churches normally participate in State sanctioned programs which include recycling, many do not understand the Biblical mandates that we must protect those who are victim to food precarity.

Perhaps our empathy can be strengthened through better understanding. Though most of us have encountered hunger and thirst at some point in our lives, or we may have had housing insecurity, most have not dealt with its most profound effects. In fact, long-term hunger, for example, demonstrates a break down in a significant social apparatus of 'care'. When disasters occur, in some countries, children are put to work in lieu of education, women and girls are forced to negotiate sexual predators

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Flavelle, *New York Times*, 8 August 2019. Flavelle identifies the United Nations Report which states that over a half billion people are living in spaces which are turning into desert. The combination of weather disaster and drought are causing people to increasingly engage in 'cross-border migration'. The report from the United Nations identifies that severe food shortages will increase with wildfires, floods, droughts, and other climate related issues.

to survive, and the very dignity needed to overcome such challenges is utterly destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

When Boaz tells Ruth, 'Do not glean from another field', he issues both advice and protection. This represents a concept of *mishpat* or justice on behalf of those who most require our assistance and protection. *Mishpat* replaces individualism with justice; it replaces nationhood with inclusive community. Boaz represents an ideal response to the way we should endeavor to respond to environmental injustice today.

Here I look to Ruth 2. 1–16 & 22 as a way of exploring the impact of profound poverty upon the most vulnerable in society. Using Boaz as a metaphor for the Church, I explore the tension created through poverty and the way it exacerbates survival strategies for women. I further analyze gendered vulnerability and the subsequent humiliation that can occur for the hungry. By challenging the moral apathy of the Christian Church today, we can move closer to honouring the Biblical mandate for *mishpat* or justice and explore the ways we can make a more immediate impact. It is this call to justice which compels us to encourage others not to glean in other fields as we take responsibility for creating structural equity for us all. I end by identifying justice making strategies to combat the moral apathy that often compounds the impact of environmental injustice.

### ***Exacerbated survival strategies***

Many Christians know the story of Ruth and Naomi. Heralded as a story of genuine loyalty and friendship between two women, the story is told against a backdrop of famine and loss. Naomi's husband and two sons die. When she and her two daughters-in-law are left alone to face hunger, she encourages them to return to their families. This was the normal survival strategy for a recently widowed woman. However, of the two daughters-in-law, Ruth refuses to leave Naomi and says, 'Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God' (Ruth 1. 16, NIV).

The loyalty of Ruth is astounding. Not only does she insist on staying by Naomi's side, but she simultaneously denies herself the normal comfort and support of family. However, the story is more than one of loyalty. This is a story of two women navigating the perils of food insecurity. Indeed, the

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<sup>2</sup> Sarah Bradshaw and Maureen Fordham's 2013 UK Government document, 'Women and Girls and Disasters', provides a thorough treatment of these issues by analyzing everything from migration to reproductive health, poverty and the breakdown of family structures. They argue that long-term support would provide better continuity and suggest ways to address this.

humiliation of returning home bereft of one's family, wealth and dignity means to return home feeling alienated as Naomi tells her kinsmen, 'Call me Mara because the Almighty has made my life very bitter.' (Ruth 1. 20, NIV). Not only did she miss the human contact of her husband and sons, but the continuity and wealth potential they represented was now gone. Despite her pain, however, the very presence of Ruth helps buffer that sense of alienation by giving Naomi companionship and a viable opportunity to create financial security and possibility. Ruth's very presence creates a potential to move out of poverty through the cultural proscriptions made available through this younger woman. Indeed, if Ruth re-married and continued to honour Naomi as a mother-figure, it would recreate that family stability and wealth that Naomi must have yearned for.

In addition to this potential survival strategy, Ruth's steadfast friendship is remarkable, in part, because her story is nearly identical to that of Naomi. Ruth also has returned to Naomi's home bereft of the social structures which should have provided her with security and companionship. Returning to her own family would have been the primary way for her to escape additional poverty. Yet, Ruth's selfless act puts her in harm's way. She may freely glean from the fields of Naomi's kinsmen, but she doesn't know anyone there and there are boundaries for the poor when they glean.

Today, women who are impoverished often have limited survival strategies. A woman who enters another country with a visitor's visa may have a stamp on her passport which clearly states, 'No recourse through public funds'. This means that, should she have unexpected challenges or difficulties, there are no fields from which she may glean. According to 'Caring Subjects: Migrant Women and the Third Sector in England and Scotland', in the journal *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 'minoritized' women create a 'politics of care' which can hold in tension the dichotomy 'between public citizenship and private caring'.<sup>3</sup> This contemporary focus on such women, who are disproportionately women of colour, examines the way women are called to juxtapose access to survival strategies which may be mitigated through citizenship claims which allow them to negotiate public spaces. This is juxtaposed with those private responsibilities of caring such as Ruth's steadfast connection with and care for Naomi.

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<sup>3</sup> Leah Bassel and Akwugo Emejulu, 'Caring Subjects: Migrant Women and the Third Sector in England and Scotland', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, (June 2017). For more information on the politics of care, see the additional sources they examine including Lister (2008) and Erel (2011).

Ruth and Naomi's return to Bethlehem, which means 'house of bread', is not without risk.<sup>4</sup> Not only is Ruth's return to Bethlehem with Naomi a risk to her own future, but her immediate strategies of survival are also vague at best. Ruth begins to glean food from fields which do not belong to her own family — much like receiving welfare or a social safety net from a country that is not your own. Food insecurity does more than create an immediate sense of uncertainty for our physical wellbeing — there is a psychological toll as well. Those who are hungry are often denied basic human dignity when forced to stand in long lines to receive food or to live in set-apart housing for the poor. Often times, poverty requires individuals to use social benefits to which they may be entitled, but for which they may also be resented.

By presuming the poor are at fault and seeking to take from the rest of us, we deny ourselves the opportunity to hear their stories. Without their stories, we often fail to better understand their humanity. Boaz enquires about Ruth when he sees her, instead of calling public attention to this stranger (v. 5). He learns her story as we need to learn the stories of those who we deem to be the poor and working poor. People are food insecure often because they cannot work without affordable childcare, or they are taking care of both their children and their parents. These daily trials are exhausting. By creating a dignity discourse where such people constantly owe us an explanation or by disparaging such persons, we deny them the right to their own dignity.

Instead of making assumptions or public pronouncements, Boaz quietly makes enquiries. He then treats her honourably due to the story he learned of her — she endured loss, and instead of trying to recover her own life, she sought to protect the life of Naomi (v. 11–12). In learning of Ruth's struggles, Boaz encouraged her to 'take refuge'. Taking refuge, means embracing safety — allowing us to stand apart from the vagaries of life which weigh us down. Boaz replied,

'I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband — how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of

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<sup>4</sup> *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*, ed. by Francis Brown, Samuel R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, 17th ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2017), p. 111.

Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.’ (Ruth 2. 11–12)

Boaz extends empathy to Ruth. Without adequate compassion or empathy, we heighten the distress of those who already endure tremendous hardship. We compound their struggles through tactics which create humiliation instead of refuge. By ensuring she is safe, Boaz creates a space for her to recover.

Boaz is aware that Ruth can benefit from her own social safety net with her own family. He finds out that she is not there because she is seeking to take from others, but she is there because of her own selflessness.

Today, being in food lines, filling out endless forms online, taking time to explain ourselves, seeking work when we lack childcare for our children or care for parents with dementia — these things are exhausting.

Many, in our contemporary moment, are tempted to presume that there are structures to assist those who are the poor or working poor among us. Such awareness may create a resentment toward those who are hungry with accusations that they are lazy or are substance abusers. In the book of Ruth, Boaz could have presumed that Ruth had other possibilities and that her presence was taking something away from his own servant women. Instead, he first learned that she made contributions in ways that could not be seen such as her care of Naomi.

This is a proscriptive lesson in understanding and valuing the immigrants who ‘glean’ or seek sustenance in our communities. It is also a reminder that, within a global context, those who speak differently and look differently are either directly or indirectly contributing to our own humanity with their compassion, their gifts and their essence. When Boaz asked the foreman, ‘Whose young woman is that?’ (v. 5) the answer became clear. She is ‘ours’ because, upon her arrival, she belonged within our community. Equally important, however, the reader becomes aware that Boaz assists Ruth in navigating gendered vulnerabilities.

### ***Hunger’s gendered vulnerabilities***

Hunger produces gendered vulnerabilities which are often overlooked. When there are disasters and floods, families often find they can no longer afford to send all their children to school. Therefore, their daughters will be forced to go into town to work as domestics while their sons return to school. Not only do the girls lose the opportunity to benefit from education and the ways it opens their future, but girls are also more likely to experience sexual coercion or sexual assault without a protective adult accountable for their

wellbeing.<sup>5</sup> When homes are destroyed, girls and women may be placed into makeshift emergency housing without private facilities, without any type of accommodation for women and girls who are menstruating, and without any type of privacy for nursing mothers.<sup>6</sup>

In this Old Testament text, Ruth is a young woman who is also vulnerable to sexual assault. The first one who addresses this vulnerability is Boaz who has created a structure of protection for his servant girls. He extends this protection to Ruth by stating:

‘My daughter, listen to me. Don’t go and glean in another field and don’t go away from here. Stay here with my servant girls.<sup>9</sup> Watch the field where the men are harvesting and follow along after the girls. I have told the men not to touch you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled’ (2. 8–9).

In Boaz, we see the generosity that the Church is expected to have with the stranger and the immigrant. While many are tempted to operate from the scarcity model (i.e. ‘I must look after my own interest/family/nation or possibly not have enough’) Boaz is a reminder that the Church operates from a limitless God who will never run out of food or sustenance. Remarkably, Boaz is the first to verbalize the anticipated possibility of a gendered vulnerability.

If we have learned anything through the ‘MeToo Movement’, it’s that the social, gendered hierarchy often compels women to keep quiet about

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<sup>5</sup> See Alyssa Thurston’s article, ‘Disasters Caused by Natural Hazards Linked to Increase in Triggers for Violence Against Women and Girls’, *London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine*, 7 May 2021. Similarly, women today are made vulnerable through COVID-19 which has significantly weakened the already fragile safety net so many women relied upon. For additional information, see ‘Disaster Patriarchy: How the Pandemic Has Unleashed a War on Women’, *Guardian*, 9 June 2021. Among other issues of fragility, they share that UNESCO estimates approximately ‘11 million girls may not return to school once the Pandemic subsides’.

<sup>6</sup> Mayuri Bhattacharjee, ‘Menstrual Hygiene Management During Emergencies: A Study of Challenges Faced by Women and Adolescent Girls Living in Flood-prone Districts in Assam’, *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* (22 May 2019). For one example of the impact of disaster upon nursing mothers, see the article by Mandana MirMohamadali, Reza Khani Jazani, Sanaz Sohrabizadeh, and Alireza Nikbakht Nasrabadi, ‘Barriers to Breastfeeding in Disasters in the Context of Iran’.

sexual assault, or coercion. Due to that hierarchy, women often have exceptional vulnerability. Ruth is vulnerable and as a foreigner, that is even more true. Boaz flips this model of gendered hierarchy by telling her, '[...] whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled' (v. 9). Ruth benefits from the work of the men who, in effect, provide service *to her* instead of sexual gratification *from her*.

Boaz provides her with two forms of structural protection which are explicit and implicit. He explicitly tells the men his expectations for them with a stern command. Then, he provides an implicit form of protection by telling Ruth to stay with the other women who will provide an additional buffer for her. Likewise, the Christian Church must provide both an explicit and implicit form of protection to those who have increased vulnerability due to a climate crisis which has created food insecurity for them. There are implicit buffers the Church provides through monetary offerings, and donations of food and other necessities. But the explicit forms of support include opening the doors of the Church to feed the hungry, providing meals for people and giving shelter from the cold. Working with our local government or with other faith groups to pool our resources and ensure that no one remains hungry is our responsibility. Our goal is not to explain why we won't meet needs, but to urge people to glean from our fields — allowing us to work together to ensure their safety and well-being.

Naomi later tells Ruth that she agrees with Boaz's suggestion to glean in his field stating, 'It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with his girls, because in someone else's field you might be harmed.' (v. 22). Naomi's survival strategies initially overlooked this vulnerability. There are many possible reasons for this. Perhaps, as a more mature woman, she was previously harmed and considered it normative. Or, she may have considered Ruth able to handle herself. I want to suggest that women in the midst of profound poverty require advocates for their safety. Mothers who have endured climate related disasters of floods, fires or earthquakes<sup>7</sup> are often traumatized and unable to adequately shield and protect their daughters. This is not an opportunity to provide judgment but compassion — and to stand as advocates alongside those whose options are limited at

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<sup>7</sup> Bill McGuire, '[How Climate Change Triggers Earthquakes, Tsunamis, and Volcanoes](#)' *The Guardian*, 16 Oct 2016. Geophysicists, such as McGuire, argue that this connection is becoming clearer. As one example, he argues that scientists have long argued that there is a correlation between rainy seasons in the Himalayas and earthquakes. For more details, please see Bill McGuire's book, *Waking the Giant: How a Changing Climate Triggers Earthquakes, Tsunamis and Volcanoes*. London: Oxford University Press, 2013.

best. Regardless of our backgrounds, the Christian Church compels us to actively protect women and girls who bear special vulnerabilities during times of food crisis. Actively standing with them, employing both implicit and explicit structures of protection, can only occur if we resist the temptation to engage in moral apathy — our ‘just-us’ instead of justice.

***Combating moral apathy with justice over ‘just-us’***

The Church must drop the shroud of individualism if we are to adequately combat food insecurity today. In essence, we must seek justice over ‘just-us’, and we are to embrace community over individualism. This will help us rid ourselves of the moral apathy that currently operates as a death shawl. Such behaviour harms both the ‘apathetic’ and those directly harmed by food insecurity.

While members of the Christian Church may presume they have a viable moral compass, the inability to exhibit compassion for those with urgent needs proves them mistaken. Moral apathy sees the injustice of someone else’s pain and yet, refuses to render support. Moral apathy is seen in the arrogance of presuming the pain of financial insecurity is always that which is self-inflicted. Even in the midst of natural disaster, believing that those who suffer do so because they simply do not adequately plan for emergencies, or presumptions that certain groups are inferior, are forms of moral apathy.

In addition to taking time to learn more about Ruth and actively seek her protection, Boaz provides us with a third helpful imperative for dealing with those who are food insecure. He demonstrates his commitment to justice by ensuring her dignity. The text is instructive as it says,

As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men, ‘Even if she gathers among the sheaves, don’t embarrass her. <sup>6</sup> Rather, pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don’t rebuke her’ (2. 5–6).

We begin to understand that boundaries are created for the poor and vulnerable. For many of us, we know the ‘poor’ live in certain areas, shop at specific stores, attend certain under-funded schools. We tolerate their existence until they cross the boundaries into our neighborhoods, stores, beaches, and schools.

For this text, even an untrained reader can ascertain that, when you are working the fields, ‘gleaning’ the produce for sustenance, there are apparent boundaries. This is implied when Boaz waits for her to get up and then says to the men, presumably in private, ‘even if she gathers among the sheaves, don’t embarrass her’. Poverty comes with its natural companion,



humiliation. People often stand in long lines at food banks where those driving by can see those who are in need and perhaps pass judgment. They may be required to provide proof of identity or even their income, depending on the procedures in place. In addition, the food given may be expired or about to expire. While grateful, there is also a strong message provided to those who are hungry: you can eat what no one else wants to eat. Who can forget the New Zealand dog food manufacturer, Christine Drummond, who offered to send dog food to starving Kenyans?<sup>8</sup>

What is most instructive, however, is that Boaz's response is not one of constraint but one of abundance. The men are not to just tolerate an error from Ruth, but to welcome it. They are told to 'pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up'. He then reiterates, 'don't rebuke her'.

Three times, Boaz expresses this new vision of justice: don't embarrass her, leave more for her, don't rebuke her. When seeking to minister to Ruth's needs, Boaz immediately utters a concern for her self-esteem. By urging his men not to embarrass her, the text infers that the workers have, in the past, embarrassed those who transgress boundaries by picking in areas that they should not. There are many ways the hungry are embarrassed, such as when they are carefully watched in spaces where they are not welcomed. As one example statements which reveal our belief that an impoverished person has come to an area where their disheveled clothes give them away as not belonging, creates embarrassment.

But for Boaz, if Ruth does transgress boundaries and picks from the stalks the men have gleaned, she should not be rebuked. Instead, they should add to whatever she has taken. In this way, we see this approach to abundance that is instructive for the Church today. Standing in food lines, single people may be told they have transgressed if social programs only provide for those with small children. Or people may be told that, as immigrants, they cannot receive any public funds. The Church has a responsibility to fill this gap so that all are able to be fed.

These instructions allow us to see that our role is to attenuate the humanity of the vulnerable by creating a dignity discourse of respect and welcome. This justice making strategy combats moral apathy which significantly exacerbates food insecurity.

### **Conclusion**

Today, many potential solutions to food insecurity and the climate crisis are promoted. The movement to make things better in the future includes reducing our carbon footprint and using sustainability practices in our food

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<sup>8</sup> See '[Africans Eat Dog Food](#)', *Black Star News*, 6 February 2006.

harvesting. However, those who are dealing with profound poverty may not see an immediate benefit to those actions. What are we doing, now, to aide those who are most vulnerable? What strategies and structures have we implemented to ensure their humanity is fully valued; to include their physical but also mental and spiritual well-being? Is it possible that we may inadvertently contribute to the indignity of those who experience food insecurity — even though we might embrace practices such as recycling or ethical food harvesting practices?

For those whose food insecurity is tied to a legacy of racial hostility or gendered inequity, there are layers of pain associated with their hunger. What steps can we take to end this precarity and make a real difference for those lives here and now?

In chapter 2 of the book of Ruth, we see Boaz as a metaphor for the Christian Church today. We are able to benefit those who are most vulnerable by listening to their stories, providing protection, and ensuring their dignity.

Though this essay focuses on chapter 2, the entire story of Ruth develops in ways which are instructive. Using the Levirate law, Naomi encourages a process whereby her daughter-in-law eventually marries Boaz. At issue, however, is the infamous ‘threshing floor encounter’ between Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 3. 4–8). Though this encounter is still debated in theological circles, as the term ‘feet’ is a euphemism for a sexual encounter, her sexual vulnerability is undeniable. This overall story is heralded as one of true friendship and loyalty between two women. But the issue of gendered vulnerability is also real and instructive for us today.

As we evaluate the best ways to increase our knowledge of food insecurity through work with other churches and activists, it is important to remember that *mishpat*, the Biblical term meaning ‘justice’ is used over 400 times in the Bible. In this contemporary moment, we exhibit *mishpat* in the ways we ‘leave food behind’ for others who glean from food banks and soup kitchens. These efforts are not nearly enough. As we advocate for ways to make the world more sustainable, we must consider the ways we can sustain the lives of our fellow humans by creating structures and systems which provide them with both physical and emotional safety.

When we hear stories of climate related disasters, the stories of women and girls are frequently pushed to the background. And, when there is the opportunity to reach out to the potential immigrant, we may, instead, do all we can to close our borders. Yet, this story is a story of abundance. By trusting in God’s provision, we see God as One who provides food for all through our actions. Instead of pushing away the stranger and the immigrant, we can encourage them to stay with us and ‘do not glean from another field’. We can provide that protective and loving Christian refuge.

The best way to combat hate and ignorance has always been and will always be with love and justice.



# Decolonizing Rewilding: Return and Refusal

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In recent years, rewilding has become an increasingly popular proposal for combatting climate change. Yet rewilding continues to be a contested concept. While the re-prefix in 'rewilding' means to go back, to return, with the breadth of senses rewilding has taken on, there is no shared reference point for what is being sought to return to.<sup>1</sup> I first lay out some of the debate surrounding this contested term before turning to a theological assessment of the roots of wilderness ideology in early-modern colonial Protestantism. I highlight the historic and ongoing potential harms of wilderness and rewilding discourse and conclude by pointing to an approach to 'rewilding' practices that refuses colonial modes of 'return' in favour of learning to live well with all our relations.<sup>2</sup>

The first usage of the term emerged in the late 80s and early 90s in association with the Wildlands Project that advocated a "3 Cs approach," which stands for **C**ore areas, **C**orridors, and **C**arnivores.<sup>3</sup> Since then, rewilding has been deployed in at least six distinct senses in the scientific literature alone: '(1) cores, corridors, carnivores; (2) Pleistocene mega-fauna replacement; (3) island taxon replacement; (4) landscape through species reintroduction; (5) productive land abandonment; and (6) releasing captive-bred animals into the wild.'<sup>4</sup> For Jørgensen, rewilding has become a 'plastic word' which is a term that has migrated from an original scientific or technical usage to a vernacular usage that contains too many contradictory senses to be of much-continued use.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, recent defenders of rewilding

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<sup>1</sup> Dolly Jørgensen, 'Rethinking Rewilding', *Geoforum*, 65 (2015), 482–88 (p. 482); Richard T. Corlett, 'Restoration, Reintroduction, and Rewilding in a Changing World', *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, 31.6 (2016), pp. 453–62 (p. 453).

<sup>2</sup> 'All our relations' is a term often invoked by Indigenous peoples in Canada to represent the obligations of care and respect that we have to all that the Creator has made, see Tanya Talaga, *All Our Relations: Finding the Path Forward* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Jamie Lorimer and others, 'Rewilding: Science, Practice, and Politics', *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 40.1 (2015), 39–62 (p. 41).

<sup>4</sup> Jørgensen, 'Rethinking Rewilding', p. 485.

<sup>5</sup> Jørgensen, 'Rethinking Rewilding', p. 485.

practice seem to have abandoned the term altogether, advocating for the primacy of 'wildness' or 'wildtending.'<sup>6</sup> Ultimately Jørgensen concludes that rewilding, as a past-oriented praxis, is committed to a view of wilderness that does not include human presence, and thus falls prey to the critiques of wilderness in the environmental humanities that began with William Cronon's critique in 'The Trouble with Wilderness' that 'wilderness' as an ideology separates humans from nature in an artificial and ultimately problematic manner.<sup>7</sup> This critique set off 'the great wilderness debate',<sup>8</sup> which has continued to raise questions about the anti-humanist ideology inherent in many deployments of 'wilderness', particularly within its role in the colonial displacement and suppression of Indigenous peoples.<sup>9</sup> As Bruno Seraphin has noted in his study of the 'Hoop Network' in the United States, even rewilding practice that attempts to learn from Indigenous peoples and life-forms continues to be positioned as an activity of settler privilege and actively excludes the direct participation and leadership of Indigenous peoples on whose lands these activities occur.<sup>10</sup>

In response to Jørgensen, geographers Jonathan Prior and Kim Ward argued that Jørgensen's attempt to trace a genealogy of the use of the term 'rewilding' prematurely problematizes rewilding on the basis of its ideological baggage.<sup>11</sup> Instead, they argue that rewilding should be

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<sup>6</sup> Kim Ward, 'For Wilderness or Wildness? Decolonising Rewilding', in *Rewilding*, ed. by Johan T. du Toit, Nathalie Pettorelli, and Sarah M. Durant, Ecological Reviews (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 34–54 (p. 34); Jonathan Prior and Kim J. Ward, 'Rethinking Rewilding: A Response to Jørgensen', *Geoforum*, 69 (2016), pp. 132–35; Jonathan Prior and Emily Brady, 'Environmental Aesthetics and Rewilding', *Environmental Values*, 26 (2017), pp. 31–51; Bruno Seraphin, "'Paiutes and Shoshone Would Be Killed For This": Whiteness, Rewilding, and the Malheur Occupation', *Western Folklore*, 76.4 (2017), 447–78 (p. 449).

<sup>7</sup> William Cronon, 'The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature', *Environmental History*, 1.1 (1996), 7–28 (p. 7).

<sup>8</sup> *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, ed. by J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998); *The Wilderness Debate Rages On: Continuing the Great New Wilderness Debate*, ed. by Michael P. Nelson and J. Baird Callicott (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> George Monbiot, *Feral: Rewilding the Land, the Sea, and Human Life* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 202.

<sup>10</sup> Bruno Seraphin, 'Rewilding, "the Hoop," and Settler Apocalypse', *The Trumpeter: Journal of Ecosophy*, 32.2 (2016), 126–46; 'Paiutes and Shoshone', pp. 447–78.

<sup>11</sup> Prior and Ward, 'Rethinking Rewilding', p. 133.

understood as ‘a process of (re)introducing or restoring wild organisms and/or ecological processes to ecosystems where such organisms and processes are either missing or are dysfunctional’.<sup>12</sup> For Prior and Ward, rewilding is not primarily a past-oriented practice, but rather an attempt to secure autonomy for non-human creatures. ‘As such, rewilding — unlike other restoration practices — foregrounds the self-sustaining qualities of non-human Nature.’<sup>13</sup> Importantly, however, this autonomy does not invoke the old Nature-Human divide of wilderness ideology, rather the autonomy of non-human creatures, as shown through the examples of the ‘Rewilding Vancouver’ exhibit and the re-introduction of beavers in Scotland, is precisely found in the diversity of entanglements by which human and non-human creatures share space in the world.<sup>14</sup> For Prior and Ward, it is ‘wildness’ as a privileging of other-than-human autonomy rather than ‘wilderness’ as a colonial and primitivist discourse that is sought in rewilding praxis.<sup>15</sup>

In a more recent response to the Jørgensen/Prior and Ward discussion of rewilding, Aaron Cloyd seeks to broaden the discussion by arguing that rewilding is a ‘cross-disciplinary conversation’ inhabiting ‘sites where imaginative and creative writings may interact with texts from environmental science and history’.<sup>16</sup> Cloyd argues that while discussions of rewilding focus on the relative goods of the various entangled flourishings of human and non-human creatures, by including works of fiction and other humanities-related discourses in the conversation, important emotional and existential elements of the issue are better explored.<sup>17</sup>

### ***The trouble with re-wilding***

Following Cloyd’s call to engage rewilding more deeply from the perspective of the humanities, I suggest that a theological analysis of wilderness as it played out in the colonial imagination of the 17th century Puritans can help to expose the ways in which rewilding practices, if they are to be a useful contribution to climate change solutions, must be decolonized. I argue that a theological analysis is appropriate to assess the roots of wilderness ideology found in Anglo-Protestant preaching and theological reflection

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<sup>12</sup> Prior and Ward, ‘Rethinking Rewilding’, p. 133.

<sup>13</sup> Prior and Ward, ‘Rethinking Rewilding’, p. 133.

<sup>14</sup> Prior and Ward, ‘Rethinking Rewilding’, p. 135.

<sup>15</sup> Prior and Ward, ‘Rethinking Rewilding’ p. 134; Ward, ‘For Wilderness or Wildness?’, pp. 34–54.

<sup>16</sup> Aaron A. Cloyd, ‘Reimagining Rewilding: A Response to Jørgensen, Prior, and Ward’, *Geoforum*, 76 (2016), 59–62 (p. 60).

<sup>17</sup> Cloyd, ‘Reimagining Rewilding’, p. 61.

about settling in the so-called 'New World'. What attending to this theological discourse shows, is that wilderness ideology has been used as what Michel de Certeau calls a 'heterological discourse' by which settlers have first 'othered' Indigenous peoples and subsequently incorporated Indigenous peoples and lifeways into their own hegemonic ontologies.<sup>18</sup>

### ***Why Puritans?***

In the last 20 years there have been a number of religious genealogies that seek to showcase the influence of the Puritans on North American conceptions of wilderness and nature, including works by Mark Stoll, Evan Berry, Jeff Bilbro, John Gatta, and Michael Northcott.<sup>19</sup> The basic problem being addressed by these genealogies is first framed by Stoll in the following way: in North America, and in the United States in particular, there is a tension between a world-affirming conservationism that established the first national parks system in the world, and a deeply destructive capitalism that is willing to remove mountains, clear forests, and redirect rivers for its own ends.<sup>20</sup> Stoll, following Weber's early analysis of what he called the Protestant work ethic, argues that these tensions are to be found within the internal tensions of Protestantism, particularly in the ambiguous legacy of the Puritans.<sup>21</sup> In a recent attempt at decolonizing rewilding, Kim Ward has critiqued the nineteenth century Romantics who inspired the creation of the National Parks system and notes that the establishment of these wilderness spaces was a 'colonial tactic [...] to secure property ownership and the right to hunt',<sup>22</sup> essentially making the wilderness into a place where masculinity can be constructed and performed after the closure of the American

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<sup>18</sup> Michel De Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

<sup>19</sup> Mark Stoll, *Protestantism, Capitalism, and Nature in America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997); John Gatta, *Making Nature Sacred: Literature, Religion, and the Environment in America from the Puritans to the Present*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Evan Berry, *Devoted to Nature: The Religious Roots of American Environmentalism*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015); Jeffrey Bilbro, *Loving God's Wildness: The Christian Roots of Ecological Ethics in American Literature* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2015); Michael S. Northcott, 'Reformed Protestantism and the Origins of Modern Environmentalism', *Philosophia Reformata*, 83.1 (2018), 19–33.

<sup>20</sup> Stoll, *Protestantism*, p. ix.

<sup>21</sup> Stoll, *Protestantism*, p. ix.

<sup>22</sup> Ward, 'For Wilderness or Wildness?', p. 39.



frontier.<sup>23</sup> Ward is correct in seeing wilderness as a space wherein fantasies of masculinity and property ownership are played out, but her analysis does not get to the root of the colonial problem. For that, I follow Stoll in focusing on a moment in early Anglo-Protestantism, for clues to the way wilderness operates as a space wherein the religious fantasies and colonial ideologies of property perform an erasure of Indigenous peoples while establishing the settler valuing of wilderness. If Anglicans are to be involved in the struggle for a just climate-transition today, it is our responsibility to be accountable for the ideologies of harm that our tradition has fostered in order not to repeat the violent mistakes of our history.

### ***Terra nullius and wilderness***

It is important to remember that what ‘wilderness’ names is a social construct not a statement about a state of affairs in the world.<sup>24</sup> An influential definition of wilderness comes from the Wilderness Act, 1964, which defines wilderness as ‘an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain’ (Public Law 88-577, Section 2-C, 1964). Wilderness is defined in contrast to landscapes that are inhabited and dominated by the activity of humans. It is this contrast, between land that is occupied, used, and dominated by humans, and land that is free of humans that is at stake in the wilderness debates, and it is precisely this contrast that was exploited by settler-colonists in their invasion and occupation of Indigenous lands.

To understand how this contrastive definition of wilderness is tied up in this colonial history, it is important to understand two overarching ideologies that are today used to describe the theo-political rationale of Christian colonialism, the so-called ‘Doctrine of Discovery’ and the later legal concept of *terra nullius*.<sup>25</sup> The ‘Doctrine of Discovery’ arose from the language of papal bulls such as *Inter Caetera* and *Romanus Pontifex* and other related documents, and provided justification for Catholic colonial efforts.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, *terra nullius* (Latin for ‘empty land’) proved useful to Protestant

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<sup>23</sup> Stefan Brandt, ‘The “Wild, Wild World”: Masculinity and the Environment in the American Literary Imagination’, in *Masculinities and Literary Studies: Intersections and New Directions*, ed. by J. M. Armengol and others (New York, NY: Taylor and Francis), pp. 133–53.

<sup>24</sup> Ward, ‘For Wilderness or Wildness?’, p. 34.

<sup>25</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 2015, p. 46.

<sup>26</sup> Nestor Medina, ‘The Doctrine of Discovery, LatinXo Theoethics, and Human Rights’, 21.2 (2019), pp. 157–73.

nations such as England that based their colonial claims on a particular kind of occupation of territory that disqualified both the prior Indigenous occupancy and the overly expansive claims to territory made by Catholic powers.<sup>27</sup>

As Yogi Hale Hendlin observes, the concept *terra nullius* is a relatively recent nomenclature, arising in court battles in Australia, though it allegedly describes a reality that has been at work throughout colonial history:

The precise term — though not the concept — is of relatively recent coinage. A lively debate has developed since the celebrated 1992 *Mabo v Queensland* case brought *terra nullius* to international visibility, ruling that Australia in fact was not *terra nullius* at the time of the state's founding, opening the door for significant land concessions to Australian aboriginals.<sup>28</sup>

However, while the term *terra nullius* may have a relatively recent history, Alex Zukas argues that the ideology of *terra nullius* is operative throughout the colonial period, arising as it does, from the logics of the papal bulls that give rise to the 'Doctrine of Discovery' which can be most clearly seen in the history of imperial mapmaking.<sup>29</sup>

To briefly explore this ideological history, consider the 1597 map of 'Norumbega' and Virginia drawn by Cornelius Wytfliet (fig. 1). Zukas situates this map in the context of sixteenth-century cartography where *terra incognita*, lands that had yet to be 'discovered' or explored by Europeans, were left largely underdefined and, importantly, unpopulated. By not acknowledging any political or human presence on these maps other than European presence, 'the mapmaker created imaginary spaces [...] that, in their form and content, transformed a *terra incognita* into a *terra nullius*

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<sup>27</sup> Alex Zukas, 'Terra Incognita/Terra Nullius: Modern Imperialism, Maps, and Deception', in *Lived Topographies and Their Mediatlional Forces*, ed. by Gary Backhaus and John Murungi (Lanham: Lexington, 2005), pp. 45–79 (p. 45).

<sup>28</sup> Yogi Hale Hendlin, 'From *Terra Nullius* to *Terra Communis*: Reconsidering Wild Land in an Era of Conservation and Indigenous Rights', *Environmental Philosophy*, 11.2 (2014), pp. 141–74 (p. 144).

<sup>29</sup> Zukas, p. 45; See also Merete Borch, 'Rethinking the Origins of *Terra Nullius*', *Australian Historical Studies*, 32.117 (2001), pp. 222–39.

waiting to be experienced and adorned with European place names and settlements.’<sup>30</sup> With the Wytfliet map, however, it is clear that the cartographic practice of claiming *terra incognita* as *terra nullius* is a conscious deception, as Wytfliet includes markings of some known Indigenous settlements and some fantastical ones, in the case of Norumbega itself, which can be seen on the map though, as Zukas reminds us ‘the map does not leave the viewer with a sense of stable native occupation by showing (even imaginary) tribal boundaries or other indicators or symbols of sovereignty to experience.’<sup>31</sup> The erasure of Indigenous occupation of



Figure 1: Cornelius Wytfliet's map of Norumbega

these lands allows for the imagination of a large, untrammelled wilderness that colonists are free to settle, manage, transform, or preserve as they imagine.

Wytfliet's map is useful for contextualizing how *terra nullius* ideology mixes with wilderness ideology in the Puritan period. In 1629, we find a record of debates among the Puritans about the propriety of migrating to the New World and settling in lands that were clearly occupied by

<sup>30</sup> Zukas, 'Terra Incognita/Terra Nullius', p. 61.

<sup>31</sup> Zukas, 'Terra Incognita/Terra Nullius', p. 63.

Indigenous peoples. Puritan leader, John Winthrop answers this objection by observing:

That which is common to all is proper to none. This savage people ruleth over many lands without title or property; for they enclose no ground, neither have they cattle to maintain it, but remove their dwellings as they have occasion, or as they can prevail against their neighbors. And why may not Christians have liberty to go and dwell amongst them in their wastelands and woods (leaving them such places as they have manured for their corn) as lawfully as Abraham did among the Sodomites? For God hath given to the sons of men a twofold right to the earth; there is a natural right and a civil right.<sup>32</sup>

For Winthrop, the first natural right is the universal right to property that is guaranteed to all descendants of Adam, to have space to live and flourish, while the secondary, civil right to property arises when labour is mixed with the land through cultivation, or as in the case of the Israelite patriarchs, digging wells (cf. Genesis 21).

Similarly, John Cotton argued in a sermon given in 1630 that 'it is a Principle in Nature, That in a vacant soyle, hee that taketh possession of it, and bestoweth culture and husbandry upon it, his Right it is.'<sup>33</sup> Notice that both Winthrop and Cotton are making the argument that all people have the equal right to 'improve' land that is lying 'waste'. This way of describing how property rights arise has largely been associated with John Locke, so it is interesting to see the ways precursors to Locke were using these types of theological justifications for the colonial appropriation of land decades earlier.<sup>34</sup> This seventeenth-century Anglo-Protestant discourse on property points to the general shift that was going on in economic thinking in the early modern period that Eugene McCarragher narrates in *The Enchantments*

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<sup>32</sup> John Winthrop, 'General Considerations for the Plantations in New England, with an Answer to Several Objections,' in *Winthrop Papers* (Boston: Massachussetts Historical Society, 1931), p. 120.

<sup>33</sup> John Cotton, 'God's Promise to His Plantation', in *The Kingdom, the Power, & the Glory: The Millenial Impulse in Early American Literature*, ed. by Reiner Smolinski (Dubuque: Kendall-Hunt Publishing, 1998), pp. 10–19 (p. 14).

<sup>34</sup> Hendlin, 'From *Terra Nullius* to *Terra Communis*', p. 147; John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, The Works of John Locke, 10 vols (London: Printed for Thomas Tegg; W. Sharpe and Son; G. Ofor; G. and J. Robinson; J. Evans and Co., 1823), V.

of *Mammon*.<sup>35</sup> According to McCarraher, an important context for the development of the views of property we find in these earlier Puritans, and most clearly in Locke by the end of the seventeenth century is the, by then, centuries-old fight over enclosures in England.<sup>36</sup> In the medieval feudal distribution of lands, those odd corners of land that were not being farmed or used otherwise were considered 'waste' or 'wilderness' and were therefore universally available for use by all descendants of Adam.<sup>37</sup>

In both Winthrop and Cotton, and from the Wytfliet map, we can begin to see how a *terra nullius* ideology is operating in the background. It is not that the earliest Puritans believe that there are no Indigenous people there, however, they are arguing, based on a tradition of commons land-use in England, that the Indigenous peoples of the New World are not using all the land, that there are vast tracts of wilderness and 'waste-lands' that settlers may legally occupy. However, given that by 1636 these same settlers would be at war with the Pequot people, it seems that these early apologetics serve more to ease Puritan consciences than guarantee Indigenous title. As Zukas reminds us, with King George III's Royal Proclamation of 1763, there is an official acknowledgment by the British Crown that many of these early legitimizing narratives are knowingly fraudulent, or at least, not offered in good faith.<sup>38</sup>

### ***Wilderness, both devil's territory and Eden***

The apologetics offered by both Winthrop and Cotton are couched in explicitly biblical terms. This biblically informed imagery is crucial for understanding the next step in the development of Puritan wilderness ideology. Early on, a tension arose in Puritan writing that depicted wilderness both positively as Eden, or the New Jerusalem, *and* as being the territory of the Devil.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Eugene McCarraher, *The Enchantments of Mammon: How Capitalism Became the Religion of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019); It should also be noted that a similar process was going on in French colonialism of the period, see Christopher M. Parsons, 'Wildness without Wilderness: Biogeography and Empire in Seventeenth-Century French North America', *Environmental History*, 22.4 (2017), pp. 643–67.

<sup>36</sup> Harriett Bradley, *The Enclosures in England: An Economic Reconstruction*, (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001) p. 47; McCarraher, *Enchantments of Mammon*, p. 20.

<sup>37</sup> Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, V: Treatise I, §42.

<sup>38</sup> Zukas, 'Terra Incognita/Terra Nullius', p. 55.

<sup>39</sup> Cronon, 'The Trouble with Wilderness', p. 10.

This ambiguity seems to have arisen out of a guiding Exodus motif, as William Bradford wrote in his *History of Plimoth Plantation*, 'Just as a great multitude of diverse people were taken by God out of Egypt into the wilderness in the Exodus to be constituted as God's holy people, so too were the settlers of this new land.'<sup>40</sup> Yet, just as the wilderness of the New World held forth eschatological promise it also held forth grave danger, as Bradford earlier notes, 'Satane hath more power in these heathen lands, as som [*sic*] have thought, then [*sic*] in more Christian nations, especially over Gods [*sic*] servants in them.'<sup>41</sup> It is in the dialectic between wilderness as a site of encounter with God and encounters with Satan that we can understand wilderness as what Foucault calls, a heterotopia, an other-space, in which *terra nullius* ideology is operating — not as an actual affirmation of 'new/empty land' but as a process by which Indigenous occupancy is displaced by the foregrounding of Puritan wilderness theologizing.<sup>42</sup>

This dialectic continued in subsequent generations of Puritan settlement. As Mark Stoll has observed, Anne Bradstreet, a notable poet among the New England elite, interpreted the wilderness beyond the hedge as a new Jerusalem 'in terms of the redemption of fallen man in his wilderness paradise'.<sup>43</sup> Yet while this positive stream persisted, and indeed, would eventually influence the nineteenth-century Transcendentalists and Romantics in their wilderness conservation efforts, a more hostile theme proved more dominant in the seventeenth century, as expressed in Michael Wigglesworth's poem, 'God's Controversy with New England' in which he described the wilderness as: 'A waste and howling wilderness, / Where none inhabited / But hellish fiends, and brutish men / That Devils worshiped.'<sup>44</sup> According to Stoll, these themes 'did dominate such accounts as William Bradford's *Plymouth Plantation*, Edward Johnson's *Wonder-Working Providence of Sions Saviour, in New England*, and Cotton Mather's histories of New England'.<sup>45</sup> This dominant theme manifested in the Puritan belief that

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<sup>40</sup> William Bradford, *Bradford's History of 'Plimoth Plantation'* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1898), p. 477.

<sup>41</sup> Bradford, *Bradford's History*, p. 460.

<sup>42</sup> A heterotopia is a type of realized utopia that provides a space for any given society to hold up a mirror to its own ideological fantasies, see Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', trans. by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, 16.1 (1986), pp. 22–27.

<sup>43</sup> Stoll, *Protestantism*, p. 64.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Wigglesworth, 'God's Controversy with New-England', ed. by Reiner Smolinski, *Electronic Texts in American Studies*, 36 (1662), p. 1 [accessed 17 June 2020].

<sup>45</sup> Stoll, *Protestantism*, p. 57.

they were 'a persecuted remnant of the righteous driven from Babylon to seek refuge in wilderness where Satan had heretofore ruled unchallenged'.<sup>46</sup> This Puritan belief seems to be resonant with the earlier Spanish conclusion, as reported by Bartolome Las Casas, that 'the demons were believed to have flown over here in large numbers during the advent of the cross, leaving behind the lands of the Mediterranean, and the holy war continued here.'<sup>47</sup> Cotton Mather, a prominent Puritan leader in the Salem witch trials, evidences this belief further in his history, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, writing, 'probably, the devil seducing the first inhabitants of America into it, therein aimed at having of them and their posterity out of the sound of the *silver trumpets* of the *Gospel*, then to be heard through the Roman Empire.'<sup>48</sup> The association of wilderness with devilry and evil had a profoundly dehumanizing effect on the Indigenous peoples who lived and worked and prospered in the landscapes that these early settlers declared wild, and caused a complete misrecognition of the careful ecological stewardship of the landscape by Indigenous peoples since time immemorial.

### ***Mather's heterology of the American Indians***

To illustrate the complex origins of North American wilderness ideology, it is useful to press further into Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*, specifically his account of the history of the 'Indians of Martha's Vineyard'.<sup>49</sup> in what follows I use the term 'Indian' to reflect Mather's language, recognizing that this nomenclature is itself part of a strategy of erasure by misidentification that settler colonialism has deployed against Indigenous bodies.<sup>50</sup> Early on in Mather's account, he acknowledges the Adamic ancestry of Indians which then leads to an extended discussion on the nature of their language.<sup>51</sup> He concludes that even though the Indians seem to have

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<sup>46</sup> Stoll, *Protestantism*, p. 57.

<sup>47</sup> Laura de Mello E Souza and Christine Robinson, 'Demonology, the Devil and the Image of America', *Portuguese Studies*, 13 (1997), 159–79 (p. 167).

<sup>48</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 49.

<sup>49</sup> Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana: Or; The Ecclesiastical History of New-England, From Its First Planting in the Year 1620 unto the Year of Our Lord, 1698*. (London: Printed for Thomas Parkhurst, at the Bible and Three Crowns in Cheapside, 1702).

<sup>50</sup> In Canada the 'Indian Act, 1876' brought together all government policy around Indigenous peoples and has been used as an instrument of control and erasure for the entirety of Canadian history.

<sup>51</sup> Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Book VI, p. 50.



differences in dialect, these assuredly descend from one common language. With this move, Mather is invoking the proximity of Babel, suggesting that the Indian are somehow closer to the 'pure' nature of Adam and not freighted down with the weight of history and civilization like Europeans.<sup>52</sup> This refusal of history to Indigenous peoples was a major component of *terra nullius* ideology, as it further proved that while they may have lived in the land for a long time, they had not improved upon it in a way that counted as proper occupancy or *occupatio* per European tradition.<sup>53</sup>

Next Mather turns his attention to the religious practices of the Indians noting, 'They generally acknowledge and worship'd many Gods ; therefore greatly esteem'd and reverene'd their Priests, Powaws, or Wizards, who were esteem'd as having immediate Converse with the Gods'.<sup>54</sup> He returns to various stories about the 'Powaws' several times throughout his narrative, but it should be noted that he takes great pains to highlight how the Powaws recognized their own powerlessness against the Christian God, being unable to curse converts to Christianity,<sup>55</sup> as well as at least one Powaw encouraging his wife to worship the Christian God because, according to Mather, the Christian God was a more powerful God.<sup>56</sup> Generally, Mather is optimistic about the progress of evangelism amongst the Indians, however in an enclosed letter from John Gardner, it is suggested that there is 'much decay' among the Indian converts and that while some fine preachers were being raised up amongst them, mostly the Indians are dying, or drunk, or too obsessed with ritualism.<sup>57</sup>

For all the confidence Mather exhibits about the powerlessness of the Indian Powaw or 'wizards' against true Christians, it is nevertheless extremely revealing that both Cotton Mather and his father Increase Mather, were deeply involved in the Salem witch trials. It is even more revealing that the witch hunt begins by identifying Tituba, an Indian slave-girl, perhaps of Central American origin, as being the progenitor of the witchcraft in their midst.<sup>58</sup> In the moral panic of the witch trials, what we see is all the contradictions inherent in the heterological wilderness ideology of the Puritans play out in a violent outburst against Indigenous and female bodies. Here, the negative wilderness ideology that cast the land as the territory of

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<sup>52</sup> Whitney Bauman, *Theology, Creation, and Environmental Ethics: From Creatio Ex Nihilo to Terra Nullius* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 55.

<sup>53</sup> Hendlin, 'From *Terra Nullius* to *Terra Communis*, p. 145.

<sup>54</sup> Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Book VI, p. 52.

<sup>55</sup> Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Book VI, pp. 53, 59.

<sup>56</sup> Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Book VI, p. 52.

<sup>57</sup> Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Book VI, p. 56.

<sup>58</sup> Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Book VI, p. 79.



the Devil, and Indigenous peoples as the Devil's children comes into stark contrast with the more positive ideology of wilderness as the site of a new Jerusalem, or place of encounter with God. In the witch trials, it is found that the diabolical decay of Indian wilderness has found holes in the hedge of the ordered Massachusetts Bay Colony and has taken root in their midst. The great Puritan hope of 'seeding' a new Jerusalem in this new Exodus wilderness is dashed by the discovery that they cannot keep out the Devil's diabolical minions. In the discovery of witches amongst the faithful, the Puritan image of an Edenic garden is revealed to be just another overrun patch of wilderness.<sup>59</sup>

### ***Is a decolonized rewilding possible?***

Wilderness, for the Puritans, was a great liminal space of unknown difference, a true *terra incognita*. Puritans interpreted this unknown space by projecting typological readings of Scripture onto it in such a way that it denied the particular existence of Indigenous peoples in their discrete places, instead transforming them into actors in a great eschatological drama between the Puritan hopes of seeding a new Jerusalem, and their fears of diabolical corruption. Through the double conception of wilderness, both in its positive, and negative aspect, the Puritans were able to enact *terra nullius* on what was previously *terra incognita* in such a way that the erasure of Indigenous bodies through the denial of their autonomous self-determination from the land was all but assured. Ongoing contemporary attempts within ecology to 'decolonize' wilderness should pay particular attention to the way *terra nullius* ideology can operate within wilderness ideology through unexpected modalities, such as in the case of the Puritan theological dualism I have outlined in this paper.<sup>60</sup>

Rewilding, if understood as a discourse of 'return' to some historic ecological benchmark continually runs the risk of re-introducing *terra nullius* and the erasure of the complex integrated human/non-human entanglements that constitute the world-system. Yet, as A. M. Kanngieser reminds us, another return is possible, that is, a return as refusal.<sup>61</sup> For while wilderness exists as a contrastive category dividing space between human presence and absence, thus making rewilding a discourse of 'return' to a

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<sup>59</sup> George Huntston Williams, 'The Wilderness and Paradise in the History of the Church', *Church History*, 28.1 (1959), pp. 3–24 (p. 11).

<sup>60</sup> Sophie Wynne-Jones and others, 'Feral Political Ecologies? The Biopolitics, Temporalities and Spatialities of Rewilding', *Conservation and Society*, (2020); Ward, 'For Wilderness or Wildness?', pp. 34–54.

<sup>61</sup> A. M. Kanngieser, 'To Undo Nature; on Refusal as Return', *Transmediale* [accessed 22 July 2021].

space of human absence, it is possible to refuse this construct, with its attendant colonial logic of *terra nullius* and insist that the return that is sought is 'a being-with, a sitting-with.'<sup>62</sup> If we are to avoid perpetuating the erasive logics of the colonial history of wilderness, then steps must be taken. Rewilding, wilding, or wildtending should be seen firstly as a refusal of the bifurcation of humanity and nature, thereby creating space for the kind of creaturely autonomy and flourishing towards which the best proponents of rewilding encourage us.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> 'To Undo Nature; on Refusal as Return'. For an example of this form of relation, see Zoe Todd, 'Refracting the State Through Human-Fish Relations: Fishing, Indigenous Legal Orders and Colonialism in North/Western Canada', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 7.1 (2018), 60–75.

<sup>63</sup> Prior and Ward, 'Rethinking Rewilding'; Ward, 'For Wilderness or Wildness?'; Wynne-Jones and others, 'Feral Political Ecologies'.

# Greening the Curriculum: An Experiment in Integration

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The Fifth Mark of Mission<sup>1</sup> — to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth — sounds like a reasonable enough goal. But doing it is more than a matter of decision-making and willpower alone. It is an intensely complex and intertwined issue. We are more than familiar with the problems of fossil fuel burning, climate change, and global heating. But let us not forget that the problem is not just about temperature; it is also about air quality. The burning of hydrocarbons produces particulates (leading to proposals for vehicle Low Emission Zones in our towns and cities) and Nitrogen Oxide and Nitrogen Dioxide,<sup>2</sup> which leads to the problems of smog, acid rain, and ground level ozone. Now add plastic pollution into the mix (everything from single-use plastics to the massive dumping of industrial plastics into the sea from fishing boats and merchant shipping). And then, without claiming that we are offering anywhere near an exhaustive list, we need to consider issues of biodiversity, mass extinction, wilding and rewilding (with its accompanying ‘baseline fallacies’), and the politically very different issues of rainforest preservation and greenbelt conservation.

As if that list were not exhaustive enough, we need to face up to the fact that, all too often, our best attempts to identify solutions only produces further problems. We complain about shrink-wrapped vegetables in supermarkets but doing away with that only leads to increased food waste. The plastic bag tax (which led to the removal of flimsy plastic bags from every supermarket checkout) probably led to increased carbon emissions — you need to use an organic cotton tote bag 20,000 times to make it greener than plastic. A switch to 100% organic food production in the UK would lead to higher carbon emissions. Dishwashers use less energy and water than hand-washing the dishes. And, perhaps most surprisingly, coffee pods are a more sustainable way of making coffee than almost any other method.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Marks of Mission have been produced and developed by the Anglican Consultative Council since 1984. The Fifth Mark was added in 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Jointly known as NO<sub>x</sub>, which is not a shorthand for Nitrous Oxide or laughing gas.

<sup>3</sup> Eva Wiseman, ‘When it comes to saving the planet, we need to play dirty’, *Observer*, 8 August 2021.

Faced with such a litany of ‘wicked’ problems, it would be easy to throw our hands up in despair. We may end up being climate sceptics in practice,<sup>4</sup> if not in theory, because anything we might do seems so minimal or potentially counterproductive. It is all too easy to think that if only ‘other people’ would change their habits, things would get better. Or that our actions pale into insignificance compared to China’s apparent race to build as many coal-fired power stations as they can. (It is always easier to blame a distant foreigner, rather than looking closer to home. Jesus may have had something to say about that in Matthew 7. 5).

Finally, it takes quite a lot of effort to claim that climate care can be easily rooted in the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles (if it was that clear, why has it taken us almost 2000 years to realise it?). As the leading environmental theologian Dave Bookless points out:

There remains a danger that those who focus on environmental mission (or, for that matter, on poverty, gender, racism, or any other form of injustice) lose what is unique about the person and work of Jesus Christ. If Christian environmentalism becomes so focused on ‘saving the planet’ that it loses sight of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, then it stops being Christian.<sup>5</sup>

Having laid out all these caveats, however, we cannot simply do nothing. Bearing all these complex issues in mind, the Scottish Episcopal Institute has begun its own tentative and faltering steps towards working out what it means to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth within its own life and operations. We are not the only theological institution to be doing so.

### ***From specialism to holism***

Since the beginning of the new millennium there has been a steadily increasing call to seminaries and other theological institutions to consider ways in which students might be better equipped to address these issues, and so lead the people of God in their discipleship and participation in the biblical mandate of creation care. Up to this point, environmental theology had largely been taught as an ‘add-on’ to existing curricula, with

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<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Freedland, ‘Are you in denial? Because it’s not just anti-vaxxers and climate sceptics’, *Guardian*, 13 August 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Dave Bookless ‘Context or Content? The place of the natural environment in world mission’, in *Missional Conversations: A Dialogue between Theory and Praxis in World Mission*, ed. by Cathy Ross and Colin Smith, (London: SCM Press, 2018), pp. 3–15 (p. 7).

supplementary specialist modules being studied only by the interested few, generally at graduate studies level and often in isolation from any other aspect of faith. For many leading such institutions, the green agenda has been little more than 'one more issue' clamouring to be packed into an already overburdened curriculum.

One major catalyst for a new approach — that of making such concerns an intrinsic part of the entire formational experience — was the ecumenical conference held in Prague in 2006 under the joint auspices of the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) and the International Baptist Seminary (IBTS). This gathering brought together participants from across Europe to explore the theology of creation and consider how theological colleges and courses could be encouraged 'to build a concern for the environment into every aspect of the life of Christian communities'.<sup>6</sup> The Conference recommended that:

such an essential part of our discipleship is taught in the churches. Seminaries and colleges should also ensure that their graduates emerge with an understanding of Christian involvement in creation care and the ability to deliver this message through their ministry.<sup>7</sup>

Inspiration was drawn from the host seminary (IBTS) itself in which creation care had begun to be embodied holistically in the curriculum by means of 'practices that explicitly and, even more importantly, implicitly convey concern for creation',<sup>8</sup> thereby forming students who were able 'to relate creation care to their church's task of being a witness to Christ in the contemporary context'.<sup>9</sup> Workshop sessions were held during the four-day event:

to explore the issues of integrating environmental concerns throughout the curriculum of a theological college. This calls for a fundamental shift in perception to acknowledge the

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<sup>6</sup> *The Place of Environmental Theology. A guide for seminaries, colleges and universities*, ed. by John Weaver and Margot Hodson (Oxford: Whitley Publications, 2007), p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> *The Place of Environmental Theology*, ed. by Weaver and Hodson, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> *The Place of Environmental Theology*, ed. by Weaver and Hodson, p. 72.

<sup>9</sup> *The Place of Environmental Theology*, ed. by Weaver and Hodson, p. 73.

importance of the natural and material world in the whole of our theological understanding and life as a worshipping community.<sup>10</sup>

The Conference's conclusion, that aspects of environmental theology and creation care 'should be a part of teaching in ethics, missiology, Christian doctrine, practical theology and liturgy, and that we should express these concerns through our worship life in colleges and churches'<sup>11</sup> was picked up by Luetz, Buxton and Bangert in a paper delivered at a 2016 research symposium in Australia. In their presentation they likewise promoted a holistic approach to the study of creation care within seminaries and other Christian teaching institutions, in this case through the linking of scientific and scriptural discursive reflections (analytical reasonings) with opportunities for spirituality-shaped environmental sustainability (faith-practice integration).<sup>12</sup>

It was a conclusion that was reiterated and developed during the meeting in December 2020 of a group of twenty-one eco-theological educators who gathered to discuss the place of environmental teaching and learning within UK theological education institutions (TEIs), the proceedings of this gathering being subsequently published as a John Ray Initiative paper.<sup>13</sup> Dave Bookless's presentation in particular urged participants to consider the merits of training which focused on 'formation not information; an immersive and contemplative approach towards using

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<sup>10</sup> *The Place of Environmental Theology*, ed. by Weaver and Hodson, pp. 77–78.

<sup>11</sup> *The Place of Environmental Theology*, ed. by Weaver and Hodson, p. 106.

<sup>12</sup> Johannes Luetz, Graham Buxton and Kurt Bangert, 'Christian theological, hermeneutical and eschatological perspectives on environmental sustainability and creation care. The role of holistic education', in *Reimagining Christian Education. Cultivating Transformative Approaches*, ed. by Johannes Luetz, Tony Dowden, and Beverley Norsworthy (Singapore: Springer, 2018), pp. 51–73.

<sup>13</sup> *The Environment in UK Theological Education Institutions: Report on the Environmental Consultation for Theological Educators (07–08 December 2020)*, ed. by Martin Hodson and Margot Hodson (Gloucester: The John Ray Initiative, 2021).

scripture within creation; experiential engagement involving the head, heart and hands; getting our hands dirty; and creation spirituality.’<sup>14</sup>

Once again, a key point raised at the consultation was the need to integrate environmental material across the whole curriculum, akin to the way in which TEIs now seek to address issues of inclusion and diversity. Specialist modules that address environmental topics — there are for instance six within the Common Awards palette, from certificate to master’s level<sup>15</sup> — while vitally important, are not in themselves sufficient. More is needed, that ‘more’ being ‘integration across the whole syllabus — a grid or transversal approach where issues around creation care are addressed across the spectrum of courses offered within the college’.<sup>16</sup>

This trajectory towards developing integrated curricula was also described by Graham Buxton, Johannes Luetz and Sally Shaw in a recently published paper entitled ‘Towards an embodied pedagogy in educating for creation care’.<sup>17</sup> These authors transcend the paradigmatic limitations of earlier pedagogical approaches by positing the need for more creative and immersive educational methods. Building on the work of experiential learning theorists, they argue for the importance of offering students ‘tactile, immersive, creative and soulful educational experiences’,<sup>18</sup> listing a sample of theological institutions which blend traditional pedagogy with such experiential approaches in their curricula.

While the authors cited above represent Protestant viewpoints, a similar journey has been happening in parallel in Catholic academic circles. Participants at the *Connecting Ecologies* symposium held at Campion Hall, Oxford in 2017 concluded that the most effective environmental education programmes involve the integration of environmental issues and theology across the whole curriculum:

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<sup>14</sup> Dave Bookless ‘Keynote presentation’ in *Environment in UK Theological Education Institutions*, ed. by Hodson and Hodson, pp. 10–12 (p. 12).

<sup>15</sup> Timothy Howles, John Reader and Martin Hodson ‘Creating an ecological citizenship: philosophical and theological perspectives on the role of contemporary environmental education’, *Heythrop Journal*, 59 (2018), 997–1008 (p. 1006).

<sup>16</sup> *Environment in UK Theological Education Institutions*, ed. by Hodson and Hodson, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup> Graham Buxton, Johannes Luetz and Sally Shaw ‘Towards an embodied pedagogy in educating for creation care’, in *Innovating Christian Education Research. Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. by Johannes Luetz and Beth Green (Singapore: Springer, 2021), pp. 349–75.

<sup>18</sup> Buxton, Luetz and Shaw, ‘Towards an embodied pedagogy’, p. 366.

So instead of optional modules, environmental theology would be spread across the teaching in biblical studies, ethics, mission and other modules. Beyond that, the hope is that the whole life of the college might be brought into a holistic scheme. So, the buildings, energy, recycling, land and food consumed all need to be considered. This [...] is where we should be aiming if we are going to produce a generation of church leaders who are equipped for the challenges of this century.<sup>19</sup>

### ***Bringing it home***

In keeping with the Scottish Episcopal Church's pledge — made during General Synod 2020 and developed at the following year's gathering — to take urgent action in relation to the global climate emergency [so as to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030, the Scottish Episcopal Institute is committed to placing environmental issues at the heart of its formational programme. In so doing it seeks to move beyond the approaches detailed in the literature, which at best are often little more than a series of 'green actions' to be taken, technical fixes to what is instead a wicked problem, and at worst remain in the arena of conceptualist or intellectual change.

SEI is convinced that if students are to emerge from training as ministers committed to leading the people of God in their discipleship and participation in the biblical mandate of creation care, then they themselves need to be *formed* as co-creative care-givers; they need to undergo 'a change of heart and mind'<sup>20</sup> or what *Laudato Si'* calls 'a profound interior conversion'. Pope Francis goes on in that encyclical:

It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So, what they all need is an 'ecological conversion', whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to

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<sup>19</sup> Howles, Reader and Hodson, 'Creating an ecological citizenship', p. 1006.

<sup>20</sup> Howles, Reader and Hodson, 'Creating an ecological citizenship', p. 1003.



a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.<sup>21</sup>

SEI's aim is to cultivate ecological phronesis in its students, 'the virtue of practical wisdom adapted in the light of ecological wisdom'.<sup>22</sup> This aim is in keeping with the Institute's overall educational ethos which seeks to form persons with the habitus that enables them to serve as agents of God's mission in today's world. It does this by providing an education in theology, ministry and mission which encompasses the development of character and the nurturing of virtues and spirituality alongside the acquisition of knowledge and understanding on the one hand and the development of cognitive and practical skills on the other. In so doing it adheres to an understanding of Christian education that is holistic, shaping intellect, spirit, affections, relationships and bodily life. It is about 'formation', the gradual transformation of learners — with the co-operation of the grace of God — into the likeness of Christ, and into ways of being, knowing and doing that are Kingdom-shaped, reflecting the calling for which learners are being shaped. It 'crunches souls and moves hearts as much as it informs minds' and 'makes Christian character and spirituality central rather than co-curricular'.<sup>23</sup> Above all it seeks to develop people steeped in Christian wisdom, that deep disposition of the heart and mind that knows how to make wise choices in the midst of life's contingent circumstances where there are no easy answers or ready blueprints to hand.

SEI's model of theological education is thus already characterised by an engaged and embodied pedagogy that attends to context as much as text, emotions as much as rational thought; one which tries to reorient the students' desires, to use James K. A. Smith's language, towards God's desires through practices that form habits.

But more is needed if it is to be fit for the current ecological age. If the curriculum is indeed to recalibrate the habits of its students by immersing them in practices that are 'indexed' to the Kingdom of God,<sup>24</sup> then the description of what 'righteous living' means needs to be enlarged.

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<sup>21</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'. On Care for our Common Home*, Encyclical Letter (Rome: Vatican Press, 2015), §217.

<sup>22</sup> Nicholas Austin SJ, 'The virtue of ecophronesis: an ecological adaptation of practical wisdom', *Heythrop Journal*, 59 (2018), 1009–1021 (p. 1009).

<sup>23</sup> Daniel Aleshire, 'The emerging model of formational theological education', *Theological Education*, 51.2 (2018), 25–37 (pp. 26 and 36).

<sup>24</sup> James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love. The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Michigan: Brazos Press, 2016), p. 24.

Similarly, as Ayres has noted, the understanding of the ‘contexts’ in which students live and work and the ‘communities’ in which they will serve must be expanded to include ‘the land and all of its inhabitants’:

We truncate the meaning of culture when we focus on social and political life to the exclusion of its quite earthly dimensions. If the purpose (of theological education) is the formation of persons for religious leadership in faith communities and in the life in the world, then the particularities of place — as well as interconnectedness of creation — must be considered part and parcel of the context for which students are formed.<sup>25</sup>

Fundamental to that task of re-description is worship, for it is that activity that ‘gives identity, meaning and purpose to all our activity thereafter’,<sup>26</sup> it is nothing less than ‘construal training’,<sup>27</sup> reshaping the imagination. Through liturgy and ritual action, worshippers are conscripted into a new narrative and altered ways of being are imprinted on their bodies; indeed, their very sense of purpose is affected, changing what they ‘feel called to in the world’.<sup>28</sup>

It is thus crucial that attention is paid to how God’s Story is told in liturgy. Students have long been urged to think critically about the use of gendered language in relation to God, the Church and human beings when constructing acts of worship; this care must now be extended to include the avoidance of overly anthropomorphic constrictions in liturgical language, expressions that betray an instrumental attitude towards creation, and awareness of the important emphasis in Christian Scripture and theology that the whole contingent created order praises its Maker. As Grdzelidze has noted ‘the language of the church should convey a particular message of unity and loving care for the other which extends to the rest of God’s creation.’<sup>29</sup> Feedback on the regular acts of student-led worship at every residential session will ensure that this aspect of formation is considered

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<sup>25</sup> Jennifer Ayres ‘Learning on the ground: Ecology, engagement and embodiment’, *Teaching Theology and Religion*, 17.3 (July 2014), 203–16 (pp. 204–5).

<sup>26</sup> Stella Simiyu and Peter Harris, *Caring for Creation? Part of our Gospel Calling?*, Grove Ethics E149 (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2008), p. 22.

<sup>27</sup> James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom. How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), p. 51.

<sup>28</sup> Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, p. 138.

<sup>29</sup> Tamara Grdzelidze ‘The Church’, in *Systematic Theology and Climate Change. Ecumenical Perspectives*, ed. by Michael Northcott and Peter Scott (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 141–56 (p. 149).

and commented upon. Students likewise will be encouraged at the Orientation Week to use the recently published SEC materials for the *Season of Creation* <sup>30</sup> which begins on the Sunday immediately following that residential, to pay attention to those Festivals which affirm creation (such as Rogation Sunday), and to consider using liturgical material and hymnody from the Franciscan, Iona and Northumbrian communities when leading worship. Those leading Bible Studies at residentials and on placement will be encouraged to use *The Green Bible*, and preachers directed towards such web sites as Sustainable Preaching.

In teaching liturgical theology, care will be taken to affirm those aspects of the worshipping life of the church 'that offer opportunity to affirm the work of God in creation and the responsibility of the community to serve their role as stewards of the world that the Triune God has created'. <sup>31</sup> Particular attention will be paid therein to the role of confession, lament and intercession in liturgy. The adaptation of spiritual practices such as ecological adaptations of the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola will likewise be recommended. <sup>32</sup>

The formational community will also be encouraged to think more creatively about the *locus* of worship, helped by the modelling of a Forest Church liturgy by staff and a former student at the opening residential of the 2021/22 academic year. This gathering for worship will take place on Kinnoull Hill, a lovely woodland area overlooking the city of Perth, and will comprise a liturgy which has connection with the natural world at its core, drawing on both books of God: the natural world and Scripture. In the same way, SEI students will be offered an opportunity to participate in a mountain pilgrimage later this autumn. It is hoped that these examples may inspire students to do likewise in the year ahead, and open themselves to the new learnings and possibilities for evangelism that are offered through spiritual reconnection with the natural world which Cate Williams outlines here:

We enable ourselves and others to be open to God speaking to us through the natural world, and we live differently as the connection changes our perception, thinking and action. Our experiences give us a new language, one that speaks of God's purposes within all creation, that finds God in the natural world

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<sup>30</sup> Authorised by the College of Bishops for experimental use in 2021.

<sup>31</sup> Lina Andronoviene, 'Worship' in *The Place of Environmental Theology. A guide for seminaries, colleges and universities*, ed. by John Weaver and Margot Hodson (Oxford: Whitley Publications, 2007), pp. 90–100 (p. 94).

<sup>32</sup> Nicholas Austin, 'The virtue of ecophronesis', p. 1018.

and that resonates well with the instincts of spiritual explorers. It is this that Forest Church offers the contemporary church, both those that feel called to pioneer Forest Church themselves, and also those within established churches as they converse with their friends and neighbours.<sup>33</sup>

Worshipping in these ways, not to mention the daily imprinting of a psalmodic thankfulness for and attentiveness to the sacramental universe through the praying of the Daily Office, is a fundamental part of the process of attuning students to an enlarged conception of Kingdom living; to a renewed envisaging of shalom, 'the common good of humanity and the holistic flourishing of all creation'.<sup>34</sup> Through praying in these ways, students will be immersed in rhythms and rituals that over time 'train their loves'.<sup>35</sup>

But what other intentional pedagogical routines — Smith would call them 'liturgies' but they might equally be dubbed a form of environmental virtue ethics — might enable staff to help form environmentally-attuned habits or dispositions in their students' lives? Much has been written in recent years about the value of tactile, immersive and experiential educational experiences which reach the soul and 'the heart' — the sensory, imaginative, intuitive and affective functions — as much as the head (reason, rationality and cognition). Such experiential approaches, it is argued:

are urgently needed at a time when education is progressively characterized by 'online' learning, and where a growing number of people engage with other people (and with nature) almost exclusively via the interface of a 'screen'.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Cate Williams, *Forest Church: Earthed Perspectives on the Gospel*, Grove Books MEv127 (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2019), p. 21.

<sup>34</sup> David Benson 'God's curriculum: reimagining education as a journey towards shalom', in *Reimagining Christian Education*, ed. by Luetz, Dowden, and Norsworthy, pp. 17–38 (p. 25).

<sup>35</sup> James K. A. Smith, 'Higher education: What's love got to do with it? Longings, desires and human flourishing', keynote address presented at *Learning and Loves: Reimagining Christian Education*. CHC Higher Education Research Symposium, Brisbane, Australia (2016).

<sup>36</sup> Buxton, Luetz and Shaw, 'Towards an embodied pedagogy', p. 355.

Clingerman likewise argues for the promotion of ‘embodied, ecological engagement beyond the classroom walls’,<sup>37</sup> while Knights maintains that due to the transformative effect of direct rather than vicarious experiences of biodiversity, ‘it is imperative that environmental education has a substantial field-based, in addition to class-based, element’,<sup>38</sup> demonstrating in his paper the positive impact of out-of-classroom learning on cognitive, affective, social and behavioural development. Ayres similarly recommends ‘earth-honoring educational practices that bring together embodied engagement and critical analysis’ and ‘a pedagogical practice that engages the senses, emotions and commitments beyond what is possible in a more formal discussion in a seminary classroom’.<sup>39</sup>

Despite this oft-recorded wisdom, a recent synthesis of seminary courses suggests that embodied pedagogies resulting in grounded environmental knowing ‘are in a relatively early stage of development and that there is some reticence at Christian education institutions to assimilate them more readily’,<sup>40</sup> with the authors suggesting that curricula continue to favour pedagogical methods that are aligned to ‘enlightenment reasoning’. Ayres’s description of her own ‘Walk and Talk’ teaching method<sup>41</sup> and Butkus and Kolmes’s outlining of the ‘three-day eco-plunge’ — the investigation of social, economic, environmental-ecological and ethical issues in Oregon’s coastal communities interwoven with key aspects of Catholic Social Teaching<sup>42</sup> — are notable in being among the few recorded examples of the kind of grounded approach recommended in the scholarly literature.

SEI staff are optimistic, however, about the opportunities that Common Awards affords for experimentation along these lines. Over the next three years SEI will institute a policy that ensures that the majority of student placements are set within congregations or other ministerial settings that are members of *Eco-Congregation Scotland*, allied to similar agencies, or declare environmentally friendly values and virtues. Similarly,

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<sup>37</sup> Forrest Clingerman, ‘Pedagogy as a field guide to the ecology of the classroom’, *Teaching Theology and Religion*, 17.3 (2014), 217–20 (p. 219).

<sup>38</sup> Paul Knights, ‘Virtue Ethics, Biodiversity and Environmental Education’, in *Environmental Ethics, Sustainability and Education*, ed. by Estelle Weber (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2009), pp. 215–24 (p. 215).

<sup>39</sup> Jennifer Ayres ‘Learning on the ground’, pp. 204 and 214.

<sup>40</sup> Buxton, Luetz and Shaw, ‘Towards an embodied pedagogy’, p. 367.

<sup>41</sup> Ayres, ‘Learning on the ground’, pp. 203–04.

<sup>42</sup> Russell Butkus and Steven Kolmes, ‘Theology in ecological perspective: an interdisciplinary, inquiry-based experiment’, *Teaching Theology and Religion*, 11.1 (2008), 42–53 (pp. 50–53).

those studying the recently released module TMM2771–Theological Perspectives on Community Development and Organising will be encouraged to focus on, participate in and write about local community environmental projects; indeed, one current student is already involved in starting up and leading a Community Garden project as part of her Mixed Mode (Context-based) pathway. The TMM1301–Foundations for Ministry and Mission in Context module, taken by all SEI students in the coming year, will have a strong focus on creation care and the assessments will centre on ways that both SEI as a dispersed community, and students as members and future leaders in congregations, can implement the vision and practices of the SEC’s plan for net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.

This rich palette of Common Awards assessment types will be used to full effect, with students being encouraged to submit assignments that hone the kinds of skills needed in their future leadership role of encouraging the people of God in their participation in creation care. Forum posts, Assessed Conversations, Oral Presentations, Group Projects, Resources for Others and the use of multimedia Portfolios will equip these candidates for the task of environmental apologetics far more readily than 2500-word essays.

The diet of modules offered will be augmented by those dedicated to environmental theology or which embrace creation care in its widest sense. Immediate plans of this nature include the addition of one entitled *Theological Perspectives on Health and Healing*, led by Gillian Straine, Director of the Guild of Health and St Raphael. This module is pertinent to the theme as there can be no examination of human thriving without also considering humanity’s common home and creation’s flourishing. We will look at where and how one of the more specifically environment-focussed modules might be included in our curriculum, perhaps at BA (Hons) or MA level during IME4–6. In the meantime, we can do this through our existing mission-focussed modules like TMM1301–Foundations for Ministry and Mission in Context (mentioned above).

However, the teaching of environmental theology will not simply be done by means of the addition of specialist or optional modules. On the contrary, work will be done to encourage every member of the team of Associate Tutors to consider the intersectional nature of environmental issues, aiming for integration of an environmental perspective across the whole curriculum; the next staff residential in Spring 2022 will initiate this conversation. Developing and tending ‘environmentally-attuned’ bibliographies is one of the ways in which tutors can ensure their particular subject matter intersects with environmental material; such a task of ‘greening’ bibliographies is akin to the work currently being done by Common Awards’ Diversity and Inclusion Network in helping TEIs decolonise and diversify the theological curriculum. In this regard then,

Northcott and Scott's 2014 publication *Systematic Theology and Climate Change* will be offered as recommended reading for those studying doctrinal theology, with Pojman's *Environmental Ethics: readings in theory and application*, Deane-Drummond's *Eco-Theology* and Valerio's *Just Living* being means of introducing students to the field of environment ethics as part of their ethical theology courses. Within the second year Reflective Practice course, Castillo's recently published work *An Ecological Theology of Liberation, Salvation and Political Ecology* will be used to acquaint students with an eco-liberationist discourse.

A member of staff will be appointed as SEI's 'Green Champion', holding a brief similar to that held by the Inclusion Officer. A version of the self-evaluation framework offered by Common Awards for the latter aspect of the curriculum will be used to reflect upon the extent to which an environmental perspective has become embedded in the design and delivery of the curriculum, as well as helping staff identify future priorities. That same staff member will also be involved with — and feed back to the student community on — the next stages of the SEC Liturgy Committee's *Responding to the Sacred: Inclusive Liturgies* initiative, an exploration of expanding metaphoric usage in the representation of the divine, incarnate within the cosmos, an issue that goes far beyond that of gender-neutral language.

SEI will also continue to model good environmental practice with regards to transport, waste management, energy, printed resources, purchasing of supplies and water usage, and to make these policies clear on all its publicity. Being an institution which rents out the venues used for both its office space and residential events, it finds itself subject to the lifestyle choices of the host organisations but will continue to make environmental sustainability a core element with regard to those aspects of its life over which it does have control. Working in conjunction with the student 'Green Champion' on Student Chapter — which is itself registered with *Eco-Congregation Scotland* — SEI staff will regularly check the Institute's environmental commitments and ensure the ongoing adoption of environmentally sustainable behaviours, working in this way towards the creation of a strategic sustainability plan. Already the Student Chapter rep., spurred on by the examples of St Hild College and Ripon College Cuddesdon, has been in contact with the Chaplain at Eco-Congregation Scotland to see how a largely virtual community such as SEI might get involved in the organisation's membership scheme.

The Institute's partnership with a seminary in Porto Alegre, Brazil — Centro de Estudos Anglicanos — and its continued engagement in the series

of TEAC<sup>43</sup> webinars which consider pressing issues for theological education in different regions of the world, will keep it mindful of global Anglican perspectives on ecological issues. It is hoped that communication between the two theological institutes can be deepened in this coming year, with the Scottish students learning from and with their Brazilian brethren about issues of deforestation, carbon capture, poverty and justice, and the linkage between gender and the environment.

### ***Setting out***

These are indeed ‘tentative and faltering steps’; they seek, however, to be obedient ones, a faith-filled response to God’s call to ‘care for the whole created order and to foster ecological justice’.<sup>44</sup> In taking them, we will seek allies and companions on the road: within the wider Scottish Episcopal Church, ecumenically, and with agencies seeking to embed environmental practices in Scottish soil. As plans unfold, we will apply for a seed-corn grant from Common Awards to support a piece of evaluative research, conducted in tandem with another Theological Education Institute or Eco-Congregation Scotland, which assesses and develops our environmental engagement. We ask for your prayers in these endeavours.

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<sup>43</sup> Theological Education in the Anglican Communion is an initiative set up by the Anglican Primates in 2003 with the aim of helping Anglican Christians worldwide be theologically alert and sensitive to the call of God.

<sup>44</sup> International Commission for Anglican–Orthodox Theological Dialogue, *In the Image and Likeness of God: A Hope-Filled Anthropology*, The Buffalo Agreed Statement (London: Anglican Communion Office, 2015), p. 12.



## Introduction to Part 2: A Quartet of Theological Insights

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In addition to the material in this Autumn number of the *Journal* regarding climate change, there are four significant articles on divergent themes. The first brings us to the first century. Nicholas Taylor asks if there is anti-Semitism in the New Testament. It is a provocative question: one often asked. Taylor makes a careful distinction, though, between the New Testament documents themselves and the history of their interpretation. He concludes that whilst anti-Semitism is not located within the texts of the New Testament themselves, it has certainly influenced their interpretation, and he reminds us of the importance of addressing the legacy of that interpretation within Christian circles and wider society.

The second brings us to the nineteenth century with an essay by David Jasper to celebrate the life and work of Thomas Frederick Simmons, a Church of England Victorian clergyman and scholar. Simmons's life exemplifies what we sometimes refer to as a 'learned church', that is a church where learning is not separated from its urban, suburban and rural parochial life but is intrinsically linked to pastoral care. We would do well to take a lesson from Simmons in the twenty-first century, where the church and university are oftenn seen as opposed.

It is to the twenty-first century that our third piece by Michael Fuller brings us in response to an article in the *Journal's* last number (Summer 2021) on the topic of Scottish Episcopal Theologians. Fuller writes in response to Jaime Wright's 'Scottish Episcopal Theologians of Science', of whom Fuller is one, to proffer his personal perspective in terms of context. Fuller notes that the development of science-and-religion as an area of study is exciting and, for him, has proved to be an unexpected exercise of his priestly vocation.

Our final article is by Katrin Bosse, who brings us into the immediate present with theological reflection on Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences. Bosse notes that reactions about threats to human health, specifically those that have confined us largely to our homes, have exposed diverse perceptions of human existence in terms of our physical bodies, from controlling our bodies via fitness to human interaction almost exclusively via the internet and social media after lockdown. We are challenged to (re)think what it means to be bodies, as we are, and for our bodies to be part of the larger body of Christ, as they are, and for us to come to terms with ourselves as living bodies.



# Anti-Semitism in the New Testament?<sup>1</sup>

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The idea that the New Testament might be anti-Semitic is the product of the collective guilt of western Christianity during the years following the second world war. As the scale of the holocaust became apparent, questions were quite legitimately asked about the continuity of the forces which not so much drove it as muted resistance to Nazism with a long history of persecution of Jewish communities in many parts of Europe over the preceding centuries.<sup>2</sup> The appalling legacy of anti-Jewish discrimination and pogroms in Christian Europe is well-documented, and as questions came to be asked about where this originated, the New Testament itself came under scrutiny. However, a distinction has not always been maintained between the New Testament documents and the history of their interpretation.

It has to be acknowledged that New Testament scholarship, like all academic disciplines, is prone to influence by the predominant ideologies of its day. The emergence of *Neuentestamentwissenschaft* as an academic discipline followed the European enlightenment, which provided the impetus for both secularism and nationalism. As the political power of the Church declined, along with its influence in education and public discourse, there emerged a plethora of racial theories and pseudo-ethnic ideologies — some influenced by, or deriving from a distortion of Darwin's evolutionary theories.<sup>3</sup> While this led to the emancipation of Jewish communities in many parts of Europe, it also raised questions about their place in societies increasingly defined by abstract but often virulent notions of nationhood.<sup>4</sup> Nazism represents an extreme development of these trends, but they were

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<sup>1</sup> Paper presented to the Sabeel-Kairos Theology Group Conference, Glasgow, 8 February 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. P. Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> A. Desmond and J. Moore, *Darwin's Sacred Cause* (London: Penguin, 2009); A. Pichot, *The Pure Society: From Darwin to Hitler* (London: Verso, 2009); R. Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> S. J. Kelley, *Racializing Jesus: Race, Ideology and the Formation of Modern Biblical Scholarship* (London: Routledge, 2002).

by no means restricted to Germany. Germany is, nevertheless, of particular importance on account of developments in several academic disciplines in its universities and intellectual life which profoundly influenced social, political, and economic as well as religious movements in other European countries and further afield. Many of these trends were already apparent in Protestant theology in Germany before and during the first world war.<sup>5</sup> This is not to single out Germany, on this or any other issue, but the identification of the Christian Gospel with a militaristic nationalism influenced more by Nietzsche than by Christ or Scripture, is evident in the writings of such eminent scholars of continuing influence as Adolf von Harnack,<sup>6</sup> Rudolf Kittel,<sup>7</sup> Otto Eißfeldt,<sup>8</sup> and Hermann Gunkel.<sup>9</sup> Not only did they consider war holy, they despised notions of non-violence and non-retaliation as weak and unmanly, and they were overtly racist; among their recurring complaints against the British, French, and Russian armies was that they defiled the sacred cult of war by deploying African and Asian troops against the ethnically pure armies of Germany and Austria.<sup>10</sup> This in no way implies that imperial Britain, France, and Russia were any less racist than Germany and Austria in opportunistically recruiting men of subject nations to their armies and deploying them on the battlefields of Europe. A generation later, the church and academy in Germany produced some outspoken and courageous opponents of Nazism,<sup>11</sup> with few exceptions these were muted on the subject of anti-Semitism. Some prominent figures in church and academia, as in other walks of life, were notoriously committed to the Nazi regime and its agenda.<sup>12</sup> Most infamous among anti-Semitic theologians supportive of

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<sup>5</sup> *The First World War and the Mobilization of Biblical Scholarship*, ed. by A. Mein, N. MacDonald and M. A. Collins (London: T & T Clark, 2019).

<sup>6</sup> A. von Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1902); ET *What is Christianity?* (New York: Putnam, 1902).

<sup>7</sup> R. Kittel, *Das Alte Testament und unser Krieg* (Leipzig: Dörfling & Francke, 1916).

<sup>8</sup> O. Eißfeldt, *Krieg und Bibel* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1915).

<sup>9</sup> H. Gunkel, *Israelitisches Heldentum und Kriegsfrömmigkeit im Alten Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1916).

<sup>10</sup> Mein, MacDonald & Collins, *First World War*.

<sup>11</sup> Several of Harnack's family, including his son Ernst, nephew Arvid, and their cousins Dietrich Bonhöffer and his brother Klaus, and the husbands of two of their sisters perished in purges of anti-Nazi activists during the closing months of the war.

<sup>12</sup> D. L. Bergen, *Twisted Cross* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); R. P. Ericksen, *Theologians under Hitler* (New Haven: Yale

Nazism was Gerhard Kittel, editor of the *Theologische Wörterbuch zum Neuentestament*,<sup>13</sup> all ten volumes translated into English as the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*,<sup>14</sup> and still in use. While the *Bekennende Kirche* (Confessing Church) was by no means unanimous in condemning anti-Semitism,<sup>15</sup> New Testament scholars who stood out included Ernst Lohmeyer (later killed by the KGB),<sup>16</sup> Günther Bornkamm,<sup>17</sup> Joachim Jeremias (to be discussed further below), and Ernst Käsemann.<sup>18</sup> Rudolf Bultmann was rather less outspoken, but through his enormous influence bequeathed to subsequent scholarship a widespread and lasting influence of the outspoken racist, anti-Semite, and Nazi Martin Heidegger.<sup>19</sup> All the previously mentioned German scholars, and many in other countries writing in other languages, expressed themselves on occasion in ways that would be considered ill-advised if not offensive if spoken today. Given that, until well after the second world war, the Protestant faculties in German universities dominated the academic discipline of *Neuentestamentwissenschaft*, developments there had a profound impact on scholarship elsewhere, including in the Anglophone world.

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University Press, 1985); *Complicity in the Holocaust: Churches and Universities in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); H. J. Forstman, *Christian Faith in Dark Times* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992); S. Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); H. Moxnes, *Jesus and the Rise of Nationalism* (London: Tauris, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> *Theologische Wörterbuch zum Neuentestament* I-V, ed. by Gerhard Kittel, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933–48); VI-X continued after his death, final volume 1979.

<sup>14</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. by Names (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76).

<sup>15</sup> S. Baranowski, 'The Confessing Church and Anti-Semitism: Protestant Identity, German Nationhood, and the Exclusion of Jews', in *Betrayal: German Churches and the Holocaust*, ed. by R. P. Ericksen and S. Heschel, (Minneapolis MN: Augsburg-Fortress, 1999), pp. 90–109.

<sup>16</sup> A. Köhn, *Der Neutestamentler Ernst Lohmeyer* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); J. R. Edwards, *The Swastika and the Sickle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019).

<sup>17</sup> Deprived of his *Venia Legendi* (licence to teach) in 1937.

<sup>18</sup> Detained by Gestapo in 1937.

<sup>19</sup> Kelley, *Racializing Jesus*.

We are of course not entitled to presume that every German scholar who survived the war was anti-Semitic.<sup>20</sup> The issues are very much more complex. The Lutheran theological tradition, with its convention of interpreting Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, as opposed to observance of the Jewish law, in terms of Augustine and Luther's experiences of religious conversion and their theological premises profoundly influenced by these experiences, dominated the Protestant Theology faculties in Germany and Scandinavia. This hindered the development of any critical examination of Paul's theology, any questioning of whether he was at all accurate in his depiction of the Pharisees and other Jews, and indeed whether the Protestant tradition of interpretation was at all accurate in its reading of Paul. For as long as it was assumed that Paul and other early Christian writers, and Jesus before them, defined themselves *against*, rather than *within*, Judaism, and that Christianity was therefore an intrinsically 'gentile' movement (whatever that might mean), hostility to contemporary Jews was all but latent in European Christianity. The 'Lutheran Paul', definitively articulated by the 'Tübingen School'<sup>21</sup> during the nineteenth century, prevailed in New Testament scholarship until at least the 1970s.<sup>22</sup> The study of Judaism of the second temple period, as the background to the life of Jesus and the New Testament writings, was still in its infancy, with most scholars assuming that Josephus's description of four movements, viz., Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, and Zealots, was essentially comprehensive and accurate categorization,<sup>23</sup> and that the rabbinic literature understood was essentially monolithic tradition, substantially in

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<sup>20</sup> E. Lorenz, *Ein Jesusbild im Horizont des Nationalsozialismus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017); K. Meier, *Die theologischen Fakultäten im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1996); *Theologische Fakultäten im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. by L. Siegele-Wenschkewitz and C. Nicolaisen, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

<sup>21</sup> The most influential scholar of this movement was F. C. Baur, whose use of Hegelian dialectics to posit a dichotomy between Judaism and Christianity, and between Jewish (Petrine) and gentile (Pauline) Christianity, profoundly influenced New Testament scholarship for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

<sup>22</sup> E. E. Ellis, *Paul and his Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961); K. Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976); S. Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988); *Perspectives Old and New: The 'Lutheran' Paul and his Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

<sup>23</sup> *De Bello Iudaico* 2.119–66; *Antiquitates Iudaeorum* 13.171–73; 18.12–20.

continuity with the Pharisees to the exclusion of other movements of the period.<sup>24</sup> Rabbinic and second temple writings were read in contrast to Jesus and the first Christians, rather than the latter understood as distinct yet essentially in continuity with their Jewish roots. Significant developments in our understanding of second temple Judaism, assisted by the discovery of previously unknown manuscripts, and by critical study of the rabbinic literature by Jewish scholars,<sup>25</sup> means that much earlier New Testament scholarship has simply become dated. Judaism of the late second temple period is now recognized as a diverse ethnic-religious tradition, rooted in Palestine but active in different cultural contexts throughout the Mediterranean world and the Middle East, within which the movements mentioned by Josephus represent only a small minority.<sup>26</sup> Jesus and the first Christians are to be located *within* this milieu, and as forming a distinct movement within it, one which itself became diverse and soon straddled the boundaries of Judaism. Earlier scholarship contains what are now recognized as misconceptions, anachronisms, generalizations, stereotypes, and conscious or unconscious caricatures of early Jews and Judaism, attested in the work of European and North American scholars generally, and by no means only the Germans.

A particular illustration of this problem, and the questions it unavoidably raises about the work of German scholars during the Nazi period, is Joachim Jeremias. He had spent much of his childhood in Jerusalem, where his father was Provost of the *Erlöserkirche* (Lutheran Church of the Redeemer) until interred by British forces in 1917, and then repatriated. Jeremias in due course became professor of New Testament in the Theology

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<sup>24</sup> H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, 4 vols (München: Beck, 1922–28), represents perhaps the pinnacle of this movement, erudite and fully recognizing the importance of second temple Judaism as the context in which Jesus lived and Christianity emerged, and therefore for understanding the New Testament and early Christianity, but fundamentally mistaken in assuming that rabbinic writings of the early Christian centuries reflect Pharisaic Judaism of the late second temple period.

<sup>25</sup> The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered at Qumran in 1947, are the most important repository of Jewish texts of the period ending in the Roman-Jewish war of 66–70 CE; F. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1997–1998).

<sup>26</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 B.C.E. – 135 C.E.* (London: SCM, 1992), represents a particularly robust statement of this position, now all but universally acknowledged in scholarship, to the point that some speak of Judaisms rather than Judaism.

faculty at Göttingen, despite having already joined the *Bekennende Kirche* (Confessing Church) and having protested the adoption of the *Arierparagraph* ('Arian Clause') by the *Deutsche Evangelische Kirche* (German Evangelical Church). It is thought that state endorsement of his appointment may have been through bureaucratic error rather than conscious decision, and certainly contrary to the intentions of the notorious Nazi Dean of the Theology Faculty, Emmanuel Hirsch.<sup>27</sup> While no professor in the faculty was dismissed for anti-Nazi inclinations, Hirsch did seek to ensure that new appointees were loyal to party, *Reichskirche*, and *Führer*. Jeremias remained in post through the war, under Hirsch and his successor, Otto Weber, who subsequently retracted his Nazism.<sup>28</sup> After the war, Jeremias gained international eminence, especially as many of his books were translated into English and other languages. He applied his knowledge of Aramaic language and rabbinic Judaism to his study of the synoptic gospels, and in particular to the teaching of Jesus, becoming one of the most influential authorities in this field. Like all scholars, his work has become dated, but it remains influential. Some of his books are still in print, including *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, first published in 1947, the second edition of which was translated into English as *The Parables of Jesus*.<sup>29</sup> It is his treatment of those parables which speak of eschatological judgement, of the rulers of the people bringing destruction on the nation, which have been deemed anti-Semitic. He was accused of academic incompetence, dishonesty, and anti-Semitism by the eminent scholar E. P. Sanders,<sup>30</sup> who was rebutted very forcefully by

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<sup>27</sup> I. Mager, 'Göttinger theologische Promotionen 1933–1945', in *Theologische Fakultäten*, ed. by Siegele-Wenschkewitz and Nicolaisen, pp. 347–59 (350); cf. R. P. Ericksen, 'Die Göttinger Theologische Fakultät im Dritten Reich', in *Die Universität Göttingen unter dem Nationalsozialismus*, ed. by H. Becker and others (Munich: Saur, 1998), pp. 75–101 (80, 97–100); R. Smend, *Zwischen Mose und Karl Barth* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

<sup>28</sup> R. P. Ericksen, 'The Göttingen University Theological Faculty: A Test Case in *Gleichschaltung* and Denazification', *Central European History* 17 (1984), 355–83.

<sup>29</sup> J. Jeremias, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu* (Zürich: Zwingli, 1947; ii. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952; ET *The Parables of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1954). Subsequent German editions continued to be published by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: iii. 1954; iv. 1956; v. 1958; vi. 1962; vii. 1965; viii. 1970; ix. 1977; x. (posthumous) 1984; xi. 1998.

<sup>30</sup> E. P. Sanders, 'Jesus and the Kingdom', in *Jesus, the Gospels, and the Church*, ed. by E. P. Sanders (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), pp. 225–39. Sanders has, throughout his career, maintained strong connections with Israeli academics and institutions.



Ben F. Meyer.<sup>31</sup> More recently Tania Oldenhage has suggested that Jeremias shared in a collective German inability to apprehend the reality of the holocaust, and all but implies that he saw fulfilment of Jesus's parables in the genocidal programme of the Nazis.<sup>32</sup> Oldenhage makes no attempt to research Jeremias's life, and in particular his affiliations and activities during the Nazi period; records may be sparse and inconclusive, but she makes no reference to the work of others who have made the effort, e.g. to account for his call to Göttingen, and confirmation of his appointment by state authorities, and how he retained his position through the Nazi period (when in other universities professors were deprived of their positions).<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, she seems to think that a book published in 1947 would have been written the same year, which betrays a failure to appreciate just how labour-intensive and time-consuming the processes of writing a manuscript, communications by surface mail services between author and (Swiss) publisher, type-setting, proof-reading, printing, and binding books were before computers and the internet were invented, even without the additional challenges of wartime and immediate post-war working conditions, shortages of materials, disrupted mail services, and the challenges of resuming the academic programmes of the university as demobilized servicemen and released prisoners of war began or resumed their studies. To have been published in 1947, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu* must have been written during the latter years of the war at the latest, in defiance of the Nazi agenda, aggressively pursued by Hirsch and Weber, of de-Judaizing Biblical Studies.<sup>34</sup> If there was any contemporary resonance to Jeremias's interpretation of the eschatology of the parables of Jesus, it would have been the increasing inevitability of the defeat of Nazi Germany; the nation whose leaders were bringing destruction upon themselves and their people was Germany itself.

This is not to suggest that there are not searching questions to be asked, not only about Jeremias and his contemporaries, but about the

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<sup>31</sup> B. F. Meyer, 'A Caricature of Joachim Jeremias and his Scholarly Work', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110 (1991), 451–62.

<sup>32</sup> Tania Oldenhage, *Parables for our Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>33</sup> Mager, 'Göttinger theologische Promotionen', 350; Ericksen, 'Göttinger Theologische Fakultät'.

<sup>34</sup> The chair in Old Testament was left vacant, after the retirement of Rudolf Smend in 1933, until Gerhard von Rad was appointed in 1945. Hirsch published *Das Alte Testament und die Predigt des Evangeliums* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1936) precisely to serve the Nazi agenda of de-Judaizing early Christianity.

presuppositions with which all scholars approach their task, and the ideological premises of the methodologies they have inherited.<sup>35</sup> Some participants in the particular debates on the reputation of Jeremias may perhaps reflect naïveté, lack of rigour, or even a determination to establish their own reputations by destroying those of their predecessors, without regard for the truth. During the decades following the second world war, Jewish scholars, in Israel and in North America in particular, have become increasingly active in the study of Jesus and early Christianity, and in the academic societies dedicated to this scholarship; sensitivity to them, as well as the widespread sympathy for Israel and blindness to the plight of the Palestinians in western societies, may have inclined some scholars towards vehement reactions to the words of predecessors, and even to impute anti-Semitism to the New Testament documents themselves. There may also be a Christian Zionist agenda, in terms of which any interpretation of New Testament eschatology which does not support the creation of a Jewish nation-state in Palestine is deemed to be anti-Semitic. The politics of biblical scholarship have been receiving increasing attention in recent years,<sup>36</sup> but there is a great deal more research to be done into the ideological commitments of institutions as well as of individuals, and into the sources of funding, and the conditions on which it is made available, which sustain universities and colleges in a commercial age. This has become particularly clear in recent years with political and commercial pressure on institutions to adopt the discredited International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) 'working definition' of anti-Semitism and to use it to suppress any support for the Palestinian cause.<sup>37</sup>

One hesitates to speak of a holocaust industry, but, as well as the very successful exploitation of both Jewish and European Christian memories in

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Kelley, *Racializing Jesus*.

<sup>36</sup> J. G. Crossley, *Cults, Martyrs and Good Samaritans* (London: Pluto, 2018); *Harnessing Chaos* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); *Jesus in an Age of Neoliberalism* (London: Routledge, 2012); *Jesus in an Age of Terror* (London: Routledge, 2008); *Jesus beyond Nationalism*, ed. by H. Moxnes and others (London: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> The [IHRA website](#) contains the 'working' definition, together with accompanying 'examples' used to clarify the definition, and other background information and documents. The 'working definition' was drafted by US Attorney Kenneth Stern, himself Jewish and Zionist in his sympathies, but who has subsequently condemned as 'egregious' the use of a working definition, drafted for data collection and categorization purposes, as a legal device to suppress freedom of expression, in [testimony to the US House of Representatives Judiciary Committee](#) in 2017.

the Zionist cause, there has been a dual tendency in New Testament interpretation, either to find anti-Semitism in every possible text, or to reinterpret key texts quite radically so that they are understood in ways quite different to what has been the longstanding consensus. This is not to deny that, from time to time, a compelling case may be argued for radical reinterpretation of a particular text, a process akin to what the philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn described as a 'paradigm shift'.<sup>38</sup> I have tried it myself,<sup>39</sup> and it seldom works. Most of the time, scholarship in all disciplines develops incrementally, and vested interests militate against radical changes in direction. It has nevertheless been entirely appropriate, if not imperative, that Christian interpretation of Scripture be reviewed quite rigorously in the light of the toxic legacy of the persecution of European Jewry over many centuries; the question has to be asked whether the impulses for anti-Semitism are to be found in the New Testament itself, in the ways it has been interpreted, or in other cultural forces. As one of the prominent scholars of recent decades, James Dunn, has observed:

The challenge thus posed to Christian NT scholars in particular cannot therefore be ducked .... The question we must face, then, is whether such attitudes are already inseparable from the scriptures on which they were based.<sup>40</sup>

Perhaps the most extreme approach to the issue is that of Rosemary Radford Ruether, in her book *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Antisemitism*.<sup>41</sup> She argues that Christology in itself was the impulse for anti-Semitism, in that it required that biblical passages be interpreted in ways radically different to the inherited tradition within Judaism, in particular overthrowing the notion of God's eternal covenant with Israel. Ruether is not a New Testament scholar but was, rather, trained in Classics. While familiar with the ancient world, her grasp of Judaism of that period is inadequate. Diverse approaches to the interpretation of Scripture coexisted not merely

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<sup>38</sup> T. S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

<sup>39</sup> N. H. Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992); 'Dying with Christ in Baptism: Issues in the Translation and Interpretation of Rom 6.3–4', *The Bible Translator* 59 (2008), 38–49.

<sup>40</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, 'The Question of Anti-Semitism in the New Testament Writings of the Period', *Jews and Christians: The Partings of the Ways, CE 70 to 135*, ed. J. D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), p. 179.

<sup>41</sup> New York: Seabury Press, 1974.

within Judaism, but within particular Jewish movements and communities, so that one particular exegetical development did not negate any, still less all, others, and prophetic texts might be interpreted in quite different ways in the writings of a single author, so that no single mode of fulfilment was discerned or expected.<sup>42</sup> Christology would therefore have added to, rather than negated, the range of possible interpretations which could be applied to any text or tradition at any time, in any Jewish community, or by any Jewish exegete. Ruether's grasp of the complex, contested, and far from uniform place of the earliest Christian communities within this geographically, culturally, and theologically diverse Jewish matrix, is similarly inadequate.<sup>43</sup> There were Christian churches which remained within a Jewish cultural matrix, continuing to observe the law of Moses, in Syria, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, and perhaps as far afield as China until the rise of Islam and the Mongol empire. Therefore, for a significant proportion of Christians of the first centuries, there was no incompatibility between their beliefs concerning Jesus and their inherited or acquired Jewish identity. Christian profession of Jesus therefore cannot be regarded as inherently anti-Semitic, or even as in itself the cause thereof.

Other scholars have recognized that there are passages in the New Testament which, interpreted out of context, could and did incite hostility to Jews and Judaism on the part of Christians separated by time and culture from the Jewish environment in which Christianity emerged. John Gager's *The Origins of Anti-Semitism*<sup>44</sup> is an important contribution in this area, as is the earlier work of the Roman Catholic convert from Judaism, Gregory Baum, *The Jews and the Gospel*.<sup>45</sup> These and other works raise issues which we need to consider with some care, and I will return to some of them shortly. Firstly, some consideration of the place of the Jewish people in the ancient world, and especially in the Roman empire, is required.

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<sup>42</sup> M. A. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); I. Kalimi, *Early Jewish Exegesis and Theological Controversy* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2002); J. N. Lightstone, *Society, the Sacred, and Scripture in Ancient Judaism* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988); *Scriptural Authority in Early Judaism and Ancient Christianity*, ed. by G. G. Xeravits and others (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013).

<sup>43</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways between Judaism and Christianity* (London: SCM, 1991).

<sup>44</sup> J. G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

<sup>45</sup> G. Baum, *The Jews and the Gospel* (New York: Newman, 1961); republished as *Is the New Testament Anti-Semitic?* (New York: Paulist, 1965).

### ***The Jewish people in the Graeco-Roman world***

During the centuries preceding the emergence of Christianity, the decline of the Persian empire enabled the eastward spread of Hellenism, driven by the conquering armies of Alexander, and established under his successors. Jewish communities in Egypt and Mesopotamia, as well as in Palestine, came under Greek rule. The disintegration of the Greek empires, and conflict between them, enabled the Roman empire to expand eastward, becoming by the first century BCE the dominant force in the Mediterranean world and the Middle East. By this time, more Jews lived in Mesopotamia than in Palestine, and there were long-established Jewish communities in Syria and Egypt, and also in Asia Minor, north Africa, Greece, and Rome itself.<sup>46</sup> Some Jews lived in ethnic enclaves, others assimilated to their host society. Those who retained their distinctive cultural observances were conspicuous to their neighbours on this account, sabbath rest and dietary laws being particularly noted and not always favourably.<sup>47</sup> Monotheism appealed to the philosophical sensibilities of many, but the aniconic worship of the synagogues was often misunderstood, and Jews are sometimes described by Roman authors as atheists,<sup>48</sup> or it was assumed, on account of their abstinence from pork, that they worshipped a pig,<sup>49</sup> or even a donkey.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, the refusal of observant Jews to participate in the local, generally polytheistic, cults, gave rise to suspicion and on occasion to conflict. While there was intermittent friction, and occasionally pogroms, such as occurred in Alexandria in c. 38 CE, it would not be correct to describe this as anti-Semitism. As the Jewish classicist Louis Feldman observed:

Of course, the term antisemitism is an absurdity which the Jews took over from the Germans. There was no such thing in antiquity, since its basis, the Noachic family tree, was hardly

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<sup>46</sup> J. M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996); M. D. Goodman, *Rome & Jerusalem* (London: Penguin, 2008); L. L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian* (London: SCM, 1992); P. Schäfer, *The History of the Jews in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>47</sup> Agartharchides, cit. Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.209–11; Horace, *Sermones* 1.9.63–72 Ovid, *Remedia Amoris* 217–20; Juvenal, *Saturae* 14.105–106; Seneca, *De Superstitione*, Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 6.11; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.4.3.

<sup>48</sup> Apollonius Molon, cit. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.148; Manetho, *Aegyptiaca*, cit. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.6; Ptolemy, *Apotelesmatica* 2.3.31.

<sup>49</sup> Petronius, *Fr. 35* [accessed 15 May 2020].

<sup>50</sup> Mnaseas, cit. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.112–14; Apion, cit. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.80; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.3.2; Plutarch, *Quaest. Conv.* 4.5.2.

known outside the circles of the Jews themselves, until the rise of Christianity, which could not well be hostile to the race of its savior. The more accurate term would be 'anti-Judaism' but the term 'anti-Semitism' is so widespread that it may seem artificial to discard it.<sup>51</sup>

In other words, the expression 'anti-Semitism' depends on the taxonomy of the descendants of Noah's three sons, known only from the Genesis flood narrative (Genesis 9.1, 18–19; 10), and therefore only within Judaism, and subsequently within Christianity.<sup>52</sup> While Jews may have regarded themselves as the descendants of Shem, their lineage from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was rather more central to their self-identity. Nevertheless, as Feldman observes, while the term is technically problematic, it has become part of the vocabulary with which important issues are discussed, and it might be unduly pedantic to discount it. Rather than obfuscating, we need to recognize that hostility to Jews and to Jewish institutions and culture, including their religion, was motivated by a variety of considerations in different contexts, and not necessarily by racism in the modern sense of the word; nor, indeed, by zeal for the Christian Gospel or a desire to avenge Christ's death. We should expect that visceral human hostility towards people of different cultures, especially immigrants, was a major factor, aggravated by commercial rivalries and other local economic considerations.

### ***Jesus within Judaism***

The ultimate indictment on Christian anti-Semitism is the historical fact that Jesus was a Jew. The theory of an 'Aryan Jesus' concocted by the British-born Nazi Houston Chamberlain<sup>53</sup> is devoid of all credibility. Notwithstanding that Galilee had experienced population migrations over the centuries, and lay beyond the political or religious jurisdiction of the cadres who controlled the temple in Jerusalem between the demise of the united monarchy and the rise of the Hasmonaeans, by the first century the people of Galilee were

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<sup>51</sup> L. H. Feldman, *Studies in Hellenistic Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), pp. 277–78.

<sup>52</sup> In the flood tradition preserved in the *Qur'an*, one of Noah's sons perishes in the deluge, and the opportunity to enter the ark is extended beyond his family, though few accept it, *Hud.* 11.25–49. Survivors of the flood are nevertheless not exclusively descendants of Noah as in the biblical tradition.

<sup>53</sup> Houston Chamberlain, *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1899).

observant Jews.<sup>54</sup> Traditions of observance in Galilee undoubtedly diverged from what some in Jerusalem may have deemed to be orthodoxy, but Palestinian Judaism was a diverse phenomenon.

Jesus is to be located within Galilean Judaism. Attempts to distance Jesus from his Jewish heritage did not end with Houston Chamberlain and the Nazis but have persisted in some strands of North American scholarship.<sup>55</sup> Jesus has been associated with Hellenistic philosophical movements, most often Cynicism,<sup>56</sup> without necessarily denying his Jewishness. Some who hold to such views argue that the Hebrew Scriptures had no part in Jesus's intellectual or spiritual formation, and the accounts of his teaching in the synoptic gospels are fundamentally false, reflecting attempts to re-Judaize Jesus and the Gospel during the period following the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple after 70 CE.<sup>57</sup>

The Gospel accounts of Jesus's clashes with Pharisees and others need to be read with a number of factors in mind. The stories had been told and retold over decades before they were committed to writing, and in contexts in which the particular personalities and issues would have been unfamiliar. As the Church experienced controversy with Jewish and other neighbours, the issues of contention inevitably influenced the ways in which Jesus's encounters with other parties were remembered. It is therefore extremely difficult to be sure to what extent passages such as the dietary controversy, tithing, and ritual washing before meals in Mark 7, or the sabbath controversies in Mark 2–3, and in many other texts in the gospels, recall actual exchanges between Jesus and the other parties mentioned, or reflect

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<sup>54</sup> M. A. Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); S. V. Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 B.C.E to 135 C.E.* (Collegeville MN: Glazier, 1980); *Galilee, Jesus, and the Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1988); R. A. Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People* (Wilmington DE: TPI, 1995); *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee* (London: Continuum, 2018).

<sup>55</sup> B. L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998); *The Lost Gospel* (San Francisco CA: HarperCollins, 1993). See further, N. H. Taylor, 'Prolegomena to reconstructing the eschatological teaching of Jesus', *Neotestamentica* 33 (1999), 145–60.

<sup>56</sup> F. G. Downing, *Cynics and Christian Origins* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992); L. E. Vaage, *Galilean Upstarts* (Valley Forge PA: Trinity Press International, 1994).

<sup>57</sup> For discussion see Taylor, 'Prolegomena'.

issues in the lives of the early Christian communities.<sup>58</sup> However, it is clear that these were intra-Jewish controversies, and discrepancies between the accounts in the different gospels show quite clearly that different Christian communities understood Jesus's teaching quite differently, with Matthew generally preserving a tradition of Jesus much closer to Pharisaic customs of dietary and other observances than does Mark. Nevertheless, the controversies reflected in Mark concern not whether or not the *Torah* was to be observed, but how it was to be interpreted. As we have noted already, first century Judaism embraced some diversity in patterns of *Torah* interpretation and observance, with traditions of observance in Galilee diverging from those which predominated in other places, most particularly Jerusalem. Furthermore, patterns of observance possible to the affluent, who could choose what they ate and when they worked, would simply not have been possible for the poor, slaves, and servants with restrictive obligations to patrons and employers. This was very directly relevant to communities who lived in poverty, for whom survival depended on eating what food they could obtain and avoiding all waste. Scrupulous adherence to rules on washing hands and vessels would, similarly, have required access to water which many could not take for granted. Followers of Jesus would not have been the only Jews, then or at any other period, unable to indulge in the ritual observances whereby more prosperous Jews could demonstrate their piety.

***Jesus's preaching of judgement and early Christian eschatology***<sup>59</sup>

God's judgement on Israel and Judah is a recurring theme in the canonical Prophets of the Old Testament: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Amos, Hosea; and indeed, also of the archetypal prophet Elijah in 1 Kings. Such prophecy had the intention of provoking the audience to repentance, so that God's wrath might be averted. By the first century, the prophets were established and honoured figures in the Jewish heritage, with most known movements reading their books as Scripture. That Jesus, like his contemporary John the

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<sup>58</sup> R. J. Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); S. Byrskog, *Jesus the Only Teacher* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1994); J. G. Crossley, *The Date of the Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); S. V. Freyne, *Jesus, a Jewish Galilean* (London: T&T Clark, 2004).

<sup>59</sup> In this section I will be making extensive use of my own previously published work. While much of this was written over 20 years ago, scholarship has not developed on relevant points so as to require that the issues discussed here be revisited, but more recent treatments will be cited where relevant.



Baptist, proclaimed God's judgement reflects continuity with the prophets, and is not an indication of anti-Semitism, and still less a symptom of their having been 'self-hating Jews'.

That Jesus proclaimed the coming of God's reign (Mark 1.14) is perhaps the most easily remembered aspect of his teaching, with the possible exception of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5.1–12). It is commonly supposed that Jesus's teaching is to be contrasted to John's proclamation of judgement, but this is difficult to sustain.<sup>60</sup> Our knowledge of John is dependent essentially on the Christian gospels and on a brief reference by Josephus, which, incidentally, does not connect him with Jesus.<sup>61</sup> The gospels interpret John in terms of his significance for Jesus, and in particular as the Elijah-like figure who would precede the coming of the messiah.<sup>62</sup> What is perhaps significant for the present purpose is that Luke implicitly identifies John as a priest. The gospel narrative opens with John's father, Zechariah, officiating in the temple (1.5–25); priesthood in Israel was (and still is) hereditary, therefore, if John's father was a priest, so was he. While this tradition is not attested anywhere else, other than in later Christian texts dependent on Luke,<sup>63</sup> it is nonetheless significant that one of the canonical gospels depicts John as a priest, but nowhere suggests that he served in the temple. On the contrary, the ritual at which John officiated is baptism, most notably, but not necessarily exclusively, in the river Jordan.<sup>64</sup> It is at the very least possible that John rejected the temple and its cult, and administered a

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<sup>60</sup> For discussion see C. M. Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996).

<sup>61</sup> *Ant.* 18.116–19. According to Josephus, John 'commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, righteousness towards one another and piety towards God. For only thus, in John's opinion, would the baptism he administered be acceptable to God, namely, if they used it to obtain not pardon for some sins but rather the cleansing of their bodies, inasmuch as it was taken for granted that their souls had already been purified by justice.'

<sup>62</sup> For recent studies of John, see J. Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology* (Columbia SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2018); J. E. Taylor, *John the Baptist* (London: SPCK, 1997); R. L. Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

<sup>63</sup> The pseudepigraphical *Protevangelium of James* is the most noted example.

<sup>64</sup> Matthew 3.1–12; Mark 1.4–8; Luke 3.1–20; John 1.19–28; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.116–17.

ritual intended as an alternative to the sacrificial cult of the temple, but this would not imply that he was in any way anti-Semitic.<sup>65</sup>

Jesus was not the first prophet to proclaim the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem: Micah (3.9–12) and Jeremiah (7.1–15; 19.14–15; 26.1–6) preceded him by many centuries, having proclaimed the destruction of the first temple, viz. that which had been built by Solomon, which was destroyed when Jerusalem was besieged and ultimately conquered by Babylonian forces in 587 BCE. The intention of these prophetic pronouncements, as is made explicit in the account of Jeremiah, is to provoke the audience, and the nation as a whole, to repentance that the disaster might be averted.

That Jesus proclaimed the destruction of the temple is reported in the account of his departure from the temple in Mark 13.2,<sup>66</sup> and the eschatological discourse which follows is a response to the disciples' question as to when this would take place. The traditions preserved in this discourse, and in the corresponding passages in the other synoptic gospels, have undoubtedly evolved in response to changing circumstances affecting the church in Jerusalem and Judaea, and more widely, in particular the developing relationships of Christian communities with neighbouring Jewish groups during the decades between the ministry of Jesus and the redaction of the various gospels.<sup>67</sup> In other words, it is widely argued that developments in the text between Mark and the reworking of the markan

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<sup>65</sup> The Qumran community, whose library is almost certainly to be identified with the Dead Sea Scrolls found near to the site of its buildings, repudiated not temple worship as such, but the Hasmonean high priesthood which had controlled the temple since the Maccabean revolt. While much about the origins of this community is uncertain, it seems clear they regarded the temple and cult as contaminated by a dynasty they regarded as usurpers of the hereditary high priesthood. See G. Boccaccini, *Enoch and Qumran Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); J. J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); E. Regev, *Sectarianism in Qumran* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007).

<sup>66</sup> Matthew 24.2; Luke 19.44; cf. John 2.19. For convenience I will cite in this section to the references in Mark, which, in agreement with most scholars, I would regard as the earliest of the canonical gospels, and the principal source of Matthew and Luke.

<sup>67</sup> N. H. Taylor, 'Palestinian Christianity and the Caligula Crisis', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 61 (1996), 101–124; 62 (1996), 13–41; 'The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Transmission of the Synoptic Eschatological Discourse', *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 59 (2003), 283–311.

tradition by Matthew and Luke reflect historical events, such as the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans in 70 CE, and increasing tensions between Christian churches and Jewish synagogues in many parts of the eastern Mediterranean world. While the membership of communities may well have included increasing numbers of gentiles in many places, and observance of the law of Moses become less rigorous (an issue to be considered below), this does not imply that such Christian groups had ceased to identify themselves as Jewish, still less that they can be considered anti-Semitic. Whether they were considered to be authentically Jewish by their fellow Jews, whether their neighbours in diaspora settings or those of Jerusalem, is another question. The evidence of friction between Christians and other Jews, both of whose communities may have included gentile members and adherents, in itself implies some degree of acknowledged common identity between them.<sup>68</sup>

It is argued by some scholars that Jesus's attack on the currency exchange and trade in sacrificial animals in the outer court of the temple, commonly known as the 'cleansing' of the temple (Mark 11.12–19) is to be understood as a prophetic act which spoke of the demolition of the temple and abolition of the sacrificial cult.<sup>69</sup> While there are also scholars who would interpret Jesus's actions as an attack on corruption in the monopoly trade taking place in the outer court of the temple, or on the inappropriate use of sacred space for trade, either reading might appear problematic. Whether Jesus regarded the market in the temple court as corrupt and exploitative, or the institution and its cult as having ceased to serve the purpose for which they had been instituted, may not be relevant to our present purpose: either interpretation could be used by later Christians to serve an anti-Semitic agenda, even if Jesus was participating in intra-Jewish disputes to which the temple and its cult were of direct significance.

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<sup>68</sup> S. J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); M. D. Goodman, *Mission and Conversion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994); N. H. Taylor, 'The Social Nature of Conversion in the Early Christian World', in *Modelling Early Christianity* ed. by P. F. Esler (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 128–136.

<sup>69</sup> M. J. Borg, *Conflict, Holiness, and Politics in the Teaching of Jesus* (New York: Edward Mellen, 1984), pp. 174–89; B. D. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus* (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), pp. 91–112; J. D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991), pp. 355–60; R. A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), pp. 297–300; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985), pp. 61–76.

However we may choose to interpret Jesus's action in the temple court, within a week he had been crucified. The account of Jesus's examination before the high priest, ahead of prosecution in the court of the Roman prefect, includes the accusation that he not merely proclaimed the destruction of the temple, but that he claimed that he would himself be the agent of that destruction (Mark 14.58). This is alluded to also in the account of the Crucifixion (Mark 15.29).<sup>70</sup> In the gospel narrative, Jesus had indeed spoken of the destruction of the temple (Mark 13.1–2), but the significance of that destruction for the future of Israel, and his own role therein, are less. Nevertheless, it would seem to be probable that Jesus's action in the temple court provoked the steps taken by the temple hierarchy to secure his death at the hands of the Roman regime. We will return to some of these points after further considering the development of the tradition.

### ***The early church in Jerusalem***

The early chapters of Acts depict the disciples of Jesus, accompanied by at least some of his family, gathered in Jerusalem. This would seem to suggest a conscious relocation of people from Galilee to Jerusalem, from the periphery of Palestinian Judaism to its centre. They remain in Jerusalem beyond their awaited reception of the Holy Spirit at the Jewish feast of Pentecost (Acts 2), and baptize a significant number of converts, all of whom would have been Jewish.

While regular participation in worship in the temple is alluded to, and the disciples presumably followed the precedent of Jesus in using the outer court as a venue for teaching and engaging with members of other Jewish groups, there is also reflected escalating conflict between the disciples of Jesus and the temple hierarchy. The Acts account may well be schematized, but the intra-Jewish conflict reflected is not to be discounted. That this was unconnected with the circumstances surrounding the death of Jesus is extremely unlikely. Jesus had spoken of the destruction of the temple, and his disciples continued to expect that this prophecy would be fulfilled.<sup>71</sup> The high priesthood, and others who supported the temple establishment or depended on it, would have been equally determined that this should not take place, and that no disturbance of the prevailing order should provoke any incident which could precipitate such an event. Tensions between Jesus and the temple hierarchy and its adherents would therefore have continued, with the consequence that the disciples incurred the same hostility which had precipitated Jesus's death.

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<sup>70</sup> N. H. Taylor, 'Jerusalem and the Temple in early Christian Life and Teaching', *Neotestamentica*, 33 (1999), 445–61.

<sup>71</sup> Taylor, 'Jerusalem and the Temple'; 'Palestinian Christianity I'.

The account in Acts 6–7 of Stephen, identified by tradition as the first Christian martyr, is significant.<sup>72</sup> Stephen is a diaspora Jew, and emerges as the representative and leader of Greek-speaking Jews who had been converted to Christianity in Jerusalem.<sup>73</sup> It is clear from what is not said in the account in Acts 6 that differences in language and culture, as well perhaps as sheer numbers, had effected some degree of separation of Christian gatherings in Jerusalem, with the potential for tensions to erupt between them. But all concerned were Jews, whatever the differences in language and culture which separated them. Whereas the Galilean disciples of Jesus had been first to incur the wrath of the temple hierarchy, it is the Greek-speaking Christian leader Stephen who is killed — not by the Romans following a trial before any imperial official, nor even by formal sentence of a Jewish court, but rather through mob action which overran whatever formal proceedings may have been under way. According to the Acts narrative, the Greek-speaking Christians are driven from Jerusalem in the persecution which followed the death of Stephen, and we read subsequently of their proclaiming the Gospel and founding churches elsewhere.

### ***The early church outside Palestine***

The Book of Acts makes particular reference to the church of Antioch in Syria, established by otherwise unknown Cypriot and Cyrenaean fugitives from the persecution in Jerusalem. These anonymous apostles proclaimed the Gospel not only to their fellow Jews but also to gentiles, making the first recorded converts from outside Israel to the Christian faith. The pericope ends with the observation that it was in Antioch that the followers of Jesus were first known as Christians (Acts 11.19–26).<sup>74</sup> This suggests that it was in Antioch, in the community which included gentile followers of Christ alongside Jews, that for the first time a church acquired an identity in the wider society distinct from that of the Jewish synagogue. We are told nothing about how the Jewish community in Antioch responded to this development. We do know that this was one of the more powerful of diaspora Jewish communities, and that relations between Christians and Jews in Antioch

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<sup>72</sup> C. C. Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992); N. H. Taylor, 'Stephen, the Temple, and early Christian Eschatology', *Revue Biblique* 110 (2003), 62–85.

<sup>73</sup> N. H. Taylor, 'Stephen in Scripture and Tradition', *Scripture Bulletin* 37.1 (2007), 21–29.

<sup>74</sup> R. E. Brown and J. P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome* (London: Cassell, 1983); S. C. Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); M. Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch* (London: Routledge, 2003).

were to remain close and, at times, tense, for centuries.<sup>75</sup> While later Antiochene Christian writers, such as Ignatius (early second century CE) and John Chrysostom (late fourth century CE) were to give expression to some of these tensions, and the latter at least contributed to later Christian anti-Semitic tropes, there is no hint in the Acts narrative of any hostility towards the Jewish community in Antioch, and the persecution in Jerusalem is mentioned only as the catalyst for the expansion of Christianity.

It is important to recognize that significant developments took place in the church of Antioch at an early date, not least because these have become overshadowed in Christian memory by the apostle Paul. Paul certainly was attached to this community for many years, but the community included Jewish and gentile Christians before he joined it.<sup>76</sup> The transition from a Jewish movement to a religion which transcended ethnicity neither began with Paul, nor was it fully complete with him. Nevertheless, Paul is a figure of immense importance in Christian memory and is widely perceived not merely to have created a movement not defined by its heritage in Israel, but as being inherently hostile to his own Jewish origins. We therefore need to consider his role with some care.

### **Paul**

It is perhaps something of an irony that the idea that Paul was the true founder of Christianity, clearly untenable in view of the observations above, should have been propounded by the Tübingen School, and perpetuated by early Jewish scholarship<sup>77</sup> as well as by atheistic intellectuals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>78</sup> Not only have these writers, in dependence on the Hegelianism of Tübingen, ignored much of the early Christian spectrum before and contemporary with Paul, they have also claimed either that Paul perverted the essentially Jewish teaching of Jesus, or that Paul liberated Christianity from entrapment in a (barbaric, primitive, restrictive) Jewish milieu. Neither view rests on sound scholarship. Jesus's teaching was undoubtedly essentially Jewish, and so was Paul's, as Jewish

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<sup>75</sup> W. A. Meeks and R. L. Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era* (Missoula: Scholars, 1978).

<sup>76</sup> M. Hengel, *Paul between Jerusalem and Antioch* (London: SCM, 1993); R. Riesner, *Paul's Early Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem*.

<sup>77</sup> J. Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1946); H. Maccoby, *The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity* (London: Barnes & Noble, 1998).

<sup>78</sup> F. W. Nietzsche, *The Antichrist* (New York: Knopf, 1918).

scholarship is increasingly recognizing.<sup>79</sup> What has been problematic for scholarship, and in particular for Jewish understanding of Paul, has been the reconstruction of his view of the enduring relationship of God with Israel, and the relevance of the law of Moses, in the light of Christ.

What survives of Paul's writings is a collection of letters, all of which date many years after his conversion to Christianity, and which reflect something of his complex relationships both with other Christian leaders and with the churches which he had founded. We have nothing he wrote during his career as a Pharisee, or during the early years of his Christian ministry, so we are unable to trace developments in his thought before the mature thinking reflected in his letters. Not only do these letters date from a relatively brief period towards the end of Paul's career, but they are addressed to Christian communities of which we otherwise know very little, and whose side of the correspondence we can reconstruct only very partially and with considerable uncertainty.

The earliest of Paul's surviving letters includes one of his most explicit denunciations of 'the Jews', clearly referring explicitly to the authorities in Judaea who had persecuted the Christians there, who were also Jews, and obstructed the proclamation of the Gospel to the gentiles (1 Thessalonians 2.14–16). While some scholars have argued that these verses were not written by Paul, but interpolated into the letter at a later date, I do not find this convincing: the supposed incompatibility of this statement with what Paul subsequently wrote in Romans depends on a selective reading of the latter; Paul does not state that the Thessalonian Christians were persecuted by local Jews, although they are the instigators in the Acts account (17.1–9), Paul refers to their compatriots.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, even if Paul was not the author of these verses, this would not avoid the problem that these words have been part of the New Testament canon for most of Christian history, and have contributed to the culture of anti-Semitism which has been at least subliminal in many parts of Europe throughout the era of Christendom and beyond. Nevertheless, the point of comparison Paul makes between the Thessalonian and Judaeian Christians is that both communities had been

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<sup>79</sup> R. L. Rubenstein, *My Brother Paul* (New York: HarperCollins, 1975); A. F. Segal, *Paul the Convert* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1990); D. Boyarin, *A Radical Jew* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

<sup>80</sup> N. H. Taylor, 'Who persecuted the Thessalonian Christians?', *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 58 (2002), 784–801. See also E. Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (London: A&C Black, 1972); A. J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); C. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013).

persecuted by their neighbours and rulers. That the rulers of the latter are referred to as 'the Jews' is at the very least unfortunate, and an early indication of the care required in referring to the tensions between the early Church and its Jewish neighbours, and of the long-term consequences of not doing so.

The relationship between the Church and Israel, and the enduring value and authority of the Jewish law, are crucial issues in the letters to the Galatians and to the Romans, the latter being often regarded as the all but definitive statement of Paul's theology. The tone of the two letters is very different, with Galatians very much harsher and more uncompromising. Accounting for the differences is an issue which has long divided scholars, with some postulating different circumstances in the congregations addressed, others development in Paul's thought over a period of years.<sup>81</sup> Resolving this issue is complicated by our not knowing precisely which churches are addressed in Galatians,<sup>82</sup> or the date of the letter. We need therefore simply to recognize that Paul expressed himself on these issues with different degrees of vehemence on different occasions, for whatever reasons. Nevertheless, it is clear that, in Galatians, Paul's argument is not with Jews, *Torah*-observant or otherwise, but with the gentile Christians of Galatia who had, under the influence of other Christian authority figures, adopted Jewish practices, in particular male circumcision. Paul's concern is not so much that they were appropriating cultural observances which were not their heritage, but that in accepting these as integral to Christian life, they were undermining the centrality of the death and resurrection of Jesus to their relationship with God and their salvation. For Paul, gentiles did not need to become Jews in order to share fully with Christian Jews in the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection, and the gifts of God's Spirit.<sup>83</sup> Paul's argument suggests that other Christians did, indeed, hold the views he opposed, and this is reflected also in the account of the Jerusalem meeting

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<sup>81</sup> For a review of the different arguments see N. H. Taylor, 'Paul, Pharisee and Christian: Israel, the Gentiles, and the Law of Moses in Light of Cognitive Dissonance Theory', *Theologia Viatorum* 24 (1997), 45–65.

<sup>82</sup> The term may refer to the Roman Province, in the interior of what is now central Turkey, where we have no record of Paul's ever having travelled and founded churches, or it could refer to a more loosely defined region which would have included the churches of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, founded by Barnabas and Paul in Acts 13–14. For discussion, see Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem*.

<sup>83</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).



in Acts 15.<sup>84</sup> The issue was not whether or not the laws revealed to Moses reflected God's will for Israel, but whether or not gentiles who became Christian were obliged to adopt them. Having made this observation, it needs to be conceded that the language and imagery which Paul uses has been amenable to interpretation, out of its original context, as an attack on Jews and Judaism. This is perhaps most true of his inversion of the figures of Hagar and Sarah, Isaac and Ishmael, in Galatians 4.21–31.<sup>85</sup>

Romans reflects both continuity with Galatians, but also more nuanced thinking. The figure of Abraham, and his priority to Moses, is, once again, crucial (Romans 4). That Abraham is, in the biblical narrative, an ancestor of Moses, could not have been contested. It is also the case that Abraham's descendants include not only the nation of Israel, descendants of his grandson Jacob, but many nations.<sup>86</sup> Where Paul and other interpreters would have differed would be as to whether Israel was the exclusive heir to God's promises to Abraham. Paul's argument that God's covenant with Abraham could not have been fundamentally altered through a covenant with Israel (and only with Israel) given to Moses centuries later, forms the basis of his claim that the law can only be subsidiary to the greater covenant, that entered with Abraham.

In Romans 9–11, we read three distinct lines of argument whereby Paul attempts to resolve the relationship between God's covenant with Israel and that created through the death and resurrection of Jesus, which created a community open to members from, in principle, all nations. In the first, 9.1–29, the 'remnant' motif is used, drawing on the history of the covenant community from the time of Abraham, showing that not all descendants have remained within it, and ultimately arguing that Christ is the sole heir to the promises, and those who inherit do so through him, whether they be

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<sup>84</sup> For treatment of this episode, see Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem*.

<sup>85</sup> This image follows a series of analogies in which Paul compares salvation with the modalities of inheritance in the ancient household, within which is his radical repudiation, *in Christ*, of distinctions between Jew and Greek (i.e., gentile), slave and free, male and female, claiming descent from Abraham for all, Galatians 3.26–29; for discussion, N. H. Taylor, 'Liturgy and Identity: Conversion-Initiation in Galatians 3:26–29', *Anaphora* 6.2 (2012), 1–18.

<sup>86</sup> Edom is, according to the biblical tradition, descended from Jacob's brother Esau. Abraham's son by Hagar, Ishmael, is the traditional ancestor of what became the Arab nations. The Midianites were ascribed descent from Abraham by Keturah. The Ammonites and Moabites were ascribed descent from Abraham's nephew, Lot.

Jews or gentiles. The second, 9.30–10.21, is closer to the argument in Galatians, arguing that the law of Moses has been superseded in Christ, ‘the end of the law’ (10.4). The third, 11.1–36, argues that Israel’s rejection of Christ, and consequent separation from God, is temporary, and serves to create the opportunity for God’s salvation to be extended to the gentiles, as it were, grafted into the olive tree that represents the covenant. While Paul concludes with the assurance that Jew and gentile alike receive salvation in fulfilment of God’s promises to Abraham, modern readers might well question the internal coherence and compatibility of these arguments.<sup>87</sup>

In conclusion, Paul’s theological arguments are based on Scripture, interpreting the Law and the Prophets in ways other interpreters might have found unacceptable, but using methods which were well established in the exegetical traditions of his day. His continuing identity as a Jew is unambiguous, as is his commitment to the salvation of Israel. In being equally committed to making salvation available to gentiles, through their conversion to Christ, Paul clearly does not see the Jewish people as the exclusive heirs to God’s promises to Abraham. Those Jewish apocalyptic groups who looked to the eschatological destruction, or at least subjugation, of the nations would have found Paul’s inclusivism offensive. Nevertheless, his not adhering to a doctrine of Jewish exclusivity and particularism, a minority position within Judaism of his day, does not constitute anti-Semitism, still less identify Paul as a ‘self-hating Jew’.

### ***The Letter to the Hebrews***

The letter to the Hebrews is an anonymous tract, associated with Paul in eastern Christian tradition. However, nearly all modern scholars would assent to the comment attributed by Eusebius to the early third century theologian Origen of Alexandria that only God knows who wrote this document.<sup>88</sup> The subject was widely disputed in the ancient Church, but some connection with Pauline theology is often postulated, nonetheless. What is important for the present purpose is that Hebrews is, like Paul, concerned with the relationship between the Church and Israel, in the light of how the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ impacts on God’s covenant relationship with Israel from the time of Abraham.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> H. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (London: SCM, 1986); E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (London: SCM, 1983); Taylor, ‘Paul, Pharisee and Christian’.

<sup>88</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.25.14.

<sup>89</sup> For treatments see H. W. Attridge, *Hebrews* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989); C. R. Koester, *Hebrews* (New Haven CN: Yale University Press, 2007);

The document opens by emphasizing that the same God who had spoken through the prophets of Israel in previous generations, had spoken to the generation of the first Christians through his Son (1.1). In other words, the revelation through Jesus transcends that through the prophets. Rather than focussing on observance of the Law of Moses in daily life, Hebrews contrasts the temple, cult, and priesthood of the Jerusalem temple with Jesus, whose death is interpreted as a sacrifice in which Christ is both officiating priest and the offering immolated on the altar (4.14–16; 10.1–18). His death is of eternal significance, and requires no repetition, as well as being quantitatively superior to that offered by the high priest in the temple (on the Day of Atonement). Rather than being a Levitical priest descended from Abraham, Jesus is associated with Melchizedek, king of Salem, to whom Abraham offers tribute (5–8).

It is uncertain whether the temple was still standing at the time of writing, and therefore whether priests were still offering sacrifices there, or whether the temple had already been destroyed and the cult become defunct, or at least fallen into abeyance. What is clear is that the author calls for an allegiance to Christ which implies repudiation of temple and cult — whether hankering after a restoration of the temple as had happened at the end of the Babylonian exile (Ezra-Nehemiah), or continuing participation in sacrificial worship in the still functioning temple (before 70 CE). In other words, those Christians who had maintained an adherence to the Jerusalem temple should rather see Jesus as having transcended the earthly institution, its priesthood, and the sacrifices offered there. The death and resurrection of Jesus accomplish more than the centuries of sacrificial offerings since the time of Moses could achieve.

While Hebrews clearly sees the Jerusalem temple, cult, and priesthood as redundant, there is no pronouncement of judgement on the Jewish people. On the contrary, the author invites Jews, whether already Christian or not, to find in Christ the benefits they had previously sought in and through temple worship. This invitation could of course extend to gentiles, whether already Christian or not, who had identified themselves with Israel and adhered to the temple and its cult as proselytes. Nevertheless, Hebrews is primarily concerned with salvation in Christ to people who identified as members of Israel. The emphasis on temple and cult, rather than observance of the Law in daily life, may even suggest that it is hereditary priests who had become Christian (cf. Acts 6.7) whom the author calls upon to abandon the temple, or hope for its restoration, and to recognize in Christ's death and

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A. C. Mitchell, *Hebrews* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007); H. W. Montefiore, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Black, 1964).

resurrection the sacrifice which brought to an end the cult in which they had officiated.

While the letter to the Hebrews is undoubtedly, and unabashedly, supersessionist, it would not be correct to describe the document as anti-Semitic.

### ***The Gospel of Matthew***

The Gospel of Matthew is at once the most observantly Jewish of the canonical gospels, and that which contains passages most virulently hostile to the Jewish people. Whereas modern scholarship tends to view Matthew as a composite work, dependent on the Gospel of Mark and other sources, ancient tradition, which persisted until the early twentieth century, viewed Matthew as the earliest gospel. Matthew and John were ascribed to apostles, and accordingly attributed some pre-eminence in the New Testament and in the life of the Church, not least in the lectionary, until quite recently. The gospel text does not in fact identify an author, but the influence of Matthew on narrative reconstructions of the life of Jesus and on the Christian imagination has been considerable. It is therefore important that this book be considered with some care.

The ascription of authorship to Matthew the apostle is the work of later Christian writers, the most ancient of whom may not have been referring to the book we know as the Gospel of Matthew. Similarly, the date and place of writing are unknown. Since scholarly consensus emerged that Matthew is dependent on Mark and other written or oral sources, its dating has generally been placed during the last quarter of the first Christian century — after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 CE. While some scholars locate the place of writing in Palestine, the majority argue that it was written elsewhere in Syria, and probably in an urban centre in the more Hellenized west of the province, Antioch on the Orontes being the most common hypothesis. We have noted previously that Antioch was a significant centre of early Christianity, where for a time Paul was based, and where issues of relations between gentile and Jewish Christians, and the interpretation of the Law of Moses, were contested at an early date. We find that Paul's position was repudiated, and that the church formed an identity quite consciously within Israel and within the covenant relationship between God and Israel which required observance of the Law, but which nonetheless included gentile converts and was unequivocally committed to Christian mission to the nations (cf. 28.16–20). The inevitable tensions in this are reflected at several points in the gospel narrative. Notwithstanding Matthew's emphasis on Jesus's royal, Davidic, lineage in the genealogy in chapter 1, women born outside the covenant are mentioned among his ancestors: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba. The Magi, representing gentile

wisdom, are the first to offer Jesus worship (2.1–12). The mission of Jesus is confined strictly within Israel (10.4), except when challenged by the Canaanite woman (15.21–28). The feeding of the 4000, located east of the sea of Galilee, i.e., in gentile territory, in Mark 8.1–13, is, by implication, located in Jewish Galilee in Matthew 15.32–39. Jesus has come not to abolish but to fulfil the Law of Moses (5.17–18), and the righteousness of his disciples is to exceed that of the ‘scribes and Pharisees’ (5.20), portrayed as the technical and ideological exponents of punctilious legal observance. Matthew includes also severe denunciation of the ‘scribes and Pharisees’, who represent perhaps not so much the opponents of Jesus during his historical ministry as the opponents of the church of the period during which the gospel was written.

A particularly pernicious statement is found in Matthew’s passion narrative. The evangelist depicts the Roman Prefect Pilate, engaged in dialogue with the crowd which had gathered in the street outside his headquarters during Jesus’s trial. The crowd, by implication representing the nation to which they belong, is incited by the ‘chief priests and elders’ to demand the crucifixion of Jesus. When Pilate disclaims the responsibility of his office, and professes innocence of the death of Jesus, the crowd responds: ‘His blood be on us and on our children’ (27.25). While the wholly implausible scene is derived from Mark 15, Matthew intensifies the hostility to the Jewish people by depicting their representatives as wilfully incurring God’s judgement upon themselves, by implication in perpetuity. Whatever our position on biblical inspiration, we have the problem that this passage is part of Christian Scripture, has been since the second century, and its close association with the death of Jesus has intensified the hostility it has provoked, notwithstanding the soteriological significance attributed to the crucifixion. Nevertheless, we need to recognize this passage as implausible fiction. When the dregs of American society gather for well-orchestrated torch-lit processions, they may be able to utter the three-word mantra ‘White lives matter’ in approximate unison, greatly helped by two of the words being monosyllabic and the third bisyllabic with the second not requiring a great deal of mental dexterity to vocalize. A British football crowd may manage to chant rather more complex slogans through benefit of transmission of oral tradition over generations. But for an ad hoc crowd to articulate an unscripted dialogue would be utterly impossible. Even during the recent orchestrated mob invasion of the United States Congress, there would have been no question of engaging in such an exchange with then Vice President Pence or anyone else, in order to overturn the result of the presidential election. This passage may be part of the gospel, and the passion narrative specifically; nevertheless, it is the type of exchange that

may be scripted in stage dramas, but does not reflect historical reality, and we need to be prepared to say so.

The Gospel of Matthew was, most scholars believe, written during the decades following the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 CE, and reflects the intra-Jewish conflict of the period when the demise of the high priesthood had left something of a vacuum in the actual and symbolic leadership of the nation. The place of Christian communities within Judaism was increasingly contested, and, while Matthew clearly reflects a community which identified itself as being part of Israel and subject to the Law of Moses, it reflects also marginalization by more powerful and longer-established groups ideologically sympathetic to the Pharisees and the emergence of rabbinic leadership.<sup>90</sup> While we can understand the social and economic forces, as well as legal pressures, to which the church represented by Matthew responded, we need also to recognize that words from the gospel have been interpreted as historical, and of enduring force when, centuries later, it was the Church which became more powerful than Jewish institutions in the Roman empire, and in Christian Europe. That the Church, and Christian rulers, used the Matthaean Passion Narrative as a rationale for persecution of the Jews, has been well documented.<sup>91</sup> We may claim that this represents distortion and abuse of Scripture, but we cannot deny that this happened.

### ***The Gospel of John***

Like Matthew, John dates, in the view of most scholars, to the decades following the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, perhaps somewhat later towards the end of the first century. Johannine Christianity has been located, by ancient tradition and modern scholarship, in western Asia, and particularly in Ephesus and the surrounding areas — as indicated by the location of the churches addressed in the letters of Revelation 2–3.<sup>92</sup> Unlike

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<sup>90</sup> D. J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007); U. Luz, *Matthew* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001–2007); J. P. Meier, *The Vision of Matthew* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004); A. J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian Jewish Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); D. C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); G. N. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993); Taylor, 'The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Transmission of the Synoptic Eschatological Discourse'.

<sup>91</sup> Carroll, *Constantine's Sword*.

<sup>92</sup> R. J. Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007); R. E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, John is not a narrative account of the life of Jesus, but rather a series of discourses by Jesus, with some dialogue, most of which is unlike the synoptic gospels in genre and content. The gospel is essentially a literary composition and theological exposition of the person of Jesus, rather than an account of his life. It needs to be read in this light. Like Matthew, John is a gospel to which apostolic authorship has been attributed by ancient tradition, and which therefore has been accorded particular authority in the development of Christian theology. Similarly, John also reflects tension between the Church and other Jewish groups, frequently labelled 'the Jews'.

While the word *Ioudaioi*, usually rendered 'Jews', is capable of translation in a geographical sense of 'Judaean', residents of the southern districts of Palestine traditionally settled by the tribe of Judah in Joshua 15, and which later became the (Davidic) southern kingdom, and by the time of Jesus (part of) the Roman Province of Judaea (which included Samaria). Making this distinction in effect makes little difference, other than possibly to exclude Galilean Jews and those of Jerusalem (if considered a separate entity), as immigrant communities such as Jews living in the cities of Asia would have been known by their place of origin, rather more than by their ethnicity or religious allegiance. The term 'Jews' is therefore to be understood as people originating from the southern Levant, and specifically from the portion of the Roman Province of Syria which had previously been administered separately as that of Judaea. The coherence of immigrant communities was reinforced by a (mythical) sense of common ancestry and a shared allegiance to the God of Israel.

John reflects tension between the followers of Jesus and those labelled the Jews, to extent that the Christians' place in the Jewish community was under threat. Those who professed Jesus as the Messiah were liable to be expelled from the synagogue (John 9.22). Whether or not Jewish communities in Asia were dominated by Pharisees or regulated in accordance with a tradition of observance associated with that party, allegiance to Jesus as the Messiah was deemed incompatible with membership of Israel.

While John shows much less preoccupation than does Matthew with matters of observance of Jewish law, membership of a local Jewish community in Asia or elsewhere in the Roman empire entailed social and economic ties, and therefore livelihood, as well as matters of religious and cultural observance and custom. Exclusion from the Jewish community

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(London: Chapman, 1979); *The Gospel according to John* (New York: Doubleday, 1966, 1970); F. J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998).

would therefore have brought severance from the economic and social and economic networks on which prosperity, if not survival, depended. Furthermore, it was recognized that Jews, being monotheists, would not participate in civic cults which they regarded as idolatrous, but it was nonetheless accepted that they were otherwise law-abiding residents whose anomalous ways were to be tolerated, and for the most part they were left unmolested. If the Christians were no longer recognized as part of the Jewish community, they would forfeit the exemptions from civic obligations, and could be required to participate in the cults which they, no less than (other) Jews, would have regarded as idolatrous. Among the earliest accounts we have from Roman sources of the persecution of Christians, are the correspondence between Pliny, Proconsul of Bithynia, and the emperor Trajan, from the early second century. Pliny reports having required Christians and alleged Christians to offer incense before a statue of the emperor and of other unnamed gods, and to curse Christ.<sup>93</sup> While this was a different province to that in which John is traditionally located, and probably some twenty years later, one can nonetheless recognize the fears. Nevertheless, to recognize the fears that beset Christian communities facing ostracism from their more powerful local Jewish communities, is not to justify perpetuating the reactions reflected in the gospel in societies in which the circumstances no longer apply. Since at least the time of Constantine, Christians in Europe have had nothing to fear from their Jewish neighbours, whatever may have been the case in the earlier centuries and may have continued in the Parthian empire for some time thereafter. The attitudes born of the situation in which John was written need to be distinguished from the essence of the gospel transmitted in the book. While the term 'anti-Semitism' would not be technically correct, Christians reading and expounding the Gospel of John today do need to repudiate the hostility to Jews reflected in this and other early Christian documents.

### ***The Book of Revelation***

The Book of Revelation is generally associated with the Johannine tradition, even though tradition has been divided in identifying John identified the seer and prophet (Revelation 1.1) with the apostle of that name. The letters locate the churches in Asia, while John is a prisoner on Patmos (1.9), an island in the Aegean. It is clear from the imagery that imperial Rome is viewed as the oppressor. In chapters 17–18 reference is made to a city, 'Babylon', built on seven hills, which is quite clearly Rome (cf. 1 Peter 5.13), notwithstanding

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<sup>93</sup> Pliny, *Epistulae* 10.96–97.



quite possibly anti-Semitic attempts by some conservative evangelicals to identify it as Jerusalem.<sup>94</sup>

Revelation is unabashedly supersessionist, not least when speaking of a new heaven and a new earth, and a new Jerusalem, in chapter 21. The new Jerusalem has no temple (21.22), God and the Lamb, that is Jesus, occupying the position and fulfilling the role which might normally be those of a temple. Nevertheless, like the letter to the Hebrews, Revelation employs imagery associated with the temple and cult of the Church. Christians are described as a 'kingdom of priests' (5.10), a heavenly temple is a focal point from which judgement emanates (15.5; 16.1), cultic apparatus features prominently (6.9), and the symbolic actions of angels which effect judgement mimic rituals prescribed in Exodus and Leviticus.<sup>95</sup> The identification of Jesus as the Lamb who had been slain (5.6,13; 6.1; 14.1; 21.2) evokes the sacrificial system, transcended and ultimately superseded in his death and resurrection.

While Revelation is supersessionist, it is far from anti-Semitic. Jesus is identified as 'the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David' (5.5), located firmly within Israel — but also of universal significance. The Church and Israel are frequently depicted as complementary: the twenty-four crowned and enthroned elders who appear at 4.4 (and are last mentioned at 19.4) represent the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles. Similarly, the new Jerusalem has the names of the tribes/patriarchs on its gates (21.12), and those of the apostles on its foundations (21.14). The 144 000 who stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion (14.1) are the redeemed of Israel, the number representing 12 000 from each of the tribes (7.4–8). Complementing these are the 'great multitude which no human could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues' (7.9). While the redeemed from within Israel and those of other nations are distinct, both are included.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> For example, E. L. Martin, 'The Seven Hills of Jerusalem', (2000) [accessed 13 February 2021]. The rabbinic texts on which this hypothesis depends are far too late to be relevant to imagery current during the Roman period.

<sup>95</sup> M. Barker, *On Earth as it is in Heaven* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995); *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000); *Temple Mysticism* (London: SPCK, 2011); *Temple Theology* (London: SPCK, 2004).

<sup>96</sup> For further discussion see D. E. Aune, *Revelation* (Waco: Word, 1997–1999); R. J. Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy* (London: T&T Clark, 1998); A. Y. Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox, 1984); E. F. Lupieri, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

### **Conclusions**

We have seen that the Church, particularly in Europe and North America, needs to be vigilant on the issue of anti-Semitism. Since Christians gained ascendancy in the Roman Empire during the fourth century, there has been a history of hostility to the Jewish people, whether actual neighbours or an abstract 'other'. At times, this hostility has been expressed in discriminatory laws, derogatory depictions, and degrading acts, sometimes escalating to violent attacks on property, institutions, sacred texts, and people. The 'holocaust' perpetrated by Nazi Germany was not an isolated incident, but the culmination of centuries of virulent hostility across Europe. We have also had to recognize that even supposedly enlightened voices, not least those of theologians and church leaders, often gave expression to subliminal prejudices, which have also required conscious rectification.

Given how deeply entrenched anti-Semitism has been in western Christianity, it was not only appropriate but necessary that its origins be investigated. The painful separation, over a century or longer, of Christianity from Judaism was both the consequence and the cause of mutual alienation and hostility. It would probably be correct to observe that, until the time of Constantine, Jewish institutions were the more powerful and well-established in the Roman Empire and may have been instigators of persecution by Roman and Parthian imperial authorities, and even active persecutors during the earliest period in Judaea and elsewhere. Nevertheless, the centuries of often violent hostility which followed the conversion of Constantine were far from following the example of Christ (Matthew 5.38–39), and far exceeded any measured retaliation which the *lex talionis* provision in the Pentateuch (Leviticus 24.19–21) might have justified, but which Jesus prohibits.

The question whether anti-Semitism is rooted in the New Testament is rightly and necessarily asked. We have found that, while there are phrases and tropes which have been used to enflame and justify anti-Semitism over the centuries, it would be anachronistic to describe the biblical texts as inherently anti-Semitic. The authors were, with few if any exceptions, themselves Jews whose identity and commitment to their heritage had required some reinterpretation in the light of their experience of Christ, but who remained who they had always been. Expressions and imagery are undoubtedly used which, even without being read out of context, express hostility and anger towards the temple hierarchy which had instigated Jesus's arrest, trial, and crucifixion, and towards Jewish communities which persecuted and ostracized the Christians from among them. There is a history to be acknowledged by the descendants of both parties, but enduring hostility towards the Jews cannot be justified, least of all by Christians who have long forgotten any hostility towards the Roman authorities who

crucified Jesus and persecuted the early Church. Nor can Christians today abdicate responsibility for their own attitudes; the critical tools to recognize the historical contexts in which words were spoken and events took place are sufficiently established, not only in academic scholarship but in basic education, for there to be no excuse for attitudes and behaviour which violate elementary principles of justice and civility.

While anti-Semitism cannot be located within the text of the New Testament, it has certainly influenced its interpretation. Christians today, and church leaders and theologians in particular, have an enduring responsibility to address its legacy in the Church and in the wider society.



## Thomas Frederick Simmons: A Forgotten Victorian Clergyman

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In the nineteenth century the Church of England aspired to be a 'learned church'. Such learning was not to be separated from its life in parishes both urban and rural, but it was intrinsically linked to the church's pastoral and spiritual calling. At the end of the century the historian W. E. H. Lecky wrote (his gendered language now demanding apology):

It is at least one great test of a living Church that the best intellect of the country can enter into its ministry, that it contains men who, in nearly all branches of literature, are looked upon by lay scholars with respect or admiration.<sup>1</sup>

This brief essay will celebrate the life and work of one such intellectual cleric, Thomas Frederick Simmons (1815 to 1884), Prebendary of York Minster and Rector of Dalton Holme near Beverley in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Simmons is now remembered, if at all, as the editor of a late medieval poem of lay devotion which he called the *Lay Folks' Mass Book*, published by the Early English Text Society in 1879. This work alone provides evidence that he was a formidably learned 'liturgiologist' — a term probably coined by J. M. Neale, and the occasion of Simmons's own inclusion in the *Oxford English Dictionary* from his use of it in a brief work entitled *Alms and Oblations* (1882). But in addition, he was a remarkably perceptive and largely self-taught philologist who developed an uncannily modern skill in tracking down, editing and interpreting medieval manuscripts. In his day he was held in high respect as a scholar who participated in the recovery of the medieval English Uses of Sarum, York, Hereford and Bangor, and contributed to initiatives in Prayer Book revision, largely through his participation in the deliberations of the newly reconstituted York Convocation. And none of this was dissociated from an energetic and highly successful, parish ministry in Dalton Holme.

Little remains to us of the details of Simmons's life. He was born into a distinguished military family and attended Winchester College before

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<sup>1</sup> W. E. H. Lecky, *The Map of Life: Conduct and Character* (London, 1899), p. 201.

matriculating at Merton College, Oxford in 1832 or 1833. He seems to have left Merton in 1834 without graduating, and then disappears for some years, quite possibly serving in the army like his father and brothers. But he returned to Oxford, this time to Worcester College from which he graduated with his BA in 1848 (MA, 1859). Ordained in the year of his graduation he served four years as curate of Buford, before moving to the parish of Dalton Holme in 1853. He remained there until his death in 1884.

Such longevity in one parish was far from uncommon in the nineteenth century. The long-lived Francis Procter (1812 to 1905), author of the standard work, *A History of the Book of Common Prayer* (1855)<sup>2</sup> was vicar of Witton, Norfolk for almost sixty years from 1847 until his death in 1905. The formidably learned William Edward Scudamore (1813 to 1881), author of the vast study of the Eucharist 'according to the use of the Church of England', *Notitiae Eucharistica* (1872) was rector of Ditchingham, Norfolk for forty-two years until his death.<sup>3</sup>

Simmons was an industrious student at Worcester College, a fact evidenced by his surviving notebooks in York Minster Library, and he cannot have failed to have contact with William Palmer, a Fellow of his College to whose deep learning and integrity J. H. Newman pays tribute in his *Apologia pro vita sua* (1864). It was Palmer who continued the liturgical work of Charles Lloyd, demonstrating that the sources of the Book of Common Prayer were both primitive and medieval, and that work bore fruit in Palmer's vastly important *Origines Liturgicae* (1832). This should be placed alongside the work of the learned William Maskell (1814 to 1890), another Anglican cleric, though he was later to follow Newman into the Roman Catholic Church. Maskell's two great works are *The Ancient Liturgy of the Church of England* (1844), and *Monumenta Ritualia Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (1846). It was the former book, setting out parallel texts of the Sarum, York, Hereford, Bangor and Roman Uses, which first led Simmons to the British Museum manuscript that he was to entitle Text B of the *Lay Folks' Mass Book*.

The foundational work of such learned clerics as Palmer and Maskell, together with the Oxford *Tracts for the Times*, published from 1833 onwards, led not only to a renewed interest in the history and theology of the Book of Common Prayer but also to a fascination with the riches of late medieval liturgy and piety that stimulated the renewed spiritual life of the Church of

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<sup>2</sup> It was revised by Walter Howard Frere in 1901, and 'Procter and Frere' remains a valuable source of information on the Prayer Book to this day.

<sup>3</sup> Scudamore was also the author of the frequently reprinted 'manual of devotions' *Steps to the Altar* (1852) which was in wide use well into the twentieth century.

England. By the time of Simmons's ordination, the Oxford Movement, together with the ecclesiological revival in Cambridge led by Neale and Benjamin Webb, had begun to have an effect on the parochial life of the church. In the words of George Herring:

Even before 1845 the Oxford Movement had acquired a life of its own, to a large degree independent of its originators in the university. They had given birth to a set of ideas that clearly answered a need among hundreds of Anglican clerics who were now carrying Tractarianism into the parishes of England.

Of the Oxford founders of the Movement, far from being remote academics, Herring remarks:

Their Catholic views of the Church of England were always designed to have practical consequences, nothing short of a wholesale transformation of the spiritual, liturgical and pastoral life of the Church.<sup>4</sup>

And so, from Oxford came a generation of scholarly clergymen whose very learning drew them not away from but into a pastoral ministry. Among them was Simmons. Nor was his Worcester College association with William Palmer insignificant. Initially a close friend of Newman, Palmer was essentially conservative and profoundly Anglican in nature, and he drifted away from the close circle of leaders of the Oxford Movement. In his *Apologia*, Newman described Palmer as one whose '*beau ideal* in ecclesiastical action was a board of safe, sound, sensible men'. Palmer was concerned to produce clergy precisely in the mould of Simmons, Anglicans formed by Palmer's magisterial *A Treatise on the Church of Christ* (1838) which laboriously sought to establish that the Church of England was a branch of the catholic church and in continuity with the pre-Reformation English Church.

And so, before turning to Simmons as a scholar, we need to gain some insight into Simmons as a parish priest. It seems probable that his coming to Dalton Holme was through family connections with the army.<sup>5</sup> The patron of the parish was Lord Hotham<sup>6</sup> who distinguished himself at the Battle of

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<sup>4</sup> George Herring, *What Was the Oxford Movement?* (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 75.

<sup>5</sup> Simmons's father was Captain Thomas Simmons and one of his brothers was Major-General Sir John Lintorn Arabin Simmons (1821 to 1903), governor of Woolwich.

<sup>6</sup> Beaumont Hotham, 3rd Baron Hotham.

Waterloo and became a full general in 1865. Between 1858 and 1861 he built, at the then staggering cost of £25,000, the parish church of St Mary's, South Dalton. The architect was John Loughborough Pearson who built in the English Gothic style and whose later work included St Augustine's, Kilburn and Truro Cathedral. In short, Pearson (at Lord Hotham's expense) provided Simmons with a first-class church built on the principles of the Cambridge Ecclesiologists<sup>7</sup> and A. W. N. Pugin to accommodate forms of worship inspired by Tractarian principles. And Simmons was clearly an energetic parish priest. There are few surviving records of his long ministry of thirty-one years in Dalton Holme, but we do have the visitation returns of Archbishop Thomson of York for 1865. Lent, Holy Week and Holy Days were celebrated, and each Sunday there were two services, morning and evening. Adults and children were provided with regular catechism classes which included teaching on the gospels and readings for the week as well as more general Bible classes. The congregation was some one hundred and thirty people, that is more than one third of the total population of the parish, and, it is noted, this 'is a great increase upon the numbers a few years since'. Nearly half the population attended church once on a Sunday. Evening schools were conducted during winter and money was given to support the infirmary in Hull and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG).

In short, parish life was thriving, and in his understated way, Simmons was probably not untypical of second-generation Oxford Movement parish clergy, faithfully following the Book of Common Prayer and eschewing the ritual excesses of the later so called 'ritualists'. In 1869, he was made a Prebendary of York Minster.

But what, then, of Simmons the scholar? He was clearly well connected in the world of learning. He knew personally William Maskell. William George Henderson, the editor of the York Missal for the Surtees Society in 1875, thanks Simmons 'for much valuable assistance'.<sup>8</sup> A later history of liturgical revision in the nineteenth century describes Simmons as 'a most learned liturgical scholar'.<sup>9</sup> And by far Simmons's most substantial

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<sup>7</sup> In 1843, Neale and Webb published a translation of the first book of William Durandus's *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, a hugely influential work on liturgical principles of the thirteenth century. James F. White comments that 'it is difficult to overestimate the importance of this work [of Neale and Webb] for it materially changed the course of ecclesiology.' *The Cambridge Movement: The Ecclesiologists and the Gothic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 68.

<sup>8</sup> Henderson was later to become Dean of Carlisle.

<sup>9</sup> R. C. D. Jasper, *Prayer Book Revision in England, 1800–1900* (London: SPCK, 1954), p. 125.



published work was his edition of the *Lay Folks' Mass Book* (LFMB) for the Early English Text Society (EETS) in 1879.

A word first about the EETS. It was founded in 1864 by the energetic, scholarly and eccentric Frederick James Furnivall with the intention of bringing early unprinted English literature before the public. Its origins were also linked to the production of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, providing texts from which the Dictionary could quote. The EETS looked back to the founding of such societies as the antiquarian and aristocratic Roxburghe Club in 1812<sup>10</sup> but its founders were clearly scholars — people like Furnivall, Richard Morris and Walter Skeat — perhaps necessarily self-taught in the skills of philology and manuscript editing, yet still formidably learned. Simmons's Introduction to the LFMB is illustrative of the purposes of the EETS in its early days.<sup>11</sup>

The publications of the Early English Text Society do far more than fulfil their primary purpose of illustrating the course of the English language. Many of them are no less available for the study of history, where it is not confined to political events, which are most prominent in ordinary histories.<sup>12</sup>

In other words, these manuscript texts, most of them from the later Middle Ages, illustrate this history of the people in their everyday lives — in religious devotion, in manners, in entertainment and who better than parish priests, immersed in the lives of their parishioners both rich and poor, to engage in such study? And so, we find that a high proportion of the subscribers to the EETS in its early days were not the professional academics of later years and today, but Anglican parish clergy. One of them is the Revd J. C. Atkinson, vicar of Danby near Yarm, not so very far distant from Simmons in Dalton Holme. Ordained in 1841, he also remained in his parish until his death in 1900. And also, like Simmons, he became a Prebendary of York Minster in 1891. An energetic parish priest, Atkinson found time to recover many of the monastic records of Whitby and became well known for his studies of dialect. In the words of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 'scholarly activity was an integral part of his Christian ministry'.

A high proportion of the early publications of the EETS were of a religious or devotional nature, and not a few of them were edited by

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<sup>10</sup> See, David Matthews, *The Making of Middle English, 1765–1910* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> The EETS continues to flourish today.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Frederick Simmons, *The Lay Folks' Mass Book*. EETS (London: N. Trübner & Co, 1879), p. xvii.

clergymen. Among them we might note in particular Edward Peacock's edition of John Myrc's<sup>13</sup> *Instructions for Parish Priests* (1868), a poem, or treatise in verse instructing the parish priest what he should be teaching his people. In the same year Furnivall edited *The Babees Book: Early English Meals and Manners*, of particular interest to Simmons as proper devotional behaviour in worship in the Middle Ages was closely linked to good 'manners'. But Simmons's LFMB is particularly notable for its meticulous and erudite editing. At his death in 1884 Simmons was also editing the *Lay Folks' Catechism*, a work completed by his colleague Henry Edward Nolloth and published by the EETS in 1901, an English text in verse based on Archbishop Thoresby of York's 'instruction for the people.' A third EETS publication entitled the *Lay Folks' Prayer Book*, edited by Henry Littlehales (1895) was an edition of the Prymer, the prayer book of the laity in the later Middle Ages. In their medieval origins the three 'layfolks' works are unconnected, but in the EETS editions they indicate a continuing concern in the late nineteenth century Church of England for the devotional life of the laity.

In his Preface to the LFMB, Simmons indicates what first drew him to this medieval poem.

I was much struck by the fact that it was the only document I had met with that enables us to know the prayers which the unlearned of our forefathers used at mass, and by the light it threw upon their inner religious life.<sup>14</sup>

The LFMB is essentially a layperson's guide to devotions in English while the Latin mass is being said, a great part of which was spoken by the priest not only in an unknown language but in silence.<sup>15</sup> A line by line comparison indicates that it closely follows the ferial Mass of the Sarum use, though the same might also be said of the York use. The laity are alerted to the place reached in the Mass by familiar Latin lines, at which prayers, or suggestions for prayer, are given to them in English. The Mass is also a visual experience, the central moment for the laity (who did not themselves communicate) being the elevation of the sacrament, indicating the real presence of Christ

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<sup>13</sup> John Myrc, or Mirk, is best known for his collections of homilies known as the *Festial*, which later was frequently reprinted and widely read.

<sup>14</sup> LFMB, p. x.

<sup>15</sup> P. S. Barnwell has suggested that seventy-two percent of the words of the Mass are said by the priest silently. 'The Nature of Late Medieval Worship: The Mass,' in *Late Medieval Liturgies Enacted*, ed. by Sally Harper, P. S. Barnwell, Magnus Williamson (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 210.

in the host. (This central moment of elevation is strictly forbidden in the 1549 Prayer Book.)

At one moment in the liturgy the laity are instructed to respond in Latin while the priest speaks the Lord's Prayer after the canon of the mass.

and whils he saies, hold the stille,  
 bot answere at temptacionem  
 set libera nos a malo, amen.  
 hit were no need the this to ken,  
 for who con not this are lewed men.<sup>16</sup>

The word 'lewed' here does not have its modern connotations but simply means 'unlearned'. It is important to recognize that the unlearned laity have no need to understand what is being said. Simmons knew perfectly well the tradition best expressed by William Lyndwood (c. 1375 to 1446) that the canon is said in silence by the priest precisely '*ne impediatur populus orare*'. The devotions of the people are not to be interrupted by any concentration on the words of the Latin Mass, but they are engaged with within the context of the Mass and its realization of the real presence of Christ.<sup>17</sup>

In short, the LFMB suggests a quite different understanding of the places of priest and people than that assumed by the Book of Common Prayer after 1549. In the reformation liturgy the priest leads the people in prayer, while in the early fifteenth century, it seems, there is a more complex, polyphonic model of liturgical worship. In the words of Bernard Lord Manning, an early twentieth century commentator on Simmons's work on the LFMB:

The object of the *Lay Folks Mass Book* was, therefore, not to make the congregation understand what the priest was saying. *Two devotions, one lay and one clerical, were to proceed at the same time.*<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> LFMB, Text B, lines 487–91. (I have slightly changed Simmons's text, replacing the thorn — þ — with 'th'.)

<sup>17</sup> See further, Barnwell, 'The Nature of Late Medieval Worship' ed. by Harper, Barnwell and Williamson, p. 210. LFMB, pp. xx, 364.

<sup>18</sup> Bernard Lord Manning, *The People's Faith in the Time of Wyclif*. Thirlwall Essay, 1917. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1919), p. 9. (Emphases added.) See also, Barnwell, 'The Nature of Late Medieval Worship', p. 217. 'The culture of polytextuality was sophisticated and complex [...]. The liturgy produced by and within that culture was no different. It was potentially so demanding, not least of the laity [...]'.

Manning then goes on to refer to Lyndwood.

Simmons's copious notes to the LFMB are informative for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is clear that his scholarship, both liturgical and philological, is very far from the 'fey antiquarianism' of which he has been accused by more recent scholars.<sup>19</sup> In his printing of parallel texts of four manuscripts<sup>20</sup> of the poem Simmons shows himself fully alert to the skills of manuscript editing and matters of dialect.<sup>21</sup> Second, his liturgical and literary scholarship, though hardly very original, is certainly profound and he is well versed in the great French Benedictine tradition of liturgiology, the nineteenth century recovery of the medieval English Uses, and the broader literary scholarship represented by the EETS. Third, and perhaps most interesting of all, are the details of Simmons's parish and personal life that appear in the notes, suggesting that he is making a clear link between the devotional life of the laity in the fifteenth century and the devotional life of his own parishioners in Dalton Holme. Like his colleague the Revd J. C. Atkinson in Danby, Simmons was a keen observer of local dialect variations, providing clues to the provenance of the different manuscripts of the LFMB. On the wording of the Lord's Prayer, he writes concerning his teaching ministry in the parish:

Some years ago, in a class of farm-servants, I heard one of them explaining to a lad, who had asked him the meaning of *which art*, that it was 'old-fashioned for *'that is'* like a [sic] many places in the Bible'. The explanation was so much to the point that I did not remark upon his incorrect philology at the moment, though it has been a hint to me ever since not to neglect the explanation myself.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, in the footnotes we find records of Simmons studying manuscript evidence in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, with William Maskell, conferring frequently with Furnivall, and on one occasion describing an extraordinary encounter with the Emperor Alexander II at a service in

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<sup>19</sup> Susan Powell, 'The transmission and circulation of the Lay Folks' Mass Book,' in *Late Medieval Religious Texts and the Transmission* ed. by A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), p. 69.

<sup>20</sup> Nine manuscripts have now been discovered.

<sup>21</sup> For a modern discussion of the manuscripts which is appreciative of Simmons's work, see Jeremy J. Smith, 'The Manuscripts of the Middle English Lay Folks' Mass Book in Context,' *Studia Anglica Posnaniensa*, 56 (2021).

<sup>22</sup> LFMB, p. 294.

Warsaw Cathedral at which Simmons was present, and seemingly very much at the front.

This final vignette suggests another aspect of Simmons's life and ministry. In addition to his life as a parish priest and as a scholar, he was also a learned and national presence in the considerable debates in the Church of England in the nineteenth century concerning the revision of the Book of Common Prayer, and here, once again, the LFMB is seen to play its part.

A renewed interest in the history of the Prayer Book and a developing sense of its insufficiency to meet the growing spiritual needs of the Church of England and its people led in 1855 to the publication of Francis Procter's *History of the Book of Common Prayer* which remained in use well into the twentieth century (and is still of great value) in its revised form, edited by W. H. Frere. But the impetus in the church to re-enliven the Prayer Book properly begins in the Oxford *Tracts for the Times* (1833 onwards), which we know from his surviving student notes in York Minster Library, Simmons had read and absorbed. Though Newman set an essentially conservative tone from his *Thoughts Respectfully Addressed to the Clergy on Alterations in the Liturgy* (Tract 3), nevertheless it was the Tractarians who began to read and use the Prayer Book as continuous with the medieval liturgies and 'even replace Prayer Book formularies with those of the medieval rites'.<sup>23</sup> But although the Tractarians' concerns were essentially *theological* rather than *liturgical*, pressure for the reform of Prayer Book worship began to grow. In 1863, J. M. Neale in his *Essays on Liturgiology and Church History* suggested that the Prayer Book was now too narrow and required supplementation from the ancient liturgies.

But it was almost twenty years from the first publication of the *Tracts* before the influence of the Oxford Movement brought about the reconvening of the ancient Convocations of Canterbury (1852) and York (1861).<sup>24</sup> The latter was to be the national platform for Simmons in his participation in Prayer Book revision.

In 1867 a Royal Commission on Ritual was established to consider the matter of Anglican worship, set up largely to combat the growing fear of Romanizing tendencies amongst a growing band of 'ritualist' clergy, and 'to

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<sup>23</sup> Bryan D. Spinks, 'The Transition from "Excellent Liturgy" to being "Too Narrow for the Religious Life of the Present Generation": The Book of Common Prayer in the Nineteenth Century', in *Comfortable Words: Polity, Piety and the Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Stephen Platten and Christopher Woods (Norwich: Hymns Ancient and Modern, 2012), p. 110.

<sup>24</sup> The Convocations, whose history began under Archbishop Theodore (668 to 690 CE), were prorogued in 1717 and did not meet again until 1852.

secure general uniformity of practice in such matters as may be deemed essential'.<sup>25</sup> Although it sat until 1870 and produced no less than four reports, the Commission actually achieved relatively little, being more remarkable for its lack of agreement between its members than anything else. But still liturgical discussion and revision were in the air, and in 1872 Parliament passed the Act of Uniformity Amendment Act, usually known as the Shortened Services Act as it permitted abbreviated forms of Morning and Evening Prayer and other minor variations. It was the first approved change in the Prayer Book for over two centuries, and it was not repealed until 1980.

On the whole the Shortened Services Act was not popular in the church. The distinguished liturgical scholar J. Wickham Legge in his essay 'The Act of 1872 and its Shortened, Hurried, and Extra-Liturgical Services'<sup>26</sup> laments not only its encouragement of laziness among the younger clergy, but the opening of a door that would encourage diversity rather than uniformity in the worship of the church.<sup>27</sup> But the question may be asked how Simmons might have viewed this new 'diversity'. True, the Preface to the Book of Common Prayer, in celebration of uniformity, clearly writes that 'whereas heretofore there hath been great diversity in saying and singing in Churches within this Realm[...]. Now from henceforth all the whole realm shall have but one use'. But the fact that Simmons was certainly a strict adherent to the Book of Common Prayer in public worship, does not necessarily contradict the lessons he was learning from the LFMB. After all, he was one of those who clearly argued for the continuity of the English Church through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and beyond, while also admitting 'our Holy Reformation' which renounced the errors and corruptions of Papal Tyranny.<sup>28</sup> There is no necessary contradiction here. Rather, what he finds in the LFMB is a polyphony and polytextuality<sup>29</sup> which tolerates and encourages an active prayer life in the people within the priestly celebration of the Eucharist. In short, the 1872 Act allowed an element of re-imagining

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<sup>25</sup> Quoted in G. J. Cuming, *A History of Anglican Liturgy*, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 153.

<sup>26</sup> In, *Some Principles and Services of the Prayer Book Historically Considered*, ed. by J. Wickham Legge (London: Rivingtons, 1899), pp. 130–54.

<sup>27</sup> Ronald Jasper follows Wickham Legge, writing that 'the Prayer Book had attempted to achieve some semblance of order. But now the Church was given official leave to return to its former state of chaos.' *Prayer Book Revision*, p. 117.

<sup>28</sup> LFMB, p. xiv.

<sup>29</sup> The terms are those of P. S. Barnwell.

in the complex and complimentary lives of priest and people — and the LFMB is certainly not irrelevant to that.

As we have seen, Simmons, a loyal son of Oxford, was essentially conservative in his churchmanship. But as with all Tractarians there was a profound Romantic element in his theology and worship.<sup>30</sup> The Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874 was certainly intended to suppress the extravagances of the 'ritualist' clergy who were prepared to suffer imprisonment rather than renounce their use of vestments, crucifixes, incense and other forms of ceremonial.<sup>31</sup> The LFMB was published in 1879, at the height of the ritualist controversy, and indeed, a reference to Father Mackonochie, who was forced to resign from his living of St. Alban's, Holborn in 1882 for refusing to abandon his ritual practices, in Simmons's critical notes suggests a degree of sympathy in the face of episcopal ignorance, and a commonality in the appreciation of pre-Reformation liturgy.

But it was the *Convocation Prayer Book* (CPB) of 1880 that most clearly showed the hand of Simmons and the LFMB, almost certainly through his participation in the deliberations of the York Convocation. The CPB appeared a year after the publication of the LFMB. It was essentially the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, except that on the title page are added 'altered rubrics showing what would be the condition of the book if amended in conformity with the recommendations of the Convocations of Canterbury and York, contained in reports presented to her Majesty the Queen in the year 1879'. The recommendations constitute the responses of the two ancient and reconstituted Convocations to the fourth and final Report of the Royal Commission on Ritual. They were never given any formal approval, though the CPB was not insignificant in the Prayer Book controversy of 1927/1928.

The differences between the two Convocations of Canterbury and York are made clear in the rubrical additions to the CPB. From a parliamentary point of view the proposals came to nothing, but they do provide us with an insight into the Church of England's liturgical position at exactly the moment of the LFMB. Ronald Jasper sums up the achievement in generally negative terms – except in one interesting respect:

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<sup>30</sup> In his *Apologia*, Newman expresses his deep acknowledgment of the medievalism of Sir Walter Scott, and the poetry of Coleridge, Wordsworth and Southey.

<sup>31</sup> They were encouraged by the widely used *Directorium Anglicanum* (1858, revised, F. G. Lee, 1866) of John Purchas, and a particular interpretation of the Ornaments Rubric in the Prayer Book that seemed to allow pre-1549 ceremonial as approved by the Book of Common Prayer.

Their proposals were not happy and betrayed a sad deficiency in liturgical knowledge. The Church was not without sound liturgical scholars, but they were too few in number, particularly on the episcopal bench, to exercise any significant influence upon the deliberations of the Convocations. In this respect York was in a happier position than Canterbury. It possessed a most learned liturgical scholar in Canon T. F. Simmons of York, and his influence was much more penetrating in the smaller Northern body than it would have been in that of Canterbury.<sup>32</sup>

This brief, though telling observation deserves closer examination. It was clear that York Convocation exhibited not only clearer liturgical scholarship, but a more detailed sense of the ancient worship and pre-Reformation traditions of the English Church. For example:

1. The festivals of St Michael and All Angels and All Saints were to be observed with an octave. This was contrary to ancient English precedent — and York Convocation objected to this proposal.<sup>33</sup>
2. A page was provided, known as a Table of Occurrences, and entitled 'A Table to regulate the Service when two Feasts or Holydays fall upon the same day.'<sup>34</sup> In attempting to offer what was missing from the Prayer Book, the ancient Sarum Pie, or *Ordinale ad usum Sarum*, a handbook for priests was ignored. It offered full and precise details which are here missing. York Convocation objected to the inclusion of this Table — one must assume being better versed in the ancient Sarum use.
3. The Ornaments Rubric was amended with the addition of the words 'until further order be taken by lawful authority'. York Convocation objected to this amendment with the words, 'Omit this addition and keep the Rubric of the Sealed Books unaltered.'<sup>35</sup>
4. Alternative questions were provided for the bishop for candidates without godparents. York Convocation objected to this, presumably on the grounds of lack of ancient precedent.<sup>36</sup>
5. Proposals to shorten Communion services were dismissed by the York Convocation.

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<sup>32</sup> Jasper, *Prayer Book Revision in England*, pp. 124–5.

<sup>33</sup> *The Convocation Prayer Book* (London: John Murray, 1880), pp. 247, 253.

<sup>34</sup> *Convocation Prayer Book*, p. 24.

<sup>35</sup> *Convocation Prayer Book*, p. 32.

<sup>36</sup> *Convocation Prayer Book*, p. 302.



The position of York Convocation in the CPB does seem to reflect closely the position of Simmons — conservative, attached to the ancient traditions of the English Church according to Sarum and the pre-1549 liturgies, and showing pastoral concern within the traditions of the church and its ancient liturgy.

But the most telling clues for the presence of Simmons and the LFMB in the CPB lie within the York Convocation rubrics for the Order for Holy Communion. The details are telling:

1. At the commencement of the service of Holy Communion are added the words: 'The Priest standing at the North Side of the Table, shall say the Lord's Prayer with the Collect following, the people kneeling.' The word 'York' follows the addition. (LFMB, Text B, 91ff., 150ff. Simmons's note: 'They kneel and say pater-nosters all through the collects and epistle').
  2. 'Then shall be sung or said the Creed following; the people still standing' (LFMB, Text B, 204ff.).
  3. After all have communicated: 'Then shall the Priest say the Lord's Prayer, the people [kneeling and] repeating after him every petition.' (1662 — York Convocation *omits* the added 'kneeling': in the LFMB the people are standing, LFMB, Text B 484ff.).
- Concluding rubrics — York replaces 'Offertory' with 'Collection of Alms and other devotions of the people.' (LFMB, Text B, 241ff.).

Thus, it might be suggested that the majority of recommended alterations in the Communion service in CPB are from the York Convocation and many bear clear signs of Simmons and his work on the LFMB.<sup>37</sup> Overall the relatively modest proposals suggested in the CPB were a move in the direction of 'greater flexibility in services.'<sup>38</sup> In other words, it was a modest but clear move away from the Reformation principle of uniformity in the Church of England.

Although Simmons is barely remembered today, his immediate successors in liturgical scholarship are much better known. Walter Howard Frere clearly acknowledges the place of the LFMB in his *Some Principles of Liturgical Reform* (1911), and his 1906 editing (with G. W. Hart) of Daniel Rock's *The Church of Our Fathers* (1849) together with his edition of the *Sarum Customary and Ordinal* (1898 to 1901) are indicative of his own deep medieval scholarship. Yet, like Simmons, Frere was not simply a scholar, but

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<sup>37</sup> See, Jasper, *Prayer Book Revision in England*, p. 125.

<sup>38</sup> R. C. D. Jasper, *The Development of Anglican Liturgy, 1662–1980* (London: SPCK, 1989), p. 61.

lived within the liturgy as (in his case) an active bishop and churchman.<sup>39</sup> F. E. Brightman, a Prebendary of Lincoln, published his *English Rite* in 1915, and it remains today the standard work on the sources and revisions of the Book of Common Prayer.<sup>40</sup> Darwell Stone's *History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist* (1909), in two volumes, refers to Simmons's scholarship in the LFMB. Other leading liturgical scholars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries — Christopher Wordsworth, Henry Littlehales, J. Wickham Legge — all acknowledge Simmons's sound scholarly achievement within the field of Anglican liturgy.

Few remember him now and yet Simmons is not alone amongst Victorian liturgical scholars who are forgotten today. There are, perhaps, two principal reasons. First, as may be seen from the EETS and its work today, work in the field of medieval philology and literature has now taken itself almost entirely into the academy of specialist scholars, though, it has to be admitted, most of them lacking the grounded and practical sense of the liturgy which Simmons acquired in his life as a working clergyman. Second, when liturgical revision in the Church of England began to gather pace in the twentieth century, long after the Prayer Book debacle of 1927/28, it was very different in tone from the world of the later Victorian church. To begin with it was self-consciously ecumenical, and second, as such it looked back not to the English liturgies of the late medieval period — Sarum, York and so on — but to the liturgy of the early church. In 1934 the American Episcopalian Burton Scott Easton published his translation of the ancient *Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, which is described in the advertisement to the book as 'the basis of the greater Oriental liturgies and [...] the eventual source of the forms in the Scottish and American Prayer Books'.<sup>41</sup> Three years later Gregory Dix published his edition of the *Apostolic Tradition* — which he dedicated to Frere — and a pattern was set that consigned medieval liturgical study very largely to the academy, while liturgists in the Church of England saw different lines of succession. Once again, the LFMB fell into the twilight of historical seclusion, a medieval text that flourished again for a moment in the world of the Victorian church.

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<sup>39</sup> See, *Walter Howard Frere: His Correspondence on Liturgical Revision and Construction*, ed. by Ronald C. D. Jasper (London: SPCK/Alcuin Club, 1954).

<sup>40</sup> Brian Cumming's excellent 2011 edition of the texts of 1549, 1559 and 1662 serves a rather different purpose.

<sup>41</sup> Interestingly this seems to exclude the Prayer Book of 1662 whose eucharistic canon Frere so disliked.

## Some Reflections on Jaime Wright's 'Scientist-theologians in the SEC'

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I was both surprised and delighted to see Jaime Wright's paper on 'Scottish Episcopal Theologians of Science' in the Summer 2021 issue of the *SEI Journal* (pp. 91–99). As she notes, there are many within the SEC 'who have contributed to the Church's theological engagement with science' (p. 98), so it feels a particular honour to be singled out for discussion alongside my colleagues Mark Harris and Michael Northcott. Having been invited to respond to Wright's paper, there follow a few remarks from my personal perspective, by way of offering a little background context to the picture which she so helpfully sets out.

Wright's paper quite correctly notes (p. 91) the importance of John Polkinghorne and Arthur Peacocke to the UK science-and-religion scene.<sup>1</sup> I was fortunate indeed to know them both, as teachers and mentors. As scientists, priests, and theologians, they were very much located within the field of apologetical writing, which is to say they sought to offer an account of the Christian faith that was consonant (a favourite term of Polkinghorne's) with a modern worldview that is heavily shaped by the natural sciences. My own approach to the field of science and religion has been heavily influenced by them both: by the desire to show that it is perfectly possible to be a practising Christian and to respect the findings about the natural world that come to us through the sciences. In addition to the various issues covered by Polkinghorne and Peacocke in their writings, this led me to a study of the historical background to the contemporary perception in the minds of many people, that science and religion must, inevitably, be opposed to one another, and to an appreciation of the highly partial (in both senses of that word) readings of history that must be made in order to sustain such a view. The work of the historian John Hedley Brooke (to whom Wright alludes, p. 90), and also that of Peter Harrison, has been of particular value in recent decades in setting the record straight on such matters. Latterly, I have come to feel that the classical debate between

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<sup>1</sup> For examples of their work, see John Polkinghorne, *Science and Theology: An Introduction* (London: SPCK, 1998) and Arthur Peacocke, *Theology for a Scientific Age*, 2nd edn (London: SCM Press, 1993).

‘science’ and ‘religion’ has lost its way, with protagonists on both sides casting their opponents as pantomime villains. I believe that more is to be gained by both sides uniting to discuss — and, more importantly, to act upon — matters of mutual interest; some examples of this alternative approach are discussed below.

Wright’s paper on Scottish Episcopal Theologians of Science is focussed on the University of Edinburgh, where the teaching of science-and-religion has latterly achieved a particular prominence. Wright quotes the well-known scholar Christopher Southgate, who stated in a review of the UK science-and-religion scene: ‘The science and religion program [in Edinburgh] is, in my personal view, at present the most creative and vigorous British training ground for new researchers in the science-religion debate’.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the theologians discussed by Wright, Southgate cites the work of David Fergusson and David Grummett; and in recent years Sarah Lane Ritchie, Mikael Leidenhag and Tripp Fuller (no relation!) have all been part of the team dedicated specifically to science-and-religion research and teaching at New College. The physicist Wilson Poon and the biologist David de Pomerai have also made important and distinctive contributions to this activity. Some of these individuals are Episcopalians and others are not; it should be acknowledged that although Wright’s paper had a particular focus on our denomination, the science-and-religion field in general, and at the University of Edinburgh in particular, is broadly ecumenical in nature.

In terms of the development of science-and-religion studies in Edinburgh, one very important name has so far been omitted: that of Ruth Page. A Church of Scotland minister, she taught at New College from 1979 until her retirement in 2000 and was the first female Principal there (1996–1999: her portrait hangs alongside those of other former Principals in the Senate Room). Her book *God and the Web of Creation* (1996) might now be considered a pioneering work in the field of eco-theology. In it, Page raised important questions regarding the anthropocentricity of much theological writing on the natural world and coined the term ‘pansyntheism’ to evoke the picture of God’s presence with the whole of creation.<sup>3</sup>

As Wright notes in her paper, my own move to Edinburgh (initially to serve at St John’s, Princes Street) more or less coincided with the publication of my monograph *Atoms and Icons*, which was used for a time as a ‘primer’

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<sup>2</sup> Christopher Southgate, ‘Science and Religion in the United Kingdom: A personal view on the contemporary scene’, *Zygon*, 51 no. 2 (June 2016), 361–86 (p. 366).

<sup>3</sup> See Ruth Page, *God and the Web of Creation* (London: SCM Press 1996), pp. 40ff.

for courses in science-and-religion at Oxford.<sup>4</sup> This must have come to Professor Page's attention, as she invited me to undertake some teaching in this area at New College. After a year or two we were successful in applying for a grant from the Templeton Foundation to enable us to expand the teaching on offer: this eventually led to the provision of two honours-level undergraduate modules, one broadly historical and one broadly contemporary in nature. These courses (heavily revised, to keep pace with scholarship over the last couple of decades) continue to run there today. My New College work was also reflected in a module on science and religion taught to students at the Theological Institute of the Scottish Episcopal Church (as it was then styled), now the SEI.

Mark Harris's appointment as a lecturer (now Professor) in science and religion at the University led to a rapid burgeoning of this field of study there, due not least to his instantiation of a highly successful master's programme in this subject. My own move to the University from my work at TISEC, initially as Teaching Fellow, subsequently as Lecturer, represented a further expansion of our department; and the setting up of an online Science and Religion Masters course, which has proved highly attractive to students from all over the world, means that hundreds of students have now encountered science and religion at undergraduate and postgraduate level through the University of Edinburgh. These include many PhD students, Dr Wright among them, who have continued to research and teach in this field.

Those twentieth-century writers who shaped the science-and-religion field generally thought of 'science' in terms of the natural sciences, and of 'religion' in terms of Western, Protestant Christianity. One of the exciting things about this field in the twenty-first century has been the way in which it has spread beyond those specific areas. Psychology, sociology and cognitive science have proved to be important dialogue partners; Wright's article alluded to my own work on Data Science, which might be considered an example of this broadening of the field of scientific disciplines brought into dialogue with religious and ethical ideas.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, there is an increasing involvement in our discussions of people from non-Western Christian backgrounds, as well as from other world faiths (most notably,

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Fuller, *Atoms and Icons: A discussion of the relationships between science and theology* (London: Mowbray, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> For anyone interested in this topic, my most accessible paper relating to it (not cited by Wright) was published in the open-access online journal *Religions*: Michael Fuller, '[Big Data, Ethics and Religion: New dilemmas from a new science](#)', *Religions*, 8 (May 2017) [accessed 28 July 2021].

thus far, Islam).<sup>6</sup> It has been a particular pleasure to welcome Muslim students to our courses at New College, studying alongside their Christian and agnostic peers.

The broadening-out of the field of science and religion studies sketched here makes this a particularly exciting time to be engaged with it. Those who urge an incompatibility between science and religion are still vociferous in their claims, but it seems to me that people are increasingly inclined not to think in polarised and polarising terms about these two aspects of human endeavour. It is clear, I think, that both have an enormous amount to contribute to human flourishing, and much is to be gained by the thoughtful interactions of theologians and scientists.

One very good example of this was afforded by an initiative of the Church of Scotland's Society, Religion and Technology (SRT) Project a couple of decades ago, following the cloning of Dolly the sheep at the Roslin Institute. The Project brought together scientists (including the head of the team which produced Dolly) and theologians (including Michael Northcott and also David Atkinson, then Deputy Principal of the Scottish Agricultural College, and now serving in retirement as a non-stipendiary Episcopal priest in the Diocese of Aberdeen) to discuss ethical issues in the genetic engineering of non-human species. The book that came out of this project, *Engineering Genesis*, was edited by the SRT Project's then director, the Episcopal layman Donald Bruce, together with his wife Ann: it consists of a thoughtful and well-researched set of reflections informed by a series of 'case studies', and it has considerably advanced our thinking in this crucial ethical area.<sup>7</sup> The SRT Project continues to serve the Church of Scotland in its engagement with contemporary science and technology.

*Engineering Genesis* illustrates that science-and-religion studies is far from an 'ivory tower' pursuit: it touches on issues that are of profound importance for us all — and it does so, moreover, in a thoroughly ecumenical way, involving conversations that cross denominational as well as disciplinary boundaries. Two further important projects might be mentioned at this point, with which many Scottish Episcopal Churches are involved. First, Scientists in Congregations has sought to engage those scientists who attend churches in speaking about their work in their local

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<sup>6</sup> For a brief overview of science and religion outwith the Western context, see Michael Fuller, 'Science and Religion in a Global Context', in *Routledge International Handbook of Religion in Global Society*, ed. by Jayeel Cornelio et al.

(Oxford: Routledge, 2021), pp. 478–87.

<sup>7</sup> See *Engineering Genesis: The ethics of genetic engineering in non-human species*, ed. by Donald and Ann Bruce (London: Earthscan, 1998).

contexts, thereby (it is to be hoped) breaking down any misperceptions there may be about the compatibility of science and people's religious faith. Second, the Eco-Congregations Scotland project has led many churches through a scientifically informed process to enable them to have a greener footprint in their activities. I believe that it is in projects such as these, linking the insights of theologians and scientists in their working together in support of human flourishing, that the future of science-and-religion lies, not in the rhetorical posturing that insists that these two areas of human striving can have nothing to do with one another.

One final comment: I am grateful to Wright for noting in her paper that my interdisciplinary interests extend also to the exploration of theological themes in music and in literature. Regarding the former, my long-standing interest in opera has seen my publishing papers on Benjamin Britten, James MacMillan and Richard Wagner<sup>8</sup> (and contributing more than twenty reviews of stage performances to *The Wagner Journal*). Regarding the latter, I am in the process of editing a book on Science and Religion in Western Literature, to be published in 2022.<sup>9</sup> My own chapter in this book concerns the work of the great Czech writer Karel Čapek (familiar in the Anglophone world as the man who coined the word 'robot'), and I am thrilled that Mark Harris and Jaime Wright are both also contributing to this venture, looking respectively at Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and at climate fiction.

Here, then, are some brief reflections on the development of science-and-religion as an area of study in Edinburgh, and on the issues which Edinburgh's scientist-theologians have been exploring. Writing as a priest, this has proved to be an unexpected and yet also exciting way to be exercising my vocation; and I sincerely hope that the work of all the theologians discussed by Wright, as well as that of those identified in this brief response to her timely and informative paper, may be found valuable by the wider Scottish Episcopal Church.

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Michael Fuller, 'The Far-shining Sail: A Glimpse of Salvation in Britten's *Billy Budd*', *Musical Times*, 147 (Summer 2006), pp. 17–24; 'Liturgy, Scripture and Resonance in the Operas of James MacMillan', *New Blackfriars*, 96.1064 (July 2015), pp. 381–90; 'Redemption in Wagner: The Case of Senta', *The Wagner Journal*, 14.1 (March 2020), pp. 4–15.

<sup>9</sup> *Science and Religion in Western Literature: Critical and Theological Studies*, ed. by Michael Fuller (London: Routledge, forthcoming).





# Being Some-Body in the Body of Christ: Dimensions of Embodiment in a Christian Perspective

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The pandemic and the political and societal reactions regarding its threats to human health have revealed different, from a Christian perspective problematical, perceptions of the human existence as body or, if we look a bit more closely, rather *in* or *with* a body. The guide to our well-being in times of the pandemic seems to neglect the bodily constitution of human being. The advice to stay at home and interact only virtually on social media leaves our actual bodies as a complex and multidimensional means of relation and interaction behind. Being a body has been confined to the privacy of our homes — shared and in touch with only a few others, or even no-body. At the same time the measures, at least those taken by the UK government, give an unmatched example of the unchallenged estimation of the body almost as a cult object in our self-perception, self-presentation and, particularly important in these times, our representation in the social media. The one and only exemption from the rule of staying at home (apart from shopping essentials, but we are encouraged to do that from home in any case) is ascribed to an hour of ‘exercise’ — not to an hour of getting sunlight or fresh air, not to an hour of social contact outdoors at a safe distance, not to a change of scenery etc. With this, we seem to be in accordance with trends of healthism and fitness waves, with all attempts to turn the ravages of time into anti-ageing and eternal youth in the way certain areas of modern and postmodern medical sciences promote it. Both perspectives — the way we deal with the threat of the virus: protecting our bodies in switching from bodily presence to virtual representation, and the way we consider the health of our bodies as a project in conducting our lives — are in danger of operating with human bodies as objects to be controlled, shaped, enhanced, and fitted in. Thus, they focus on a very limited picture of what it means to be a living body.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the Corona crisis in Europe 2020, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, amongst others, ventured the assumption that the Corona crisis reveals the only value of postmodern society as the protection of the ‘bare life’ (*zoë*, in opposition to ‘qualified life’/*bios*), resulting in a continuous state of anxiety/angst and a sense of general

The following reflections try to engage with a broader perspective on the corporeality of human life, arguing that the characteristics of bodily being provide the matrix for understanding what it means to be human. At first, we will explore common characteristics of human life as bodily life, such as its locatedness and location, its relationality, its finitude and mortality, its vulnerability and its exhaustibility. We will ground the broader perspective on being a body in conversation with anthropological perspectives of the Hebrew Bible. The following section 'Being Some-Body' takes into account that these common features of bodily life do not appear to us as an objective, external knowledge, but always as our experience of ourselves, inextricably connected to our sense of self. All these common features are only actual in the particularity, uniqueness of bodies as the personal identity of a body in and for the world. Being body and being somebody appears to be in inseparable union for human beings. Again, we engage with anthropological perspectives of the Hebrew Bible and explain the characteristic feature of creaturely being as the core function of *leb*, the heart, that correlates the physiological, emotional/affective, cognitive and volitional dimensions of the embodied self. Human bodies live in replying to the creator's address in the givenness of the world — they are the location and mode of the created freedom that characterizes human being. The third section 'The Body of Christ — Incarnation, the Body on the Cross and the Resurrected Body' explores further aspects of the theological value and appreciation of bodily being in reflecting on the implications of God's salvific engagement with bodily being in the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of the Word/*Logos*, the second person of the Trinity for the understanding of what it means to live as a human body. Has this theological value been replaced by spirituality, in contrast to bodily being, by Christ's ascension and the pentecostal arrival of the Spirit? In two final sections the paper unfolds implications of the meaning of being a body for Christian identity. In 'The

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insecurity. Without agreeing with Agamben's conclusions which are close to the denial of the pandemic and to related conspiracy theories, it seems important to me to see nevertheless the problematic narrowness in the perception of what it means to save or protect lives as displayed in the restrictions and measures taken by governments to control the spread of the virus. Along the lines of this paper, the differentiation of *zoë*/bare life and *bios*/qualified life is already a problematic one. There is no 'bare' life that can be protected as there is no living body that is simply defined by its anatomy and physiological processes. For Agamben's analysis see his guest commentary 'Nach Corona: Wir sind nurmehr das nackte Leben' (After Corona: We are Only the Bare Life) in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 18 March 2020.

Body of Christ — gathered around Word and Sacrament', we explore briefly the understanding of the church as the body of Christ from a Lutheran perspective, with its implications for bodily communication in word and sacrament. The following section 'Our Bodies in the Body of Christ — Temple of the Holy Spirit' establishes foundations for an 'embodied spirituality' that values the desires of a human body as the occasion of God's transforming salvific action in reorienting the desires towards God's desire of communion with creation and the enjoyment of created bodily life in all its dimensions. Thus, notions of spirituality — or of the spirit behind a lifestyle — that neglect the embodiment of mind, soul and spirit of human beings and try in one way or other to leave the body as the mode of creaturely being behind, are to be rejected.

### ***Being body: A broader perspective***

Vis-à-vis the 'excarnate'<sup>2</sup> way of life that is globally enforced on people by the pandemic, albeit in different shapes and details of restrictions, it seems important to regain a broader perspective on human embodiment than the notion that bodily vulnerability puts human life in jeopardy and that this risk can be dealt with by regarding the body as an object, subject to all kinds of bodily enhancement strategies. The Biblical understanding of the human condition as a 'living soul/body' (*nepheš hajjah*) offers a perspective that perceives human life as a holistic experience of the body. As an organism in its environment, the body is defined by its boundaries in time and space — the location of the body. Without being somewhere (and not everywhere) one would be nowhere. The locatedness of the body is given in the experience of touch — be it the touch of other living bodies or the contact with dead matter. Bodies encounter touch — there are no bodies without touch.<sup>3</sup> Only recently research on the human sense of touch has gained more

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<sup>2</sup> I borrow this term from Richard Kearney, professor of philosophy at Boston College, who, according to *The Economist*, calls the process that led to a remarkable increase of virtual social interaction over the recent years 'excarnation'. He assesses this situation as a 'crisis of touch' that leaves people skin-hungry.

<sup>3</sup> In his recent monograph on human embodiment, Paul Griffiths shows convincingly the fundamental role of touch in the constitution of flesh (which — in his terminology — is the living body in contrast to inanimate, non-living bodies): 'Without touch there is no flesh. [...] Without the fleshly touch of others, flesh rapidly becomes body: it dies.' Paul J. Griffiths, *Christian Flesh* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), p. 5. Building my argument upon perspectives of the Hebrew understanding of being human,

attention: in the 1990s the neurons that detect affective touch, called the C-tactile (CT) afferents, were discovered and confirmed as playing an important role in the human perception of pain.<sup>4</sup> We cannot dig deeper into the findings of this branch of brain research here, but the importance of skin-to-skin-touch, established so far, is widely experienced by its absence during this pandemic, as for example stated by *The Economist's* edition on the pandemic in February, highlighting that touch is 'the only sense crucial to humans' survival'<sup>5</sup>. This little glimpse into recent developments in this area of brain research already allows us to emphasize that the boundaries of the body that establish the here-and-nowness of the body through the sense of touch are porous. Far from being closed borders, leak-proof and sealed off, the boundaries of the body are places of traffic. Continuous exchange with its environment, communication in different modes, takes place at these boundaries and characterizes the life of the body. This exchange takes, for instance, the form of ingestion and excretion — literally a partial incorporation of the environment, transforming the outside world into the body-unit. Without such an exchange there is no body. The understanding of the human body that characterizes the scriptures of the Hebrew Bible points to this important feature of bodily existence when, in the story of creation, the clay sculpture, made by the Creator-potter from the soil of the earth (formation), about to become the first human, receives God's *ruach* as the breath of life (animation) through the nostrils and thus becomes *nepheš hajjah* — a living body.<sup>6</sup> This clarifies, that the Hebrew *nepheš* does not describe a concept of the, possibly even immortal<sup>7</sup>, soul as a distinctive

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I do not follow Griffiths's terminology: the Hebrew term *basar*, flesh, indicates precisely the perishability and mortality of human flesh, viewed apart from God's life sustaining breath. Human flesh refers to the decay of human bodies when they are separated from the creative or sustaining source of life. Cf. Isaiah 40.6 'All people [Hebrew: *basar*, flesh] are grass. Their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass.'

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Emily Kuehn, 'Research into our sense of touch leads to new treatments for autism' [accessed 24.02.2021].

<sup>5</sup> Daryn Ray, 'The pandemic made the world realise the importance of human contact'; cf. also Dacher Keltner, 'Hands On Research: The Science of Touch' [accessed 24.02.2021].

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Bernd Janowski, *Anthropologie des Alten Testaments: Grundfragen — Kontexte — Themenfelder* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), p. 50 and Gerhard von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose/Genesis*, 9th edition (Altes Testament Deutsch 2-4) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1972), p. 53.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Karin Schöpflin, 'Seele', TRE 30 (1999), 737-40 (p. 739).

aspect of humanity in the way we might associate it with Platonic philosophy or certain strands of Roman-Catholic theology.<sup>8</sup> *Nepheš hajjah* is the result or product of God's creative act in 'building the body' and 'enlivening it' by God's breath.<sup>9</sup>

More important for our observation of the porosity of human boundaries is the Hebrew understanding of the body as a synthesis, an organism of different limbs, in which each of the different limbs can be used *pars pro toto* for the body as a whole — in the body's physiological sphere and in its social sphere.<sup>10</sup> *Nepheš*, physiologically the throat, is the channel

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<sup>8</sup> Promoting a holistic image of the human being as body, this article will not focus specifically on the body-soul-relation or body-soul-spirit/mind-relation as a distinctive feature of human existence with its implied dualisms of body and soul or mind, flesh and spirit, inner person and outer world, etc. This seems to be broadly supported by biblical studies not only with regard to the Hebrew Bible but also according to studies of the Gospel of John, or the writings of Paul. For an overview of the development in support of the exegetical view of the human being as a singular whole, neither a dichotomous nor a trichotomous being, see Joel B. Green, *Body, Soul and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), pp. 4–16. In contrast, for a recent anthropological account of humans as soul-body compounds, see Joshua R. Farris, *An Introduction to Theological Anthropology: Humans, Both Creaturely and Divine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020).

<sup>9</sup> With Janowski, *Anthropologie*, p. 50, I understand *nepheš hajjah* as the product of God's creative act against Loretz's understanding that the living human is a compositum of soil (*adamah*) and *nepheš*. This disagreement has obvious implications for understanding death: whereas in Janowski's understanding death occurs when the relation between God and the creature is interrupted in a way that God's breath is withdrawn from the creature, in Loretz's interpretation death means the dissociation of the components soil and *nepheš*.

<sup>10</sup> For examples see Janowski, *Anthropologie*, pp. 142–45. Revisiting the anthropology of the Hebrew Bible, it struck me how effectively this language-use mirrors the entanglement of the emotional/social and physiological sphere in its reciprocal influences, and, with the possibility to use each organ as *pars pro toto* for the entire person in a certain emotional/physiological state, the complexity of personal identity in a network of processing information, a communicative system, rather than a body machine with its simple logic of a one way channel of causes and effects to which we are used in modern medicine. Whereas this entanglement can

for breath as well as for food and drink. At the same time, it is the location of the voice, another mode of the, in this case, explicitly communicative exchange of the body with its outside world. *Nepheš*, *pars pro toto* for the human being, indicates the body's need for constant exchange with its environment — and the Hebrew Bible does not shy away from describing the social threat of hate and bullying as the drowning of the *nepheš* — in a situation of social exclusion, the body finds itself in life-threatening waters.<sup>11</sup>

Both observations — bodies experience their own locatedness and location by touching other bodies, being touched by other bodies or by contact with objects, and bodies are open to the outside world, the others, in constant exchange — show that bodies are no self-enclosed, no self-sufficient beings; they are not their own self-contained bubble.<sup>12</sup> Being body is being in relation. The body senses in their specific capacities of perceiving the outside world and acting in response to the received perception, might even let us ask, whether bodies are to be described as fundamentally communicative beings. Over the course of the last 50 years, a broad strand of German (Protestant) theology has understood human being as constituted by (communicative) relations — the human being, called into life, addressed by God and called to respond. This has shifted theological

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be seen in contrast to the notion of the soul, the life of an independent 'inner person', as the human distinction, it seems to display some convergence with the sciences, especially the neurosciences and their insight into the fundamental embodiment of the mind. Cf. Green, *Body, Soul and Human Life*, pp. 33 and 38–46.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Psalm 69. 1,3,4: 'Save me, o God, for the waters have come to my neck [Hebrew *nepheš*] [...] I am worn out, calling for help [...] many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me [...]'. In the following the social misery of the one who prays is described, then follows the petition for rescue from the deep waters.

<sup>12</sup> The notion of the constant exchange of the human body is in sharp contrast with the modern sense of being human, that locates human dignity 'in self-sufficiency and self-containment, sharply defined personal boundaries, the highly developed idea of my 'inner person,' and the conviction that my full personhood rests on my exercise of autonomous and self-legislative action' (Green, *Body, Soul and Human Life*, p. 12). The fundamental porosity of the body's boundaries contradicts an understanding of human beings as individuals, 'buffered selves', with a firm sense of the boundary between self and others, inner and outer world. For a comprehensive discussion of the construction of the modern understanding of being human see Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

discourses from substance ontological perspectives to an explicit relational ontology which reflects not only the anthropological<sup>13</sup> and theological<sup>14</sup> perspectives of the Reformers more accurately, but also the world view of Scripture. More recently, this seems to be equally emphasized in debates about embodiment in the philosophy of mind.<sup>15</sup> The development of language in the human species seems to rely on the bodily development that is implied in the location of the larynx, due to which human beings have a much bigger spectrum of different sounds available, especially vowels, than for example chimpanzees. Michael Tomasello, former director of the Max Planck institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, describes the human ability to perceive each other as intentional agents, the capacity for shared intentionality, as distinctive for being (or becoming) human.<sup>16</sup> Shared intentionality requires the ability to follow another person's direction of view, an ability humans acquire at about the age of nine months. This bodily development (characteristic for the human species) proves to be an important feature for the development of the brain structures that enable communication and thus for human intersubjectivity. Apart from confirming the general intersubjectivity and communicative relationality as constitutive for being human, this also shows the reciprocal influences in the development of 'body' and 'mind' in the evolution of humanity and underscores the inseparability of body and mind or soul/self. Research on language acquisition shows that language is learned by being addressed in the first place, i.e. in a responsive manner. For the theologian, this structure of human development might appear as corresponding to the ontological

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<sup>13</sup> Put on top of the theological agenda by the instructive analysis of Luther's anthropology: Wilfried Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Christoph Schwöbel, 'God as Conversation: Reflections on a Theological Ontology of Communicative Relations', in *Theology and Conversation: Towards a Relational Theology* ed. by J. Haers and P. de Mey (Leuven: University Press, 2003), pp. 43–67.

<sup>15</sup> For a broad philosophical approach cf. Charles Taylor, *The Language Animal: The Full Shape of the Human Linguistic Capacity* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> See Michael Tomasello, *Becoming Human: A Theory of Ontogeny* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019). See also Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life*, p. 41. It is important to note that all these features do not exclusively apply to humans. Brain research confirms that certain animals possess many of these capacities, too.

structure of the relational constitution of being human as called into life, addressed by God and called to respond.<sup>17</sup>

The body's openness and its fundamental relatedness to the outside world as a constitutive feature of bodily being imply the fragility or vulnerability of bodies. Being dependent on the constant exchange with others in the world, even ingesting these, can turn out in harmful ways. Bodies are vulnerable and wounded. They are exposed to the dangers and risks<sup>18</sup> of illness and they are ill. They experience pain and bear scars. In a world of climate change and the global pandemic the public awareness of the fragility of human existence is reflected in the perceived omnipresence of risks and danger in public discourses and in the endeavour to contain risks and insure our lives against all contingencies. At the same time, the attempt at containing risks and systematically insuring oneself against risks supports a general notion of the possibility of comprehensively safeguarding one's life against all kinds of perils and dangers.<sup>19</sup> This notion gains persuasive power through the enhanced technical possibilities of predicting dangers and calculating risks, and the medical progress that seem to suggest that human life undisturbed by illness or decay is within reach of realistic technical-medical development.<sup>20</sup> This is intensified since we tend to interpret many dangers as risks: the passive encounter with threats which the body is subject to come to be understood as intentional commitments to risky, dangerous situations. Thus, the fundamental vulnerability is perceived as an intentional matter of choice: if I choose the right lifestyle the risks of contracting an illness can be minimized.<sup>21</sup> In contradiction to such an

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Gregor Etzelmüller, 'Verkörperung als Paradigma theologischer Anthropologie', in *Verkörperung als Paradigma theologischer Anthropologie*, ed. by G. Etzelmüller and A. Weissenrieder (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), pp. 219–44 (p. 231).

<sup>18</sup> For the differentiation of danger and risk, see Niklas Luhmann, *Risk. A Sociological Theory* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>19</sup> For an analysis of the sociological and political implications of risks in a globalized world cf. Ulrich Beck, *World Risk Society* (Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 1999).

<sup>20</sup> For this understanding of sickness and death as questions of technical mastery, see Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. (London: Penguin Vintage, 2016), especially pp. 24–34.

<sup>21</sup> Mikkel Gabriel Christoffersen, *Living with Risk and Danger* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019) has pointed out how problematic these perceptions of human vulnerability as manageable risks appear within the framework of a relational theology, that takes the



understanding of the — at least theoretically — infinite capacity for enhancement of the body, the Hebrew Bible emphasizes that the body's fragility and vulnerability includes the physiological, mental, and social sphere of a body's life. The body is ill, groggy, unwell, when life's fundamental relations — to oneself, to others, and to God — are harmed or broken.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, bodily existence is finite existence: it starts in the womb with the fusion of an egg and a sperm cell and ends in the tomb when its vital processes have come to an end and it decomposes to dust. Bodies are being born and die. They come to life and decay. There is no bodily experience that does not relate back to the givenness of the body as its presupposition. There is no bodily experience that does not rely on the continuous vivifying 'breath of life', maintaining the body as a living being, a creature. When this breath of life is withdrawn the body returns to the dust from which it was made. The Hebrew Bible describes *adonaj* as the one who can close the womb (cf. Genesis 30.1–2) or open it up (cf. Genesis 30.22), a remarkable bodily image for the fact that life itself — its initial gift and its sustenance — is not under human control. Already in their mother's womb the fruit of the womb is addressed by God, receiving their unique identity in a name: 'The Lord called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb he named me.' (Isaiah 40.1) Not only physical existence is in this way referred back to

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creatureliness of human beings seriously: relying on relations that are set not by human beings, but for human beings by God, implies inevitably the possibility of losing these relations in one way or the other. In response to these tendencies in the postmodern world, Christoffersen presents a 'Theology of Risk and Danger' in a Trinitarian framework, which rightly understands the management of risk and danger not as a human project but as embedded in God's agency in creation, incarnation and redemption, and perfection.

<sup>22</sup> For instance, this is displayed clearly in Psalm 102. The psalmist refers to their own status in describing an illness in its bodily symptoms (vv. 3–5), and in its social dimensions (vv. 6–8). Both dimensions are not separated in a sequence (i.e. social exclusion as the explanation for psychosomatic implications, or the other way around, somatic suffering as the cause of social exclusion). Rather both dimensions are envisaged closely connected and framed by the psalmist's cry for help, asking for *adonaj's* presence, God's visual and auditory attention (vv. 1–3) and by their lament (vv. 9–11) about God's anger which has thrown the psalmist away to a place where they wither away like grass. The entire set of fundamental relations of the human being — to God, to oneself and to other human beings or creation as a whole — is suffering and endangered in this illness.

something given, but personal identity itself — an important aspect of being a body to which we will turn in the next section.

Since the body lives by resources which it does not produce itself, exhaustion as the result of the body's activity and the need for rest and re-creation are part of bodily existence. Circadian rhythms are written into every cell of the body and characterize every process of bodily existence.<sup>23</sup> The body cannot give itself what it needs, when its exhaustion cries for rest and re-creation. It has to receive it. Activity and passivity, work and rest, finite creativity and passive re-creation characterize the body's course of life. Pointedly, Psalm 127 (verse 2) reminds us of the limits of human achievements, viewed on their own. ('It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil, for he gives sleep to his beloved.') The Sabbath, as the day of rest, is inscribed into the order of creation, resetting humans and the entire creation to the fulfilment of the seventh day — 'God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good' (Genesis 1.31) — an occasion for recreation through *adonaj*, on whose enlivening breath all bodies rely. The holiness of the Sabbath consists in being welcomed back into the order of creation, in which the creature owes the creator everything and acknowledges this relation in praising the creator and creation.<sup>24</sup> It is no coincidence that obeying the rhythm of work and rest, weekdays and Sabbath, is also the reminder of Israel's liberation from the slave house of Egypt (Deuteronomy 5.15) — characterizing God's people as free from the demands 'to be what you achieve'. Turning back to the most immediate, fundamental response of the creature to the givenness of life, namely the praise of its creator, at the end of the work, and in this way giving opportunity to be restored, re-created by God shapes human bodies' deepest rhythms.

From this perspective, the fundamental relation of the Creator to God's creature envelops even the mortality of human bodies, as the natural fact of the given finitude. Its acknowledgement therefore — be it as harmful and difficult as it may be — is wisdom (Psalm 90.12), a wisdom that the body's

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<sup>23</sup> For the characteristic 'circadian rhythms' that can be described as the inner clocks 'that permit organisms to optimize physiology and behaviour in advance of the varied demands of the day/night cycle' (p. 1) and are found in every living being, cf. Russell G. Foster & Leon Kreitzman, *Circadian Rhythms: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>24</sup> For an account of the human exhaustibility and the anthropological meaning of the Sabbath cf. Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropologie des Alten Testaments*, newly edited by B. Janowski (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2010), pp. 197–208.

ageing, withering, vulnerability and suffering always already encounters and bears witness to even if it is not acknowledged in an explicit way.<sup>25</sup>

We can note here already, the finitude of the body that is implied in the body's dependence on a source of life and life's maintenance by powers from outside exposes bodies to the seductive question of the serpent: 'Did God really say: "You must not eat from any tree in the garden"?' (Genesis 3.1) with its fake promise of eating the fruit and becoming like God the Creator who has the power to define good and bad from scratch (Genesis 3.4). The promise of such independence from God the Creator, denying the givenness of life by ingesting whatever pleases and is desirable no matter what, and in this way ignoring the given order of creation seems to be key to the body's fallibility (and fallenness). It does not only lead to destroying the foundational relation to the Creator, it also damages the many relations to the creature's created environment, denying them the respect owed to their createdness. Instead, the sinner perceives them (be they other living bodies or the inanimate world) only as material for the body's self-supply, and thus, ends up in the self-deception of self-sufficiency.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The connection of death and guilt though leads to a more complex picture of the tension between God and death and the meaning of the human death for the human being after the fall in the Hebrew Bible. Thus, the untimely death, i.e. not to be granted to die in good old age and full of years, satisfied by the richness of one's life, is an occasion for lament and petition. Cf. Wolff, *Anthropologie*, pp. 152–77, and Janowski, *Anthropologie*, pp. 80–83.

<sup>26</sup> I can only indicate this understanding of 'original sin' here as it develops in correspondence with its foundations in a relational ontology as the violation/damage of the created relational network that constitutes bodily life. Luther's account of the '*homo incurvatus in se*' in his Lecture on Romans describes this dislocation of the human being in relation to God, to the others and to oneself: 'Our nature, by the corruption of the first sin, is so deeply curved in on itself that it not only bends the best gifts of God towards itself and enjoys them (as is plain in the works-righteous and hypocrites), or rather even uses God himself in order to attain these gifts, but it also fails to realize that it so wickedly, curvedly, and viciously seeks all things, even God, for its own sake.' ('Ratio est, Quia Natura nostra vitio primi peccati tam profunda est in seipsam incurua, vt non solum optima dona Dei sibi inflectat ipsisque fruatur (vt patet in Iustitiariis et hipocritis), immo et ipso Deo vtatur ad illa consequenda, Verum etiam hoc ipsum ignoret, Quod tam inique, curue et prae omnia, etiam Deum, propter seipsam querat.' WA 56: 304, 25–29.) This disoriented relation ends up in the human being not

***Being some-body***

All these general, classifying descriptions of what it means to be a body so far seem to miss an important insight into the constitution of being a body, namely its particularity and — in this particularity — its identity: all general characteristics of being a body are only there as a particular, unique (and complex) ensemble of a personal identity. This uniqueness applies to our bodies in their appearance, in their specific response to being spoken to, their way of addressing others, in their way of perceiving the world around them and of acting upon it. It also applies to the specific ways of a body's perception of itself in and through those we encounter. Every experience of a body is the experience of one's own body, and only through one's own body one experiences the bodies of others. There is no body-free ('excarnate') experience of ourselves, the others, and the world around us. My body is my particular 'being for me' and it is my presence in the world. My body is uniquely mine.<sup>27</sup> As Paul Griffiths simply notes:

The history of a body of flesh is the history of a life. Its principle of organization, what makes it the fleshly body it is and not some other, is the principle of a life. Its boundaries, temporal and spatial, are the boundaries of a life.<sup>28</sup>

— a particular life, one is tempted to add.

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acknowledging God as God but wanting to be God themselves. 'Non potest homo naturaliter velle deum esse deum, Immo vellet se esse deum et deum non esse deum.' (Martin Luther, *Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam* (1517), WA 1:225,1.) For a consistently relational account of sin cf. Christoph Schwöbel, 'Changing Places: Understanding Sin in Relation to a Graceful God', in *Sin, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation: Christian and Muslim Perspectives*, ed. by L. Mosher and D. Marshall (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016), pp. 23–39.

<sup>27</sup> For understanding the body as my particular being for me and in the world see Joachim Ringleben, 'Body and Corporeality: II. Dogmatics', in *RPP* 2 (2007), 145–46 and Kirsten Huxel, 'Body and Corporeality: III. Ethics', in *RPP* 2 (2007), 146–47. The mind-body problem with its problematic dualism, going back to Descartes and the different attempts to interpret the *unity* of body and soul following the phenomenological approach refers to the existential twin dimensions of the experience of the self/I and the experience of the world/outside. For details see the entry 'Body and Soul', in *RPP* 2 (2007), 147–52.

<sup>28</sup> Griffiths, *Christian Flesh*, p. 2.

With the following 5 aspects I will try to unfold a little more (but still very briefly!) what the body's experiencing of itself as one's own entails.

1. The experience of a body as one's own implies the particular locatedness in time and space of a body as self-contiguous: the body has no separable parts — i.e. it cannot be at two different places at the same time. The body does not tolerate any interruptions in being this body. Thus, our body is the sturdy incorporation of the perspectivity of our life.
2. In its finitude the body entails individual determining features (such as skin or eye colour, size, or sex) some of which will in the course of the life of a body as somebody develop as more dominant than others, depending on the time and space, cultural setting, etc., in which one lives. Simone de Beauvoir's famous statement, 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman',<sup>29</sup> gives us a sense of the entanglement of bodily givenness, experience and its cultural meaning and overtones. There is no pure or naked body through which we could make experiences apart from the cultural framework in which we already always live. Rereading Simone de Beauvoir after almost 40 years also gives us some reassurance, that with regard to the question of embodiment, sex, and gender the Christian perspective has — at least partly — changed. With regard to the Christian interpretation of the body or human flesh, de Beauvoir writes:

The Christian is divided within himself, the separation of body and soul, of life and spirit is complete; original sin makes of the body the enemy of the soul; all ties of the flesh seem evil [...] And of course, since woman remains always the Other, it is not held that reciprocally male and female are both flesh: the flesh that is for the Christian the hostile Other is precisely woman [...] the fact of having a body has been considered, in woman, an ignominy.<sup>30</sup>

3. The body is an inseparable unity of flesh and spirit. As personal identity the particular body is more than 'just body'. This is mirrored when we talk of expressions of the body, body language, etc. It culminates and is made explicit in the self-relation of persons, their self-awareness and then their self-reflexivity — a body-self or some-

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<sup>29</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), p. 18.

<sup>30</sup> de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p. 168.

body. Being a body-self is the mode in which the dimension of the 'inner' person and the dimension of the 'outer' person are bound together, and which already indicates the problem of distinguishing between 'inner' and 'outer' person. It is, however, part of the experience of oneself as a body in the world that these two dimensions can be somehow out of sync, a clear indicator of both the dimensions. As an illustration we may turn to a contemporary literary example, Frances, main character (and first-person narrator) in Sally Rooney's 'Conversations with Friends'. After having received quite unexpectedly the diagnosis of endometriosis, a chronic disease that would change her life, Frances talked to her boyfriend on the phone without revealing the news. 'I hung up the phone. After that I put some cold water on my face and dried it, the same face I had always had, the one I would have until I died.'<sup>31</sup> Just a little further in the story, she reflects:

I looked out the window at the station. I had the sense that something in my life had ended, my image of myself as a whole or normal person maybe. I realised my life would be full of mundane physical suffering, and that there was nothing special about it. Suffering wouldn't make me special, and pretending not to suffer wouldn't make me special. Talking about it, or even writing about it, would not transform the suffering into something useful. Nothing would. [...].<sup>32</sup>

4. Self-reflection never presents us with an objective image of ourselves, the 'naked truth' about ourselves. It is itself embodied <sup>33</sup> — an

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<sup>31</sup> Sally Rooney, *Conversations with Friends* (London: Faber & Faber, 2017), p. 274.

<sup>32</sup> Rooney, *Conversations*, p. 275.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life*, pp. 42–46, including a set of examples related to areas of brain research and the philosophy of mind. The philosophy of mind, emerging from brain research, has changed the contours of the body-soul/mind problem significantly: 'If the capacities constitutive of the human being traditionally allocated to the immaterial soul are identified with neuronal processes, then the need underlying the attribution of an immaterial soul to the human being vanishes. In this case, one might conclude that what makes us singularly human is the complexity of our brain — or, better, the properties and capacities that have this

important insight the *embodied cognitive sciences* has made us take note of over the last ten to fifteen years. Self-reflection as a mirror of ourselves is always already coloured by our history, our bodies' capacities and particularities, our affections. In conversation with the work of the brain researcher Thomas Fuchs, the OT scholar Bernd Janowski has pointed to the stunning insight that the anthropological perspective of the Hebrew Bible does not present the brain as the mediator of our relations to the world, other persons and ourselves. The reflective and navigating 'organ' is not the brain. The Hebrew language does not even have a term for brain. The body's core *relational* 'organ' according to the Hebrew Bible is the heart, *leb*. The cognitive faculty of humans is located in the heart, which, of course, at the same time houses the emotions/affections and the will.<sup>34</sup> Instead of distinguishing between reason, will and feeling and three different organs for each of these faculties, the Hebrews are used to an understanding of the unity of these faculties of the self at the core of the person: the heart correlates the physiological, emotional/affective, cognitive and volitional dimensions of personhood, the embodied self. According to this view, the emotions are not the mirror of an inner life, secluded from the outside world, which 'burst out' or overflow from time to time. Rather, they are the way in which the body perceives the outer world as its own outer world, relates to it and responds to it.<sup>35</sup>

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complex brain as their anatomical basis. If human identity is grounded in consistency of memory, if the differentiation marks of the human person are the development of consciousness, individuality within community, self-consciousness, the capacity to make decisions on the basis of self-deliberation, planning and action on the basis of that decision, and taking responsibility for these decisions and actions, and if these have a neural substrate, then the concept of 'soul', as traditionally understood in theology as a person's 'authentic self', seems redundant.' (Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life*, p. 27).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Bernd Janowski, 'Das Herz – ein Beziehungsorgan: Zum Personverständnis des Alten Testaments', in *Dimensionen der Leiblichkeit: Theologische Zugänge* ed. by B. Janowski and Chr. Schwöbel (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2015), pp. 1–45 (p. 1).

<sup>35</sup> Oswald Bayer, 'The Soul as Answer', in *Lutheran Quarterly* 33 (2019), 399–412, describes the soul (not the heart) as this core of human being in relations of the I, the self and their location in relation to God: 'the totality of my self as it lives in the duration of remembering and expecting in the countenance of the eternal God' (p. 406). The crucial eccentricity of my

This is illustrated in the immediacy of bodily and mental states and relations in emotions like fear, anger and wrath, joy and laughter. The response of the heart is by no means just immediate. Rather, it is *oriented* by its affections, by that which the heart perceives as what it longs for, or what it is attracted by and driven to. However, in its reasoning, the heart ‘then’ double checks the correlation between body and world (the ‘sincere’ heart), forms a ‘thought in the heart’, which culminates in an intention and a plan, orienting the human agency towards an aim. The heart is the continuous relation of feeling-reasoning-intending-and-acting as a communication of the body with its world. The proximity of this view of the function of the relational core in the body’s heart to insights of the Reformers into the attachment of the will to the affections, the bondage of the will, is obvious here.<sup>36</sup>

5. In general, the heart’s response to its ‘being’ in every particular situation can affirm its own constitution in the relational set in which human bodies find themselves — to the creator, to their fellow creatures, creation and to themselves — or try and contradict it — self-deception in not honouring the creator, not respecting creatures and creation. With the heart at its core, the body-unit enables human freedom, the capacity to act (with the body, or with parts of the body, but — apart from very few exceptions — it is always the entire body, the person herself who is accountable and responsible for the act). This agency occurs in response to the perceived givenness of this particular body as a living being, a person in the world. Human bodies are the location and the mode according to which human beings experience the possibilities and limits of ‘created (i.e. non-absolute) freedom’.

### ***The body of Christ***

As we are bodies, hardwired to connect with other people in all dimensions of the wide range of embodied communication, we are creatures addressed

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life, its givenness, in order to be redeemed and perfected, that is emphasized in Bayer’s account of the soul as the difference between I, self and the soul finds its reflection in our account here as the heart’s need of orientation.

<sup>36</sup> The role of the faculty of affections in human agency and its implications for the freedom resp. bondage of the will plays an important part in the theological account of Philipp Melanchthon. For his approach see Philipp Melanchthon, *Loci communes* (1521), in *Melanchthon and Bucer*, ed. by W. Pauck. (London: S.C.M. Press, 1969), especially ‘The Power of Man, Especially Free Will’, pp. 22–30.



by the creator God in order to communicate, to respond in relation to the one who called us into life, to our fellow creatures and to creation as a whole. God's will is to maintain this original creative and sustaining conversation with us — even as sinners whose main concern (that what we attach our heart to) is not to tune into this conversation, receiving orientation in God's communication with us and then acting upon it. In contrast, we seek to sing our own song, create our own special creation of life, try to sustain it in a boundless desire to make it our own, ingest it and gain self-sufficiency — developing our bodies into something like a safe bubble. God's will to communicate with God's creatures, to maintain the relation of free and self-giving love that is the very ground and the goal of creation, even when we try to withdraw our bodies from this relation, is actualized unsurpassably in the incarnation of the *Logos*.

'Anyone who has seen me, has seen the Father' (John 14.9) is the hermeneutical baseline of the Gospel of John, rephrasing the certainty of faith, that Jesus Christ's life, Christ's *body* as it were, in its tiniest beginnings in the womb of Mary, in all his bodily interaction in the course of his life, his words, his hands, his wandering, his eating and drinking, even his exhaustion and fear, up to his miserable pain and death on the cross is the true image of God.

God as body? Aren't we used to the opposite notion, that we are bodies (with the hope of — finally — escaping the prison of the body in God's new creation), but that God certainly is not body, but transcendent? The Hebrew Bible does not shy away from body language when it comes to events of encounter with God. God is walking in the garden, God speaks and has a face (which seems to be overwhelming for the creature under the constraints of time and space and therefore dangerous to see) etc.<sup>37</sup> Coming from God's incarnation in Christ, we should not brush this picture aside too readily, since it does not seem to fit with God's holiness, or our understanding of transcendence and immanent bodies. God's presence comes along with glimpses of embodiment, addressing the human who encounters God in such a way that God can be addressed and makes Godself available for the human being. This is never a fully bodily presence (it rather works *pars pro toto*) but it makes sure, that God is — for a time in a certain place — present, perceivable, and available. This availability is not under human control and — and that is an important difference to the incarnation of Christ — it never

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Philipp Stoellger, 'Vom dreifaltigen Sinn der Verkörperung', in *Verkörperung als Paradigma theologischer Anthropologie*, ed. by G. Etzelmüller and A. Weissenrieder (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), pp. 289–316, especially his reflections on God's embodiment in section 6, pp. 303–08.

gives God into human hands. Although present, God's transcendence is maintained.

If we take the Christological dogma seriously that the Father and the Son are of the same being, we have to refrain from an understanding of the incarnation, describing an incorporeal God taking on flesh (as a kind of disguise) for a certain period of time, a messenger, delivering some brilliant and challenging ideas, a few healing touches and the spirit of a new community to enhance humanity's understanding of God. The incarnation makes the decisive point: God's real presence in this world is bodily presence. And this presence is not opposed to God's transcendence, but rather the way in which transcendence and immanence are related, namely in the very being of God as God's will to be in communion, with us. The incarnation calls the idea of being *saved from* our bodies — to become solely spiritual beings — into question. Instead, it inscribes an unsurpassably value of bodily encounter into the process of salvation. God wants to meet us in the midst of the particularities of our bodily experience. Human bodies do not only provide the location and the occasion for revelation and salvation, they are indispensable for the transformation itself and inextricably connected to it.

This is most clearly demonstrated in the Gospels' witness to Jesus of Nazareth's ministry: fleshly born to Mary (and Joseph), in the rather uncomfortable — but very physical — surroundings of a stable, as a male Jew in first century Israel (in whom God's history of the covenant with the Jewish people becomes disclosed as an intrinsic — not just an accidental — feature of God's very story). The story of his public appearance begins in encountering the movement around John the Baptist, in the cleansing waters of the river Jordan. People are touched — even those who were untouchable — and healed from bodily diseases, people are addressed and invited to move literally away from their former existence, wine is enjoyed, and fish given to the hungry, banquets are held and hospitality is celebrated. Food and drink establish a new human community<sup>38</sup>, including the bodily comforts of rest and foot massage. Encountering Jesus was far from an experience that solely engaged the mind with a new understanding of God and the world. Encountering the love of God in the person of Christ means

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<sup>38</sup> For an interesting account of eating in connection with thanksgiving (for the gift of food and the labour involved in its preparation) and lament (as our eating is inevitably involved in the economy of death and slaughter), fasting and eucharistic eating as well as abuse of food and drink which also lays the ground for a Christian ethical account of food and consumption (Griffiths calls it the 'hagiography' of eating), see Griffiths, *Christian Flesh*, pp. 103–21.

encountering the caress and joy of being touched by God in the broadest sense of ‘body touch’, engaging all the senses. Where God’s kingdom has begun, broken bodies walk tall. By Christ’s body the communication between God and humans, God’s goal for creation, becomes real. And even where Jesus’s message establishes a new culture, the better justice (rather than healing a natural/physiological deficiency), this often happens corporeally, rather than only mentally. Sermons are followed by meals even where there is not much to eat. As our bodies are both naturally given and socially/culturally constructed, so is the body in the centre of healing that Jesus provides for cultural wounds.<sup>39</sup> John’s narration of Jesus’s encounter with the woman caught in adultery (John 8.1–11) intertwines both dimensions skilfully: the woman stands in the middle of the accusing crowd, her body exposed to the threat of her accusers to stone her. The absence of the accusing bodies and of their threats at the end of the scene depicts the liberation that salvation brings — the woman in her own space, being looked at only by Jesus who does not condemn but gives her an identity freed from her sin. The bodily encounter with Jesus lets the woman experience that the sinner does not remain imprisoned in her sin in Jesus’s presence.

The seriousness of the incarnation, Christ’s bodily existence, is disclosed in the general direction of Jesus’s life towards death. His humanity entirely embraces the finitude of human bodies to their very end. Moreover, in the details of the painful death on the cross it also embraces the vulnerability of human bodies and its actual woundedness. God’s will to communicate with God’s creatures, extends to sharing the utmost pain and suffering. The cruelty of the scene leaves no doubt: there is no cry of suffering, no choked whimpering, no muffled sob of fear of human bodies that is not known by experience, first-hand, by the incarnate God. The full humanity of God incarnate is disclosed in the suffering of his body and in his final breath. On the cross, Christ offers himself, his own body, to God’s agency.

The death of the body is followed by the resurrected body of Christ, bearing all the signs necessary to identify the body as the body of the crucified one. This seems to be one crucial point of the bodily resurrection: the body is the mode of personal identity throughout all discontinuity. Therefore, it is not a heavenly restored body that Mary and the disciples, men and women, encounter after the resurrection, but the body that still shows the wounds to be inspected on invitation (John 20.24–29) — while at the same time its true identity can be hidden for those who encounter him at least until they encounter him — truly bodily, when he takes the bread as he used to do it, gives thanks, blesses it and breaks it (Luke 24.13–34). A second aspect might be the here-and-nowness which is part of God’s

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<sup>39</sup> See also Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life*, pp. 48–50.

presence amongst us (at least, in this world). As personal presence it is not a free-floating unrecognizable virtuality. Rather, it remains true, that God has bound his presence — freely — to the body of Christ. The gospels emphasize clearly: the resurrected crucified one is not a ghost nor a story made up by his desperate followers (which should make us cautious to interpret the resurrection as a resurrection into the kerygma, as Willi Marxsen did in accordance with Bultmannian thought, rather than as a resurrection of the body — raised by God the Father — that still shows the signs of the torture on the cross, even though, as we will see, even ‘the kerygma’ or the Gospel is in any case not ‘without a body’ or disembodied.)

### ***Gathered around Word and Sacrament***

Has the theological value of embodiment become obsolete in the community of disciples after Christ’s ascension through which he gave way to the coming of the Advocate, the Holy Spirit? (‘But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.’, (John 16.7)). Are we now entering the ‘body free’, disembodied, stage of spiritual renewal, transcending the limits and weaknesses of the body? We have already seen that we would undermine that Jesus of Nazareth’s mission appreciated the body, enabling bodily healing processes, be it physical healing, be it the social healing of the community of humans by the means of the bodily, physiological processes of eating and drinking. In its very beginnings in the mission of Jesus Christ the new creation is established in interaction of bodies that implies a transformation of the human society by the Holy Spirit.

Thus, it seems almost trivial to answer the question if with Pentecost we are entering the disembodied stage of spiritual renewal in the negative and to point to the Church as the ‘body of Christ’. However, in the current climate and with regard to a number of decisions of church leaders and congregations one is almost tempted to emphasize, there is no body of Christ without bodies.<sup>40</sup> This relation of Christ’s body as his ‘availability’ for the

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<sup>40</sup> Particularly the Pauline corpus with its juxtapositions of inner and outer man (e.g. in 2 Corinthians 4), life according to the Spirit and life according to the flesh (or ‘mortal bodies’) (e.g. in Romans 8) seems to underscore the notion of a dichotomous or trichotomous view of human persons (especially in the perception of those not engaged in the specialized scholarly discussion of biblical studies) and the idea that the renewal and transformation of the Christian leads from a mortal, fleshly body known as the outer human to an everlasting, spiritual being in the presence of God, already actualized as the inner human here and now in the process of

believers in the Spirit is what we try to explore in this section. The body of Christ is to be found where Christ's — God's — Spirit is.

But isn't it the Spirit's big advantage to be free, not bound to a body and therefore able to blow wherever it pleases (John 3.8)? Without a body, our image of the Holy Spirit would come dangerously close to that of a drifting ghost, being here, there and everywhere, without ever to be grasped, arbitrary in its appearances, unidentifiable — certainly not much of a help to gain certainty and orientation, to evoke trust and reflect God's faithfulness. Since it is Christ's spirit, the body to which the Spirit has bound himself is the Word, i.e. the *Logos*, the Gospel, as its witness to the destiny of Jesus of Nazareth evokes faith in those who listen. The body of the Spirit is the *viva vox Evangelii* — and indeed, we cannot talk of the living voice of Scripture as the body of Christ without referring to the bodies of the believers, the mouth and voice of the preacher, who gives sound to the word of Christ as the truth of God the Father,<sup>41</sup> the members of the congregation, whose ears the Spirit has popped, whose heart the Spirit has transformed into a listening heart, responding in trust and faith. The living voice of the Gospel can, of course, take different shapes<sup>42</sup> — in the sacraments it connects even more explicitly

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transformation. We will turn to the question of the meaning of the embodiment of Christian believers in the last section of this paper.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. WA 28: 166,31. See Alexander Kupsch, *Martin Luthers Gebrauch der Heiligen Schrift: Untersuchungen zur Schriftautorität in Gottesdienst und gesellschaftlicher Öffentlichkeit* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), p. 118.

<sup>42</sup> Even though the living voice of the Gospel can take different shapes it still remains crucial — at least for Luther — that it is vividly proclaimed, shouted into the world, in a way that keeps its character as witness in the form of personal communication alive: as the truth of the word has become the truth for the preachers who lend their own voice to the proclamation of the Gospel, so it can become the truth for the hearts of the listeners when and where the Spirit vivifies the witness and transforms it to a communication that evokes faith. Luther therefore can insist that preaching is actual proclamation, oral communication (and actually not written on paper, in the sense of dead letters, an essay about God rather than a witness of being addressed by God and being called to respond to that address). This criterion of the proclamation of the Gospel as personal communication, relying on a relation of trust enabled by the Spirit, so that Christ's word actualizes the Father's love for listeners here and now, remains crucial even if the means and tools of communication in the twenty-first century differ significantly from those of Luther's Wittenberg. Today's question therefore remains: which modes of communication of the word, which means for this

to the body. When, in the Eucharist, the word is accompanied by the bodily act of *receiving* bread and wine as Christ's body and blood, so that the communicants taste and see that the Lord is good (Ps. 34.8) and are incorporated into God's communion with God's people, it is quite obvious that there is no way around the physical gathering of believers without endangering the vital connection of word and element in embodied communication. Likewise, when in the water of baptism, the child (or adult) joins in the death of Christ, is cleansed and raised to a new existence in Christ, these sacramental acts and words, received by a living human being, become the body of the Spirit, who, in its self-giving, grants faith and brings the baptized body to life.

What the sacraments present in a concentrated, condensed mode (or better, what God creates as the body of Christ, when bodies receive God's self-giving in the sacraments) is true for worship as a whole (and expands beyond particular occasions of worship when and where the Spirit illuminates the word of Scripture to create and maintain faith): worship is the designated place where human bodies are exposed to God's word, where they are addressed by God the Father through the Son, God's Word, and granted a listening heart by the Spirit, where they are called by their name and invited to respond in all dimensions of being a body. They respond with their lips in prayer, be it urgent, hasty petition, tearful lament, heart-warming thanks, or uplifting, spine-straightening praise, in the tunes of their hymns, in the harmonies (or cacophonies) of their joint voices. They enact their response in their gestures, sitting or kneeling, standing or walking, — perhaps even dancing? — in receiving and ingesting bread and wine, Godself, to strengthening the entire person, newly received earthly life as a glimpse of the life to come, when God grants life in its fullness, and, of course, when they are sent out with the blessing, commissioned to live the life of the witness of God's grace in the midst of their world. Worship is God's communication with bodies through the body of Christ in word and sacrament. As such worship embodies God's story with our bodies, from created and beautiful bodies to tempted and disoriented, fallen and miserable, suffering, tearful, lonesome bodies, bodies, curved in on themselves to uplifted, straightened, light-footed and communicative bodies, bodies transparently radiant of their perfection in communion with God.

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communication are appropriate to the hope that it speaks to the listeners in a way that affects and attracts the listeners' hearts as God's self-giving to us? Cf. Luther's sermon on 7 September 1522, WA 10 (vol III): 305,1.

### ***Temples of the Holy Spirit***

Inasmuch as we talk of our bodies as the limbs of the body of Christ, the Church, we can speak of the believers' (individual) bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit, bodies transformed by God's grace — as Paul does in 1 Cor. 6.19–20: 'Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.' We can follow here once more the logic of the listening heart. It does not produce its own orientation in apparently absolute freedom, ignoring its creatureliness and its foundational relationships. The transformation that has taken place in the body of the believer (and has to take place again and again, if we agree with Luther's notion of human beings as 'simul iustus et peccator, simul iusta et peccatrix', sinners and justified persons at the same time<sup>43</sup>), is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believers' hearts as the foundational orientation of the human creature. It is the Spirit who orients human creatures towards their consummation in communion with God and thus locates their body in their true place in time and space, as God's beloved creatures, created to be redeemed and perfected, created together with all the other creatures, human and animal bodies and plants, with creation as a whole.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Human beings are sinful viewed on their own, and justified by God's grace in the work of the Holy Spirit that creates faith as the relationship that transfers the sinner to the place of the justified — this movement has to be understood as the foundation of the life of faith in each and every moment of faith. Faith is at no time progressing away from this initial spark. In this perspective, the notion of growing faith, the formation of faith as a process of development, or — conversely — of an ongoing, gradually progressing purification of the human being in the process of sanctification becomes problematic. Christians do not grow *towards* faith but grow *in* faith. *They* grow *in* faith, not: their *faith* grows (continuously).

<sup>44</sup> Here we could, of course, ask again: if the work of the Holy Spirit is the reorientation of the human heart, the inner core of human beings, do we fall back into the logic of the inner work of the Holy Spirit, liberating the inside, while leaving the body as the outside of personhood behind? Do we not find this notion in Paul's theology, for instance in the image of the clay jar, containing a treasure — an image that seems to sit well in the framework of Platonic thought? Annette Weissenrieder's instructive contribution to the question of the embodiment of the inner human beings according to 2 Corinthians 4 has shown persuasively the constitutively reciprocal relation between the inner human being and the outer human being. This relation cannot be allocated in a timely order as if the outer human being would have

Located in this set of relations, the heart's desires gain new ground and fresh aims. We have described the disoriented hearts' desires as desiring what maintains one's self, secures one's survival, feeds one's self-maintaining powers, gains self-salvation and consumes what it desires, in short, as living at the expense of others. A heart grounded in God's passionate love for God's creatures which responds to this love in faith and trust is not less desiring. It is not the desires themselves that embody sin. It is their aim to gain self-stability. The reoriented heart of the body that is the temple of the Holy Spirit desires the body of the other in all dimensions and in whatever modes of loving attention, wishing that the other (as the other!) will be part of my future. The reoriented heart honours and praises God in enjoying God's gift of human relatedness and relation, without consuming it and making use of it only as a means of self-preservation. The desires of the body that is the temple of the Holy Spirit do not join into relationships that expect their fulfilment through exploitation. Instead, they expect their flourishing from God, and respect the personal — bodily — integrity and freedom of the other as God's creature, rather than exercising power and control. Desires that are directed towards the self-relation of the body that is the temple of the Holy Spirit, will bear witness to the gift of embodiment, respecting its finitude, its gifts and joys as well as its pain and suffering, and its direction towards death, as much as its destiny to be perfected not by its self-sustaining or self-enhancing powers, but by God's fulfilment of human bodies in God's communion with newly created bodies in God's realm where there will be no more pain or suffering, tears or death. In their body's life, in its finitude and its particularity, they encounter Christ's cross, as they offer their body to God's agency trusting in God's new creation and hoping for

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to die so that the inner human being could live. Rather, this relation is to be understood in the dialectical way of the life of the — in itself dying — body: precisely *in* the body, the clay jar made by the creator God in order to give God's own life to it, *in* its finitude and createdness, that becomes the place of God's transforming, life-donating action, human beings encounter God — in analogy to Paul's theology of the cross, disclosing God's victory. The inner human being would then not be liberated from the body but actualized in the body's fragility its constitutive relatedness towards the triune God. This dependence of the human being, visible as the body's life, does not first and foremost disclose a human weakness, but a treasure: the event of salvation in Christ. Cf. Annette Weissenrieder, 'Verkörperung des inneren Menschen? 2 Korinther 4,16 im Lichte antiker medizinischer und philosophischer Traditionen', in *Verkörperung als Paradigma theologischer Anthropologie*, ed. by G. Etzelmüller and A. Weissenrieder (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), pp. 183–218 (esp. pp 202–05).



fulfilment. A body, temple of the Holy Spirit, that desires what it desires from God, the creator, redeemer and consummator of creation, as a gift of grace, responding in its desires to God's desire to be in communion with creation, loves God in, with and under the joys of its bodily love. This keynote of newly oriented creaturely bodies before their God can already be recognized in its multiple vibrations and echoes, when Martin Luther (in the explanation of the first commandment in his Large Catechism) explains that having a god refers to 'that for which we are to look for all good and in which we are to find refuge in all need'<sup>45</sup> and adds (in the explanation of the first article of the Creed in the Small Catechism) faith in God the creator means:

I believe that God has created me together with all that exists. God has given me and still preserves my body and soul: eyes, ears, and all limbs and senses; reason and all mental faculties. In addition, God daily and abundantly provides shoes and clothing, food and drink, house and farm, spouse and children, fields, livestock, and all property — along with all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life. God protects me against all danger and shields and preserves me from all evil. And all this is done out of pure, fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all! For all of this I owe it to God to thank and praise, serve and obey him (...)<sup>46</sup>

Regarding — apart from this one true God — no one and nothing else as God, being enabled to do so by the Holy Spirit's illumination, sets our bodies free to be some-body in the body of Christ: to desire and to be desired and to enjoy created life in all its bodily dimensions and particularities in communion with fellow bodies before God.

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<sup>45</sup> 'A 'god' is the term for that to which we are to look for all good and in which we are to find refuge in all need. Therefore, to have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe in that one with your whole heart. As I have often said, it is the trust and faith of the heart alone that make both God and an idol. [...] For these two being together, faith and God. Anything on which your heart relies and depends, I say, that is really your God.' *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. by R. Kolb and T. J. Wengert, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), p. 386.

<sup>46</sup> *The Book of Concord*, p. 432.



## Reviews

JASON KAWALL, ed., *The Virtues of Sustainability* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021). 270 pp. ISBN 9870190919826. Paperback. £19.99.

In light of growing appreciation of the severity of the climate crisis and the urgency of substantial personal and systemic changes required to address it, this collection of essays dealing with the virtues of sustainability is a timely offering. Edited by environmental ethicist Jason Kawall, Professorial Chair in Culture and the Environment at Colgate University, it draws together essays by scholars in disciplines ranging from philosophy and political science to religious studies and psychology in a wide-ranging exploration of the virtues of sustainability. The book provides a wealth of insight into how serious thinkers are considering questions such as ‘What does the call for a sustainable future mean for us — for our ways of life and our understanding of human flourishing?’

The volume’s introduction provides a concise overview of sustainability: what it is and key debates surrounding it, before gathering essays in three main parts. Part I deals with the cultivation of virtues of sustainability. In the first essay, psychologist Susan Clayton affirms that the majority of people do treat behaviours associated with sustainability as virtuous. This matters, she says, because issues regarded as morally weighty are more likely to give rise to a sense of personal responsibility to address them. Exploring the notion of ‘environmental identity’ she considers the formative influence of early experiences of natural environments. People who develop such an identity are more likely to perceive themselves as interdependent with nature, and this may profoundly influence their tendency to act in ways that protect the environment. A further offering by psychologists Victor Corral-Verdugo, Martha Frías-Armenta and Anais Ortiz-Valdez explores how environmental factors may encourage the nurture of virtues of sustainability. Matt Ferkany considers the role of virtue education for sustainable development, a model promoted by UNESCO’s Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and bearing resemblance to Aristotelian character formation. In the final chapter in the section, Cheryl Hall argues for the importance of emotions (alongside cognition and action) in shaping virtues. Together, these chapters offer insights that have potential to catalyse reflection and action on matters such as the significance of the integration of environmental concerns into Christian formation, spirituality, nurture.

Part II offers two studies illustrating how virtues of sustainability are embodied in different communities and traditions. Pankaj Jain explores the

integration of philosophy, religion and environmentalism in the Jain tradition. He highlights virtues given significance in the tradition: nonviolence, nonacquisitiveness and pluralism; the role of low impact vegetarian dietary practices; and the importance of exemplary individuals. In the other chapter, Christine J. Cuomo considers northern, indigenous Iñupiat communities, whose core virtue is respect for nature, and whose challenge is to live out their values in the face of vast programmes of fossil-fuel extraction. She draws attention to the lack of attention paid, in the quest to secure more sustainable future ways of living, to the wisdom already present in indigenous traditions. Developing environmental ethics for the future is, she says, less a matter of innovation and more one of reflection, creativity and discourse involving the rediscovery of values and virtues already present in varied cultures and traditions.

The book concludes with Part III, containing four chapters offering in-depth discussion of particular virtues of sustainability. An essay by Laura M. Hartman examines cooperativeness, a relational, public virtue which is a quality distinct from the act of cooperation. She contends that that cooperativeness is crucial for the achievement and continuation of sustainability. Rooted in the Christian ethical tradition, her account understands cooperativeness as closely related to virtues such as forgiveness and patience. She suggests ecological restoration and cooperatives as examples of cooperativeness at work in the field of sustainability which are both prophetic and pragmatic. She also notes the challenges to achieving genuine cooperativeness, citing examples where attempts have gone wrong. In his chapter, Jason Kawall offers a case for patience as a key virtue of sustainability, rather than one for which there is no longer time. We will need to have patience, he says, to persevere with changes whose completion or impacts will not occur in our lifetime, and to continue to pursue long term goals even without evidence of short-term success. Steve Vanderhheiden looks at the virtue of conscientiousness, contending that it can offer a means of addressing wealthy, consumerist lifestyles by encouraging people to nurture awareness of our embeddedness in and impact on natural systems, the impact of our lifestyles in disrupting their balance, and the development of corresponding normative attitudes and actions shaped by this awareness. In the book's concluding chapter Sarah Wright examines the virtues of creativity and open-mindedness and finds them to be crucial for the development and maintenance of sustainability initiatives large and small since it is hard to imagine the widespread adoption of new ideas, learning and the development and embracing of new technologies without both open-mindedness and creativity.

The essays in this book are not for the most part works of Christian theology. However, if Hartman and Wright are correct in their theses that cooperativeness, open-mindedness and creativity are requisite to the pursuit of sustainability, this is exactly the sort of volume that one should read in order to engage with alternative perspectives. Its serious engagement of the challenge of achieving sustainability and its broad spectrum of perspectives have the potential to offer both insight and challenge regarding the approaches of other traditions and their relationship to Christianity. Perhaps it may even prompt Christians to share their own insights, stimulating deeper engagement with these critical questions in the communities in which Christians are rooted.

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RACHEL MASH, *Renewing the Life of the Earth: Christian Discipleship and Environmental Action*, Grove Books Discipleship series, No. 2 (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2021).

'Not the last word.... but often the first' is how Grove Books describe themselves. For those who do not know about them, Grove Books offer excellent twenty-eight-page introductions to range of topics. Their new Discipleship series, for which this is the second volume, continues with this established pattern.

A brief but informative introduction sets out the array of issues that need to be considered in environmental action: the loss of biodiversity, global heating, water shortage and food insecurity, plastic pollution, and the concept of the Anthropocene epoch. It then raises the question of whether these are matters of concern for green activists, or whether they are issues at the heart of our Christian discipleship. Four short but substantive chapters demonstrate just why and how the latter might be the case.

The first two chapters look at the Old and New Testaments in turn. Familiar texts around the diversity of creation and human stewardship thereof (Genesis 2. 15) are discussed, along with the impact of the Fall and the cursing of the ground (Genesis 3. 17–18). This discussion is not new, but here it is expressed concisely, with clarity and insight. The chapter on the New Testament brings us more clearly into the realm of Christian discipleship, with discussion on how the Kingdom of God and the Cross — in

effect, our soteriology — are central for placing environmental action at the heart of Christian discipleship.

The final two chapters move on to the practical question, ‘how then should we live?’. Packed with suggestions for our spiritual practices, lifestyle and consumption, the waste of food, energy and water, and our clothing purchases, we do these things not to ‘save the planet’ but because we are disciples of Jesus. Finally, there is an acknowledgement that these issues can all too easily feel too overwhelming, too complex to allow for an easy solution, and we are released from the responsibility of trying to solve all of them. Instead, we should ‘identify our heartbreak’ (what is it that really fires us up?) and ‘find our tribe’ (join with others to work on it). It is a long and complex road to embark upon, but we can start on it by ‘leaving our [plastic] nets’ (Matthew 4. 20) and following Jesus towards the longed-for renewed heaven and renewed earth.

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MERCI SROKOSZ and REBECCA S. WATSON, *Blue Planet Blue God: The Bible and The Sea* (London: SCM Press, 2017). 208 pp. ISBN 780334056331. £19.99 (paperback).

The aim of the book is to examine what the Bible says about the sea. This book is the accessible product of a the ‘Sea in Scripture’ project at the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, a collaboration between an oceanographer and a biblical scholar. It is intended as a lens through which to challenge our attitudes and behaviour in relation to God’s world. It is a bold attempt to connect scriptures about the sea not only to theological questions, such as the meaning and purpose of life, but also to fundamental issues of our times, such as economics, migration, and climate change. Each chapter begins with a brief look at a relevant biblical passage, then draws on the current scientific understanding of the ocean, ending with a Key Message, a Challenge, some questions for Reflection and Discussion, followed by some thought on Action that could result (p. 7).

The book is packed with excellent theological resources as well as poetry and literature, while drawing on good (easy to understand) science. It draws the reader in with its imagery and descriptions of the sea. It is a rich book that asks us to examine our own life in light of our experience of the sea alongside those of characters from the Bible. The reflection and

discussion section in each chapter offers at the very least a good starting point for group discussion.

It is the challenge and action sections that really connect with the climate crisis. Of course, the sea is obviously important when thinking about the changing nature of our world, but the authors challenge us to see how the sea invites us to relate to the created world anew, 'to experience the wonder of creation and access a more profound level of contemplation' (p. 30). They point out how we abuse the sea — both intentionally and unintentionally with waste disposal and pollution.

There is the reminder that God does not have a relationship only with human beings but is the God of all creation, the reminder that we have a responsibility towards the sea and the creatures that dwell in it, the reminder of our vulnerability as creatures and our beneficent responsibility as created in the image of God to care for and protect the whole of creation. The seas, and the creatures of the deep, are a continual reminder of how much we do not know and do not understand about our world inviting us to a place of humility and awe before the greatness of God.

Our dependence upon the sea (literally necessary for water) and the constant recognition of the fragility of created order (to which floods and droughts testify) are part of our understanding of God and our relationship with the Creator. This in turn points to our interconnectedness with the created order and our dependence upon creation as a gift from God.

Blue Planet provides a unique and interesting discussion about the climate crisis. It invites the reader to plumb the depths of the ocean, to rethink their relationship to God and to the world and to challenge themselves to 'live as if we are, as Wesley put it, at 'every moment on the brink of eternity' (p. 234). This is a timely and necessary book that can be worked through individually or as a group.

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ELIZABETH A. JOHNSON, *Creation and the Cross: The Mercy of God for a Planet in Peril* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2019). ISBN 978-1626982666. 256 pp. £35.71 (hardcover); £13.55 (Kindle).

'How can the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ be understood as good news for the whole created world, including human beings, to the praise of God and to practical and critical effect?' (p. 29).

The book begins by setting out the question it will attempt to answer — ‘how in our day can we understand cosmic redemption?’ (p. xi). It boldly begins by addressing what we do with sin (atonement, redemption and the Cross) when we think about this question, seen by many as a stumbling block that does not allow for the redemption of all of creation. Johnson invites the reader to explore a ‘theology of accompaniment’, one that will help us to understand that redemption can ‘support planetary solidarity and work for ecojustice’ (p. xiii), in short, an ecological understanding of salvation.

Johnson employ’s Anselm’s dialogic way of teaching, with Clara as interlocutor. This makes the book interesting and engaging — Clara presents common theological suppositions, to which many readers will surely relate, encouraging the reader to examine their own thoughts on the subject, providing some insight into the doctrine while allowing Elizabeth the chance to respond with a fresh perspective. Employing this ancient didactic practice is refreshing and offers a chance for the reader to engage with the text — Clara’s questions are insightful, based as they are about Johnson’s own interactions in the classroom.

The first book (as the chapters are called) wrestles with Anselm’s theory of atonement (satisfaction theory) and its development over the past millennium. It also lays out the foundation for the rest of the book — the motivation of pressing issues of justice, peace, equality, religious pluralism, and ecological wellbeing as challenging this deeply rooted theory towards a more holistic understanding of salvation (p. 14). As one would expect from one of the foremost feminist theologians, Johnson dips into diverse and interesting sources, such as Delores Williams’s critique of satisfaction theory from the perspective of black women who are coerced into ‘replacing’ white women as oppressive, viewing it as an encouragement to accept exploitation rather than radical justice that sets them free. Building on such interpretations, Johnson reframes the question of Jesus’s death as being necessary to reconcile us with God in an ecological perspective — the recognition of the wonder and fragility of the world places our human need for salvation within the longing of the whole of creation.

Book two moves on to the comfort of God, recalling the God who rescues God’s people from exile in the wilderness and leads them home, particularly referencing Isaiah. Remembering God as the one who comforts directs one to the motivation of mercy and compassion that leads to redemption; merciful action that refers to rescue from physical, political, and spiritual bondage that ultimately leads to restoration.

The importance of knowing the gospels is the starting point for book three, emphasising their reading as faith documents, not simply eyewitness reports. The gospels offer both spiritual encouragement and challenge. Here is a reminder that the ‘kingdom of God’ should be proclaimed as a joyful



announcement that ‘salvation is on its way from God’ (as Schillebeeckx suggests), a setting of the world to rights. Telling the story of Jesus’s life, death and resurrection leads Johnson to the conclusion of ‘the idea of salvation as the divine gift of “I am with you”’ (p. 106). It is the location of God not only with power and glory, but in the midst of suffering, in solidarity with those who are oppressed that call all those who believe to ‘create situations where life can flourish’ (p. 108).

Book four, ‘interpretations blossom’, discusses salvation as a metaphor and revisits many such metaphors and mixed metaphors that attempt to explain early Christian understandings of Jesus’s death and resurrection. Biblical witness and early church history are condensed into forty or so pages, giving glimpses of how our interpretation of the texts can easily lead to misunderstandings, challenging even the very way in which we speak of ‘salvation’, with roots in the medical art of healing, later being understood in a more holistic sense (p. 120):

The whole New Testament bears witness to the experience of salvation coming from God in Jesus through the power of the Spirit. ... In tune with his life, death, and resurrection and the ongoing experience of the Spirit poured out in their community, the disciples knew themselves to be healed and at peace with God; this flowed into a profound mission to love their neighbor in solidarity with Jesus’ care for all (p. 121).

Legal and financial metaphors, sacrificial images, family metaphors and others are given close attention, pointing out how we often use language without understanding what we are saying.

Moving now from historical interpretation, book five invites the reader to explore ‘God of all flesh’. Drawing on sources such as Karl Rahner and Pope Francis’s *Laudato Si’*, this is a reminder that Jesus was not an enemy of the flesh — *all* flesh, that is, the whole of creation. The discussion of ‘salvation as God’s accompanying the whole troubled, sinful, agonized, and dying world into the depths of agony and death and beyond. Mercy upon mercy’ (p. 194) leads neatly into book six, and our conversion, turning our hearts and minds toward creation in a blessed way — conversion that has not only intellectual but emotional, spiritual, and ethical dimensions.

This book presents a challenge to the way in which many people understand salvation. It demands that we consider how the love of God encompasses all of creation and as such it asks Christians to take seriously their responsibility of care, nurture, and dependence on the cosmos. This is a masterful, yet accessible, treatment of the doctrine of salvation for an earth

which is crying out for justice that would serve congregation as a group study, amateur theologian, and serious scholar equally well.

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JOLYON MITCHELL and JOSHUA REY, *War & Religion: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021). 138 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-880321-8. £5.99 (paperback); £5.69 (e-book).

*War and Religion* is an ambitious attempt to introduce the reader to interactions between religion and war spanning diverse continents, centuries, and traditions. The first chapter, 'Remembering wars', begins by subverting Western readers' expectations by first calling our attention to the motif of martyrdom inherent in Shi'a Islam and how it provides materials to remember the Iraq-Iran war. This and the Native American Ghost Dance are set alongside a more predictable starting point of British remembrance commemorations arising out of the First World War (p. 2). The three examples, marked by great loss for those who remember, support a key argument in chapter one: more loss equals more religion due to increased difficulty in finding meaning (p. 16). The book teases out the ambiguity in how religion provides comfort and hope in the vacuum of loss, often blurring images of war victims with those of religious messiahs and martyrs (p. 8).

Chapter two, 'Waging holy wars', outlines the reality that for many ancient cultures, religion and war were inseparable. Moving from the general to the particular, the concept of Jihad within Islam is set in its historical and wider religious context, in which the use of violence is only one possible meaning alongside the greater spiritual meaning of Jihad: a godly striving for self-mastery (p. 26). The book is honest and even handed in its approach: reminding the reader that Jihad involving force is a practice emphasised by a minority or held within defined limits, whilst acknowledging the textual and religious basis for its persistence. By exploring Christian crusades alongside ancient and modern forms of militarised Jihad we are reminded that the Western heritage remains under scrutiny with regards to holy wars. In its discussion of Wahhabism, the flag of Saudi Arabia, with a sword and the Shahada side by side, echoes chapter one's scene of Christian war graves marked by a combined sword and cross (p. 27).

In-between chapter two's outlines of crusades and examples of military Jihad, the recent examples of a holy war given are that of 9/11 and

the rise of Isis. These are placed in chapter two to indicate their overt religious nature. The modern conflicts listed in chapter three, including those in Northern Ireland and Sudan, involved the directing of religious feeling for political reasons, but were not born out of religion themselves. Understanding 9/11 as a primarily religious act is problematic. This view, articulated by Western governments, prevents necessary analysis of the political, economic and diplomatic conditions that may have motivated this incident. Osama bin Laden in his explanatory letter speaks more of such conditions than religious motivations (Osama bin Laden, 'Letter to America', *Guardian*, 24 November 2002 [accessed 22 July 2021]).

More convincing is the argument that the Crusades were motivated primarily by religion, as evidenced by the capture of religious sites, rather than those of militaristic or economic importance, and the expectation of forgiveness of sins in return for Crusaders' sacrifices (pp. 32–34). The authors admit that: 'We will always need to think hard in order to come to a view of whether a war belongs in chapter 2, or in chapter 3: whether it is a holy war, fought for religious purposes; or a secular war made possible by religion' (p. 56).

Chapter four offers a compelling summary of how religions have sought to reduce the harms of war. The outlines of Islamic jurisprudence and Christian Just War Theory feel immediately accessible and relevant to how people may think of the reasons for and conduct of war today. As with all chapters, the authors leave us with pertinent questions, e.g. whether such theories that make war more humane or subtly approve and prolong war, as articulated by Stanley Hauerwas (p. 71).

Chapter five outlines the nuances of many pacifisms held in world religions and by individual figures. More intriguing than the passing mention of Mahatma Ghandi, who the authors admit had no clear religious affiliation, is the figure of Norman Morrison, a Quaker. Inspired by Thich Quang Duc, Morrison self-immolated in front of the Pentagon in protest at the Vietnam War (p. 81). The example of a Christian pacifist being inspired to self-violence by a Buddhist to prevent organised violence provides ample material for reflection. It shows the nuances of the pacifist impulse and its transgression of boundaries between differing faiths and cultures. This chapter's focus on lesser-known groups which seek peace through interfaith mediation highlights the importance of diverse local approaches to pacificism (p. 93). These are not newsworthy approaches, instead they are as simple as 'an imam and a pastor drinking tea together week after week [...] and that nothing noticeable happening is one kind of peace' (p. 94).

The book holds back on theory until the sixth and final chapter. It concludes where it began, by pointing to the ambiguity that exists between religion and war, which allows both violent crusaders and pacifist Quakers

to claim they are Christians. It has gone to lengths to show these apparent contradictory positions exist in most faith traditions: 'Religion incubates under its ambivalent wings the possibility of both war and peace' (p. 104). This claim may affirm, worryingly, the religious responses of both a suicide bomber, and a pacifist executed for refusing to fight (p. 106). Thus, the limits of universal categories are revealed, such as religion-in-general, which are really based on the Christian inheritance of the West (p. 109). Along with casting doubt on war-in-general and religion-in-general, the book asks us to recognise that the assumption that war is negative is itself a particular Christian inheritance (p. 113), which remains open to the reader's critique or affirmation.

Moving beyond the scope of this book, as invited by the gentle challenges in each chapter, the reader is enabled to examine their own religious assumptions and practices. For example, there are two aspects of chapter one which merit further interrogation by Christians in ministry. In the account of how the Ghost Dance ritual was articulated by Wovoka, a Paiute mystic, we learn he worked for a Christian rancher. This may explain why Wovoka's vision for a new world includes elements of Christian eschatology. Jesus becomes present in the appearance of clouds and the dead are raised. Land, cattle, and justice are restored in a general resurrection of Paiute tribespeople and the settlers are swept away by a flood (p. 11). The imagery is more than ambiguous, it is subversive: the Messiah proclaimed by the invading settlers is the hope of Wovoka's emancipation ritual performed against them. Christology has transcended and usurped its colonial vehicle, as it might any problematic form of mission and ministry.

The second issue is the claim that religion provided images with 'accessible meaning and rhetorical force' in the aftermath of WW1 (p. 4). Yet, we read that the cenotaph was popular because of its non-religious imagery and that two of the most consistent elements of remembrance services are non-religious: the two minutes silence and *For the Fallen*, a secular poem (p. 8). Instead, these examples prove that religion in the aftermath of WW1 was unable to fill the vacuum of loss. Moreover, we might question the Established Church's role in reducing religious specificity to serve the needs of all citizens or combining religious motifs with those of war, e.g., decoration of war graves with a sword placed over a cross (p. 8). This book starts helpful conversations about how churches might deal with war and remembrance today, but understandably stops short of deeply questioning our inheritance and our future.

This book is an excellent short introduction to the multi-faceted and checkered history of religion and war that will move readers beyond the usual territory of Armistice Day and conflicts involving Western powers or solutions. It is sensitive and even handed in its treatment of differing

positions from start to finish and opens these topics in much of their complexity, whilst remaining highly accessible regardless of prior knowledge. It provides ample material to commend it highly to any reader interested in interfaith dialogue or ministries of peace and reconciliation.

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ALLAN I. MACINNES, PATRICIA BARTON and KIERAN GERMAN, eds, *Scottish Liturgical Traditions and Religious Politics: From Reformers to Jacobites, 1560–1764* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2021). 240 pp. Hardback: ISBN 9781474483056. £69.23. Ebook (ePub): ISBN 9781474483087. Ebook (PDF): 9781474483070.

As Allan I. MacInnes observes in the introduction to *Scottish Liturgical Traditions*, while ‘much has been made of the polity, the doctrine, and the discipline of the churches in Scotland [,] relatively little has been done on modes of worship, and even less on liturgical practices’. This collection of essays aims to ‘redress this imbalance’, by examining the liturgical practice ‘of Roman Catholics and Episcopalians from Reformation to Enlightenment’. MacInnes provides a useful overview of both Protestant and Catholic liturgical traditions. But he stresses that it was Catholics, Episcopalians, and Jacobites who had the ‘flexibility’ to drive ‘liturgical reform’, which explains why these traditions dominate the volume.

Stephen Mark Holmes offers a synthesis of his exhaustive research on the liturgy in pre-Reformation Scotland. As he demonstrated in *Sacred Signs in Reformation Scotland: Interpreting Worship, 1488–1590* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), Holmes is eager to move away from traditional liturgical scholarship, which searches for ‘distinctiveness in saints, rubrics, and texts’ towards understanding how Scotland’s liturgical books shaped public and monastic worship. Holmes traces the influence of English and continental liturgical traditions in pre-Reformation Scotland. While lamenting the sixteenth-century destruction of liturgical books, Holmes is careful to shift the blame from reformers, pointing out English armies were responsible for much of the destruction. Holmes concludes that, despite iconoclasm, pre-Reformation liturgical traditions influenced Scottish Protestants.

Patricia Barton and Thomas McNally’s chapters both concern Catholic missionary activity after the Council of Trent. Barton shows how Scottish religious culture was shaped by piety more than politics. Where previous accounts of Jesuit activity focused on high politics, Barton draws on the 1580 report of the first Jesuit missionary to Scotland, Robert Abercrombie, to

illustrate how Jesuits relied on women to sustain the faith. Using Sìleas na Ceapaich's Gaelic poetry, Barton shows how women's dynastic connections and literary activity could maintain Catholicism after the Reformation. She traces the manuscript tradition of Sìleas's poetry to show how Gaelic orality functioned 'as a tool against persecution'.

McInally's contribution demonstrates why Franciscans succeeded in evangelising the Highlands, where Jesuits had failed. While Trent condemned the celebration of the Eucharist in private houses, the Jesuits succeeded in sustaining the faith among lowland elites by doing just that. But they faced difficulties in the Highlands because they could not recruit Gaelic priests. The lacuna was filled by Franciscans, who enjoyed a long history of ministry to non-Catholics. By 1650, the order had trained many Irish and Gaelic-speaking priests. McInally traces the early development of Franciscan missions and shows they employed methods of catechesis that better aligned with Gaelic oral tradition. Franciscans fared better than Jesuits at adapting Roman dictates to the Highland context.

John M. Hintermaier and Alasdair Raffe's chapters present competing accounts of the development of Episcopalian confessional culture. Challenging Raffe's suggestion that 'Episcopalian identity was largely a product of the post-Revolution period', Hintermaier traces tensions over liturgy from the period of the Covenants until the 1670s to vindicate the Restoration 'from the charge of being a do-nothing era in the history of Scottish liturgy'. The instability of the 1640s forced Presbyterians to dismantle conventions of public worship. These innovations created tensions with those who accepted set forms of prayer. It was in this context that Robert Leighton 'tried to plot a middle way between' extemporaneous and set forms of prayer. After the Restoration, the liturgy remained a point of contention between Presbyterians, who feared 'that the return of bishops meant the return of a liturgy', and bishops, like Thomas Sydserff, who campaigned for alignment of Scottish with English practice. Hintermaier outlines attempts of the Restoration Episcopate to create set forms, and credits Leighton and Gilbert Burnet with a compromise position, which 'clearly favoured the use of liturgy' while insisting 'that all prayer should flow out of an inner devotion'. These views influenced eighteenth-century English and Scottish Episcopalian thought.

Raffe's contribution extends his argument in *Scotland in Revolution, 1685–1690* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), that James VIII favoured a 'multiconnectional experiment' which encouraged a 'free market in religious services' and ultimately created opposing Episcopalian and Presbyterian confessional cultures. Where James hoped multiconfessionalism would foster mutual toleration, it led to a hardening of Episcopalian and Presbyterian colours and stoked division that ultimately

produced revolution in 1689. Raffe shows Episcopalian architecture, and Catholic printing, widened the divide between Presbyterian traditionalists and Catholic-Episcopalian innovators.

Kieran German, Marie-Luise Ehrenschwendtner and Isaac M. Poobalan all focus on Aberdeen's Episcopalians. German complicates the relationship between Jacobitism and Episcopacy. Most scholars have assumed Episcopalianism and Jacobitism were two sides of the same coin. German complicates this picture through detailed case studies of Aberdeen's Episcopal congregations. By showing flexibility in confessional principles and preferences, and avoiding public indications of their Jacobitism, Episcopalians successfully sustained a presence in Northeast Scotland.

Ehrenschwendtner's reconstruction of the careers of George and James Garden places the brothers within contexts of Scottish ecclesiastical history and European piety. They were part of the late seventeenth-century shift towards divine-right episcopacy. But their primary concerns were spiritual: 'hostility to theological controversy and sympathy to continental mysticism'. Ehrenschwendtner argues that their spiritual beliefs 'determined their allegiances and loyalties', not vice versa. This chapter displays Ehrenschwendtner's extensive knowledge of mystical writings, which she reads, correctly, as practical guides to Christian living. It was practical mysticism, not religious enthusiasm, which attracted the Gardens to Antoinette Bourignon.

In contrast, Poobalan's chapter on Henry Scougal claims Scougal has been misread as mystic, latitudinarian and Episcopalian. Through analysis of Scougal's *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (1948) and George Garden's funeral sermon, Poobalan contends that Scougal should be read in the tradition of Aberdeen theology. Scougal moved 'the dominant Christian thought of Restoration Scotland beyond Calvinism'. This analysis seems limited: Scougal's thought owed more to the theology of Robert Leighton and Edinburgh divinity than it did to an Aberdonian tradition. His departure from Reformed orthodoxy was a product of his engagements with Catholic mysticism and British latitudinarianism.

Recent years have seen a healthy amount of scholarly interest in Scotland's juring- and non-juring Episcopalian liturgies over the long eighteenth century. Chapters by Tristram Clarke, Richard Sharp, A. Emsley Nimmo, Darren S. Layne and W. Douglas Kornahrens contribute to this theme. Clarke's central thesis is that shared liturgical, rather than political commitment or denominational identity, defined episcopacy after 1689, and transcended political differences between jurors and non-jurors. Clarke traces the use of set forms among both juring- and non-juring congregations. He shows that Scottish Episcopalians' knowledge of liturgy was key to their preferment in England and the colonies.

Sharp's chapter focuses on the patristic scholarship of non-juring Scottish Episcopalians, who turned to the liturgies of the primitive Church, in particular the Apostolic Constitutions, to ground their practice. Sharp follows this tradition through to the controversy over the usages in the 1710s. A 'usager' minority believed 'liturgical revision was a central means for recovering the unity of the church' and separated from the 'non-usager' majority, who held the primacy of Scripture. Sharp ends with a broader discussion, connecting his chapter to the central theme of this volume: the non-jurors liturgical innovation and its impact across the Episcopalian churches.

Nimmo's chapter asks, 'Why Episcopalians pray for the dead'. He focuses on the most significant usager theologian, Archibald Campbell. Taking up Martha McGill's suggestion, Nimmo uses a close reading of Campbell's *Doctrine of the Middle State* (1721) to demonstrate that he defended a doctrine close to the medieval understanding of purgatory. This doctrine put Campbell at odds with the bishops and was instrumental in the schism between usagers and non-usagers. Despite being on the losing side, the success of Campbell's publication was such that, by 1735, prayers for the dead became part of Scottish liturgy.

Historians often assume a connection between Highland clans, Episcopalian clergy, and Jacobite commitment. Layne's contribution demonstrates that the political theology of non-juring Episcopalians bound them to the Stuart cause and uses statistical methods to show the activity of Episcopalian clergy in the 1745 rebellion. Clergy, he shows, were key to conveying the ideological message of Jacobitism.

Kornahrens completes the volume with a chapter traversing the Episcopalian liturgical tradition. Dispelling the myth that the liturgy reached Scotland from England, Kornahrens argues that the 'controlling feature of the theological tradition of Scottish Episcopacy is its adherence to the witness of the Church Fathers alone for the interpretation of holy scripture and for the establishment of doctrine'. He traces this tradition to the Aberdeen Doctors. Scottish Episcopacy drew on their scholarship, while claiming the authority of the Fathers. The chapter centres on Thomas Rattray's *Ancient Liturgy of the Church of Jerusalem* (1744). By comparing Rattray's work with the 1764 liturgy, Kornahrens demonstrates that Rattray's text was 'the precipitating agent in the movement towards organised liturgical worship in the Episcopal Church' both in Scotland and America in the late eighteenth century.

This is an impressive collection of essays, offering an accessible overview of worship in the Catholic and Episcopal churches from the medieval period to the Jacobite risings, which can be read either as a textbook or a state-of-the-discipline collection. All contributors reject simple



connections drawn in older scholarship between Episcopacy, royalism and Jacobitism. Internal disagreements reveal the vibrancy of the historiography. Common themes would have been better illuminated by thematic rather than chronolectal arrangement, and the introduction could have said more about what holds these traditions together: episcopacy saw itself as the true heir of a Catholic tradition of worship, but that, far from conservative, it was constantly innovating.

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THEODORE A. BERGREN, *1 Clement: A Reader's Edition* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2020). x plus 193 pp. ISBN 978-0-8132-3236-2. £12.26 (paperback).

No student of the New Testament or early Christian literature, specifically epistolography, can afford to be unfamiliar with *First Clement*. Whilst its date of composition and authorship are uncertain, the lion's share of evidence indicates the late first century and a Roman church official of some stripe. There is little reason to dismiss the tradition of crediting it to an early bishop of Rome called Clement. Even if the name does not appear in the letter itself, it is ascribed to him by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.15–16; 4.22.1–3) and a slew of early Christian authors. Like the *Didache*, *First Clement* is contemporary with, or perhaps antecedent to, the Pastoral and Petrine letters.

*First Clement* is addressed 'to the church of God dwelling (as a stranger) in Corinth', and it shows familiarity with St Paul's Corinthian correspondence (as well as bits of the LXX and NT). Eusebius (*ibid.* 4.23.11) says it was read publicly in Corinth, implying a near-to-biblical authority. *First Clement* finds itself along with *Second Clement* — a late-first or early-second century sermon of no relation to *First Clement*, and another story in itself — at the end of the canonical books in the fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus. Thus, *First Clement* provides a window into the earliest lived reality of Christianity that no serious student will want to miss, especially through the transparency of the original Greek.

Theodore A. Bergren's *1 Clement: A Reader's Edition* is a welcome companion in engaging *First Clement* in its original without getting bogged down in text-critical issues and apparati, for it is very much a *vade mecum* for the student. Bergren uses J. B. Lightfoot's edition (London: Macmillan, 1890) in a compelling way. On the verso pages, he sets the sequential Greek text of *First Clement* in outline form and verse-by-verse. On the recto pages, again in outline form and verse-by-verse, he sets the rare and more difficult Greek words with their parts of speech and brief definitions in English.

Toward the end of the book (pp. 173–85), he presents a similar list of all the common and less difficult words. Bergren is not replicating what standard Greek grammars and lexica offer, but rather a user-friendly tool for the reader whose proficiency in *Koinē* Greek is in the making. Indeed, the *Reader's Edition*, is ideal for classroom use. There are many online tools and computer programmes to aid in the reading of texts like *First Clement*, but by my lights nothing beats holding something tangible in one's hands to provide not only the data but its spatialisation in the whole of the text. (Bergren even uses monospaced fonts for ease of reference, which at first blush seem all-too-retro, but are in fact easy on the eyes.)

*A Reader's Edition*, then, is to be highly praised for accomplishing two things at once: first, it presents *First Clement* in such wise that a reader with a working proficiency of Greek, albeit with recourse to other tools, can navigate; and second, it provides growing room for learning by leaving words unparsed and their syntax unspecified. Finally, it concludes with a list of biblical quotations and allusions in *First Clement* (pp. 186–90), which to my mind, only whets the appetite for more study.

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