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Introduction

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The articles in this issue of *Critical Theology* are on disparate yet related topics. The lead article, by YunJung Kim, explores the marginality experienced by Koreans in Canada and how the relationships and solidarity established between Asian migrant women and Indigenous women in Canada is a significant instance of ecclesia. The second article, by Harold Wells, explores the climate change emergency. The third article reviews a macrohistory of the United States from 1900 to the present.

Three very different issues. Yet they are related. The individualism described and critiqued by Robert Putnam and Shaylayn Romeny Garrett in the book reviewed in the third article will need to be overcome for climate change to be adequately addressed and if migrants to the United States and Canada are to be welcomed here. Adequately addressing climate change will also require coordinated action by different churches, among others. The issue concludes with a book review of a recent addition to Dalit theology by a theologian currently living in the United States. In a globalized world, the lines of solidarity and relatedness are many and diverse.

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Toward Postcolonial Practice in Canadian Diasporic Contexts

Transformative Relocation from Asian Migrant Women's Perspectives

By YunJung Kim
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Ours is an era of migration. In the widespread global movement, Canada's promising image of diversity, equality, and inclusiveness has drawn many Asian migrants to choose this country as their new home. Yet as they search for that new home, the migrants' vision of hope and of a better life often becomes fragmented in their complex and complicated migrant reality. Canadian white colonialism and its interlocking dominant power structures operate through a whole array of migration processes, and thus Asian migrant women confront many obstacles and structural barriers preventing full participation in the host society. In such a hierarchical social environment, Asian migrant women's reality is that of a life-struggling site where they negotiate with the pervasive colonial power and confront systemic racism, sexism, and many other interlocking forms of oppression. Nevertheless, it is crucial to point out that the deprivation, wounds, and vulnerability of migrant life are not the final destination. Significantly, tension can be the condition for new construction, instability can be the source of openness, and wounds can open creative dissonance.

This article explores how Asian migrant women who are forced to remain perpetual strangers in the white dominant society can relocate themselves as creative agents of counter-narratives against white colonialism. I argue that by embracing their dislocation, and through their critical migrant perspectives on colonial power and their eagerness for justice and fullness of life, Asian migrant women can resist white colonialism and commit to building respectful, border-crossing, and interdependent relationships with others across social, cultural, and gendered boundaries.

This article develops through three sections. In the first section, which borrows from postcolonial feminist criticism, I examine how Asian migrant women have been marginalized by Canadian white colonialism and its imperialistic and patriarchal immigration policies. In the second section, I argue that when Asian migrant women attempt to rediscover their identity through an embrace of hybridity, multiplicity, and openness, they open new avenues of resistance, transformation, and relationality. In the third section, focused on some cases of solidarity-making between Asian migrant women and Indigenous women, I explore how Asian migrant women engage in new relationship-building with others. I conclude with a theological vision: that Asian migrant women's border-crossing solidarity with/for others is a significant enactment of the essential nature of *ecclesia*, both temporally and spatially, in which all vulnerable bodies can find empowerment and hope.

Asian Immigrant Women as Strangers in Canadian Colonial Contexts

Canadian Colonial Context

Canadian white colonialism represents a long-standing hegemonic project to build "a white man's country"[1] through the violent exclusion and marginalization of non-white racialized peoples in the Canadian legal systems and national formation. White European settlers' involvement in the dispossession and genocide of the Indigenous inhabitants and their communities confirm that Canada was built upon dishonourable and violent foundations. Beginning in the 15th century, the "Doctrine of Discovery" became the basis of colonization in many lands, including those of North America, fuelling white supremacy insofar as white settlers believed they were instruments of divine design and possessed cultural superiority.[2] Moreover, Canada's "benign peacemaker" myth has upheld the innocence of white settlers in the colonial process, even though they were historically committed to practices of assimilation, dispossession, and genocide against Indigenous communities.[3] This aspect of white settler colonial projects against Indigenous communities forms an unbroken thread from the past to the present.

In the early 20th century, during a period of increasing neoliberal economic competitiveness in the global context, Canadian white supremacy and nationalism took the form of immigration policies aimed

at non-white racialized peoples for the sake of national economic prosperity. The open-door policies of the late 1960s and 1970s under the point system generated gendered and racialized conditions for Asian migrant women that were structurally discriminatory and marginalizing. Under the family category of that policy, dependent Asian wives were forbidden access to social security programs in Canada, including subsidized housing, federally sponsored language programs, and social assistance, even in situations of abusive family relationships.[4] In cases of abusive family relationships, many dependent Asians legitimately feared that accessing support services might jeopardize their immigration status.[5] Although the family class category allowed women of the Global South some access to legal claims of Canadian citizenship,[6] it permitted only partial and restricted inclusion into the white dominant host society.

While the government takes a role in immigrant selection and settlement for humanitarian reasons, in recent decades women who are dependents in the family class category are continually exposed to systemic discrimination, exploitation, or abuse.[7] In 2013, immigrant women made up 40 percent of skilled workers, entrepreneurs, investors, and self-employed immigrant applicants.[8] However, while Canadian immigration polices favour those with the economic prosperity of the dominant whiteness, women's skills that are valued tend to be gendered and racialized, functioning as tools to support white hegemony.

Canada's Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) might be the clearest example of ways that Asian migrant women are managed through a highly gender-based migration process.[9] These caregivers are structurally vulnerable to exploitation because of the requirements of the LCP, low wages, and the sort of racial and gendered stereotyping that belies their level of skill and creates a barrier to their eventual incorporation as citizens.[10] Through the "feminization of immigration," the colonial process of racialization and the gendered construction of Asian women has amplified patriarchal white nationhood[11] and reinforced their lives as precarious, subordinate, and marginal.

Asian Migrant Women's Intersectional Lives

Asian migrant women's experiences of oppression and privilege have been shaped by multiple interlocking systems of dominant power. While the common categories tend to be race, class, and gender, other power axes related to sexuality, residency status, religion, language ability, or some combination of these shape migrant women's marginal experiences to different degrees.

Englishness – linguistic imperialism: "Englishness" is a form of discrimination that non-native English-speaking migrant women experience. Gillian Creese and Edith Kambere point out that accents "form a site through which racialized power relations are negotiated and 'Others' are reproduced materially and figuratively in Canada."[12] The white power holders of the Anglo/Franco community have regulated linguistic norms against non-native English speakers with accents, leading to a devaluation of minority languages and a refusal to recognize alternative identities and the rich cultural memories of minorities.[13] Such imperial linguicism is imposed upon Asian migrant women as a rationale for (dis)entitlement in employment or participation in civic society. While the accent barrier is used as a tool to control minority immigrants in racist, sexist, and classist ways, the white norm of Englishness produces an oppressive form of "accent discrimination" with hierarchy, exclusion, and marginalization as its consequence.

Heterosexualism: While Canadian immigration support is largely given to family immigrants who contribute to the labour market, the identities and issues of sexual minority immigrants are not appropriately catered for in immigration regulations and settlement processes. A hegemonic version of migration is upheld because of an assumption of heterosexuality in Canadian society. The identities or realities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender migrants are excluded from the government-funded "settlement services" aimed at aiding new immigrants' integration into mainstream society.[14] The heterosexual principles associated with race, class, and national origin mean that Asian queer migrants are seen as outsiders and thus face the reality of homophobia and heterosexism within the dominant host society.

Religious identity: In the Canadian religious context, "Christian theology becomes the trigger for the classificatory subjugation of all non-white, non-Western people,"[15] thereby victimizing Asian migrant women of religious difference through institutional and interrelated forms of religious, gendered, and racialized violence. For example, one survey found that more than 90 percent of Muslims have experienced discrimination since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a situation that particularly affects Muslim women with their religious symbols of hijab and creates a form of violence known as "gendered Islamophobia."[16] It is a colonial perception that white Anglo-Canadian Christian-centred culture is a superior culture to which all other religious practices are subordinate and in terms of which white Canadians feel entitled to abuse Muslim women both physically and verbally. Religious difference is thus a crucial barrier for Asian migrant women in their social interactions with others.

Legal status and citizenship: Attainment of citizenship is the hope of all migrants, because such legal status is a signifier of "full membership in the community with all its rights and responsibilities."[17] However,

to gain a political form of belonging, there is ongoing risk and insecurity, as "many de-skilled and marginalized Global South immigrants—straddling the line between surplus exploitation and unemployment—stand on the threshold of Canadian citizenship."[18] In immigrant hierarchies, Asian migrant women struggle with multiple restrictions and partial/minimal incorporation into mainstream society. The result is, as Castles calls it, a "hierarchy of citizenship,"[19] where Asian migrant women might feel a sense of belonging and inclusion, yet at the same time experience exclusion and rejection within their own society.

Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge that contemporary migrants in Canada are situated as privileged colonists vis-à-vis Indigenous people in the entangled settler–colonial relations. By cooperating with the white settler's colonial project of the "invasion" of Indigenous communities, the discourse of the citizenship of migrant bodies corresponds to Indigenous people's struggles of violence and marginalization.[20] Emma Lowman and Adam Barker make the following point:

> Being a Canadian citizen means, in theory, having one's rights defined in the Constitution and protected by the machinery of the state. … [T]hat means that for Settler Canadians, citizenship conveys a right to reside on, own, and exert control over lands taken from Indigenous nations, while Indigenous peoples are assigned fractions of their traditional territories, if any.[21]

In these complex colonial relations, the crucial question for Asian migrant women remains this: Without codifying their lives along a simple extension of the hegemonic citizenship they are entitled to, how can they find a responsible sense of belonging to the land along with Indigenous people?

As examined above, in Canadian colonial history and its legacy, Asian migrant women have been constructed as perpetual others, experiencing marginalization, discrimination, and exclusion in their multiple locations. This harmfully impacts Asian migrant women's self-understanding and their relationships with diverse others in the migrant context, which then take the form of mistrust, separation, and "cross-racial hostility."[22] Yet within such an imbalanced reality, Asian migrant women seek to resist the colonial imposition of assimilation and imagine "alterity from within subordination."[23] The next section explores how Asian migrant women disrupt the colonial definition of themselves and rewrite their self-understanding positively from a perspective of hybridity, multiplicity, and difference.

Asian Migrant Women's Hybrid Identity and Resistance

Orientalist Discourse

The knowledge system of the colonial West has constructed cultural representations of Asian women as fixed, homogenous, and inferior others. Building on Said's Orientalist project to deconstruct the Western binary view of identity, Kang NamSoon asserts that Orientalism is a white supremacist ideology that serves as "an epistemological and colonial device for guaranteeing Western hegemony" over non-Western identities, cultures, religions, and political groups as part of a colonizing process of knowledge construction.[24] In the colonial history of the Western world, Asian women are controlled through the internal logic of the Orientalist mechanism of essentialism, totalization, and objectification. This Orientalist discourse exercises colonial control over Asian migrant women's identities and their social functions in Western society.[25] Because the control of Asian women's cultural and gender identity occurs through imperialistic social structures, it suppresses their social mobility in the wider context of society.

More seriously, when Asian women internalize a white dominant script of inferiority and essential difference, they readily reproduce the colonial fantasy about themselves becoming a white normative subject. Bhabha argues that "[c]olonial authority is always ambivalent, contested, and conflictual, characterized not only by manifest power of domination but also by latent dreams, fantasies, and myths, and obsessions."[26] In the colonial circle of power, Asian women adopt the colonial patterns of assimilation into the Western norm and become themselves tools sustaining complex lines of systemic inequality in their multiple locations.

Constructing Hybrid Identity, Resistance, and Connections

The living location of migration is hybridized, multiple, and cross-cultural. As migrants make constant spiralling life-movements back and forth between their *roots* and *routes*, new positions emerge from these intermixing worlds. Homi Bhaba's term "hybridity" is appropriate for articulating the intermingling of cultures, "the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space" in global cross-cultural contexts.[27] Bhabha calls this the "Third Space," for it transgresses the binary logic of identity politics. On these paths of negotiation in the in-between space, identity changes, is reshaped, and there is recognition of difference, hybridity, and multiplicity.[28] By employing the postcolonial perspective of the Third Space, Asian women can engage in new ways of self-description and agency.

First, the affirmation of the hybrid identities of Asian women can function as a vital intervention against assumptions about identity that are part of the othering process of Asian women. Kang indicates that in the borderline-crossing space of diasporic situations, "monolithic categories of gender, class, race, or ethnicity are resituated," which in return yield "a space of resistance."[29] In the intermixing and the contradictory location of migrant lives, Asian women's identities are no longer coordinated as a "fixed, essentialist, singular entity but as a moving, becoming, and interconnecting, negotiating and hybridizing one."[30] This reconstruction of hybrid identity of Asian women serves to deconstruct the "we" (white, centre, and dominant) / "they" (non-white, margin, outsiders) binarism of the colonial paradigm. By searching for who they truly are as intercultural and open-ended beings, Asian women can disrupt the dominant groups' colonial definition of Asian women-ness (as racialized and gendered others) as well as their definition of Canadian-ness (white European).

Accordingly, when Asian migrant women embrace an open, relational, and hybrid identity by travelling "in many in-between worlds," the epistemological ground of relatedness becomes the ethical source of border-crossing solidarity with others. Eleazer Fernandez captures the internal principle of diasporic identity, stating that "[t]he translocal is a self that is porous to the interweaving of the many localities in the self. This person is locally rooted and globally winged. A translocal is one who experiences the interweaving, the tension, and the possibilities of one world of many worlds."[31] The self-positioning of "trans-locality" or "many-worlds living" promotes Asians to recognize the human conditions of interdependency at the multiple locations of colonial power, where the beneficial as well as the negative aspects of marginal women's lives are illustrated. It prompts Asian women to discover their moral responsibility to engage in justice-seeking solidarity with others across many boundaries, thereby building an interrelational web of life. With her notion of "interstitial integrity," Rita Nakashima Brock stresses that in the North American context, Asian diasporic women's ontological paradigm of connectiveness is embodied in their roles as agents of an organic connection to and solidarity with other marginal bodies struggling with various forms of violence and suffering.[32]

In dignifying their hybrid, relational, and interstitial living, Asian migrant women open up the capacity to discover new meaning in life, cultivate their subjectivity, and interact with many different people and worlds, thereby creating new spaces of transformation, empowerment, and relationship from their marginal spaces.

Border-Crossing Solidarity with Indigenous Women

The moral sense of Asian migrants is manifest through their solidarity-making with many other marginal bodies, especially Indigenous women, by resisting colonial practices and searching together for a common life-flourishing across all related terrains of the lived reality of Canada.

Complicity and Difference

In a white dominant society, the relationship between the two groups has formed in complex ways. Lowman and Barker argue that in this white colonial society, all settler communities derive social benefits from the displacement of Indigenous people.[33] Because white settler politics of settlement on the land have involved capitalist social progress, the responsibility is diffused, and all settlers therefore become complicit in the victimization of Indigenous people. Thus while new racialized migrant settlers pursue successful migrant lives by adopting the political identity of white Canadian-ness, their sense of legitimate belonging to the land and of being progressive, although seemingly positive, is in fact dishonest, disrespectful, and unjust.

Acknowledgement of their own complicity leads migrant settler women of colour in Canada to examine their relationship with Indigenous people. A colonial strategy of blindness and silence toward the Indigenous presence, consciously or unconsciously learned from white colonial knowledge, is then resisted through a recognition of the harmful perpetuation of the structural violence of settler society. Such critical awareness of their own complicity can fuel Asian migrant women to take responsibility for restoring the wrongdoing of history and institutional practices through justice-seeking solidarity with Indigenous women and by working toward mutual and respectful co-living on Turtle Island.

Life-Dialogue in Solidarity-Making

Solidarity between racialized migrant women and Indigenous women aimed at resisting the entangled colonial structures of subordination, racism, and gender-based violence is created through empathy, life-dialogue, and border-crossing collaboration. Some particular cases of such solidarity-making illuminate how these women have turned away from the given colonial relations and entered the relational space of empowerment, mutual support, and liberation for all.

The United Church of Canada's Sounding the Bamboo conference: The United Church of Canada's Sounding the Bamboo Conference is an outstanding example of solidarity with Asian Christian women standing with Indigenous women in a Christian faith community. The conference was designed to support

intercultural, interracial, and intergenerational dialogue for racialized women and to explore racial and gender justice issues.[34] In my view, the conference, themed "Mary, Eve, White Feather, and Me," held in 2010 in Winnipeg, was an instructive moment of encounter between Asian Christian migrant women and Indigenous women, who presented their experience of violence and cultural genocide and their wisdom about creation and the land.[35] This learning about Indigenous women's painful Turtle Island history inspired participants to interrogate the complexity and complicity of the role new migrant women have played as part of the settlers of this land. The shared sense of vulnerability and interrelatedness helped participants overcome their own personal biases and stereotyping of one another and to assert their agency in reimaging a new form of life based on co-existence and co-responsibility in churches, communities, and society. Greer Wenh-In Ng writes that women's empowerment and solidarity was concretely realized at the conference, which "recognizes and honors the multiplicity and difference claimed by its slogan, 'We are Many, We are One.'"[36] This does not mean solidarity between different racialized women and Indigenous women can solve all the complex relationships in the Canadian reality immediately. Yet, conviction can grow that the spirit and act of connectedness binds wounded women together in a permanent promise of solidarity. Such an embodied vision is reflected in the theme song of the conference: "Let each gift be shared and honored: language, culture, home, diaspora—each so rich, enriching others."[37] Sounding the Bamboo solidarity is thus a lived manifestation of relational truth, that is, of different vulnerable women, once divided by the colonial life-death power, encountering each other and weaving "an alternative story."[38]

Idle No More movement: The relational principles of solidarity with Indigenous women are also embodied in the Idle No More movement, where Indigenous people and migrants conduct many different forms of decolonial action.[39] In the past couple of decades, the Canadian government has cut Indigenous health funding, ignored the more than 600 missing and murdered Indigenous women across Canada, and tried to defend its role in First Nations school child welfare agencies and women's shelters to international human rights tribunals.[40] Sharing the Indigenous feminist analysis of patriarchal power relations, non-Indigenous racialized women take up "ally-ship" in anti-colonial dialogue and protests. In particular, Idle No More Teach-In Week was a period of building solidarity through "self-in-relation" and through offering learning classes and organizing alliance protests and healing-art exhibition events in which non-Indigenous women participated.[41] Furthermore, the Annual Women's Memorial March, She Speaks: Indigenous Women Speak Out Against Tar Sands, and Grassy Narrows River Run 2016: Healthy River, Healthy People[42] are effective solidarity-making protests in which non-Indigenous women take shared responsibility to defend the waters, the land, and Indigenous women's human rights.

For racialized migrant women, this alliance in Indigenous decolonizing solidarity is not merely aimed at easing new settlers' anxiety about "their sins."[43] It has, rather, the deeper intent of fostering real transformation in people's minds and in the structural reality, opening an emancipatory dimension for both groups, who are on different home-making roads of the stolen land. That is, immigrant women, "living in constant fear of deportation and denied access to basic services … have struggled to find stability and to make homes here on Turtle Island. With humility and openness, the migrant women have been able to submit themselves into their heartfelt alliance with the claim, that 'we too are Idle No More.'"[44] There is complicity in the settlers' colonial project no more, and silence about the theft, devastation, and violence toward the land no more. Certainly, in the solidarity-making process, there are challenges and risks for all participants, since it is a precarious balancing of their respective positions and different levels of struggles resulting from the trauma of white supremacist settler colonialism. Yet their self-giving love can lead to working through these challenges and risks and to finding long-standing tactical perspectives and opportunities for solidarity.

No One Is Illegal movement: Another case of solidarity between racialized migrant women and Indigenous women occurs through the No One Is Illegal movement. This refugee and migrant justice movement raises "public awareness about the exploitation in the immigration system and border controls as well as inter-related systems of exploitation of capitalism, and race, gender, sexuality, and ability based oppression."[45] Because of Canada's imperial border hegemony, nondocumented migrant women and trans people, and particularly survivors of violence and their children, live in a space of forced invisibility, exclusion, and repression, in constant fear of detention and deportation.[46]

Demonstrating empathy for the pain of the undocumented migrant women and their families, Indigenous women join the no-border, anti-sexism, or anti-deportation claims of the No One Is Illegal movement. Some excellent solidarity protests, including the Education Not Deportation campaign,[47] Safe Shelter for Women and Trans People,[48] and Honoring Evelyn: Solidarity with Migrant and Sex Workers,[49] functioned as platforms to reframe the racist and sexist politics of the state and to transform the modalities of membership and the sense of belonging of migrant bodies. Such solidarity unfolds the capacities of vulnerable migrant women to serve as co-resisters along with Indigenous allies, disrupting the colonial division between "guest"

and "permanent" workers into those who deserve rights and others who don't. Moreover, by listening to the Indigenous criticism of the failure of the No One Is Illegal movement to respect Turtle Island, the group modified their slogan to state "Land, justice, and self-determination, Canada is an illegal nation!"[50] Recently, the movement has extended its relationship-building to diverse LGBTQIA2 communities, working for creating space for undocumented LGBTQ migrants and two-spirited Indigenous people to share their vulnerability in light of a lack of social support, isolation, and an absence of options for staying safe.[51]

As demonstrated above, once the different groups of Indigenous women and racialized Asian women connect with each other, the possibility of mutual interaction creates a form of solidarity that brings about real change in the present colonial socio-political climate.

Conclusion: The Vision of Ecclesia

I have explored the way that Asian migrant women who are forced to be perpetual others in white dominant Canadian society resist colonial practices against them and seek to build an alternative model of life. Their lived experience of marginalization and subordination, their eagerness for a hopeful future, and their distinctive lens of multiplicity and border-crossing offer abundant resources for Asian migrant women to rewrite their identity, rediscover their moral vision, and reroute their life destination. Affirmation of a multiple, relational, and hybrid identity leads Asian migrant women to interrelation, respect, and mutuality with others across rigid racial, cultural, and social borders. In particular, solidarity-making with Indigenous sisters against multiple oppressions of racism, heterosexism, and patriarchal colonialism illuminates how marginalized women across difference and fragility can make life-dialogue together, effectively opening possibilities for liberation, mutual transformation, and interconnectedness.

Mutual and relational space-making with/for vulnerable others through an affirmative recognition of difference, by sharing shattered life-stories, and from subversive collaboration for justice is, theologically speaking, a significant way of building an inclusive and hospitable community of life with all God's blessed people. Letty Russell's model of "a church in the round" suggests that the church is a roundtable gathering that remains open, changing, and flexible, where "the welcome extends to those of all races, ages, nationalities, genders … as the church becomes a place where there is intent to heal and to live out God's justice."[52] This vision of an inclusive and interactive roundtable community of Christ, made up of multiple bodies of difference and vulnerability, is appropriately actualized through a migrant's practice of building a new community of life with Indigenous allies. Here the ecclesial presence of the living Christ is revealed through the evolving process of dislocated Christians weaving and reweaving the interdependent relations of life in an open-ended, back-and-forth, here-and-there embrace of broken bodies. In building border-crossings and extended communities of multiple bodies of difference and vulnerability, Asian migrant women can become more compassionate, resilient, and empowering. A new living church is opened by those dislocated and vulnerable migrant Christians' vision and practices of faith and hope in the fearful time and place as they seek to meaningfully fulfill the mission of building God's household from below (Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:15).

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28 Kang quotes from Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 211. Kang, *Diasporic Feminist Theology*, 103–104.

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Confronting the Climate Emergency

Visions and Strategies

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What can a theologian have to say about a subject matter so clearly in the domain of the physical sciences? What can pastors or preachers, bishops, or church mission boards have to contribute in the realm of energy technology or economics? I contend that the churches, both their leaders and their members, have vital roles to play in the struggle to confront the climate emergency.

In the last half century or so, we have advanced in our awareness of the need for contextual theological reflection. We know that we need to move beyond facile comments about prayer as the solution to all our problems. We cannot join those who "trust God" to protect them from a pandemic while refusing to follow public health guidelines. If as Christians we are committed to truth, we have to "interpret the signs of the times" (Matt. 16:3) with some degree of depth. And more than that, we need to follow in the great biblical, prophetic tradition of addressing real-world struggles with vision and courage.

Listening to the Science

It is not uncommon for those identifying as Christian to deny that climate change is real or urgent. Over against this, theology needs to begin (in this particular case) by listening to the physical sciences. We cannot pose as experts in astrophysics, biochemistry, marine biology, or glaciology – some of the sciences that contribute to what is called "climate science."

A key source of scientific information is the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), consisting of hundreds of scientific specialists from many nations. Dipping into the IPCC reports, we recognize rigorous, peer-reviewed scientific inquiry. The consensus among so many international researchers on anthropogenic (human-caused) climate change has gained the status of common knowledge (rather like the knowledge that smoking tobacco causes cancer). The IPCC teaches us about the consequences of the burning of fossil fuels—coal, oil, natural gas: it emits carbon dioxide (CO2), which traps heat, forming a "greenhouse ceiling" over the planet, reducing dispersal of the sun's heat to outer space. What follows is the rising average global temperature of the planet; the gradual melting of the polar regions; the rising, warming, and acidification of ocean waters; the destruction of marine life and corals; the inundation of coastal lands and cities; unbearable heat; and uncontrollable hurricanes, floods, fires, and famine. This is already happening but will become far worse with the probability of reaching a tipping point of widespread, devastating climate events, perhaps within 10 years.

This is indeed an emergency. The IPCC report of 2018 warned the world that global average temperature above preindustrial levels is likely to exceed 1.5 °C by 2030.[1] But a December 2020 report of the World Meteorological Organization warned that average global warming is already about 1.2 °C, and that there is a real possibility of reaching 1.5 °C and approaching 2 °C by 2024.[2] This is considered a threshold beyond which we will be unable to prevent global chaotic circumstances. Such a tipping point will be the consequence when warming feeds back upon itself, resulting in the release of methane (a more potent greenhouse gas) from vast regions of thawing permafrost.[3] Thereafter, we would be on our way toward "the destruction of civilization as we know it" or even an "uninhabitable planet."[4] Not only human lives are in danger. In 2019, the UN Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity reported the disappearance of thousands of biological species and warned of one million threatened by extinction. All these creatures are valuable in themselves and integral to the ecosystems on which humans depend.[5] The UN Environmental Programme calls for a 6 percent reduction in fossil fuel production each year between 2020 and 2030, pleading with governments to avoid "locking in unsustainable fossil fuel pathways."[6] The obvious implication for North America is to cease building pipelines!

Churches Taking Sides

It is not the task of theologians or preachers to lay out blueprints for navigating through this emergency. However, neutrality is no virtue when civilization is at stake. Various stances are to be found among Christians. We know that many are deniers of global warming and exercise considerable political influence.

Sociological studies show that "Evangelicals are less likely than non-Evangelicals to believe that global warming is happening."[7] Many are primarily concerned with eternal salvation and suspicious of the authority of science; they trust that God will take care of the climate. Tens of millions of Christians in various parts of the world are hostile or inhospitable to climate science, and some actively resist systemic action to deal with the problem. This is not true of all evangelicals; evangelical "greens" also exist and are growing in number, most notably in the Sojourners movement.[8]

Most "mainline" denominations in the Western world—Anglican/Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, United—have taken official stances acknowledging the scientific consensus on anthropogenic climate change, accepting the gravity of the situation, and adopting ethical recommendations for meeting the challenge.[9] This is not to say that most pastors or priests have addressed the matter from their pulpits, or that many members of these churches have taken these recommendations to heart or acted upon them.

My own church, for example, The United Church of Canada, through its General Council, sent out a declaration over 20 years ago: "Energy in the One Earth Community" (2000), recognizing the findings of climate science and laying out recommendations for sustainable development. Founding itself theologically in scripture, it recommended a move away from fossil fuels and increased use of renewable sources of energy. It called upon church members to alter their patterns of consumption and engage in education on climate issues, and it asked the people to communicate with their governments about the urgency of the climate threat.[10] In 2015, the United Church voted to divest itself of investments in fossil fuel companies and to divert funds to renewable energy development.[11] Some congregations and individuals have acted on these recommendations: some divestments, solar panels on roofs, letters and petitions, participation in demonstrations. But these things have not amounted to an effective mass movement.

We have space here to consider only one important ecclesial/theological statement, which in basic content is very similar to those of the other churches.

The Vision of Pope Francis

A formidable theologian and leader of the Roman Catholic Church, the largest international Christian communion, Francis has taken sides on the reality of climate change and on matters of strategy as well. His *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home* of 2015 grounds his discussion in substantial biblical reflection. Foundational for all that the pope says about climate change is his faith in God as Creator and reverence for all of life as God's creation. He speaks of Jesus, the Word made flesh, and of God's deep engagement with the physical world.[12] At the heart of our troubles is the disruption of creation by our human presumption to take the place of God by refusing to acknowledge our limitations as creatures. Taking our "dominion" to be absolute, we engage in a "tyrannical anthropocentrism," wreaking havoc upon other creatures and upon ourselves as well (no. 68). Stressing the interconnectedness of all creatures, the pope echoes Francis of Assisi, speaking of our common home as "a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us" (no. 1). He would "call creatures, no matter how small, by the name of 'brother' or 'sister'" (no. 11). A crime against the natural world is "a sin against ourselves and a sin against God" (no. 8).

The pope also speaks of the Creator as self-limiting, seeking human cooperation with divine purposes without impinging on the autonomy of creatures. He goes so far as to say that leaving an inhabitable planet for future generations is "first and foremost, up to us" (no. 160). He offers no guarantee that the Creator will rescue us in some supernatural manner from the consequences of our folly. Remarkably, the pope has, in some respects, departed from classical theism, which has traditionally spoken of an all-controlling deity. However, the Spirit of God is not absent, but "has filled the universe with possibilities" (no. 80). He writes: "the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world as a whole" (no. 99). We find here an affirmation of the providence of God, together with a high emphasis on human care and responsibility.

The pope speaks modestly: "the Church does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics. But I am concerned to encourage an open and honest debate so that particular interests or ideologies will not prejudice the common good" (no. 188). He is well informed about climate science and accepts the diagnosis of the scientific community as fact. He does not hesitate to take sides on the central point: "technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels … needs to be progressively replaced without delay" (no. 165). That replacement means renewable energy.

Francis also offers ideological critique. He never uses the term "capitalism" in this encyclical, but speaks critically of "the market," lamenting that "whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenceless before the interests of a deified market, which become the only rule" (no. 56). The Christian tradition, he points out, "has never recognized the right to private property as absolute or inviolable, and has stressed the social purpose of all forms of private property" (no. 93). He speaks passionately about the natural environment

as "a collective good" (no. 95) and stands against the privatization of water; clean, drinkable water, he insists, is not a mere commodity, but a universal human right (no. 185). Francis denounces a "Promethean vision of mastery over the world" (no. 116) as the present "dominant technocratic paradigm" (no. 112). While acknowledging the benefits of modern technology, he rejects the lie that every increase in power is an increase in "progress," and that unlimited economic growth or an infinite supply of the earth's goods is beneficial. He speaks positively of cooperatives that share wealth and resist consumerism and polluting methods of production (no. 112). Ethical precepts follow: "Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature" (no. 139). Presenting a vision of a world of universal communion in which humans are connected to all other creatures, he calls for a "change of heart" (no. 218) in the service of a "civilization of love" (no. 231). The right political priorities and strategies will flow from this spiritual base.

The pope's prophetic message deserves to be heard loudly and clearly from Catholic pulpits all over the world.

Strategies: Scientific and Technological

The question arises: Is it worth the struggle? Considering that carbon dioxide, once emitted, remains in the atmosphere for centuries,[13] and expensive fossil fuel infrastructure is in place for decades ahead, is it too late? If the game is up (as some say), all our theology and ethics is irrelevant. Do we have reason to hope that global warming can be turned around by reducing greenhouse gases?

We note that the scientific consensus does not consider the threat of climate catastrophe to be inevitable, though it speaks of a threshold in the near future when warming may become irreversible. Meanwhile, significant progress is occurring in the development of renewable resources, especially for energy supply and transportation.

What is required is a historic transition from fossil fuels to renewables, mainly wind and solar. Such a transition would resemble profound changes in the past: from oxen and horses to the steam engine, and later the internal combustion engine; from wood to coal, to oil and gas, and from oats to oil.[14] Such transitions have been economically motivated; humanity shifted from one source to another because doing so was profitable and beneficial. Such transitions sometimes took millennia or centuries, but in our time it is a matter of species survival. A professor of business, Bruce Usher, argues that "we have no time to lose."[15] CO2 concentration, which should be about 350 parts per million (ppm) to stabilize the climate, is already above 400 ppm, and increasing by around 2 ppm per year. The rate of increase is also growing. The shift needs to happen rapidly, within a decade, to avoid approaching a disastrous 450 ppm.[16]

The transition within the required time limit is a huge challenge, considering how dependent modern civilization is on fossil fuels. Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, tells us that one barrel of oil is equivalent to about 23,000 hours of human labour. From 2000 BCE until the 18th century, no great change occurred in the standard of living of most human beings. "What changed that was coal, oil and gas. All of a sudden, in the industrialized world, the standard of living was doubling every twenty or thirty years."[17] It has meant a great reduction in human drudgery, together with amazing mobility, improved nutrition, health, longevity, and comfort. In recent decades, the fossil fuel revolution has spread to the less developed world, so that huge populations in China, India, and elsewhere increasingly benefit from modern industrialization. An energy economist points out that "a half cup of gasoline has enough energy to lift a car to the top of the Eiffel tower. Most renewables, as found in their natural state, don't have nearly that punch … a lot of land and equipment is required." It should not surprise us that "the global energy system is still dominated 80% by fossil fuels."[18]

Some progress has occurred, however, especially in China, which is now the world's greatest emitter of greenhouse gases, but also the leader in the development of the technologies necessary to reverse those emissions—that is, it's the most aggressive developer of wind, solar, and biofuels.[19] Major progress has occurred also in Western Europe, especially Germany and Scandinavia, and, to a lesser extent, the US and Canada.[20] Usher tells us that by 2015, annual investment in renewable energy was more than double the investment in fossil fuels: that "five hundred thousand solar panels were installed globally every day; in China, new wind turbines were installed every hour." Economic analysts predict that nearly three quarters of new power generation between 2017 and 2040 will be for renewable energy. This transition, he states, is created by cost competitiveness.[21] But McKibben notes that by 2019, global divestment from fossil fuel industries has amounted to $8 trillion, partly as a result of the international campaign to leave these fuels in the ground. Considering the falling value of conventional energy stocks, investors fear stranded assets.[22] The economic power of renewable energy lies in the fact that the source is free of cost: "sunlight provides as much energy in ninety minutes as is consumed by every person on the planet in a year."[23] The costs result from the land required, materials and production of solar panels, and the cost of investment capital.

These costs declined by 94 percent in only 17 years (2000–2017), "making solar energy competitive with other sources of electricity generation."[24] Also, the cost of electricity by wind power (taking account of materials, land, construction of turbines, and capital) also declined dramatically—by 90 percent from the 1980s to 2017—making wind competitive with alternative sources in coal, nuclear, and natural gas.[25]

Usher also writes about rapid growth in the adoption of electric vehicles, with swift improvements in battery technology, sales soaring in China, and numerous jurisdictions announcing deadlines for the end of fossil fuel vehicles.[26] He gives us additional grounds for optimism in his discussion of "convergence." Since wind and solar energy suffer from intermittency, and storage of energy remains a challenge, he notes the potential of the symbiotic relationship between renewables and electric vehicles: these can be programmed to recharge at night when renewable energy is most available and discharge to the grid when electricity is in short supply. Electric vehicles can serve as "batteries on wheels." Tesla Inc. envisages an arrangement by which people will place solar panels on their roofs, plug in an electric vehicle, and take advantage of convergence, which benefits both the consumer and the public grid.[27]

Jeremy Rifkin, advisor to many governments, presents an optimistic vision of a "third Industrial Revolution," which uses renewable energy converging with new digital technology. Following upon the first two major energy transitions in modern times, the third industrial revolution will feature solar and wind energy, converging with a digitalized internet in the transportation and building sectors. He foresees sensors attached to every device: "By 2030 there could be trillions of sensors connecting the human and natural environment in a global distributed intelligent network."[28] All of this will fail if climate disaster is not avoided. Rifkin declares: "The sooner the collapse of the fossil fuel era comes, the brighter the prospect that humanity might be able to quickly scale up a smart, global, green infrastructure that will take us into a post-carbon ecological civilization, hopefully in time to save our species…."[29]

Major hurdles remain. Two science researchers, Richard Heinberg and David Fridley, have argued less optimistically that, while 100 percent clean energy will eventually be possible, the new technologies face major challenges: fossil fuels will still be necessary to build new energy systems. Manufacturing processes that require high-temperature heating processes, such as metals, cement, and plastics, can eventually proceed with renewables, but at much greater cost than with fossil fuels.[30] We should expect a smaller, slower, and more localized economy. Problems of scale and speed will mean a shrinkage of global trade and air travel. Our present luxurious consumerism in the rich world will be curtailed; it will be necessary to "preadapt" to living with less energy, which will require major adjustments for social justice and equality.[31] Besides wind and solar, they acknowledge also hydropower, geothermal, and biomass, which have limited opportunity for growth.[32]

No one knows what scientific/technological innovations may lie ahead. We may take note of "Project Drawdown," a coalition of 200 scientists, engineers, and inventors from around the world. Paul Hawken, editor of *Drawdown*, explains: "the goal of the project [is] to identify, measure, and model one hundred substantive solutions to determine how much we could accomplish within three decades toward that end."[33] By "drawdown" he refers to the reduction of greenhouse gases either by avoiding emissions or sequestering them. Eighty viable solutions already exist, though all need to be widely implemented. Of these, the top 10 are refrigeration, wind turbines (onshore), reduced food waste, plant-rich diet, tropical forests, educating girls, family planning, solar farms, silvopasture, and rooftop solar. A further category includes 22 brilliant but as yet untried ideas still in the planning stage, including methods of carbon capture or sequestration.[34] So, it is not only a matter of reducing fossil fuels. *Drawdown* shows us that transformation can also occur in food and agriculture, buildings, reducing the raising of animals for meat, reforestation, family planning, and education.

The upshot of this discussion is that we have practical grounds for hope. The campaigning is not in vain. We know what needs to be done and how to do it. Yet fundamentally, this remains a human problem. The question is, Will we actually do it?

Strategies: Ideological and Political

Heinberg and Fridley recognize that "fossil fuels are too valuable to allocate solely by the market."[35] The role of governments will be essential because

> market mechanisms by themselves will be insufficient to drive the renewable energy transition at the speed required to outrun climate change and fossil fuel depletion. Government policy will be required to direct sufficient capital toward building new energy capacity, to manage the build out of energy storage and necessary grid upgrades … to provide efficiency incentives and mandates to ease the burden of a likely decline of energy availability during the transition.[36]

The issue becomes, then, one of ideology and politics. The term "ideology" is often used pejoratively to refer to rigid, inflexible political ideas. The term was used negatively by Karl Marx to refer to systems of ideas

that legitimize the privileges of the ruling class. But ideology is inescapable. The term is often used neutrally to refer to mindsets and biases arising from life experiences and interests. But Marx was right in that ideology can be perpetrated in propagandistic ways to maintain wealth and power. "Denialism," accompanied by great faith in "the market," is the ideological stance on climate adopted for decades by defenders of the fossil fuel industries. Powerful corporations, like ExxonMobil, Shell, Texaco, and others, have long known the facts about global warming through their own research departments. Yet they use propaganda—misinformation clothed in highly charged rhetoric—to confuse the public, through "think tanks" that question the science, suggesting that it's all a matter of opinion. They have invested hundreds of millions of dollars to lobby politicians to discourage action by governments that hurts their highly profitable industry.[37] In both Canada and the US, a revolving door of personnel among government, civil service, and industry has resulted in the defunding of environmental organizations, the reduction of regulations, and the muzzling and firing of environmental scientists.[38]

Public awareness of climate realities is now so widespread that the ideological rhetoric has shifted. We now encounter a "New Denialism," which claims to accept the science but offers inadequate solutions that provide cover for industry. Sociologist William Carroll observes that incremental steps are taken that do not seriously threaten the profits of the fossil fuel companies. The bottom line is that jobs and profits in the oil and gas sector must be protected at all costs. The climate threat, according to this approach, must be met only through "the mechanisms of the market in keeping with the logic of capitalism."[39]

A vigorous debate rages about the degree to which capitalism is responsible for the failure, over so many years, to make headway against climate change. A key figure in this debate is Naomi Klein, a prolific author and respected leader of the environmental movements in North America. Identifying herself as a "secular Jewish feminist,"[40] she demonstrates that prophetic messages are by no means limited to Christians. In *This Changes Everything: Capitalism versus the Climate*, she argues that a techno-fix is possible, but "it is impossible without challenging the fundamental logic of deregulated capitalism."[41] Sometimes she appears to reject capitalism altogether, as when she writes, "climate change is a battle between capitalism and the planet."[42] She is not arguing for a "communist" centralized command economy, such as we saw in the Soviet Union, or even today's China, which she believes is caught up as much as the West in consumerism and total human control of nature.[43] She favours more decentralized, localized economies, governed by cooperatives and democratically elected governments. Klein declares that "moderate actions don't lead to moderate outcomes. They lead to dangerous, radical ones."[44] This is because

> ours is a global economy created by, and fully reliant upon, the burning of fossil fuels and that a dependency that foundational cannot be changed with a few gentle market mechanisms. It requires heavy-duty interventions: sweeping bans on polluting activities, deep subsidies for green alternatives, pricey penalties for violations, new taxes, new public works programs, reversal of privatizations….[45]

Since capitalist interests have sabotaged any serious attempt to deal with climate change, Klein believes that required strategies to meet the climate crisis make "some kind of left-wing revolution virtually inevitable."[46] She celebrates widespread movements of resistance: public demonstrations, sit-down strikes, blockades and sabotage of pipeline developments by Indigenous people and their allies.[47]

Marc Jacard challenges Naomi Klein's attack on capitalism. A professor of sustainable economics, a lead author of IPCC reports, and an advisor to the governments of China and of British Columbia, Jacard cannot be dismissed as a new denialist. As one committed to the struggle to reduce emissions, he agrees that the big fossil fuel corporations have had far too much influence. Like Klein, he believes in the value of public demonstrations. On one occasion he engaged in civil disobedience: "13 of us blocked a coal train as a public wake up action in May 2012. We were arrested and jailed for a few hours."[48] However, Jacard contends that Klein's statements that seem to demand the end of capitalism (while not clearly defining "capitalism" or what she would replace it with) actually make the task of fighting climate change more difficult. Democratic electorates, he argues, are far from willing to abolish private enterprise, and the suggestion that this is necessary risks alienating the public from practical solutions.[49] Jacard, too, warns that the transition to renewables will be painful and complicated.[50] He does, however, point out that substantial progress in reducing emissions has been made in various parts of the world that operate with free market capitalism. He cites, for example, the state of California, which has had much success in reducing emissions through carbon pricing but more through compulsory regulations controlling energy efficiency, vehicle emission standards, and renewable energy requirements. The California government reports a reduction in emissions of 24 percent between 2001 and 2018. This is not enough, but it's a beginning, with ambitious goals set for the years ahead.[51] He mentions similar success in Sweden[52] and Norway. Jacard says that "most assets of conventional oil today belong to state-owned com-

panies that were nationalized long ago."[53] Abolishing capitalism is a tall order that would take decades or centuries to accomplish. He recommends compulsory but flexible regulations, carrying heavy penalties and generous subsidies, with ever-increasing restrictions on carbon emissions. The "heavy-duty interventions" he proposes may not differ much from what Naomi Klein wants, since it is "deregulated capitalism" that she so clearly opposes. The capitalist "deified market" has to be reined in, and Jacard hopes that, with growing public awareness, this will become increasingly possible.

He adds to this a proposal for global cooperation. Since impending climate disaster is a global problem, and since most nations will not disadvantage themselves in the global markets by voluntarily restraining their emissions, a "climate club" of concerned nations could come together to discourage countries from free-riding on other nations' efforts. This would involve some enforcement mechanism, such as "tariff-like mechanisms imposed on imports of countries that insufficiently regulated or priced their own emissions."[54] He imagines a scenario where the United States and China, together carrying enormous international clout, might initiate such a climate club, and others may be constrained to join in. It seems a long shot, but when the climate emergency becomes clear to all, such a strategy may become practicable.

It is sobering that an energy economist like Jacard thinks that "whether we like it or not … geoengineering options are now unavoidably in the toolbox." We will end up manipulating the weather with "risky technological fixes," such as solar radiation deflection and chemical neutralization of ocean acidification "to avert the worst devastations of climate change because we didn't act in time."[55]

I conclude that the ways and means for dealing with the emergency—technological, political, and economic—are available. But none of this will happen without a groundswell of public awareness and political will to achieve profound social transformation.

Confronting the Emergency: The Potential of the Churches

It is important to recognize that the climate threat is not just one more "crisis." We must name it an "emergency" that needs to be treated as such. That is why Seth Klein (British Columbia director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives) contends that a wartime approach is necessary. He argues, in his book *A Good War*, that climate breakdown requires us to "mobilize all of society, galvanize our politics, and fundamentally remake our economy."[56] He sees parallels between the threat of fascism in World War II (and, to some extent, the 2020–2021 pandemic) and the threat of climate disaster. *"We have done this before,"* he writes. To fight fascism, we "mobilized in common cause across society to confront an existential threat. And in doing so, we retooled our entire economy in the space of a few short years."[57] As in wartime (or in a pandemic), social solidarity and public buy-in are essential if people are to accept the curtailment of their freedoms, and perhaps rationing—not only of air travel and luxuries, but even food and clothing. There must be a sense of fairness; sacrifice must be shared among all classes. It will obviously mean an end to "deregulated capitalism," because central economic planning will be indispensable. Seth Klein tells the story of how, during the Second World War, the government worked with private enterprise when possible, enlisted the expertise and accessed the infrastructure of the private sector, but created Crown corporations when necessary.[58] The struggle was conducted with a certain ideological flexibility. He writes: "just as the Second World War ended the Great Depression, as we rebuild from this pandemic, an ambitious climate plan with massive green infrastructure spending – the Green New Deal – can be just what the doctor ordered."[59] Again, we perceive in his words a truly prophetic message, though he does not speak from a Christian base.

We return to our opening contention: The churches have a vital role to play in confronting this emergency. A unified stance exists among the major churches, whose official statements, including the encyclical of Pope Francis, acknowledge the science and broadly agree in their calls to action. The beginning of a shift among evangelicals is also a hopeful development. We need only a critical mass—a substantial minority of committed people to create a tipping point of public opinion—to enable significant action on climate change.

The task remains to mobilize and inspire the people to consent and cooperate with deep social transformation. Although in many places the churches' numbers are greatly reduced, millions of people attend worship every Sunday all over the world. The official stances of the churches certainly authorize pastors and priests to exercise the power of the pulpit to preach and teach on matters of lifestyle and ethics and to encourage local activity for social and ecological change. The churches' potential for inspiring action by large populations is surely great at the grassroots level. Christians can be inspired to live unselfishly, to alter lifestyles, initiate or support environmental movements, and support constructive efforts of political parties or governments that struggle against climate disaster. The churches have opportunities to educate through study groups and public events. They have buildings and sometimes schools at their disposal. Moreover, some denominations, and even some dioceses or congregations,

are wealthy, with considerable investment portfolios; these can be divested or redirected in constructive ways. While there is no one Christian strategy, the churches share a common faith in the Creator, who is at work in the world and within us and others, through the Spirit. As followers of Jesus, Christians share a common commitment to the love of neighbours and love of God's creation.

In the years to come, the churches' participation in the struggle for sustainable planetary life will be a test of their credibility and a true measure of the authenticity of their faith commitment.

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The Moral Vision of Robert Putnam and Shaylyn Romney Garrett

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The United States is in a profound social crisis of its own making. It is plagued by extreme economic inequality, political polarization, social fragmentation, and a culture of self-centeredness. This can change. During the Gilded Age of 1870–1900, the country was in a similar state. Then the Progressive Age began. An army of volunteer reformers set about improving American society in numerous ways: creating educational opportunities, social networks, labor unions, and agencies to aid society's victims; legislating reforms to narrow the gap between rich and poor; exposing social exploitation and negligence; and working together across political party lines to address a host of social ills. This impetus toward a more just and inclusive society continued until the 1960s, after which America reversed course and regressed to its present dysfunction. However, just as Americans turned their society around before, they can do it again.

This is the diagnosis and argument of Robert Putnam and Shaylyn Romney Garrett in their recent book, *The Upswing.*[1] Putnam, Malkin Research Professor of Public Policy at Harvard University, is the lead author. Garrett, who worked with him on this book, is an activist, author, and former student of Putnam's. Putnam, a prolific writer, has received numerous awards for his books, especially his 2000 book, *Bowling Alone*,[2] an examination of the decline of community in America. Putnam studies society in a well-funded style, with research assistants and office staff to help him amass and analyze the data of social surveys, statistics, and sociological, political, and historical studies. The spirit that hangs over *The Upswing* is Alexis de Tocqueville. Like Tocqueville and other classical sociologists, such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim, Putnam and Garrett are committed both to an objective description of society and a moral judgment on what their analysis reveals.[3] In this vein, they seek to study society scientifically and provide empirical data for their arguments, repeatedly stressing that the trends and changes they describe are "measurable."[4] Yet, like the great founders of sociology, Putnam and Garrett analyze their data in terms of a moral vision that enables them to identify dehumanizing aspects of society as well as social processes that promise to "deliver people from their plight."[5] Their book is infused with a prophetic passion. Critical theologians can recognize them as kindred spirits of sorts whose social analysis can aid in engaging American and Canadian society. Their intent with this book is to lay out "a new, evidence-based narrative that encompasses the ups and downs of an entire century, thereby setting a clearer agenda for choice going forward."[6] The utopia guiding their critique is succinctly expressed as follows:

> Creating a community that values the contributions of all, limits the opportunities of none, and offers prosperity without prejudice, will define any lasting renewal of American democracy – for people of color, for women, and for other marginalized groups who still struggle for equality and inclusion. Indeed, for all of us.[7]

What follows will summarize the main argument of this important book, discuss its evaluation of the 1960s, note a contributing cause of the turn to individualism stemming from this decade, and conclude by assessing the book's significance for critical theology.

From "I" to "We" to "I"

Putnam and Garrett analyze four categories of American society: economics, politics, society, and culture. The first four chapters show how in each of these categories, from 1900 on, America in general moved from a profoundly individualistic outlook to the pursuit of a more just and inclusive community. The 1960s were the peak of this push and yet also a turning point. By the late 1960s, America was closer to being an inclusive community "than ever before in its history."[8] But then Americans took their "foot off the gas."[9] They ceased pursuing a greater community and reversed course. Consequently, the U.S. has steadily become a more individualistic, unequal, divided, fractious, and oppressive society. It now flounders in a second Gilded Age.

The authors recognize that over the course of the 20th century, overall improvements have occurred in some aspects of public health and quality of life. Infant mortality has greatly decreased. Americans on aver-

age are now healthier and wealthier; they have larger homes, more technical conveniences, and a longer life expectancy than in 1900.[10] They acknowledge that "from some points of view … America is now basically a more diverse, tolerant, and open society than it was at mid-century."[11] However, recently the life expectancy of Americans has for the first time decreased, largely due to an increase in "deaths of despair"; that is, "fatalities due to drugs, alcohol, or suicide,"[12] which particularly affect "rural communities, working-class individuals, and young adults."[13] Another troubling statistic: "today black Americans are completing college at a lower rate compared to whites than they were in 1970."[14]

Putnam and Garrett connect this and other disconcerting data to a common trend in the four categories they study. They chart this as the "I-we-I" graph, an inverted U that graces their book's cover. Their central finding is that the graphs of greater or lesser economic equality, collaboration and bipartisanship in politics, community in social life, and altruism in cultural values each follow the same pattern over the 20th century: starting low in 1900, rising to a peak in the 1960s, and then sinking again to the present abysmal level, which is more or less where America was in 1900. As they put it, "The story of the American experiment in the twentieth century is one of a long upswing toward increasing solidarity, followed by a steep downturn into increasing individualism. From 'I' to 'we,' and back again to 'I.'"[15]

How Inclusive Was This "We"?

The four chapters arguing this are followed by two on the place of African Americans and women in this "we" that America was building. Putnam and Garrett note that Jim Crow, the dehumanizing racial segregation of African Americans enforced by law and maintained by white culture, meant in many respects the exclusion of African Americans from the "we" that Progressive Reformers laboured to construct. White Progressive Reformers were shaped by this culture; among them, "racism was the norm, not the exception."[16] Much of the formal Jim Crow regime was dismantled by the civil rights movement that culminated in the 1960s. This dramatically changed the place of Blacks in American society. However, Putnam and Garrett note that Blacks, usually as a result of their own efforts, were moving toward equality with whites prior to the 1960s, even under Jim Crow. They also note that after the civil rights struggle, this movement "toward racial equality slowed, stopped, and even reversed."[17]

They draw three conclusions from this. First, despite the successes of the civil rights movement, many white Americans remained unwilling to accept African Americans as equals. This generated "white backlash against the measures required to make inclusion a reality,"[18] which became a factor in American politics after Richard Nixon successfully exploited it in his 1968 and 1972 presidential campaigns. Political exploitation of white backlash helped move the centre of American social values from "we" back to "I."[19] Second, Putnam and Garrett conclude, from the slowing of African American progress toward equality with whites as American priorities turned from "we" to "I," that "a selfish, fragmented 'I' society is not a favorable environment for achieving racial equality."[20] Despite the pervasive racism of Progressive Reformers, their goal of a more inclusive "we" created a cultural and ideological framework that aided the movement of African Americans toward greater equality with whites.[21] Third, if Americans want to reverse their current dysfunction, they need to find "new and ever-more inclusive ways to achieve Martin Luther King Jr.'s unrealized vision of the 'beloved community'."[22]

Putnam and Garrett's findings regarding the place of women in America are more positive. They note that women did achieve greater social participation prior to 1960.[23] The revolutionary change that women experienced in their status and opportunities in the 1960s and 1970s was only possible because of these earlier successes. But whereas African American progress toward equality with whites slowed after the 1960s, the feminist struggle forged ahead, transforming "cultural norms and social attitudes about women."[24] However, in recent decades, increasing economic inequality and insufficient progress on wage equality with males have been hard on a growing number of women who financially support their households. This is particularly true for African American women. Though women continued to progress toward equality with men as American society became more "I" centered, there is little evidence that the latter aided the former.[25] Naturally, Putnam and Garrett could not comment on the negative impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women's progress in the labour market and society in the United States and elsewhere.[26]

Putnam and Garrett conclude that while the decades-long push toward a more inclusive and equal "we" that culminated in the 1960s made significant gains, it was never inclusive enough. They note that a communitarian focus on 'we' enforced social conformity and stifled dissent, and that intellectual and artistic critiques of this increased in the 1950s.[27] An ethos of social conformity also can and did oppress minorities of various kinds. In the 1960s, failure to fully include African Americans and other racialized minorities in the American "we" and the constraints that an ideology of social conformity placed on individuality ignited a cultural explosion that turned America toward individualism. This dramatically undermined the

communitarian focus that had empowered America's growth in community from 1900 to 1960.[28]

What caused American society to reverse course in the categories of economics, politics, social cohesion, and culture at virtually the same time and revert to becoming a more individualistic, unequal, unjust, and fractious society? Putnam and Garrett note the turn to neoliberal social thought and economic policies beginning in the 1970s and put into calamitous effect by the Reagan administration in the 1980s. However, they prefer the term "libertarian" to neoliberal and see neoliberalism as a proximate cause of the change in direction of American society,[29] resulting largely from a more underlying shift in social norms: a turn to individualism.

Neoliberalism as a social project was more than an expression of individualism. It sought the creation of a three-tiered society in North Atlantic countries that economically marginalized a significant segment of the population,[30] while the interests of corporations and the wealthy were protected by tax breaks and, in the United States, by the phenomenal growth of the prison industry.[31] Though this was legitimated by a philosophy of individualism, it amounted to the oppression of the poor "by economic and political elites and the professionals in their service."[32] The ethos of neoliberalism is incompatible with basic Christian commitments.[33] Much of the economic inequality and loss of social solidarity that Putnam and Garrett lament resulted from the turn to it.

Putnam and Garrett find no single primary cause for the turn to individualism in American society. This and the subsequent rise of neoliberalism remain enigmatic.[34] They acknowledge an increased acceptance of diversity as a result of changing social attitudes in the 1960s. However, they conclude that the net effect of the 1960s was negative. It produced an emphasis on "individualism and individual rights at the expense of widely shared communitarian values."[35] This led to America's current dysfunction. To reverse this, the emphasis on individualism needs to be balanced and integrated with communitarian virtues of equality and inclusion.[36]

Here two questions arise. First, is this an accurate assessment of the 1960s? Second, what might help explain the change in direction of American society that the 1960s brought?

The 1960s

The shifts in focus in American culture from "I" to "we" to "I" that Putnam and Garrett chart cannot be denied. Yet the positive contributions of the 1960s to social justice and inclusion deserve more recognition. Significant movements for social inclusion originated in this decade. For example, the 1969 Stonewall riots galvanized the gay liberation movement, which, expanded to the LGBTQ+ movement, has won sexual minorities greatly increased inclusion in the "we" of many North Atlantic countries. In the 1960s, Jean Vanier began what became the international L'Arche federation, which has enabled many people with intellectual disabilities to move from institutions into communities where they are loved, respected, and have a voice in their own affairs. The "creative chaos"[37] of the 1960s produced a drift toward individualism, but also these and other countervailing movements that have made North Atlantic societies more inclusive.

A Canadian Detour

In Canada, the long Sixties from 1960 to 1975 saw several reversals of federal government policies that moved toward a more inclusive "we."[38] Since Confederation in 1867, immigrants to Canada were expected to assimilate to its dominant British culture and Christian religion. Groups judged incapable of this due to their race were hindered from immigrating to Canada. In the mid-1960s, various ethnic minority and immigrant groups began advocating for a multiculturalism policy. A race-neutral immigration policy was adopted in 1967. Multiculturalism became federal policy in 1971 and was enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982 and in Canadian law in 1988.[39] This shift in federal policy from "racial exclusion and cultural assimilation to race-neutral admission and multicultural integration"[40] essentially happened between 1965 and 1975.[41]

Similarly, the long Sixties saw a profound change in attitudes toward Indigenous peoples. In 1969, Pierre Trudeau's federal government tabled its White Paper, which aimed to abolish Indigenous peoples' special status resulting from treaties they made with the Crown. Indigenous peoples mobilized in response and forced the Trudeau government to back down. A string of Indigenous victories in asserting their treaty rights, including land claims and powers of self-government, followed in rapid succession. By 1975, the federal government had in theory reversed its policy toward Indigenous peoples, acknowledging them as self-governing communities whose treaty rights had to be honoured.[42] Despite these gains, these rights and the self-governing status of Indigenous peoples in Canada continue to be frequently ignored in public discourse and in economic, educational, and child-welfare practices, and their implementation is sometimes violently resisted.

In relation to Quebec, the homeland of Francophones in Canada, there were a series of legislative and attitudinal changes on the part of Canadian federal governments between 1964 and 1977[43] in response

to Quebec's Quiet Revolution and its demand for increased self-determination. These changes were designed to grant Quebec "full linguistic equality and strong provincial autonomy"[44] so it could preserve its distinctive culture and national identity. They also allowed Quebec to address injustices that saw French Quebecers at a significant economic disadvantage compared to Anglophones in the province.

As these examples indicate, in Canada significant changes toward a more inclusive "we" occurred during the long Sixties. Yet these moves were in many respects promises that remain unfulfilled. Racialized minorities in Canada continue to experience marginalization, and immigrants often face discrimination. The treaty rights of Indigenous peoples continue to be thwarted and contested. Quebec is still denied full recognition of its distinctive status as a nation. Putnam and Garrett's observation that this lack of full inclusion can lead to social violence and decline in community and solidarity with others has been borne out in recent Canadian history.[45] Canadians should heed their warning that failure to fulfill these commitments can damage a country's cultural fabric, undermine communal ideals of equality and inclusion, and trigger a slide to social dysfunction.

Another significant move toward greater inclusion occurred in Canada during the 1960s. Universal medicare was established in the province of Saskatchewan on July 1, 1962. It was legislated for all of Canada in 1966 and took effect in 1968. Though repeatedly challenged, universal health care has become virtually "irreversible"[46] in Canada. Despite certain shortcomings—for example, coverage for dental, mental health, and ocular care is very limited, and the delivery of health care being marred by racism in some locations—this move toward greater inclusion for many in a basic social good has fulfilled its promise. A majority of Canadians now consider universal medicare to be a fundamental and beneficial characteristic of their society. When universal medicare works well, it has a latent function of communicating the message that we belong to one another. This may be helping to arrest in Canada the drift toward individualism and fragmentation currently ravaging the United States.[47]

These Canadian innovations, along with the others mentioned above, are examples of how the 1960s generated movements and legislation that have made lasting contributions in the United States and Canada toward building "a community that values the contributions of all, [and] limits the opportunities of none."[48]

A New Prophetic Consciousness

The 1960s also gave birth to a new prophetic consciousness in Christian theology and elsewhere that sought to change the character of North Atlantic societies. The anti–Vietnam War movement that helped lead to the Paris Peace Agreement in 1973 was one example. This was not an attempt to make the "we" of American society more inclusive. It was an attempt to change the relationship of this "we" to other countries.[49] Martin Luther King Jr., whose guiding ideal of the beloved community Putnam and Garrett admire, became a fervent supporter of this movement in 1967. It has been described as inspired by the Holy Spirit and echoing the gospel.[50] Putnam and Garrett focus on what occurred within America. They do not reflect on how America affected other societies during the decades from 1900 to the 1960s. No one book can do everything. But a society cannot be assessed solely by the nature of people's relationships and quality of life within it. A country must also be assessed by how it affects the lives of people outside its borders. The principle of respect for the freedom and rights of others, which is at the heart of American democracy, is essentially universal in extent.[51] So, too, is the moral injunction of the parable of the Good Samaritan to care for others.[52] It was recognition of this that led King to oppose the Vietnam War.[53]

The theological critique of American economic imperialism in Latin and South America is another example of the prophetic consciousness that arose in the 1960s. American foreign policy then supported unregulated capitalist development in Latin and South America. Some saw this as well-intentioned toward these regions. But because "unregulated capitalism is an economic system that enriches the centre at the expense of the periphery,"[54] this economic development adversely affected countries it was supposed to help. It "expelled local populations from the land, undermined their subsistence economy, chased them into poverty-stricken shantytowns, produced exploitative working conditions, and enriched a small, technically trained, local elite loyal to the new masters."[55] This helped create the stream of refugees that in recent years have been arriving at America's southern border. Observing the economic developments fostered by American foreign policy in the 1960s from the periphery of Latin America, "Latin American bishops recognized an ever-extending system of wealth creation that threatened to enslave the population on the southern continents."[56] The drift from "we" to "I" in American society after the 1960s was accompanied by equally disastrous foreign policies and economic imperialism. In the 1980s, politico-economic neoliberalism took hold in the United States, England, and Canada "that sought to enhance the material well-being of a privileged minority and assign to the margin the rest of the globe's population."[57] Globalization has made the second Gilded Age international in scope.

Theologically, recognition in the long Sixties of the detrimental effects of North Atlantic economies and foreign policies on the Global South became a hinge not to individualism, but to a new prophetic consciousness in many churches in the Global North and South that had previously been aligned with the status quo. The "tumults, yearnings, and reflections of the Sixties"[58] introduced a contextual concern and prophetic consciousness into Christian theologies in North Atlantic countries and Latin America. This generated numerous critical theologies, which aim at social transformation as well as greater social inclusion.[59] Like the anti–Vietnam War movement, these theologies intended a change in the character of the "we" of America and other North Atlantic countries. Frequently, this intended change includes renouncing neocolonialism and white privilege.

There is considerable correspondence between Putnam and Garrett's moral passion and these theologies. Both seek to expand the "we" of American society. However, Putnam and Garrett support a reform strategy for engaging American society. Their study of history argues that existing economic, political, and social institutions can be sufficiently modified for an inclusive and egalitarian society to emerge. Many contextual theologies advocate a more radical, conflictual engagement with these institutions. Both approaches are needed.[60] Putnam and Garrett might deem this more radical approach partly responsible for the fractious state of America today. Still, the development of these critical theologies has given "the emancipatory dimension of divine redemption … a central place in the construction of Christian theology."[61] This benefit also derives from the 1960s.

A Changed and Distorted Understanding of the Good

Why did America reverse direction and begin an "individuating revolution"[62] in the 1960s? Charles Taylor argues that this change has been driven partly by a new understanding of the good[63] that had been present among cultural elites for some time and in the 1960s "was generalized to all classes."[64] This new notion of the good is the view that everyone has a distinctive "way of realizing humanity, and that it is important to find and live out one's own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society, or the previous generation, or religion or political authority."[65] This is the ethic of authenticity. Taylor argues that this new moral ideal "points us towards a more self-responsible form of life … [and] allows us to live (potentially) a fuller and more differentiated life, because more fully appropriated as our own."[66] However, to actualize one's identity authentically, this ideal must be lived in dialogue with a transcendent notion of the good and with respect for the demands that our relationships with others place upon us.[67] Neo-liberalism lacks the latter two dimensions.

Taylor's analysis of the ethic of authenticity helps explain how the '60s could inspire beneficial movements of liberation as well as the turn toward today's self-centred, fractious America. The ethic of authenticity was at work in phenomena like the peace movement. Here it was lived out in relation to transcendent notions like peace and justice. This ethic is also present in L'Arche, which recognizes the intellectually disabled as each having their own way of realizing humanity that can contribute to the common good. What happened, in the 1960s and since, is that for many, this ideal degenerated into a narcissistic celebration of self-choice apart from any reference to transcendent notions of the good or the impact of one's choices on others. Taylor calls this the slide to subjectivism.[68] Authenticity became defined "in a way that centres on the self, which distances us from our relations to others."[69] As the horizons of this ideal were reduced in this way, the ideal became distorted and self-contradictory. An idolatrous understanding of the self and one's social class insinuated[70] itself into this notion of the good, even in religious communities. As Putnam and Garrett note, "a commitment to individual autonomy now plays a larger role in American religious affiliation than it has for at least half a century."[71] Thus reduced and distorted, the ethic of authenticity has contributed to the individualism and the social dysfunction they describe.

A Role for Religion

Putnam and Garrett conclude their book with a call for a renewed grassroots engagement with American social issues, drawing on lessons and examples from the Progressive Era. However, without "a culturally-mediated ethical sense of solidarity, the general population"[72] is unlikely to join in. This could come simply from American cultural history and patriotism. However, the example of Martin Luther King Jr. suggests that this engagement needs empowerment by something transcendent to culture that can motivate both social engagement and a thoroughgoing critique of society. Gregory Baum argued that "the great world religions are the major social sources for an ethic of solidarity and self-limitation."[73] Jürgen Habermas has also argued that secular reason and social engagement need the moral sources provided by world religions if they are to avoid becoming cynical and self-serving.[74] Putnam and Garrett note that "a socially reformist Christianity was a central inspiration for much of the social activism"[75] of the Progressive Era. However, in secularized North Atlantic societies, religion has become less effective in providing transcendent horizons for an ethic of authenticity. Still, Putnam and Garrett believe that history remains open. As Americans pulled

their country out of a cultural slump before, they can do it again. Christians can see the Holy Spirit at work in this kind of hope.

The Holy Spirit

Putnam and Garrett's analysis illustrates one aspect of how the Holy Spirit works to empower and facilitate the social engagement they call for. According to some New Testament traditions, the Spirit works to create a "force field"[76]—a social ethos in which "diverse experiences of the removal of isolation and of individual and collective separation,"[77] of liberation, community building, and cooperation, become possible. People within this force field both receive from it and give to it.[78] This force field becomes concrete through faith, hope, and love, as forms of understanding that shape the way individuals and communities view reality and interact.[79] This force field is centred on the gospel and manifest in communities explicitly formed in response to it. Yet the Holy Spirit seeks to constitute public force fields characterized by faith, hope, and love that extend beyond churches, into which people of other faiths or without explicit faith may be drawn and to which they may contribute. These force fields are never perfectly realized in history. They remain vulnerable to disruption and decay. They are frequently distorted by sin. However, they foster the search for justice, peace, inclusion, and equality. They create an ethos in which advances toward a greater justice and freedom are possible. The Holy Spirit creates these in part through people exercising their spiritual gifts, such as faith, hope, and love, but also leadership, teaching, service, or prophetic activity.[80] These gifts "are elements of the force field of the Spirit, and at the same time they themselves constitute force fields, through which the action of the Spirit is realized and spread in the finite and shared life of human beings."[81] Ideally, the exercise of these gifts has a cumulative effect.

When Putnam and Garrett describe how the Progressive Era, despite the racism of many of its activists, created an ethos, "an expanding sense of 'we'"[82] that was "a prerequisite for the dismantling of 'the color line',"[83] they provide an example of this dynamic. In effect, their book is a case study of how this kind of force field became established, very imperfectly but still effectively, and then how it declined after the 1960s as America slumped into an individualistic culture in which responses to the Spirit's call to seek unity, justice, and peace find themselves swimming upstream rather than with the current.

Putnam and Garrett's argument that this slump can be reversed exemplifies another aspect of the Holy Spirit: "a passion for the possible."[84] Like Jürgen Moltmann in his *Theology of Hope*, though through a very different type of analysis, they too seek to introduce hope into worldly thought and, through their lessons from the Progressive Era, thought into religiously based hope.[85]

Conclusion

Putnam and Garrett conclude that Americans must find a way to revitalize earlier communitarian virtues without reversing subsequent progress in individual liberties.[86] Underlying this conclusion is a moral vision with biblical resonances: we belong to one another. We are to love our neighbour, for ultimately, our good is bound up with theirs. This is a moral vision that many critical theologians share. Though critical theologians may favour a more radical social analysis and a more socialist political agenda, they and social activists can benefit from Putnam and Garrett's social analysis and the lessons and encouragement they draw from the Progressive Era.[87]

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36 Ibid., 341.

37 Douglas John Hall, "Christianity and Canadian Contexts: Then and Now," in *Intersecting Voices*, eds. Don Schweitzer and Derek Simon (Ottawa: Novalis, 2004), 19. Hall attributes this term to Paul Tillich.

38 Will Kymlicka, "Ethnocultural Diversity in a Liberal State: Making Sense of the Canadian Model(s)," in *Belonging? Diversity, Recognition and Shared Citizenship in Canada*, eds. Keith Banting, Thomas Courchene and Leslie Seidle (Montreal: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2007), 43–52.

39 Ibid., 43–46.

40 Ibid., 46.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 48.

43 Ibid., 49–52.

44 Ibid., 51.

45 Ibid., 77.

46 Hall, "Christianity and Canadian Contexts," 23.

47 Another factor arresting this drift is the Canadian federal system of government, which decentralizes political power. Charles Taylor argued that this decentralization has worked against social fragmentation while creating another problem, that of Canadian unity. Charles Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity* (Concord, ON: House of Anansi Press, 1991), 119.

48 Putnam with Garrett, *The Upswing*, 282.

49 James Cone, *Martin & Malcolm & America* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 237–40.

50 Samuel Rayan, *Breath of Fire* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1979), 131.

51 Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 123–24, 175–78.

52 Johann Baptist Metz, *Love's Strategy* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 170.

53 Cone, *Martin & Malcolm & America*, 238.

54 Baum, *Religion and Alienation*, 222.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., 224.

58 Hall, "Christianity and Canadian Contexts," 25.

59 Gregory Baum, "Concluding Reflections," in *The Twentieth Century: A Theological Overview*, ed. Gregory Baum (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999), 248.

60 Baum, *Religion and Alienation*, 193.

61 Baum, "Concluding Reflections," 248.

62 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 473. There are significant agreements between Putnam and Garrett's social analysis and that in Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*, 112–19, and Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 473–504.

63 Taylor, *A Secular Age,* 474.

64 Ibid., 485.

65 Ibid., 475.

66 Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*, 74.

67 Ibid., 35.

68 Ibid., 55–69.

69 Ibid., 44.

70 Mark Lewis Taylor, *Religion, Politics, and the Christian Right* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 33.

71 Putnam with Garrett, *The Upswing*, 141.

72 Gregory Baum, "The Catholic Left in Quebec," in *Culture and Social Change: Social Movements in Québec and Ontario*, ed. Colin Leys and Marguerite Mendell (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1992), 151.

73 Ibid., 152.

74 Jürgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion* (Malden: Polity Press, 2008), 109.

75 Putnam with Garrett, *The Upswing*, 132.

76 Michael Welker, *God the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 235–51.

77 Ibid., 235.

78 Ibid., 242.

79 Ibid., 240.

80 Ibid., 240–41.

81 Ibid., 240.

82 Putnam with Garrett, *The Upswing*, 242.

83 Ibid.

84 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Theology of Hope*, 212.

85 Ibid., 33.

86 Putnam and Garrett, *The Upswing*, 341.

87 I thank David Seljak for many helpful suggestions regarding this paper.

Book Review

The Liberating Significance of Divine Possessions

Joshua Samuel. *Untouchable Bodies, Resistance, and Liberation: A Comparative Theology of Divine Possessions.* Boston: Brill/Rodopi, 2020. xiii + 262 pp.

The work of inculturating the gospel in India has been ongoing for over 200 years. Joshua Samuel carries it one step further in this book, which was originally his Ph.D. thesis at Union Theological Seminary, New York. In the book, Samuel, a Pariayar from Tamil Nadu, investigates the liberating meaning of divine possessions among his people in both the Hindu and Christian religions. This is a work in comparative theology that moves beyond the comparison of religious texts to religious practices. The Pariayars are Dalits, who suffer from caste oppression. Their very bodies are considered polluting in upper caste ideology. But during divine possessions, these bodies become occupied by a transcendent presence: in Hindu rituals by a deity; in Christian worship by the Holy Spirit. According to Samuel, these divine possessions are connected to economic oppression and suffering, and they happen in a communal context. Aspects of these possessions can be seen as subverting the forces that marginalize Dalit communities. Under the control of a Hindu deity, a Dalit person may foretell the future, provide healing, or offer answers to family problems. They may also verbally or physically abuse dominant caste members, in this way asserting themselves and their reality over against oppressive caste realities.

Possession by the Holy Spirit generally occurs within Christian charismatic worship. Samuel describes a typical service in which this happens as follows: after the opening "praise time," in which people sing upbeat songs and clap along, a second portion of the worship begins with songs sung at a slower tempo and an invocation to experience the Holy Spirit. The songs gradually increase in tempo, and congregation members begin to speak in tongues, jumping up and down, praying and crying out loudly. Though this portion of the service is visibly ecstatic in nature, the worship leader remains in control. While those possessed by the divine in Hindu religion sometimes walk around the village in a possessed state, Christians possessed by the Holy Spirit typically remain within the church building. In Roman Catholic communities, women sometimes become possessed by Mary. Samuel also describes how Dalit Christians typically understand baptism and the eucharist as the reception of Christ and the Spirit in their bodies, and thus as akin to divine possession.

Hindus describe being possessed as being chosen by a divinity and filled with power. Christians describe possession by the Holy Spirit as an experience of joy and peace. While these experiences do not address caste oppression explicitly, Samuel argues effectively that they do so implicitly, and that Dalits use language about evil spirits and physical ailments to speak of caste oppression. For Samuel, divine possessions are what James Scott called the 'weapons of the weak', forms of indirect resistance to overwhelming oppressive forces. As such, they empower Dalits to survive and live with some dignity within a caste system that they cannot oppose directly. Invoking Paul Tillich's notion of *kairos*, Samuel sees these divine possessions as kairotic moments in which caste oppression is disrupted, even if only momentarily. In this way Samuel articulates the theology of survival that he finds implicit in Dalits' bodily experiences of divine possession.

This is an insightful and creative contribution to Dalit and comparative theology. Samuel has skillfully employed concepts from liberation and Black theology, comparative theology, Dalit theology, and the thought of Paul Tillich to identify how the crucified Christ is present in the Spirit among a crucified people. He continues the fruitful dialogue between Black and Dalit theology that has been a stimulus to the latter from its inception. However, his conclusion that "there is always movement and action for change in possessions" (135) left me wondering; how would the great Dalit leader Ambedkar have responded to this claim? Samuel may be right, but might it be more accurate to say there is always potential for movement and change in the disruptive event of possessions? While the divine possessions Samuel studied were disruptive moments in which Dalit agency and presence surface, did they lead to or carry forward social change? Or do they bring hope and comfort into the lives of those who experience them and the community around them, while their living conditions remain mostly unchanged? Perhaps in addition to the *kairoi* of divine possessions, a broader social *kairos* is needed for the liberating potential of divine possessions to become actualized in a fuller and more lasting manner. Either way, this is an important book for anyone studying Dalit religion or doing Dalit theology.

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