

Critical Theology

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Introduction

By Don Schweitzer

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This issue of *Critical Theology* begins with reflections by Jane Barter on the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, which documents a major failure of Canadian society to protect some of its most vulnerable members. The second article, by Carolyn Whitney-Brown of St. Jerome's University in Waterloo, discusses the disturbing revelations of L'Arche founder Jean Vanier's sexual manipulation of a number of women. In his article, Michael Canaris of Loyola University Chicago examines the views of Avery Dulles and Pope Francis on the death penalty. The final article presents an understanding of Jesus Christ from the perspective of Korean members of The United Church of Canada.

These issues and topics have been temporarily displaced from public discussion by the COVID-19 virus outbreak. This pandemic, now in its third month, dominates the daily news. It has reshaped private and public lives, the workplaces of most people, and the priorities of most governments, and has dramatically impacted many industries and most countries' economies. The virus has taken the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and has caused great emotional and physical suffering. At the same time, the pandemic has given the planet a brief and slight reprieve from environmental pollution and has provoked remarkable solidarity among people in deeply divided societies. Reflections

on the COVID-19 pandemic will be forthcoming in this journal. Yet for all its importance, the topics discussed in this issue remain in place.

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Those We Do Not Know

Thinking as Church about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

By Jane Barter

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In late May of 2019, the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls concluded its work and published an over 1200-page report.¹ The Report engendered a brief maelstrom of controversy upon its release, most notably due to its unflinching evocation of the term “genocide” with respect to the disappearance and murder of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA in Canada.² Beyond this initial eruption, there was little response from the Canadian public, particularly when compared to the enthusiastic reception of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) and its 94 Calls to Action. Such silence was even more deafening in the churches, which, save for the ecumenical organization Kairos,³ offered little by way of direct engagement with the Report. This also stands in marked contrast to the churches’ endorsement of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and their wide-scale adoption of its Calls to Action. In this paper, I wish to probe this reticence theologically as I examine the ways in which the Church has been co-opted by specific tales of national redemption that are tacitly theological in nature. As I shall argue, the cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) interrupts this national narrative, for it calls into question conceptions of Canadian progress, while also refusing to subsume its victims into the endless march of a national teleology. Hence, this Report, and the witnesses to the missing and murdered upon whose testimony it is based, calls for another modality of memory and redemption—one that is not easily harmonized with the upbuilding of the nation-state or the churches as national projects. Toward the conclusion of this essay, I will point to alternate forms of remembering in solidarity with Indigenous peoples, which I believe the memories of the missing demand, and to which we are most urgently called by the testimonies of the missing’s loved ones.

History and Progress

When the TRC concluded its work in 2014, the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) presented an “Expression of Reconciliation”⁴ at the Commission’s closing ceremonies. The Canadian Council of Churches

represents 85 percent of Canadian Christians; the leaders of each of the member churches signed on to the Expression. The official letter, signed by then-president of the CCC Lt. Colonel Jim Champ, expressed the churches’ sincere regret over the past, particularly with respect to the residential schools, and committed themselves to reconciliation, which was framed thus in the Expression:

As Christians we base our lives and all our relationships on our experience of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ to God, one another and all creation (2 Corinthians 5:18). Our faith calls us to love and serve in the same manner that Jesus loved and served, to be messengers and ambassadors of reconciliation. We are called to break down walls that divide and to welcome all *we meet as fellow citizens*.⁵

Here one must ask what the nature of reconciliation is that is upheld by these words. Why is fellow citizenship the modality expressed by the churches as restored relations? And why do the churches uncritically assume that the overcoming of past wrongs can or ought to be done through the colonial nation-state? The next sentence is equally vexing:

In the long history of the relationship of Indigenous Peoples in Canada with other Canadians, it is painfully clear that we, as Christian communities, have often fallen short of living the love and service of Jesus.⁶

Here the problem is seen to lie in the fact that Christian communities failed to be adequately Christ-like. While I do not take issue with the sentiment, there is no place in which the distortions of relations are attributed to a colonial project. The subtext is clear. We must become more loving and serving to be reconciled partners with Indigenous *Canadians* [emphasis mine]. Thus the CCC’s response also conforms nicely to a nationalist narrative that reconciliation will come through acts of local healing rather than redistribution of resources, Indigenous sovereignty, and structural change—in short, through an interruption, rather than a continuation, of the national project. The reconciled future,

according to the TRC and the CCC alike, is dependent upon local acts of truth telling, love, and service. It is through these therapeutic and private interventions that change will take place and the past will be left behind.

Many Indigenous scholars have contested the assumptions that inhere in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, particularly in its casting of the Indigenous subject as one in need of healing from trauma. Two things are wrong with this modality of reconciliation. First, it problematizes the individual rather than the structure; and second, it is predicated upon a view of trauma as a past and latent experience rather than an ongoing one. While there is no doubt that Indigenous persons experience trauma, the framing of trauma as a personal psychological imbalance rather than the consequence of colonial violence ends up, if not blaming the victim, then at least diverting the problem to the individual rather than the nation-state. In her *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights*, Athabaskan scholar Dian Million interrogates the notion of Indigenous trauma and victimhood as a device that serves the national ends of turning Indigenous subjects into objects requiring management, intervention, and increased jurisdiction over their “healing” and their lives.

[T]he white elephant in the room appears to me to be how the perception of the subject of colonial violence is indexical to comprehending the dance of hegemony in our times. If the institutions and discourses in place around our ‘damage’ are hegemonic, what then are our relations with the mechanisms of ‘healing’ in the forms in which it is most usually presented now?⁷

The churches need to ask at the very least the degree to which the healing mechanisms that they have endorsed are themselves hegemonic. What tacit forces and assumptions about Indigenous subjecthood are shaping them? Who is benefiting from them? And finally, what is the picture that is in place of reconciliation? If trauma is seen as chiefly a personal (and Indigenous) experience to be overcome, then much is concealed about the ongoing role of the colonial state in its creation and perpetuation. As Anishinaabe philosopher Dale Turner argues, the dominant understanding of reconciliation “focuses on resolving historical injustices in order to heal ‘unhealthy’ Aboriginal communities”⁸ All our notions concerning healing from trauma as the primary modality of reconciliation (including Christian versions of these therapeutic terms such as love and service) need to be critically interrogated, as they deflect from the current material changes required in this country for reconciliation, and as they focus intervention and management upon Indigenous subjects and communities.

The National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

This is not to argue that historical injustices against Indigenous people are irrelevant. Rather, it is to say that historical injustices need to be seen as immanent and ongoing. The Report of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Women and Girls renders explicit the connection between the current crisis of MMIWG and the historical role of the churches in Indigenous communities:

Indigenous women experienced political and social marginalization through the imposition of patriarchy by Christian churches and the Government of Canada. Colonization also gave rise to racist and ethnocentric ideas that continue to dehumanize Indigenous women and make them targets of violence. The cycles of intergenerational trauma, set in motion by colonization, are a root cause of domestic violence in Indigenous communities today.⁹

The churches had a major impact in interrupting traditional kinship networks and imposing patriarchal familial structures, structures that were replicated in the *Indian Act*. The *Indian Act* denied women the right to possess marital property and regulated membership and status along exclusively patrilineal lines, in spite of the matrilineal nature of most First Nations communities. Right up until 1985, women who married non-Indigenous men were stripped of Indigenous status, while non-Indigenous women who married Indigenous men were conferred status. Church-run residential schools further defined gender roles for Indigenous people, as the schools and their vocational training were highly segregated along the lines of gender. Sisters and brothers were separated into different schools, which reinforced the already broken ties between male and female family relations that the residential schools imposed. Sexual and domestic violence continues to be a very real outcome of colonization; intergenerational trauma and the specificity of this form of violence to Canada is rendered explicit in the Report. What this means is that the churches need not only to condemn the violence, but also to look squarely at the ways in which they have contributed to the violence.

In 2011, the Canadian Council of Churches acknowledged the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls by launching a campaign to combat human trafficking. The CCC’s leadership kit raised awareness about global human trafficking, absorbing the experiences of Indigenous women into the larger scourge of sexual slavery in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. What was lost in this approach is the direct responsibility of Canada and the churches in perpetuating the exploitation of Indigenous women

as part of its ongoing colonial project. The campaign also failed to address the many forms of violence that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA experience, which leads to their disappearance and murder. While I am not denying the role of human trafficking in contributing to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, I do wish to ask if this model does not miss key causalities between the national project and violence against women by focusing instead on prostitution and criminal activity. Violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada is much more ubiquitous than a focus on trafficking women suggests. Although trafficking is a part of the phenomenon of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, the range of targeted violence that Indigenous women in this country face is much broader, and includes sexual abuse, domestic violence, and exploitation by male workers in Indigenous territory such as fur traders, RCMP officers,¹⁰ clergy, loggers, Hydro workers, and so on. As L'nu scholar Rebecca Moore puts it in the Report: "Being an Indigenous woman means living under a society and 'civilization' that benefits from your voicelessness, invisibility, disappearance, non-existence, and erasure."¹¹

Moore points to an insight that is shared among Indigenous feminist scholars on MMIWG: that is, the colonial project has always been contingent upon the erasure of Indigenous populations from the land. The erasure of Indigenous women is a particularly expedient means, for it involves not only the women's removal, but also their progeny's. One of the most efficient ways that Canada had in solving the "Indian Problem"¹² was to control women's reproduction, through forced sterilization and the removal of their children, whether that be through the residential schools, the Sixties Scoop,¹³ or, later, the hyper-surveillance of mothers through child welfare agencies, and birth alerts.¹⁴

Genocide

Given the level of violence identified, it was hardly surprising that the Inquiry made the case that Canada has participated and continues to participate in gender-based genocide. In this, the Commissioners drew on the framework from international law, specifically Article II of the UN *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (1948), which states that genocide consists of any of the following criteria:

- a. Killing members of the group;
- b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and

- e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.¹⁵

By casting genocide as a past, present, and future reality, the Report interrupts the trajectory that the liberal nation-state finds most comforting: that is, that genocide (if it existed at all) against Canada's Indigenous peoples belongs to a distant past. In its stead, the Report unflinchingly links the disappearance and murder to the nation-state; indeed, it is part of the very fabric of Canadian society:

The common thread weaving these statistics together is the fact that violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people is not an individual problem, or an issue only for certain communities. *This violence is rooted in systemic factors, like economic, social and political marginalization, as well as racism, discrimination, and misogyny, woven into the fabric of Canadian society.*¹⁶

There is no start date or end date to this genocide. It is not localizable as a determinate and quantifiable event in the past that we have overcome, and therefore Canadians remain complicit in the disappearance of women. What is also unclear is who the subjects of this violence are. It is the very nature of disappearance and murder that the subjects cannot speak for themselves and therefore must be witnessed to by others. As such they mark the very caesura that marks citizenry. If reconciliation means, as the Canadian Council of Churches claimed, "welcoming all as fellow citizens," how do we welcome the dead or the disappeared? How do we reconcile ourselves, our churches, and our nations to the missing?

The Missing

The missing mark the impossibility of citizenship for certain members of the Canadian nation-state. Just as women were not recognized by the *Indian Act*, they also disappear from the sightlines of Canadian public consciousness—literally. Many of the women's bodies were found in dumpsters; their bodies were disposed of on the edge of town, in a river, or in a garbage dump. The use of Indigenous women's bodies and the representation of their bodies and lives as disposable are deeply embedded within the Canadian colonial imagination.

To be missing is to exist in the liminal space where one is neither dead nor alive, neither human nor inhuman. The missing are not citizens with rights; they are instead a voiceless, faceless presence whose absence marks the precise caesura of the Canadian national project. Similarly, the murder of Indigenous women often takes place in zones in which women are subject to arbitrary and shifting colonial and patriarchal power. In her analysis of the case of Pamela George, a sex-

trade worker who was raped and beaten to death by two suburban white males in 1995, Sherene Razack argues that Canadian city geography itself sets up the boundaries between decent (white) and indecent (Indigenous) society. Spatialized power gives male settlers the right to be free citizens while it relegates Indigenous women like Pamela George to the Stroll:

Two white men who buy the services of an Aboriginal woman in prostitution, and who then beat her to death, are enacting a quite specific violence perpetrated on Aboriginal bodies throughout Canada's history, a colonial violence that has not only enabled white settlers to secure the land but to come to know themselves as entitled to it. In the men's encounter with Pamela George, these material (theft of the land) and symbolic (who is entitled to it) processes shaped both what brought Pamela George to the Stroll and what white men from middle-class homes thought they were doing in a downtown area of prostitution on the night of the murder. These processes also shaped what sense the court made of their activities.¹⁷

In order to counter the spatialized power that is deeply embedded within Canadian consciousness and that tacitly divests certain Canadians (Indigenous women) from citizenship, we need an alternative construal of the space and the time of redemption. Redemption is not reconciliation to the nation-state, or between its citizens. Instead it belongs to a different order altogether, one in which the rules that govern who is recognized as a bearer of rights give way to the appearance of those whose rights have never existed and to those who have rarely been afforded recognition in this country.

Such an alternate form of redemption to the reconciliation of the nation-state is actually one that is upheld by the family members of the missing. For these members know that reconciliation is deferred as long as women remain missing and as long as deaths like theirs continue. For these women, the wound of their sisters' loss is ever palpable. And as such, remembering them remains the only hope that a nation such as Canada—or churches such as ours—has to begin to move beyond its colonial violence. Remembering them means an active form of recollection, a reinscription of the missing into the communities. It also means active refusal to characterize the women as anything less than full members. Not as prostitutes, not as drug addicts, not as aberrant subjects, but the women are remembered by their family in their singularity, as those whose absence is a palpable wound, one that cannot be healed until their sisters return.

Isabel Winning's testimony on the death of her niece, Nicole Ashley Daniels,¹⁸ is a perfect example:

And, I think a lot of ways that we get lost in media and stuff like that is by focusing on the troubles that we have as Aboriginal people, that are not just for Aboriginal people. Those problems exist worldwide. The problem is that we suffer as addicts—I'm also a survivor as well. But, the problems that we suffer as addicts do not mean that we warrant an early death sentence because of those actions or because we have faults and because we had made mistakes.¹⁹

In refusing to see her story and her niece's as the inevitable consequence of a life of trauma, Winning challenges those tropes that would seek to treat Indigenous populations in a systematized way as an aberrant subject. Further, Winning's testimony makes the case strongly that there is no "worthy" victim. The imputations of worth and value in judging these cases must be critically undermined. So, too, must the overarching narratives that would seek to harmonize the discordant, to manage the women's stories in such a way that they are a problem that needs to be solved through targeted reform of their lives.

Thus the singularity of the women's lives is retained. It is not sacrificed for a higher, redemptive end. The stories of the women in the testimonies themselves remain ambivalent, raw, unassimilated. In this sense, the work of the family members in remembering their sisters in their singularity tacitly upholds an alternative form of redemption. It is one in which redemption is deferred whenever there are missing persons, for it refuses to subsume their memory under the march of Canadian progressive history.

It is surprising how, in spite of the churches' repentance over their collusion with the nation-state during the residential schools era, the churches remain markedly uncritical of Canada today. In particular, they have tended to adopt wholesale the language of reconciliation, which, as many Indigenous critics have pointed out, generally involves reconciliation within and to the nation-state. Such reconciliation is not only spatially bound within the political state that is Canada, but also has a distinct temporality—one in which past trauma is healed through present and local acts of truth telling for the sake of a renewed future. The missing and murdered trouble the nation-state because they do not appear as recognizable subjects. They trouble both the spatiality of Canadian cities through their disappearances and the temporality of reconciliation as they alert us to the ongoing crisis of genocide. Their stories rub against the grain of the narratives that churches and nations tell themselves about the restored relations that are being ushered in. Narratives such as that of Bernice Catcheway, who recounted this story when she went to the RCMP when her daughter Jennifer went missing in 2008:

And, he [the Officer] said, “Oh, what’s her name?” I said, “Jennifer. Jennifer Catcheway.” “Oh, how old is she?” Like that. That’s how he spoke to me. “How – how old is she?” I said, “She just turned 18 Thursday, her birthday.” “Oh, give her a week. She’s on a drunk.” I said, “You don’t even know her to talk to her [sic] like that – about her like that. You don’t know her.” He said, “Oh, give her a week. Give her a week.”²⁰

Missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls are subjects that we do not know. We do not know them because of stereotypes about them—stereotypes that distort their reality to us. We do not know them because they are gone. But we also do not know them willfully, because if we chose to know them then we would have to look squarely at a mother’s grief, a daughter’s disappearance, and a nation that has continued to create the conditions for such violence. We would have to adjust our theologies dramatically in order to know Bernice and Jennifer Catcheway—an adjustment that would question our lingering attachment to the Canadian project as a means of securing right relations, an adjustment that would force us also to question ourselves as architects and ongoing participants.

Unwittingly, the family members remind the churches of another narrative to which they belong and to which they are called. Instead of the foreclosed telos of national redemption, the churches have been called by Christ to sweep all day for the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10), to leave everything behind to find one lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7), and to long steadfastly for a lost child’s return (Luke 15:11-32). May we take the time to try to know those who are missing, and may we await restored relations with Indigenous persons with the patience and humility that their memories demand.

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1 National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, Vols. 1a and 1b (May 29, 2019). <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report>. Accessed May 20, 2020.

2 This acronym is used by the Report and connotes two-spirited, lesbian, gay, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual persons, who are also victims of targeted gender violence against Indigenous persons.

3 KAIROS is a notable exception, particularly in its SSHRC-funded partnership with Dr. Sherry Pictou, a Mi’kmaq scholar and former chief of Bear River First Nation. This joint venture looks at the link between violence against Indigenous women and lands through resource extraction. See Kairos Canada, “Strong Medicine for Toxic Resource Extraction,” <https://www.kairoscanada.org/strong-medicine-for-toxic-resource-extraction>. Accessed May 21, 2020.

4 Canadian Council of Churches. “Expression of Reconciliation.” Last modified 2020. <https://www.councilofchurches.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/CCC-Expression-of-Reconciliation-Final-Final-EN-Signatures-Complete.pdf>. Accessed May 21, 2020.

5 Ibid. [emphasis mine]

6 Ibid.

7 Dian Million, *Therapeutic Nations Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013), 170.

8 Dale Turner, “On the Idea of Reconciliation in Contemporary Aboriginal Politics,” in *Reconciling Canada: Critical Perspectives on the Culture of Redress*, edited by Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 100.

9 National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, Vol. 1a, 313.

10 Shockingly, the conclusion to the Canadian Council of Churches’ Toolkit on human trafficking offers an appendix titled “Where to Go for Help,” which lists the numbers of RCMP offices in various regions in Canada. See Canadian Council of Churches, “Human Trafficking in Canada.” Last modified 2020. <https://www.councilofchurches.ca/social-justice/human-trafficking-in-canada>. Accessed May 21, 2020. That the Toolkit makes a naive appeal to the RCMP as a resource in cases of sex trafficking, and especially considering the cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women, throws considerable light on how out of touch the churches remain on this issue. They would do well to read the Report of the National Commission to gain a more nuanced understanding of the historic and present relationship between Indigenous women and the RCMP.

11 National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, Vol. 1a, 30.

12 This pejorative term is used here to refer to the problems identified by Canada in the wake of civil rights and postcolonial movements of the 1950s and 1960s globally and Canada’s efforts to improve its reputation on the international stage. Dian Million writes: “Canadians were not solely driven by a sense of altruism when they became worried about their ‘Indian problem’ in the 1950s and 1960s. Aboriginal peoples lived segregated and controlled under a tight colonial Indian Act bureaucracy, impoverished and suffering from a variety of social ills...” Million, *Therapeutic Nations*, 89.

13 The “Sixties Scoop” refers to the mass removal of Indigenous children from their homes and into the child welfare system, usually without permission from their families or communities.

14 Birth alerts are issued by health care and child and family services agencies in order to track those considered to be high-risk pregnant women. “The alerts serve to flag certain women – largely Indigenous – in hospital, and stipulate that, if an alert has been issued, the agency may apprehend the child at birth.” National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, Vol. 1a, 364.

15 Ibid., 51.

16 Ibid., 56.

17 Sherene Razack, “Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice: The Murder of Pamela George,” in *Race, Space and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*, edited by Sherene Razack (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002), 128–29.

18 Sixteen-year-old Ashley Nicole Daniels was found face down in the snow just two blocks from her Winnipeg home in April 2009. She was intoxicated and had benzamides in her system. She was also, paradoxically according to the Coroner’s report, found with an open blouse, a jacket undone, and frozen. There were no charges laid in this case.

19 Public Hearings, Winnipeg, volume 9. Last modified 2019. https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/20171016_MMIWG_Winnipeg_Public_Vol_9_combined.pdf. Accessed on May 20, 2020.

20 Public Hearing, Bernice Catcheway et al. “National Inquiry on MMIWG, Testimonies.” Mmiwg-Ffada.ca, Last modified 2019, https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/20171017_MMIWG_Winnipeg_Public_Vol_10_combined.pdf. Accessed on May 20, 2020. Eighteen-year-old Jennifer Catcheway disappeared on June 18, 2008. For 11 years the Catcheways have conducted their own searches, scouring garbage dumps, rivers, lakes, and forests looking for their lost daughter.

“What We Lose in Certainty”

Re-grieving Jean Vanier

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When Jean Vanier died in May 2019, a flood of written tributes poured forth, each expressing various facets of grief.¹ In February 2020, details of Vanier's manipulative sexual practices through much of his adult life were revealed by an external inquiry requested by L'Arche International.² Another surge of writing followed, as people around the globe grieved again, this time for the women who were hurt by Vanier and for the Jean Vanier we thought we knew. Anger. Denial. Confusion. More anger. Depression. Bargaining.

In the first days after the news broke, I found a scene from the movie *Love Actually* played in my mind. Emma Thompson's character responds to her husband's admission of unfaithfulness by saying to him, “Yes, but you've also made a fool out of me, and you've made the life I lead foolish, too.” In an inarticulate and irrational way, I felt in myself that same sentiment, that the ways in which so many of us have tried to live Vanier's compelling vision of transformative community, even of prayer and closeness with Jesus, suddenly felt foolish, naive, maybe even suspect.

I agreed to write something for *Critical Theology*, but I realize these are thoughts-on-the-way, not a final answer—comments that I may later recognize as a bargaining stage of grieving, or a kind of salvage effort.³

“What we learn today is a huge blow and a cause of great confusion but what we lose in certainty, we hope to gain in terms of maturity,” wrote L'Arche International in its public letter. A whole world of theology exists in that sentence, accepting a terrible reality with a faithful intention to be open to hope and growth.

Thus I have been thinking about maturity. I find myself pondering two unrelated moments from the same year, more than half a century ago.

In 1967, Leonard Cohen wrote a 29-word poem titled “Etiquette,” addressed to someone building an Ark in their yard.⁴ In this poem, he queries whether he can get on the Ark, and whether he will be permitted to get off, then asks whether studying “Etiquette” should precede learning “Magic.”

In a documentary broadcast across Canada the same year, filmmaker Peter Flemington asks the 38-year-old founder of L'Arche (the Ark) if he is a saint. Jean Vanier laughs for a while, says that saints are recognized only after their deaths, then offers an unexpected insight into what sanctity is and why the people with intellectual disabilities with whom he lives are more likely to be “the real saints.”⁵ Let me be quick to say: no one has to take up the saint role. Now seems like the right time to drop that adoring and alienating word altogether when referring to living persons.

L'Arche does have a kind of magic. One founder of a L'Arche community, while noting its limits, also affirmed, “L'Arche is magical – transforming the unwanted, the unvalued into precious friends and teachers.”⁶ Part of that magic is the freedom, even irreverence, of life on the margins. Vanier loved to tell of how in the early days of the new L'Arche house in France, they encouraged a government inspector to stay for dinner, then passed him a pot of mustard. When he opened it, out jumped a cloth snake on a spring, and the household fell about laughing. Vanier liked physical comedy, such as tossing orange peels around the room after a meal together. Stories of rule breaking and boundary pushing abound, such as the time a person with an intellectual disability, while waiting with L'Arche representatives to meet the Pope, went and sat on the Papal throne to see how it felt. This shared humour and social liberation is part of the unexpected pleasure, the magic of L'Arche.⁷

But Cohen's poem offers a gentle suggestion that perhaps Etiquette comes before Magic.

Do I have to say that coercing anyone into sexual intimacy in the context of spiritual accompaniment is never good etiquette? One of the six women who testified to the investigation said that when she later told and wrote Vanier of her distress, all he said was that he thought it was “good.” It was not good. The theological justification provided by Vanier and his mentor Father Thomas Philippe of offering to be Jesus through secret sexual touching amounts to pretending or presuming to be god to others. This is self-idolatry, fake magic, and uncritical theology.

Genuine etiquette requires being considerate of each person. The rule-bending humour of L'Arche is good etiquette, because while it shifts assumptions about propriety, each person is respected. In L'Arche, people with intellectual disabilities are central in creating culture, actively building communal memories, and developing their own stories. L'Arche often upends overly serious power structures to give space for people of all abilities to discover each other and have fun together. I am not saying L'Arche is perfect—anyone who knows L'Arche would never say that. At its best, however, L'Arche embodies the key etiquette of sharing life with respect for each person, especially in their vulnerability.⁸

I hope the six women who brought forward their stories feel a sense of both justice and respect. The public letter released by L'Arche International asserted: “If the words of those who testified bring to light a troubled part of our history, their efforts give L'Arche a chance to continue on its journey, to become more aware of our history, and, ultimately, better able to face the challenges of our time. We understand that this was also their intention, and we are grateful for it.”

Ten years ago, L'Arche International asked me to begin a project exploring complex aspects of L'Arche founding stories around the world. The idea was that overly idealized founding stories limited L'Arche's creativity and freedom. Some of those remarkable international founding stories of L'Arche in Canada, India, the UK, the US, Ivory Coast, Haiti and Honduras were published just last fall in *Sharing Life: Stories of L'Arche Founders*. My other recent book, *Tender to the World: Jean Vanier, L'Arche and the United Church of Canada*, is likewise a book of stories about how people with and without disabilities in the United Church took up the challenge of L'Arche, with times of ecumenical discovery and personal growth, as well as painful misunderstandings and failure. To set aside stories like these because of our deep disillusionment with Vanier himself risks overlooking the many inspiring stories of everyone else.

This leads to a bigger question of whose stories and wisdom might be unjustly dismissed with Vanier's. Much of the writing by Jean Vanier was not written solely by one person; many were works of Vanier's collaboration with others, often women.⁹ If bookstores and publishers pull Vanier's books off their shelves and catalogues, will we lose the collective contributions of Vanier's many unacknowledged co-authors as well?¹⁰ I don't have an answer to this, but I know that the seemingly singular authorial voice of “Jean Vanier” includes insights of other writers and the community. It will be sadly ironic if the result of Vanier's horribly

newsworthy story is to leave him still the centre of attention, silencing or eclipsing the stories of others, whether those are the women who were harmed or founders, members, and supporters of L'Arche beyond Vanier.

I want to encourage everyone grieving their loss of certainty. The news about Jean Vanier does not devalue or diminish anything you have been living. The lives we have chosen are not foolish. We need each other. Now is not the time to lose faith in our efforts to build bridges across difference, to create communities and alliances with others.

More than ever in our world today, we need mature and diverse communities of prayer, of generosity, of peace-making, of activism, and yes, of fun. We need the etiquette of respect woven with the magic of kindness.

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1 See Carolyn Whitney-Brown, “Jean Vanier: Remembering an Icon, Not an Idol,” *Sojourners*, May 20, 2019, <https://sojo.net/articles/jean-vanier-remembering-icon-not-idol>. Accessed March 2, 2020.

2 See L'Arche International, “L'Arche International announces findings of Independent Inquiry,” https://www.larche.org/news/-/asset_publisher/mQsRZspJMdBy/content/inquiry-statement-test. Accessed February 23, 2020.

3 This article was written in early March 2020. See also my online interview with *Broadview* magazine, February 26, 2020, <https://broadview.org/jean-vanier-abuse-report>. Accessed March 2, 2020.

4 Leonard Cohen, *Stranger Music: Selected Poems and Songs* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993), 188. I do not have copyright permission to quote the poem here, but I suggest you pause to read it online: it can be found by searching inside his 1993 collection, *Stranger Music*.

5 Carolyn Whitney-Brown, *Tender to the World: Jean Vanier, L'Arche and the United Church of Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019), 30–32.

6 *Ibid.*, 73. See also 192–94, notes 18–19, for a partial list of L'Arche-related scholarship in many fields.

7 Carolyn Whitney-Brown, *Sharing Life: Stories of L'Arche Founders* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2019), 2.

8 This includes the ongoing commitment of L'Arche to ensure the safety of every community member, with and without disabilities: www.larche.org/prevention-and-safeguarding. Accessed March 3, 2020.

9 For further discussion of Vanier's collaborative writing, see also Carolyn Whitney-Brown, “Too Chicken to Cross the Road? Jean Vanier and Getting to the Other Side,” *Critical Theology* 1:4 (2019). Also Carolyn Whitney-Brown, “Introduction to the New Edition,” *Jean Vanier: Essential Writings* (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 2019), 10–11.

10 See, for example, John Longhurst, “L'Arche founder's printed legacy damaged in sex-abuse report fallout,” <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/arts-and-life/life/faith/larche-founders-printed-legacy-damaged-in-sex-abuse-report-fallout-568430642.html>. Accessed March 4, 2020.

“Ready to Pardon?”

An Ecclesial Analysis of the Death Penalty and Catholic Abolitionism

By Michael M. Canaris
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Cardinal Points

On February 21, 2001, three members of the Society of Jesus were inducted into the Roman Catholic College of Cardinals by Pope John Paul II. Since I study ecclesiology and not journalism, I admit to knowing little about Roberto Tucci, the former director general of Vatican Radio and member of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. The other two Jesuit “classmates” were, however, exceedingly important figures in my own life of faith: Avery Dulles, my former professor, Doktorvater, boss, and spiritual grandfather; and Jorge Bergoglio, the future pope who underwent a spiritual transformation in the Argentine city where my wife was born (Córdoba) and who has reimagined the papacy for a global Church more than any figure in centuries.

On that sundrenched day in the Piazza San Pietro, the Polish pope reminded the first cardinals of the new millennium that

the world is becoming ever more complex and changeable, and the acute awareness of existing discrepancies creates or increases contradictions and imbalances. The enormous potential of scientific and technological progress, as well as the phenomenon of globalization that is extending to ever new areas, require us to be open to dialogue with every person and every social institution, with the intention of giving to each an account of the hope that is in us.¹

In this article, I wish to place these two Jesuits who were among the addressees of that call, Dulles and Pope Francis, into conversation with one another about a moral issue that undoubtedly reflects the “complex and changeable” nature of our world and the “existing discrepancies” within it: that of capital punishment. This is one among many social realities where the Church’s posture as the *lumen gentium* demands that we believers work tirelessly to refocus that brilliance on the deepening shadows of globalization’s

dark underbelly. Christians of every stripe still willfully ignore too many vulnerable populations suffering in anonymity, whether in overcrowded prisons, coercive sweatshops, insalubrious brothels, makeshift deportation centres, or cramped isolation cells. Because of my previous work on theologies of migration, it is impossible for me to dissociate some of these explorations into human dignity from larger questions about human rights, the meaning of “criminality,” and social integration that arise in the moral and ecclesial debates about both execution and immigration, which seem to move closer to one another in heated American political rhetoric, at times.

Bergoglio and Dulles both left the Vatican a few days after that 2001 ceremony, crossing the Atlantic to return to radically different mission fields: the slums and *villas miserias* of Argentina for one, and the ivied (or ivory) ramparts of American higher education for the other. And despite the many differences in their personalities, formation, and areas of expertise, an untiring and principled commitment to human dignity is woven through both of their visions of the Church and its relationship to controverted social issues. It is thus worth exploring them in detail below.

A point of clarification may be needed first. The rhetorical device I employ to frame these arguments is not a strict dyad. As will be made clear, a third cardinal, Blase Cupich of Chicago, has contributed to the contemporary conversation by utilizing the thought of a fourth, Joseph Bernardin, and their insights help provide a means of exploring a broader ecclesial topography around the issue. It also recognizes that the since-deceased Dulles obviously does not have the possibility to rebut the proffered arguments or weigh new evidence, though Christianity consistently draws on and applies great thinkers from the past in non-originalist hermeneutical endeavours, and so the *modus operandi* should not seem unfamiliar to the current reader.

Dulles and Human Dignity

Pope Francis can at times seem like the leading—or lone—moral voice on the current world stage regarding many of the most pressing needs of our “common home.” Dulles wrote relatively little of which I am aware on the rights of migrants, or the evils of white supremacy, or the corrosive distortions of privilege and wealth inequality on the successful proclamation and reception of the gospel. He cites, in a few places, relevant documents about the freedom of migration and the integration of all people into society from Popes Pius XII, John XXIII, and Paul VI, of which anyone studying such questions from a Catholic angle is aware. And of course, he holds that “no ruler or society may arbitrarily deprive its citizens, or anyone else, of life, liberty or property. Slavery as an institution is unacceptable. Torture and cruelty are affronts to human dignity.”² But he asserts that there are relatively few instances where the “church has taken any official stand on neuralgic issues such as the busing of elementary school students, affirmative action, or reparations to be given to groups that in the past suffered from discrimination.”³ He, like all of us, was a historical and intellectual product of his day and, though many of these controversies of race and exclusion remain unresolved or have proven even more acute and divisive in our own times, there were different cultural and ethical skirmishes dominating the discourse in his lifetime.

Yet, one rich vein of his thought where we can clearly surmise his commitment to the ineradicability of human dignity is in his reference to the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998. Addressing its critics head on, Dulles defended the sacred, inviolable, and what he called “pre-political” tradition of human rights espoused by the United Nations General Assembly document.⁴ He traced the more modern notion of human rights to its ancient roots in human dignity. “If rights are not to be mere self-assertion,” he says, “they must be grounded in principle and be accompanied by acknowledgement of correlative duties.”⁵ He posits that non-governmental organizations and the Church may both be well positioned, in different spheres and with different capacities, to rise above ideology and individual or tribalist self-interest to offer a consistent defense of the inexpugnable dignity of each person, regardless of place of birth, age, state in life, or past decisions. If such a vision is to be realized, however, one must recognize that the impasses in ecumenical progress and the unmitigated rancour within intra-Catholic rows in recent years illumine the work that remains uncompleted to live up to such a charge in our day.

Tackling the issue at hand, Dulles clearly asserts that heinous lawbreakers “when condemned to imprisonment or death, retain their human dignity, which entitles

even the worst offenders to be treated with respect and not wantonly abused.”⁶ It would be difficult to imagine lumping those desperate for bread, work, or security into this “worst offenders” category. Even the strictest (and most historically narrow-sighted) interpretations of laws concerning migration and social integration need recognize that involuntary separation of children from their parents, excepting cases of malfeasance or abuse, undoubtedly transgresses upon the “inviolable rights of the family” as the “basic cell of society,” which are fundamental to the dignity he defends.⁷ It is hard to imagine the ardently anti-abortion cardinal condoning such an offensive idea as that of a pregnant woman fleeing violence and starvation across a border in desperation as somehow being guilty of smuggling an “anchor baby” inside of her womb.

Dulles is adamant that “rights” which are rooted in and manifest themselves in dignity are not simply to be understood as immunity from harm, but also contain positive entitlements: parental care, a just wage, personal security. Both human dignity and their resultant rights are for Dulles more fundamental than any political non-aggression pact. Because they are rooted in the transcendent, no one can be excluded from inheriting and being moulded by their inalienable bequest. Though Dulles does not frame it in the same categories, such a graced legacy must apply to impoverished and addicted people, those of low income or educational credentialing, migrants with or without residency authorization, and those condemned to or paroled from incarceration.

But even in the most extreme cases of vile affronts to society, Dulles asserts that “the sacred rights of every human being are greatly strengthened by recognition of their basis in divine law.”⁸ Though obviously antecedent to the current pope’s particular formulation of the phrase, the “globalization of indifference” plagued the issues that urged Dulles to defend the universal, inviolable, and prepolitical/transnational possession of rights and human dignity for all created children of God, in direct and not inverse proportion to their marginalization and vulnerability.

The Renunciation of the “Right to Life”?

The current pope obviously agrees that all human beings share a divinely endowed dignity. However, lest we homogenize their theological visions too facilely, it is crucial to explore the specifics of Dulles’s and Bergoglio’s contrasting views on the Church’s ability to condone or permit capital punishment, at least in theory. While both view the human person as perpetually manifesting the permanent dignitas of creaturehood, Dulles saw no discordance between his overarching view of human rights and the possible renunciation

of the right to life and to a natural death through law-breaking. Pope Francis has adamantly disagreed.

Though personally opposed to the practice, Cardinal Dulles famously noted that in his theological opinion, the Christian tradition did in fact allow for the execution of criminals under certain circumstances. He clearly distinguished this prudential application of terminating life from that of abortion and euthanasia, which he considered the direct taking of innocent human life.⁹ The decidedly political, and not theological, formulation of what came to be known in United States circles as the “pro-life” movement need not, and in fact for him did not, necessarily include the “right to life” for prisoners condemned to die, who in his opinion could—in admittedly rare instances—be seen to have deprived themselves of that right.¹⁰

Dulles is not the only Christian thinker to hold such a perspective. The most elaborate and nuanced defense of this in recent years has been offered by Edward Feser and Joseph Bessette in their extended study titled *By Man Shall His Blood Be Shed*.¹¹ They open this volume, which they term “a Catholic defense of capital punishment,” with a somewhat striking claim: the death penalty “*in fact promotes* a culture of life. For that reason – in addition to the mountain of other moral, scriptural, and magisterial considerations in its favor – capital punishment is something we believe Catholics ought to support.”¹² Feser and Bessette put forward a position much akin to Dulles’s: “no Catholic may condemn capital punishment as intrinsically unjust, though a Catholic may still oppose the use of the death penalty on prudential grounds.”¹³ It is clear that Feser and Bessette do not oppose its continuation in society, when administered after careful prudential judgment. They agree with Dulles that “As with personal self-defense and just wars, the death penalty’s appropriateness, morally and practically, depends on the circumstances.”¹⁴ Nowhere to my knowledge, however, does Dulles take the position as far as they do, referring to the execution of convicted offenders as “this most salutary punishment.”¹⁵

Dulles does have some harsh words for those who seek to claim that the Church now mandates an unqualifiedly abolitionist position on the question. He calls such a perspective “a radical revision – one might even say reversal – to the Catholic tradition,” and claims that

the mounting opposition to the death penalty in Europe since the Enlightenment has gone hand in hand with a decline of faith in eternal life.... While this change may be viewed as moral progress, it is probably due, in part, to the evaporation of the sense of sin, guilt, and retributive justice,

all of which are essential to biblical religion and Catholic faith.¹⁶

It is for him “secular humanism” and not a “deeper penetration of the gospel” from which the most full-throated protests to the death penalty come.¹⁷ It is particularly striking to note that he was making these comments in an era when many American bishops were more overtly abolitionist than were the popes who nominated them to their sees.

Yet, Dulles also makes clear that “Catholics, in seeking to form their judgment as to whether the death penalty is to be supported as a general policy, should be attentive to the guidance of the pope and the bishops.”¹⁸ My current pope (Francis) and bishop (Cupich) are offering moral guidance to me today in a decidedly different direction from his interpretation.

Development: It Is a-Comin’

As alluded to above, Pope Francis shares with Dulles a theological anthropology that argues that human dignity is inherent, permanent, and co-constitutive of the mortal experience on earth. However, the pope’s recent instruction to amend the *Catechism of the Catholic Church’s* §2267 to reflect a development not only in prudential applications of the death penalty, but explicitly in doctrine, stands in rather sharp contrast to the arguments laid forth by Dulles, Feser, and Bessette that one can support capital punishment as a reality still respectful of human dignity in the 21st century. Since 1997, §2267 had read that “cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity today are very rare, if not practically non-existent.”¹⁹ The bishops’ collective movement away from a defense or endorsement of the practice was already then well under way. But Francis has altered the text to make an even stronger statement on the issue:

Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good.

Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes. In addition, a new understanding has emerged of the significance of penal sanctions imposed by the state. Lastly, more effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption.

Consequently, the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that ‘the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person’, and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide.²⁰

While both Dulles and Francis obviously recognize that capital punishment was a regular historical occurrence, in many cases enacted by Christians toward Christians, Francis posits that it is not merely historical or pragmatic changes (such as more secure prisons) that led him to insist on the inadmissibility of the practice from a Catholic perspective. The current Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Luis Ladaria Ferrer, S.J., refutes such a point in the accompanying explanatory letter of the change, which asserts that this “development [of doctrine] centers principally on the clearer awareness of the Church for the respect due to every human life.”²¹ He calls this a “coherent development of Catholic doctrine,” which is situated “in continuity with the preceding Magisterium.”²²

Interestingly, both Cardinals Dulles and Ladaria (the latter assumedly representing the vision of the current Holy Father) find support for their position outlined in Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*.

Dulles uses the 1995 text to distinguish from the other practices it more famously condemns, such as homicide, genocide, abortion, and euthanasia, leaving philosophical and ethical elbow room for the death penalty, albeit in applications almost bordering on hypothetical. As he puts it, “the State has the right, in principle, to inflict capital punishment in cases where there is no doubt about the gravity of the offense and the guilt of the accused.”²³ Dulles finds himself squarely in line with John Paul II’s interpretation of the contemporary situation. He makes clear that such a position is in line with many patristic sources; he is personally aware of “no official statement ... that denies the right of the state to execute offenders at least in extreme cases.”²⁴ Yet in praxis they recognize that “under present circumstances in countries like the United States, cases in which the death penalty is justified are extremely rare, if not non-existent.”²⁵

Francis’s interpretation of *Evangelium Vitae*, along with other pronouncements of John Paul II, such as his Christmas Message of 1998 and outspoken comments on the topic in St. Louis in 1999,²⁶ lead the current Holy Father to view the development of a renewed insistence of human dignity in this arena as remarkably consistent with the Polish pope’s teaching, as well as with that of Benedict XVI, who made similar pleas. The distinction (or development) comes in the apparent elimination of the *principle* that the Church can continue to accept capital punishment, as

Francis’s predecessors undoubtedly and explicitly had already sought its *practical* eradication from society. If the Church no longer endorses or accepts capital punishment in cases of heresy, as it once did, so too can it now recognize a development in approaches to dignity that would make the death penalty impossible for Catholics to continue to support, even in the face of physically violent crimes.

Ladaria, importantly, cites Pope Francis’s Letter to the President of the International Commission Against the Death Penalty. Praising their work and assuming responsibility for the Christian use of the practice, the pope argues, “Furthermore, [capital punishment] is to be rejected ‘due to the defective selectivity of the criminal justice system and in the face of the possibility of judicial error.’”²⁷

Here we have an admission, contra *Quanta Cura* and *Lamentabili*, not only that error *does* in fact have rights, but that the very means of determining the culpability of the one apparently manifesting that error are often deeply flawed. The signs of our times demand that we in the global North, and particularly in the United States, realize that realities of race, social exclusion, and poverty are not unrelated to the vast majority of inmates on death row. Inadequate, uncommitted, or ineffectual representation can and often does contribute to the “defective selectivity of the criminal justice system” to which Ladaria alludes, as does mental disability of the defendant, prejudicial biases, police corruption and manipulation, evidence contamination, and capital juror comprehension problems and peripheral cues (the attractiveness of the argument source, vividness of presentation, etc.).²⁸ Dulles admits that miscarriages of justice happen.²⁹ Still, his ecclesiological presentation does not give sufficient weight to the multifaceted complexity of criminological and sociological realities, nor to attendant questions of economic stratification, race, and privilege that inexorably lead certain types of persons in certain types of places to receive radically different sentences, and the impact the above has to have on Catholic thinking and duty in this sphere.

It is also interesting to note here the distinction many draw between the Church’s ongoing prudential recognition of the moral permissibility of the State’s right to legitimate self-defense and the protection of society in both (1) just international conflicts and (2) the cessation of active crimes when immediate violence is involved (as an American, the epidemic of mass shootings comes to mind).³⁰ Here the Thomistic principle of double effect is worth mentioning, despite the vast array of literature critical of it.³¹ Intending one effect and causing a secondary effect while intending a separate primary effect are not, for Aquinas, identical realities. Such an argument could today be made that

disarming an aggressor to protect oneself (individually or collectively) without the intent to end his or her life, even if mortal wounds result, is markedly different than the imposition of the death penalty by the State toward a person already in custody and condemned to die as a punitive sentence.³² John Finnis, for example, uses the language of “intentionally terminating life” *contra* “knowingly causing death,” and argues that the Catechism’s latest revision makes no substantive changes to Catholic teaching since the time of at least Pope Pius XII regarding this distinction, though Finnis sees other, wider developments taking place regarding the overall culpability of intending death in policing or military contexts, which are to his mind in need of closer study. Yet, there remains a qualitative difference, rooted in intentionality, between the termination of life because one is under threat of imminent danger and doing so for almost entirely retributive reasons.³³

A New Trail to Blase

As mentioned above, my current ordinary also finds capital punishment to be contrary to the Gospel. Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago has pointed out the intrinsic flaw to arguments that the death penalty offers an authentic path toward retributive justice, even if it were administered fairly and flawlessly, which it decidedly *is not*. As he puts it: “At a profound human level, we tend to believe that by executing a murderer, we are somehow helping rebalance the scales of justice. But that thinking is flawed, for the real tragedy of murder is that there is no way to rebalance the scales of justice, no way to bring life back to those who have been killed or to restore them to their grieving families.”³⁴

When United States Attorney General William Barr announced in July 2019 that the Justice Department was reversing a moratorium on the federal death penalty for the first time in 16 years, Cupich called the decision “gravely injurious to the common good, as it effaces the God-given dignity of all human beings, even those who have committed terrible crimes.”³⁵

All of this follows from one of Cupich’s overarching pastoral initiatives, inheriting one of his predecessor’s visions, and adapting it to the signs of our times. Cupich has referenced and built upon Cardinal Joseph Bernardin’s famous “consistent ethic of life,” which itself argued against divorcing abortion and euthanasia from Catholic views on ending life in other contexts, to offer a revised “consistent ethic of solidarity.”³⁶ The interdependence exhorted in this global ethic critiques both the neo-libertarian and isolationist world views that in his opinion distort Catholic social teaching’s defense of an intrinsically social and common humanity, one that persists even in the face of grave misconduct. When reading Cupich’s various writings and comments on the theme, such interdependence, and the

collective self-examination it demands, preclude the Church from admitting or endorsing capital punishment today, in his opinion. Cupich claims that this approach reflects the Holy Father’s holistic defense of the sacredness of life and inviolability of human dignity, without exceptions.

We live in an era when the dignity of human life is threatened. Wherever we turn we encounter mounting efforts to treat the lives of men and women as mere means to larger and allegedly more important goals.... This is why it is so vital for us to have this discussion, and especially for us to urge all elected officials and leaders to recognize their responsibility but also the vested interest of society in defending the sacredness and value of every human life. This principle of the dignity of human life must underpin any reference to inequality, inconsistency, and systemic injustice. It is what holds together our care for the poor, the sick, the migrant, the excluded. Our assertion that the value of a human life does not depend upon an individual’s quality of life or age or moral worth must apply in all cases. For if we protect the sanctity of life for the least worthy among us, we surely witness to the need to protect the lives of those who are the most innocent, and most vulnerable.³⁷

Interestingly, Cupich even cited Dulles at a presentation at the University of Chicago on this very topic, making clear that genuine dialogue, which is essential for the solidarity he urges, demands that “it takes great strength [and] virtue, to give permission to another person to sit across from you and let them tell you why they think you’re wrong.”³⁸ While Dulles and Cupich do not agree in their conclusions about the admissibility of the death penalty in principle, the latter’s willingness to take the opinion of the former seriously, and dialogue with opposing viewpoints, embodies precisely the commitment to synodality and generosity of spirit that he seeks to impress upon contemporary ecclesial and wider social discourse.

In Summary

To conclude, it is clear to anyone who has read their works that neither Avery Dulles nor Jorge Bergoglio have ever wavered in their commitment to recognize the God-given dignity of the human person. This is not earned or granted by governmental systems (though they can and often do obscure it through dehumanizing policies), but is a constitutive element of theological anthropology regardless of place of birth, religious affiliation, residency status, or behavioural norms—including criminality.

Even the familiar list of heinous villains in the course of human history never shed the inherited dignity of creation, or the eternal *imago Dei*, before or after death, though many have disregarded or distorted it—as we all can—in monstrous ways. Dignity is ultimately ineradicable and irrepressible, even for those who dwell in the shadows: whether that be of documented residency, degrading poverty, or of the guillotine, firing squad, electric chair, gas chamber, or valley of death itself. Dulles and Bergoglio might not have agreed on what that dignity precisely demands of us as Christians in regard to condoning the execution of criminals. The former thought an unqualifiedly abolitionist position on the issue to be a radical revision, even potentially a “reversal,” of the Tradition, whereas the latter sees it as a coherent development of Catholic doctrine. Perhaps having such differences of opinion can in some instances be “right and just,” to borrow a liturgical phrase. Neither argued for its widespread use in restoring law and order to contemporary modern societies, though other voices in their lifetimes certainly have. My personal relationship with Dulles ought to make eminently clear that my critical response to his opinion is rooted in an unswerving respect and grand-filial affection for his encyclopedic theological knowledge and personal magnanimity.

But, a life of faith for both of these exemplary and holy men was never merely about parroting propositions, but rather about putting the treasure of faith into active practice in the situations that radically confront us as disciples. Today neither would likely refute that the reality of human dignity is too often imperilled by societal forces and callous indifference to suffering. I have no intention to cast one over against the other in offering potential paths forward. Yet, Pope Francis and Cupich have compellingly argued against Dulles that in defending the lives even of those accused and found guilty of unspeakable crimes, in sentences always handed down by fallible human means, Christianity bears powerful witness to the unconditional value of human existence and to the hope of redemption even in the face of overwhelming challenges of viciousness, despondency, apathy, or remorselessness. Though Dulles may have disagreed with their ultimate assessment, and the changes in the Catechism that have followed it, it is becoming more widely accepted in Catholic circles today that those condemned for capital crimes cannot justly be deprived of an existential relationship with the Source of all life and absolution, with the transcendent God who finds all such women and men important and “wants to work wonders” in them, even on death row.³⁹ A developing awareness of universal human dignity, and not merely one of fluctuating time and circumstance, has led to this revision in the Church’s learning and teaching (importantly, in that order) concerning capital punishment. Our times

seem to be calling contemporary believers to emulate and enact, not to overspiritualize, the words of the Psalmist:

Let this be recorded for a generation to come,
 so that a people yet unborn may praise
 the Lord:
 that he looked down from his holy height,
 from heaven the Lord viewed the earth,
 to hear the groans of the prisoners,
 and loose those who were condemned to die.
 (Psalm 102:18-20)

For ours is a God “ready to pardon” (Nehemiah 9:17). Perhaps now Catholics are finally striving to become the same.

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1 Homily of John Paul II, Ordinary Public Consistory, 21 February 2001, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_20010221_concistoro.html. Accessed May 20, 2020.

2 Dulles, “Catholic Social Teaching and American Legal Perspective,” *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 30 (2002): 277–89, at 279.

3 *Ibid.*, 285.

4 “Human Rights: The United Nations and Papal Teaching.” McGinley Lecture, November 18, 1998. Published in Dulles, *Church and Society: The Laurence J. McGinley Lectures 1988-2007* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

5 *Ibid.*, 286.

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*, 281. This language is drawn from John Paul II’s *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), particularly §46.

8 *Ibid.*, 288.

9 This is not a note designed to speak to the worthiness of this argument, or its many critics.

10 Cf. “The Death Penalty: A Right to Life Issue?” McGinley Lecture, October 17, 2000. Published in Dulles, *Church and Society*.

11 Edward Feser and Joseph M. Bessette, *By Man Shall His Blood Be Shed: A Catholic Defense of Capital Punishment* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2017). They have continued this defense apace with the recent conversations initiated with Pope Francis’s decision to alter the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

12 *Ibid.*, 15. Italics in the original.

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*, 380.

15 *Ibid.*, 384.

16 *Ibid.*, 336–37.

17 *Ibid.*, 337.

18 *Ibid.*, 344.

19 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §2267. The footnote alludes to *Evangelium Vitae* §56, which was published after the Catechism’s promulgation. The original text read: “If bloodless means are sufficient to defend human lives against an aggressor and to protect public order and the safety of persons, public authority should limit itself to such means, because they better correspond to the concrete conditions of the common good and are more in conformity to the dignity of the human person.” John Paul II cites this in *EV*, before approving the change to §2267 in 1997.

20 Pope Francis, *New Revision of Number 2267 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church on the Death Penalty – Rescriptum “Ex Audentia SS.MI.”* http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20180801_catechismo-penadimorte_en.html. Accessed May 21, 2020.

21 Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, "Letter to the Bishops Regarding the New Revision of Number 2267 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church on the Death Penalty," 1, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/ladaria-ferrer/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20180801_lettera-vescovi-penadimorte_en.html. Accessed on May 20, 2020.

22 Ibid., 7.

23 "The Death Penalty: A Right to Life Issue," 344.

24 Avery Dulles, "Catholicism and Capital Punishment," in *Change in Official Catholic Moral Teachings*, ed. Charles E. Curran (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 137.

25 Avery Dulles, "Catholic Teaching on the Death Penalty: Has It Changed?" in *Religion and the Death Penalty: A Call for Reckoning*, ed. Erik C. Owens, et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 28.

26 The USCCB cites these and other like statements, such as Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Sant'Egidio in 2011, where the pontiffs extolled those working to abolish the practice, albeit while never claiming it contradicted Catholic teaching in principle. <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/death-penalty-capital-punishment/holy-father-and-vatican.cfm>. Accessed May 21, 2020.

27 Ladaria, "Letter to the Bishops," §6. Francis's letter of March 20, 2015, also makes an important connection to the collective guilt of a State that kills by omission, via an "economy of exclusion and inequality." Similar arguments arise in his December 17, 2018, address to the same body.

28 For an excellent analysis of the latter, see Mona Lynch and Craig Haney, "Discrimination and Instructional Comprehension: Guided Discretion, Racial Bias, and the Death Penalty," *Law and Human Behavior* 24:3 (2000): 337–58.

29 See Dulles, "Catholic Teaching on the Death Penalty," 29. Here he lists a number of reasons for militating against the current usage of capital punishment, which passingly mention prejudice, adequate legal counsel, and psychological impairment.

30 I am indebted to Circuit Court of Cook County (IL) Judge Thomas More Donnelly for his helpful insights leading to this section of the text.

31 See, for two representative examples among many, Jonathan Bennett, "Morality and Consequences," in James P. Sterba, ed., *The Ethics of War and Nuclear Deterrence* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1985), 23–29, and Haig Khatchadourian, "Is the Principle of Double Effect Morally Acceptable?" *International Philosophical Quarterly* 29:109 (1988): 21–30.

32 In terms of technical theology, I wrestle with these questions more from an ecclesiological angle than a moral one in this piece, but the boundaries between the two (like so many others in human life) are quite obviously permeable and dynamic, rather than barricaded and fixed.

33 This ought not be interpreted as an endorsement of the profoundly biased "Stand Your Ground" laws in parts of the United States, or the tragedies that have arisen in their wake. One must be acutely

aware of what "imminent danger" implies, and never confuse it with "unrealistic racially motivated hysteria." I also do not intend to imply in citing Finnis that I share his broader conclusions: "Is Christ's Church coming to heel behind atheist or pantheist secular globalist powers, and agendas, that it would do well to desist from flattering? ... For we should be under no illusions: the organs of the European Council, the United Nations, and the European Union, unconcerned to exclude from human society all intent to kill, and disdainful of God's lordship over life and death, are devoted to the opaque language of dignity. They deploy it constantly, bureaucratically, to promote their rejection of capital punishment but equally their indulgence towards euthanasia, suicide, and the many forms of anti-marital sex, and the radically unjust promotion of gender fluidity and same-sex parodies of marriage." Italics in the original. *Public Discourse: The Journal of the Witherspoon Institute*, two-part series on capital punishment by John Finnis, August 22–23, 2018, <https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2018/08/39396>. Accessed on May 21, 2020.

34 <https://thetablet.org/cardinal-cupich-revising-stance-on-death-penalty-cant-rebalance-the-scales-of-justice>. Accessed on May 20, 2020.

35 @CardinalBCupich tweet, cited in Carol Zimmerman, "Catholic leaders object to reinstatement of federal death penalty," *Catholic News Services*, July 26, 2019. He went on to say in subsequent comments, "When the state chooses to perform executions even when there are ways to protect society, it has concluded that the right to life is conditional after all" and "A state that refuses to use the death penalty advances a culture of life with great power of witness precisely because it protects the lives of those who have been judged least worthy of its vindication."

36 While this has been an ongoing theme of Cupich's public engagement, the most widely read synopsis of his effort is likely "Cardinal Blase Cupich on the Signs of the Times: Witnessing to a Consistent Ethic of Solidarity," *Commonweal*, May 19, 2017. <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/cardinal-blase-cupich-signs-times>. Accessed on May 20, 2020.

37 "Remarks of Cardinal Blase Cupich at the American Bar Association on Capital Punishment," August 2, 2018, <https://www.archchicago.org/cardinal-cupich-s-statement/-/article/2018/08/02/-remarks-of-cardinal-blase-j-cupich-at-the-american-bar-association-on-capital-punishment>. Accessed on May 20, 2020.

38 Cf. Blase Cupich, Keynote Lecture, Virtue, Happiness, and the Meaning of Life Capstone Conference, October 14, 2017. The full text can be found on www.thevirtueblog.com. His allusion is drawn from Dulles, "Christ Among the Religions," *America* 186:3 (2002): 8–15.

39 Pope Francis, "Address to Penitentiary Police and to Staff of the Penitentiary and Justice Administration for Minors and the Community," September 14, 2019. This comment was made explicitly to the prisoners entrusted to the staff. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/september/documents/papa-francesco_20190914_polizia-penitenziaria.html. Accessed on May 20, 2020.

Jesus Christ for Koreans in The United Church of Canada

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Koreans within Canada and The United Church of Canada form a diaspora culture marked by their experience of migration.¹ This involves a quest for a new identity that is marred by a lack of full acceptance by the dominant white cultures in both. Many Koreans in Canada also no longer fit in Korea if they return there. They thus find themselves betwixt and between;² no longer simply Koreans, yet not fully accepted as Canadians either. They are out of structure, neither one nor the other. This is a liminal state with creative potential. It can create knowledge of the sin of the surrounding social order that those who fit into it are unable to recognize and openness to new forms of community that transcend some limitations and injustices of the old.³ However, like most Koreans in the United States, the liminality of most Koreans in Canada is made permanent and enforced by the white majority consciously or otherwise failing to fully accept them.⁴ This permanent, enforced liminality is a form of marginalization, an “externally imposed and societal discrimination.”⁵ Even wealthy and well-educated Koreans in Canada experience marginality “due to their race or inability to communicate in the dominant language.”⁶ Though this marginality is primarily one of status, it tends to limit Koreans’ earning power, career opportunities, and life experiences.

Koreans in Canada are typically capable people. Most have migrated to Canada and established new homes here. This tremendous undertaking requires courage, vision, adaptability, resourcefulness, and resilience. Like other migrants, they must develop a new life in a society very different from that to which they were accustomed. Most Koreans in Canada have done this, creating new communities with a distinctive Korean diaspora culture. They have become part of Canadian society and the United Church, and contribute to the well-being of both.

Their marginality gives their identity a distinct fragility.⁷ A racist taunt or even a well-intentioned comment by a white person can shatter their sense of belonging and reinforce their marginality in Canadian culture. The 1992 Los Angeles riots showed Koreans in the United States that this psychic vulnerability is matched by a social vulnerability. The same is true in Canada.

Though some Korean immigrants have experienced rapid upward social mobility,⁸ few enter the upper class of Canada.⁹ “Their socio-economic position is generally middle class,” and they often face “disadvantages and discrimination in the labour market.”¹⁰ As marginalized people, most Koreans in Canada do not have the same status as white people. They frequently have less social capital in the sense of social contacts and influential relationships outside of the Korean diaspora community. This increases their vulnerability to psychic and social aggression, and the fragility of their identities and communities.

Koreans in Canada have hybrid identities resulting from the fusion of the culture and religion they bring with them, with that which they encounter in Canada. This hybridity is not the same for all. Koreans born and raised in Canada are not formed by Korean culture in the way that their immigrant parents or grandparents were. Their identity and cultural values are usually not the same. Also, Korean immigrants do not all bring the same Korean culture to Canada, and the culture that theirs fuses with varies depending on where they live in Canada. This creates differences within the Korean diaspora community as well as between it and the rest of Canadian society. Their hybrid identities create a need for freedom in the church. The patterns of worship, decision-making, and service that suit white members of the United Church may not fit Koreans belonging to it.

The introduction to the Twenty Articles of Doctrine in the United Church’s Basis of Union states that the United Church “acknowledges the teaching of the great creeds of the ancient Church.”¹¹ Presumably, this refers to the Nicæan Creed and the Chalcedonian Definition. At the heart of the Christological teaching of these creeds is the soteriological principle that the “unassumed is the unhealed.”¹² Early church theologians like Gregory of Nazianzus or Augustine used this principle to understand Jesus’ person and saving significance in relation to human nature in general. But people always exist in historically concrete cultures that form part of who they are. Accordingly, this principle makes it necessary to inculturate the gospel, to understand Jesus in relation to and in terms of a

people's own culture and context. Otherwise the part of them formed by their culture will be unredeemed and their understanding of the gospel may divert their attention from the real sins and evils facing them. For most Koreans in Canada, this means that Jesus must be understood in relation to their experiences of migration, their condition of marginality, and their hybridity.

Inculturating Christology in this way can also have saving significance for the white majority in the United Church and Canada. Social groups often do not see the oppressions or marginalizations they perpetrate. As Jesus is inculturated into racialized minority cultures, the sufferings, marginalization, and *han* of these peoples are portrayed in their understanding of him; members of a dominant culture come face to face with its racist and marginalizing effects as they encounter these understandings of Jesus.¹³ White Christians learn the truth about their racism and that of their culture and history through encountering the Black Christ. Western Christians learn about the limited nature of Western culture through encountering the Asian Christ. Christian men learn about sexism through encountering the Crucified Woman. Through Jesus becoming inculturated into the Korean diaspora community in Canada, non-Korean Christians may learn about the marginalizing effects of Canadian culture, and Korean Christians can have their experiences addressed by the gospel and be empowered to carry out their unique ministry. The United Church is developing a tradition of asking Dietrich Bonhoeffer's question "Who is Jesus Christ for us today?" every few decades as its context changes. As Koreans form a distinctive group within it, this question also needs to be asked in relation to them.

Jesus in Relation to Koreans in Canada

When the gospel is read from the context of Koreans in Canada and the United States, one notes that Galilee, where most of Jesus' ministry occurred, was a marginal place. The reign of God was taking shape through Jesus and his ministry among the marginalized there, and through their openness to him that their liminal situation created.¹⁴ Jesus' ministry was characterized by a preferential option for the poor and marginalized. The reign of God that he inaugurated was "represented by people who were outsiders in the present society: by the poor, children, and the followers of Jesus."¹⁵ It brought healing, justice, peace, and acceptance to them and others, and involved liberation, freedom from marginalization, poverty and oppression, loneliness and alienation. It also involved reconciliation, forgiveness, and the acceptance of those who are ethnically and racially different. Finally, it brought freedom to love and to serve God. For example, women found a new place of freedom around Jesus.

Jesus' ministry included the celebration of God's goodness in common meals in which marginalized people participated. These meals symbolically brought a new identity to people of being beloved by God. Though society marginalized many of the people that Jesus ate with, he welcomed them. This was a source of dignity and self-acceptance to them. Jesus' message of the coming of God's reign was addressed to all. But he inaugurated it by entering into the marginality of Galileans, sharing it with them, awakening them to the creative possibilities of their liminal situation, and empowering them to actualize these. This began with his baptism by John. Here he stood among the marginalized as one of them. It concluded with his death on the cross. Jesus experienced the Galileans' marginality most profoundly when he went to Jerusalem, the centre of Jewish society. Here opposition to him became deadly. His opponents subjected him to an ultimate marginality by crucifying him.

The death of Jesus resulted from conflicts between him and the political, cultural, and religious leaders of his day.¹⁶ The clash between his liminal status as a self-proclaimed prophet from a marginal region with no institutional legitimation and those with institutionalized political and religious authority in Jerusalem was one reason for his death. The social systems intended to guarantee the stability and well-being of society; religion, law, and civil authority all joined in casting him out to die outside the city.

His death was also a complex event on a spiritual level. In his arrest, trial, and death, Jesus experienced numerous forms of sin, evil, and suffering simultaneously. On the cross, he experienced a profound spiritual liminality, hanging betwixt and between God and the nothingness of an agonizing, humiliating death, which he underwent out of faithfulness to God, God's people and creation, and God's coming reign.¹⁷ The gospels record this in different ways. Mark's gospel records the marginality of Jesus' experience with his cry of forsakenness on the cross. John's gospel portrays how the creative possibilities of Jesus' profound liminality were paradoxically being realized here by describing Jesus' death as his exaltation. In light of Jesus' resurrection, Christians later realized that in Jesus' death both were happening at once.

The Saving Significance of Jesus for Koreans in the United Church

Capability

John Calvin's notion of the threefold office of Christ as prophet, priest, and king¹⁸ can be used to discuss Jesus' saving significance in relation to Koreans in the United Church. The prophetic office of Jesus, that of telling the truth and giving life direction, relates primar-

ily to the capability of Koreans. His royal and priestly offices relate primarily to their fragility and diversity.

Koreans in Canada are typically capable people. When they immigrate to Canada, they frequently experience “disadvantages and discrimination at an early stage of adaptation, but they [often] overcome such obstacles with their strong work ethic and aspiration for upward mobility.”¹⁹ While many do not achieve the same income as white Canadians with similar education levels, still most manage to become self-supporting, many by becoming self-employed. Despite the obstacles many face as a racialized minority, most have created new homes for themselves in Canada. This is partly due to the work ethic that many bring with them. Koreans in Canada typically work hard. Whether they are students at college or university, business executives, or owners of a small business, most strive to perform well and achieve. This is often for good reasons: to provide for their families or to maximize their potential. For clergy and lay people, the harder they work at the church, the more they show how much they love God. Yet in today’s globalized consumer culture, this capability harbours a hidden danger.

The Korean work and educational ethic within the church and Canadian society can become demonic when one’s achievements and efforts become determinative of one’s identity, when people are judged by what they accomplish rather than accepted for who they are. This danger is accentuated by globalization and social media, which combine to continuously tempt people with vistas of ever more possessions, adventures, and aesthetic experiences. No matter how much one has or has seen and done, there is always more to acquire or experience.

By its success in offering new and enhanced ways of experiencing ordinary life for some and by its failure to do so for many, globalization reinforces in the imaginations of people, poor and rich alike, the assumption under which it operates: that nothing is more important in life than healthy and energetic, young and beautiful bodies at whose disposal are abundant varieties of food, clothing, gadgets, and games.²⁰

This can give rise to insatiable appetites for new experiences and consumer goods that suffocate or stunt compassion for others and undermine “global solidarity and environmental responsibility.”²¹ It can lead those who are capable to become slaves to untamed and wrongly directed desires for consumption that can never be satisfied. Koreans generally migrate to Canada in search of a better life for themselves and their families. As they become economically established, this quest can become twisted into a seeking after ever more, newer, expensive, and prestigious

possessions and lifestyles. As can happen to any Canadian, their solidarity with others may give way to a lifestyle of conspicuous consumption.

Religions like Christianity link people to a transcendent good that redirects human desires in a way that “can help generate both a healthy sense of contentment, even joy, and foster commitment to global solidarity, thereby helping achieve a greater measure of global justice.”²² Jesus’ prophetic ministry directs people toward contributing to societies and relationships characterized by justice, peace, and the acceptance and recognition of others. This relates daily life to the reign of God so as to charge it with transcendent meaning. It directs people’s capabilities away from insatiable and ultimately empty desires for unbridled consumerism and toward efforts to humanize life and celebrate the goodness of God in community with others.

Characteristic of much of the ethical teaching of Jesus is an orientation toward free, creative self-withdrawal for the sake of the poor, the marginalized, or discipleship to Christ.²³ This ethical orientation directly counters the ethos of endless consumption that globalization and social media can foster. As Koreans become established in Canadian churches and society, their ability and opportunities to practise this increase. By such self-withdrawal, white members can create room within the United Church for those who have been marginalized within it, including Koreans.

Jesus’ prophetic ministry bequeaths a prophetic calling to Koreans in the United Church. Latin American theologians reading scripture from positions of economic oppression and Asian-American theologians reading it from positions of cultural marginality have each identified a transcendent principle running through it that is essential to this calling. These principles are present in the ministry of Jesus and are to guide the life of the church. Latin Americans have identified God’s preferential option for the poor.²⁴ Many Korean Christian leaders in the United Church are familiar with this through exposure to Minjung theology in Korea.²⁵ Asian-American theologians like Sang Hyun Lee and Jung Young Lee have identified a complementary transcendent principle: God’s intention to establish a diverse and harmonious creation.²⁶ A key to living out the preferential option for the poor and establishing inclusive societies that are in keeping with God’s intention is a willingness on the part of those with power and privilege to practise free, creative self-withdrawal for the sake of others who exist on the margins.

As a marginalized community within Canadian society and the United Church, many Koreans are positioned to be a prophetic minority that lifts up these two principles and identifies where and how they direct the

church to follow Jesus. Their marginalized position enables them to see forms of oppression and exclusion that those at the centre of church and society may not notice or may consider to be normal. It can give them an openness to alternatives and a desire to create a more inclusive community.

The prophetic nature of Jesus' ministry also created space for people to exercise their capabilities. Korean women have many capabilities. But to date, "the patriarchal, sexist culture that still prevails in many Asian American households"²⁷ frequently prevents them from exercising these in leadership in the church, community, or society.²⁸ This tendency to restrict women's leadership contrasts with the "new attitude towards women"²⁹ that Jesus displayed.

A key to overcoming it will be the practice of free, creative self-withdrawal by Korean men. The prophetic ministry of Jesus calls Koreans to be in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed. In Germany during the Second World War, this call was summarized by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his notion of Jesus Christ as the person for others,³⁰ the one who undertook responsible action for the sake of others, particularly the victims of society. This understanding of Jesus and his prophetic ministry is suitable for Koreans in the United Church. One temptation facing many Koreans is to live quietly, concentrating on their own communities and family lives, not getting involved with larger society. Koreans are called to care for their families and build supportive and celebratory diaspora communities that enable themselves and other Koreans to build new lives in Canada. As long as this inward focus on "clustering" creates communities with porous borders that are open to others and wider society,³¹ it is in keeping with the ministry of Jesus. However, as the person for others, Jesus calls Korean Christians in Canada to become involved with others outside of their own community as part of their seeking the coming of God's reign. As they seek to follow Jesus, they must engage surrounding Canadian society: entering into its religious debates, its civil issues, its concerns with reconciliation between settlers and Indigenous peoples and with recognition of Quebec as a distinct society. They need to follow Jesus as the person for others within Canadian society, not apart from it.

Bonhoeffer's call to discipleship and responsible action on behalf of the victims of society remains an appropriate interpretation of the way of Jesus. However, his "world come of age,"³² in which humanity is able to take charge of its affairs, has given way to a modernizing world "spinning out of control,"³³ in which human actions have created and accelerated far-reaching processes and effects such as climate change which have incalculable risks.³⁴ The multicultural world society produced by globalization is characterized by

"intranational upheavals and international conflicts,"³⁵ which frequently defy efforts to establish peace and justice. The functional differentiation of modern societies tends to isolate social and cultural spheres like education, health care, law, politics, religion, and the economy from each other. This fragments societies, making it difficult for them to effectively address overarching problems like climate change.³⁶ Globalized capitalism has increased the gap between rich and poor, condemning many to the economic margins of society. This increased gap, along with international conflicts, the targeted persecution of minorities and rampant crime in some states, and the increased possibilities for travel and communication created by globalization, has created an international refugee crisis. In the midst of this crisis, Jesus is not just the person for others. He is also present in the other: the refugee seeking a place to live safe from violence and persecution. According to Matthew 25:45, the risen Christ meets us in all persons in need: in the poor, the refugee, in all in whom the fragility of life is glaringly apparent.

Efforts to remedy moral and natural disasters and shape a just society now seem dwarfed by the crises facing humanity and threatening creation. The prophetic ministry of Jesus directs Christians to where they need to be and what they need to do. But what sustains such commitment? The love that the beauty of Jesus' moral example gives rise to can turn to despair or rage if not supported by something beyond human powers to act. A modernizing world spinning out of control reveals the fragility of human efforts to build a just society and the need for such efforts to be empowered and encouraged by a transcendent good, grounded in God.

This turns us to Jesus' royal office and the hope inspired by his resurrection. Jesus, the person for others, experienced the fragility of life and good works in his death. Yet he became the risen Christ, vindicated by God, raised as a sign of hope for humanity and creation.

Fragility

Koreans experience the fragility of life when they migrate to Canada. Old certainties dissolve in the new society they enter. Leaving one's home, even in search of a better future, often creates an irrevocable sense of loss, and even in a globalized age of social media and air travel, creates a great distance between friends and family who remain behind. This sense of fragility is deepened by the marginality that most Koreans experience in Canada. A sense of belonging to something that has intrinsic and enduring value—a place, a country, a larger group—is constitutive of many people's sense of self.³⁷ Such belonging gives

people roots and identity, a sense of participating in something transcendent that gives life meaning and orientation. This sense of belonging to their new home is denied to most Koreans in Canada. Their experience of marginality can create permanent psychic scars³⁸ and a lasting sense of *han*.

The resurrection of Jesus brings assurance, peace, and hope in relation to the fragility of life. In raising Jesus, God's love overcame in principle all that threatens and diminishes life, creating the promise of a different future and bringing into history a new reality that sin and death cannot destroy and that promises and pushes toward their overcoming.

This peace helps heal the loss that comes with migration. It brings the assurance that the community one has lost through immigrating is not gone forever, but is gathered up eternally in God's redeeming love. Through the risen Christ, one becomes part of the communion of saints that spans continents and ages. In this community, the beauty of family relationships and friendships is not lost to time. One meaning of Jesus' resurrection is the promise that in the end, "all will be well, and all manner of things shall be well."³⁹ From this flows a peace that enables one to accept life in all its fragility and rejoice in its beauty, however fleeting and frail it may be. The pain and loss of migration remain, but they are taken up into the "final, eschatological peace"⁴⁰ which the risen Jesus brings to the disciples. This gives rise to a joy that has forgotten nothing and that seeks expression in celebration and love for others. The wounds of the risen Christ are marks of the marginalization that his resurrection has overcome. His resurrection brings the hope that Koreans' marginalization will one day be overcome, too.

Understood thus, Jesus' resurrection inspires the courage to love and faithfulness to the earth. When the love that Jesus' moral example gives rise to begins to flag, Jesus' resurrection can sustain it. As God's love has overcome the cross in Jesus' resurrection, Christians see here a promise that all the love shown in history has an enduring value, and that ultimately God's love will overcome sin, evil, suffering, and death, once and for all.

Jesus' resurrection also challenges Korean Christians in Canada. The marginality of most may tempt them to demonize white and other Canadians and retreat into the Korean diaspora. In order to exercise the prophetic potential of their liminality, Koreans need to develop forms of community with others across racial and ethnic lines.⁴¹ This is precisely what Jesus' resurrection challenges them to do.

According to Karl Barth, through Jesus' resurrection and ascension, "all things are put under Him."⁴² This does not mean that everything that happens serves God. But as the risen Christ is active everywhere, it means that Christians must be prepared for "parables of the Kingdom" to be spoken to them from the world at large, from those outside church.⁴³ Adapting this to the situation of Koreans in Canada and the United Church, this means they can expect to hear parables of the kingdom from all places, including white society and white members of the church—precisely those who marginalize them! By parables of the kingdom, Barth meant words that the church needs to hear, be they insights into the human condition, into social trends or conflicts, or even into who Jesus Christ is and what he calls Christians to be and do. This means that Korean Christians may hear true words that illuminate their situation, their calling, and who Jesus Christ is for them today, from white society and white church members. Korean Christians in Canada must think for themselves and chart their own course in following Jesus. But as they do so, because of Jesus' resurrection, they may at times receive useful ideas and insights from white Christians and others. Examples of this might be the work of cultural anthropologist Victor Turner, whose notions of liminality, anti-structure, and *communitas* have been important for Asian-American theologies,⁴⁴ or the United Church's decision to become an intercultural church.⁴⁵ The approval of this request can be seen partly as the risen Christ working and speaking through a majority that was largely white, saying something to Korean members and other racialized minorities in the United Church. Understood thus, Jesus' resurrection challenges Korean Christians to remain in conversation and engaged with white Christians and white society, even though the latter may marginalize them. Conversely, white United Church members need to listen carefully to what the risen Christ is saying to them through Korean members and others.

The priestly work of Jesus centres on his dying for others in order to create for them a new identity and community with God based not on their own performance, but on what he has done for them. As summarized in the doctrine of justification by grace, this has several meanings for Korean Christians in Canada. First, through justification, God bestows divine acceptance and recognition upon those who have been marginalized by society. Justification counters the white refusal of recognition with recognition by God in Jesus Christ.⁴⁶ It "relativizes all finite principles as the ultimate source of the worth of human persons before God,"⁴⁷ thus freeing Koreans from having to conform to the "white normativity"⁴⁸ that has been present in the United Church. Second, Koreans in Canada, like all migrants, need "to discover an inner identity that fos-

ters their own agency,"⁴⁹ and resists external identities imposed on them by dominant cultures that increase their "vulnerability and subjugation."⁵⁰ Justification by grace provides this. Third, their liminal condition can be an "uncertain and bewildering place,"⁵¹ where questions of who they are and how they should live can cause them never-ending anxiety. Justification by grace addresses this by providing an inner identity based on what God has done in Jesus Christ. From this comes a peace that can enable Koreans to cope as best they can with the uncertainties and question that life brings, knowing that whether they cope well or not, they belong to God. This frees them to live creatively with "interstitial integrity," with an acceptance and celebration of their liminal status, and a freedom to create a new identity out of the different cultures and traditions that are part of who they are.⁵² Justification by grace can thus empower Koreans in Canada to embrace the creative possibilities of their liminal situation and fulfill their prophetic potential.

Diversity

How does Jesus direct and enable Korean Christians to live amid the cultural and religious diversity of Canada and with the diversity within the Korean diaspora community?

First, Jesus' example and the new community with God that he creates is a source of evangelical freedom that enables Korean Canadians to go their own way in following Jesus. Second, the justification by grace that Korean Christians enjoy extends to others within and outside the church. It creates a field of meaning that enables them to live with cultural and religious differences, to recognize and accept others, even while they may critically engage them.

Jesus is a model to Koreans in the United Church through the freedom he exercised in relation to his inherited religious traditions. Jesus respected Torah, Temple worship, and Jewish social conventions of his day. Yet he demonstrated a remarkable freedom in relation to these,⁵³ in order to bring healing to the sick, relief to the demon possessed, and fellowship to the excluded. As Koreans seek to build a new identity for themselves and follow Jesus in Canada, they need to have a similar combination of respect and freedom toward church traditions they bring to Canada and in relation to those that they encounter in the United Church. This freedom is a gift to them from Jesus. The gospel binds Christians to the memory of Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection. But it frees them to understand and implement this memory in dialogue with what the Spirit is saying to the church through signs of the times. The example of Jesus shows that love is expressed through faithfulness and respect that is free to change and adapt as circumstances require.

As Christians follow Jesus, there will be variations in the way they do this.⁵⁴ A certain pluralism of belief and practice is to be expected and welcomed in the church within a broader context of shared belief.

Justification by grace enables Korean Christians to live with pluralism within the church and to live with cultural and religious pluralism outside of it. As it frees them from white religious/cultural normativity, it also obligates them to extend this same freedom through acceptance and recognition to others, within the church and beyond it. The church is bound by faith in Jesus Christ. Yet interpreting the gospel in terms of justification by grace creates within it openness to the world. The result should be an ethos within the church of "bounded openness"⁵⁵ that provides an overarching perspective for it that encompasses cultural and religious differences. This provides a basis by which Korean Christians can live and work together with those of other religions and no religion.

As the body of Christ, the church is called to be a "contrast community, which by living out the values of Jesus makes God's love present in the world and so prepares it for its transformation into the new heavens and the new earth."⁵⁶ It must present these values in contrast to public discourse that is cynical, self-serving, and forgetful or oppressive of society's victims. Jesus calls and enables Korean Christians to make their place on the edge of society a productive contrast to the exclusive centres of church and society. Within the United Church, other marginalized communities like Francophones and Indigenous peoples play a similar role. The call of Jesus to the marginalized is not to become a new centre, exclusive or forgetful of other marginalized peoples. It is to call existing centres into a new recognition and welcome of others, so that there is justice and room for all.

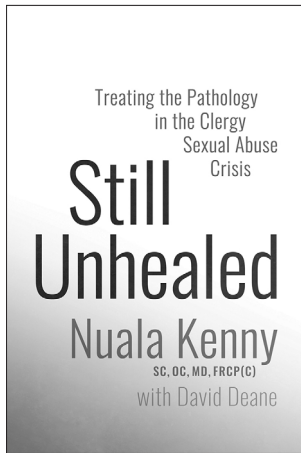
Conclusion

Through their faith and discipleship, Korean Christians extend the body of Christ into some of the margins of the United Church and Canadian society. In doing so they help transform both toward greater inclusivity and diversity and their own status changes. Their marginality remains. But it becomes a liminality through which Jesus addresses the wider church and society in a prophetic way. Thus, they play a unique and vital role in the coming of God's reign.

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- 1 This paper has benefited from discussion of it at the Religion and Culture colloquium of St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon, on January 30, 2020.
- 2 Peter Phan, *Christianity with an Asian Face* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 8–9.
- 3 Sang Hyun Lee, *From a Liminal Place: An Asian American Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 10.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 3–5.
- 5 In-Jin Yoon, “The Korean Diaspora from Global Perspectives,” in *Korean Immigrants in Canada: Perspectives on Migration, Integration, and the Family*, eds. Samuel Hoh, Ann H. Kim, and Marianne S. Noh (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 48.
- 6 Chun Hoi Heo, *Multicultural Christology: A Korean Immigrant Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003/2005), 204.
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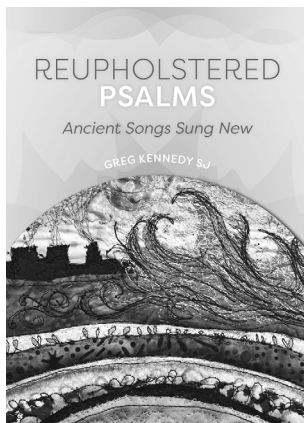
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