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Introduction

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Shortly after assuming office, Pope Francis made a name for himself by carrying his own luggage and driving his own car. He has broken new ground through his writings and diplomacy. It is hoped that he will continue this through coming to Canada in the near future to apologize for the Roman Catholic Church's involvement in residential schools. Two articles in this issue discuss some of his ideas. Mary Beth Yount examines the document that Pope Francis and Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb produced during the Pope's visit to Abu Dhabi in February 2019. She applies the ideas featured in this document and in *Fratelli Tutti* to the plight of female migrants. The second article, by Nicholas Olkovich, puts some of the ideas in *Fratelli Tutti* into dialogue with the understanding of populism put forth by political theorists Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau.

At the same time that Christians are being exhorted by Pope Francis to engage in constructive social action, many are also wrestling with colonial legacies that continue to distort Christian thought, action, and worship. A third article by Becca Whitla contributes to this discussion by examining how the Anglo-Saxon heritage of Protestant hymnody was distorted by entanglement with the ethos of British imperialism. Critical theology requires both critical reflection and constructive proposals. This issue supplies both.

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Fraternity, Human Community, and Migration

Pope Francis and the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb

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An interesting collaboration between Pope Francis and the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb has developed, informing our understanding of communal responsibility and, especially, of the responsibility of those in positions of power—including religious and political leaders—to uplift those who have been marginalized and exploited. The declaration they both signed in Abu Dhabi, *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*[1] (HF), from the Apostolic Journey of Pope Francis to the United Arab Emirates on February 3-5, 2019, emerges "from a profound consideration of our contemporary reality, valuing its successes and in solidarity with its suffering, disasters and calamities" (HF, 3) and is a call to community and to action for that community.

The declaration is formulated to counter "individualism accompanied by materialistic philosophies that deify the human person and introduce worldly and material values in place of supreme and transcendental principles" (HF, 3). It is a concrete call to action to "intellectuals, philosophers, religious figures, artists, media professionals and men and women of culture in every part of the world, to rediscover the values of peace, justice, goodness, beauty, human fraternity and coexistence in order to confirm the importance of these values as anchors of salvation for all, and to promote them everywhere" (HF, 3). The invitation of the document is framed in religious terms, rooting responsibility in the "transcendental value" that people of faith are required to, the document says, "see in the other a brother or sister to be supported and loved … called to express this human fraternity by safeguarding creation and the entire universe and supporting all persons, especially the poorest and those most in need" (HF, 1).

On June 12, 2018, the Holy See Press Office published a bulletin that Pope Francis would visit Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates the following February "In response to the invitation of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi" and "also in response to the invitation of the Catholic Church in the United Arab Emirates." There he would "participate in the International Interfaith Meeting on 'Human Fraternity.'"[2]

The planning and the trip—and the writing of the document itself—involved extensive conversations. Pope Francis notes this in his foreword to a book detailing the practicalities by Judge Mohammad Abdulsalam, characterizing it as "'the challenges and difficulties we all faced and overcame in order to realize this great objective.'"[3] The Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, the co-author of the document with Pope Francis and the chair of the meeting, likewise describes, in his foreword to that same book, "'countless meetings and discussions in preparation for'" the HF document.[4] Preceding this was a slow thawing in the frozen relations between the countries, as reported by Gerard O'Connell in an interview with Judge Mohammad Abdulsalam, who helped to plan the visits of the two diplomats to each other's countries.[5] In his video message as the apostolic journey approached, Pope Francis hinted at the document to come, stating: "'I am happy that the Lord has given me this opportunity to write, on your beloved land, a new page in the history of interreligious relations, confirming that we are brothers and sisters even though we are different.'"[6]

Elements of the dialogue of these two collaborators can be seen in two documents and in the response of one to the other. An interplay exists between the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti,* "On Fraternity and Social Friendship" (FT)[7] and the document created during the meetings of the two religious and world leaders. Pope Francis unites FT with HF in multiple ways, including the many ways FT cites and quotes HF; likewise, the connections can be seen in the reaction of the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb to the release of FT. He declared that "'My brother, Pope Francis's message, *Fratelli tutti*, is an extension of the Document on Human Fraternity, and reveals a global reality in which the vulnerable and marginalized pay the price for unstable positions and decisions … It is a message that is directed to people of good will, whose consciences are alive and restores to humanity consciousness.'"[8]

The concerns in FT are not new, as Pope Francis writes: "Issues of human fraternity and social friendship have always been a concern of mine. In recent years, I have spoken of them repeatedly and in different settings" (FT, 5). He specifies that in the encyclical FT, he "sought to bring together many of those statements and to situate them in a broader context of reflection" (FT, 5). One of those documents, as evidenced in the seven citations and in multiple quoted and other referenced sections, is HF. Pope Francis notes in FT that, in the case of this encyclical, "I have felt particularly encouraged by the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, with whom I met in Abu Dhabi, where we declared that 'God has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and has called them to live together as brothers and sisters.' This was no mere diplomatic gesture, but a reflection born of dialogue and common commitment. The present Encyclical takes up and develops some of the great themes raised in the Document that we both signed."[9]

This paper, too, follows the pattern of FT, which is inspired by HF but integrates further information and reflection. The first part highlights similar themes across FT and HF using textual analysis, and the second part develops these themes, especially in regard to community and migration, in the global (but especially the Western European) context. The second part of the paper examines the situation of migration at the intersection of nationalism, xenophobia, and economic interests that can contribute to the exploitation of female migrant workers via channelling them into low-paying, low-status caregiving and domestic work. The conclusion is specific suggestions in this context and in response to the call in HF, reiterated in FT, to transform structures to address equity.

Part I: Themes in *Fratelli Tutti* from Human Fraternity for World Peace

Pope Francis describes his meetings with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, and the document that came out of it, as "a reflection born of dialogue and common commitment" at which "we declared that 'God has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and has called them to live together as brothers and sisters.'" He then makes clear that FT points to, and develops, themes from their meeting (FT, 5). Beyond simply the common principles across FT and HF, the documents are themselves an enactment of collaborative dialogue (as is the support by the authors of HF after the release of FT). The cooperation included the precursors to the trip to the United Arab Emirates itself (including the visit of the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb with the Pope at the Vatican in 2016 as well as the planning for the papal trip to the United Emirates), the meetings during the trip, HF (which spans religions and governance approaches), the many mentions in FT of HF and of the religious leader who was the dialogue partner and co-drafter of HF, the positive endorsement of that leader to the ideas from HF conveyed in FT, and then the many follow-up movements, including the Vatican-supported Higher Committee of Human Fraternity.[10]

FT paraphrases and quotes HF at various points, even quoting, at length, the appeal that Francis and the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb made near the closing of HF. The references to HF occur when discussing a wide variety of topics, the general themes of which relate to community and social support—how we as humans should be together and care for each other. The connections Pope Francis makes are detailed in this part of the paper and then, following the goals of FT as noted above, this paper will put them "in a broader context of reflection" (FT, 5).

The themes shared across the documents are related to the ideas about the common good, a phrase that is used 34 times in the official English translation of FT. Both HF and FT emphasize that human beings are created equal and to live together in community. Below we look carefully at the selections from HF that Pope Francis thought important and related enough to include in FT. These topics include human fraternity, dialogue and common commitment, the role of religion, governance and economic structures, and the impacts of weaponizing both fear and the inequitable distribution of resources.

More than simply detailing the destructive forces such as terrorism and manipulation by those in power of political, economic, and religious structures, the common points across the documents include calls to advocacy. All must, according to FT, drawing on HF, include diverse voices for the enrichment of the whole to move communities (including the global community) toward a humane future that rises above materialism and to continuously speak out for religious and civil rights. We must replace fanaticism, xenophobia, and social fragmentation with unity and, the document makes clear, the integration of religions and religious perspectives can help us to bring about justice.

These documents detail positive scientific, technological, and similar advances (especially in developed countries) but also the negative influence on global action to address injustices, of a "'moral deterioration … and a weakening of spiritual values and responsibility. This contributes to a general feeling of frustration, isolation and desperation'" (FT, 29). FT quotes HF to highlight increasing tensions and armament as well as connecting this with economic concerns, including a global context "dominated by uncertainty, disillusionment, fear of the future, and controlled by narrow economic interests" (FT, 29), political crises, and

inequitable distribution of resources connected with poverty, hunger, and resulting starvation. In the face of all of this, as written in both documents, "'there is an unacceptable silence on the international level.'"[11] At the conclusion of this section highlighting the positive and negative advances that FT cites from HF, Pope Francis asserts that "This panorama, for all its undeniable advances, does not appear to lead to a more humane future" (FT, 29).

Pope Francis revisits the topic of equality in FT, quoting HF, in the context of eliminating marginalization and emphasizing inclusion. It is important to respect the "religious and civil rights of some citizens who are thus discriminated against" and avoid "'misuse [of the term *minorities*, which] paves the way for hostility and discord'" (FT 131; emphasis in original). FT next quotes HF in section 136, when it includes a theme that is common across both documents: that it is "important to reinforce the bond of fundamental human rights in order to help ensure a dignified life for all the men and women of East and West, avoiding the politics of double standards" (FT, 136). He expands it thus: "Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb and I have observed that 'good relations between East and West are indisputably necessary for both. They must not be neglected, so that each can be enriched by the other's culture through fruitful exchange and dialogue'" (FT, 136). Positive political relations, Pope Francis says, drawing on HF, can help countries acknowledge the "'fundamental human rights'" of all and also bring with it the enrichment of diverse cultures—including, specifically, that "'The West can discover in the East remedies for those spiritual and religious maladies that are caused by a prevailing materialism. And the East can find in the West many elements that can help free it from weakness, division, conflict and scientific, technical and cultural decline'" (FT, 136).

It is not just citizens, according to Pope Francis, who must be protected, as sections 131 and 136 both follow immediately upon discussion of migration. Pope Francis writes about the obligation of "taking certain indispensable steps, especially in response to those who are fleeing grave humanitarian crises … the guarantee of the minimum needed to survive; freedom of movement and the possibility of employment; protecting minors and ensuring their regular access to education; … promoting integration into society" (FT, 130). Preceding section 136 on fundamental human rights, Pope Francis says, "'Immigrants, if they are helped to integrate, are a blessing, a source of enrichment and new gift that encourages a society to grow'" (FT, 135).

Pope Francis recalls when, with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, he called upon those who create and oversee "'international policy and world economy to work strenuously to spread the culture of tolerance and of living together in peace'" (FT, 192). The Pope builds on this quoted section in FT, adding that to this end of peace, "When a specific policy sows hatred and fear towards other nations in the name of its own country's welfare, there is need to … correct the course" (FT, 192). This section follows immediately after Francis addresses the damage done by "fundamentalist intolerance" and points toward the importance of respect, love, welcoming diversity, and "the priority of the dignity of every human being" over ideas and actions (FT, 191). It also addresses the need for politicians to include the voices of many, including dissenting voices, and eliminate growing "fanaticism, closedmindedness and social and cultural fragmentation" (FT, 190); rather, the Pope says, we need "a spirit of openness to everyone … an exchange of gifts for the common good" (FT, 190).

The next section, in which Pope Francis explicitly references the HF document, indicates that the problems in our current world emerge out of desensitized consciences and a disconnection with the values of religions, of putting individualistic and materialistic ends in primacy of place instead.[12] The latter part of that section in FT builds on this to emphasize the need for the perspectives of the marginalized and that "room needs to be made for reflections born of religious traditions that are the repository of centuries of experience and wisdom" (FT, 275).

The shared themes across the documents make clear that religions can be positive or negative forces in our communities, as, drawing on the document with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, Pope Francis connects terrorism to "'an accumulation of incorrect interpretations of religious texts and to policies linked to hunger, poverty, injustice, oppression and pride'" (FT, 283). This followed a statement unique to FT, one about believers needing to return to the sources of their faith to "concentrate on what is essential: worship of God and love for our neighbour, lest some of our teachings, taken out of context, end up feeding forms of contempt, hatred, xenophobia or negation of others" (FT, 282). Violence, he adds, is not rooted in "our fundamental religious convictions, but only in their distortion" (FT, 282).

Pope Francis extends this notion of the role of religion into the role of religious leaders, and he launches into "an appeal":

> In my fraternal meeting, which I gladly recall, with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, "we resolutely [declared] that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood. These tragic realities are the consequence

> of a deviation from religious teachings. They result from a political manipulation of religions and from interpretations made by religious groups who, in the course of history, have taken advantage of the power of religious sentiment in the hearts of men and women… God, the Almighty, has no need to be defended by anyone and does not want his name to be used to terrorize people." (FT, 285)

He then repeats the "appeal for peace, justice and fraternity that we made together," which includes:

> "In the name of the poor, the destitute, the marginalized and those most in need, whom God has commanded us to help as a duty required of all persons, especially the wealthy and those of means;
>
> "In the name of orphans, widows, refugees and those exiled from their homes and their countries; in the name of all victims of wars, persecution and injustice; …
>
> "In the name of *human fraternity*, that embraces all human beings, unites them and renders them equal;
>
> "In the name of this fraternity torn apart by policies of extremism and division, by systems of unrestrained profit or by hateful ideological tendencies that manipulate the actions and the future of men and women; …
>
> "In the name of God and of everything stated thus far, [we] declare the adoption of a culture of dialogue as the path; mutual cooperation as the code of conduct; reciprocal understanding as the method and standard." (FT, 285; emphasis in original)

Clearly the encyclical, and the HF inspiration for it, is a call to fix the structures that close people out, that lead to isolation and injustice. We need to reflect and incorporate FT into our reflections. What walls are marginalizing people and how can we remove them? What bridges must be built? What kind of actions, and with whom, can we take to expand fraternity[13] to the whole globe, especially to those who are suffering? As Pope Francis intended, we must now enact the "social Encyclical … in the face of present-day attempts to eliminate or ignore others … with a new vision of fraternity and social friendship that will not remain at the level of words" (FT, 6). We need to foster a culture of encounter and dialogue to help bring about the common good. Among the many crises we could address here, this paper takes up the cause of treatment of migrants. The encyclical pays special attention to Islam, and so, taking our cue from that, our reflections apply the lens of fostering community and the common good to migration, especially female Muslim migrants.

Part II: Significance of the Common Themes in the Context of Global Migration

The current intersection of neoliberalism, the effects of late capitalism (especially the meeting of the commodification of women and labour with the current need for domestic and caregiving workers), and changing perceptions of certain religious adherents has given rise to polarization and movements that diminish global community. We can see this in the nationalist and exclusionary rhetoric and legislation in some countries and in the privileging of the individual over the community and the selective (mis)treatment of migrants.

Brexit, the rise of Donald Trump (and his proposed "border wall"), and other nationalistic movements that have recently come to the fore in Western Europe and the United States likely lessen the sense of global community. Polarization within nations is also contributing to a sense of isolationism for individuals and to factionalism. Populist refrains such as "Believe in Britain" and "Make America Great Again" demonstrate self-interested and isolationist tendencies. Whether these stem from perceived lack of community or not, which is debatable, these polarizing movements are certainly *causing* such a loss, globally and locally.[14]

Current Data: Global Migration

Discussions of "the migration crisis" abound. Sometimes this phrase is employed to legitimize the exclusion of migrants and anti-immigrant attitudes, while at other times it is used to express concern over the deaths and disappearances of migrants or the exploitation of settling and settled immigrants. Often the ways that we discuss migration continue some of the exclusion and othering visible across countries.

International migration[15] has been rising steadily, with an approximate 200% increase between 1960 and 2015[16] and, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the migration agency for the United Nations, this increase has continued steadily, with the 2020 report stating that "we have also seen the scale of international migration increase in line with recent trends." Status changes and irregular migration pathways make it challenging to know exact numbers, but according to IOM figures, "the number of international migrants is estimated to be almost 272 million globally, with nearly two-thirds being labour migrants."[17]

International and internal (i.e., within borders) migration stem from many causes and can be voluntary or involuntary. Intersecting factors, including those related to economics and trade, social and cultural dynamics, demographics, climate, safety, ease of movement, and geography can all impact migration patterns and processes. The IOM summarizes the

general flow of movement thus: "The largest corridors tend to be from developing countries to larger economies such as those of the United States, France, the Russian Federation, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia."[18] As the IOM accurately portrays it, "As part of current shifts, international migration has increasingly become weaponized. It is being used by some as a political tool, undermining democracy and inclusive civic engagement, by tapping into the understandable fear in communities that stems from the accelerated pace of change and rising uncertainty of our times."[19]

Migration can be dangerous for those who pursue both regular and irregular migration pathways, and increasing desperation can lead people seeking a new home to take considerable risks. In 2018, the IOM raised the alert that immigration and displacement due to "conflict, persecution, environmental degradation and change, and a profound lack of human security and opportunity" has been increasing.[20]

The risk does not end when people arrive and settle in another country. Exploitation of migrants and already settled immigrants often happens through work, and some of this is due to their recruitment into "the type of labour least favoured by the native-born: the so-called 3D (dirty, dangerous, demanding) jobs." Additionally, as the 2020 IOM report notes, "In countries with large shares of high-skilled natives, low-skilled migrant workers have complemented the skills of natives by occupying jobs in sectors where citizens are in short supply; in many cases, these are also sectors that native workers consider unattractive." This has been significant, as the report notes, for "for native, high-skilled women. As migrants have filled jobs in childcare and housekeeping, female native workers have been able to increase their workplace participation and productivity."[21] The report cites studies from Italy and the United States to support points such as "when there was a large supply of immigrants who provided household services, native Italian women spent more time at work."[22]

It is important to raise critical questions around the assumptions inherent in the perceived benefits of funnelling migrant and immigrant woman into low-wage and low-status work. Labour exploitation can happen at many levels, including governmental. Sara R. Farris, in the book *In the Name of Women's Rights: The Rise of Femonationalism*, examines the ways that workfare programs in the Netherlands, France, and Italy purport to emancipate and integrate female Muslim and other migrant women through employment and volunteerism but really groom them for, and funnel them into, low-paid and low-status caregiving and domestic work.[23]

The IOM points out the "feminization of migration" and advocates for "more gender-targeted policies for migrant inclusion."[24] These policies need to reflect the obstacles female migrants confront, especially "when it comes to labour market inclusion. In the European Union … Among employed women migrants, 40 per cent were overqualified for their positions, with a high number engaged in domestic work. Refugee women are even worse off in terms of labour market inclusion, given their more precarious status and situation."[25] National identity politics, social concerns, and public relations campaigns—and, as the IOM report highlights, increasingly via social media[26]—are being used to legitimize anti-immigrant attitudes and the exclusion of migrants.

Contributions of Nationalistic, Economic, and Religious Movements

Fratelli Tutti and *Human Fraternity for World Peace* point to the need to disrupt abusive power structures that continue marginalization and victimization and, instead, to include and support all for the common good. Religions can help with this, as can corrective political movements. In fact, religions and those in positions of power—including countries in power—have a responsibility to replace extremist nationalism, xenophobia, and exploitive economic interests.[27] Johan Verstraeten highlights the "scapegoating and stigmatizing" that supports such movements and is perpetuated by them.[28]

A lack of community and unity can be seen in the polarization evidenced in the international and national political realms as well as social, religious, and legal structures. In fact, these movements and the divisions they inspire are themselves rooted in, and foster, a space marked by historically shaped, socially constructed, and culturally located power relations. Given that these are neoliberal movements, one might suppose that they advocate for traditional victims of the established power structures such as the poor (moderating income inequality) and women.

Sara R. Farris's analysis of "the deployment of gender equality within xenophobic campaigns" in the Netherlands, France, and Italy reveals that neoliberalism actually does the opposite to the rights of women, migrants, and Muslims. Neoliberalism not only makes the equal rights campaigns of these marginalized populations functional to consumer cultures but also is "a political-economic formation that 'institutionalizes' the femonationalist ideology as part of the functioning of the state apparatuses in order to (re)organize the productive and particularly the socially reproductive sphere."[29]

In Farris's discussion of the factionalization and religious othering currently happening at the intersection of neoliberalism and religion, she points out that the late-capitalistic commodification of Muslim and migrant women and the casting of them as *objects in need of rescue* to then be channelled into sorely needed domestic and caregiving tasks has included the Western narrative that this is for their own good, for the liberation of Muslim women from the oppressive Muslim men (whose labour is not needed in such a permanent way).

The quoted, referenced, and contextualized points in *Fratelli Tutti* from the declaration by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb provide a deep understanding of some of the challenges in our society, especially the weaponization of religious, economic, and governmental structures against the marginalized. The common themes also provide a clear call for the global community to support religious and civil movements that promote care for the other above materialism and other self-interested philosophies. The integration of diverse voices, religions, and religious perspectives into our priorities and decision making can help us fulfill our obligation, in response to the call in HF, reiterated in FT, to transform structures to address equity. We must draw closer to unity and justice, displacing the desperate economic situations that are contributing to exclusion, fanaticism, xenophobia, and social fragmentation.

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1 *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* from the Apostolic Journey of Pope Francis to The United Arab Emirates (February 3-5, 2019), papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.pdf (vatican.va). Hereafter, HF. Page references are given in parentheses in the text.

2 Declaration of the Director of the Holy See Press Office, Greg Burke, 06.122018, https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2018/12/06/181206f.html. Accessed on December 29, 2021. (Note: The official English translation of the bulletin does have this as "fraternity," as do most of the official translations, although the official English translation of Pope Francis's welcome video calls this meeting about *brotherhood instead of fraternity*: "invited me to participate in the interreligious meeting on the theme 'Human Brotherhood.'" The term "fraternity" has a gendered connotation, albeit potentially to a lesser degree than "brotherhood.")

3 Mohammad Abdulsalam, *The Pope and the Grand Imam: A Thorny Path. A Testimony to the Birth of the Human Fraternity Document* (Motivate Media Group, 2021). Unpaginated (available as a digital text only).

4 Ibid., "Foreword."

5 Gerard O'Connell, "An Inside Look at How Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Have Revolutionized Catholic–Muslim Relations," *America Magazine,* April 13, 2021, https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2021/04/13/pope-francis-grand-imam-catholic-muslim-abdel-salam-240436. Accessed on December 29, 2021.

6 Video Message of His Holiness Pope Francis on the Occasion of His Upcoming Apostolic Journey to the United Arab Emirates, January 31, 2019, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20190131_videomessaggio-emirati-arabi-uniti.html. Accessed on December 29, 2021.

7 *Fratelli Tutti* ("On Fraternity and Social Friendship"), October 3, 2020, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html#_ftn118. Accessed November 1, 2021. Hereafter, FT. Paragraph references are given in parentheses in the text.

8 Vatican News, "Grand Imam: 'Pope Francis restores to humanity its consciousness'. The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, reacts to the release of Pope Francis's Encyclical, 'Fratelli tutti,' on Sunday," October 5, 2020, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/world/news/2020-10/grand-imam-al-tayyeb-encyclical-fratelli-tutti-fraternity-pope.html. Accessed December 19, 2021.

9 *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* from the Apostolic Journey of Pope Francis to The United Arab Emirates (February 3-5, 2019), 5. (Hereafter, HF.) The signed declaration is interesting for many reasons, but of note: it is a foundational source in and does not cite previous Church documents as support for the assertions therein. This departure from usual practice in official Church documents is likely due to the fact that this is a collaboration, but the significance remains. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html. Accessed November 20, 2021.

10 Space limitations prohibit discussion of this committee, but the reader can find information about this endeavour, which includes various representatives (including the President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue of the Holy See), here: https://www.forhumanfraternity.org/higher-committee. Accessed February 27, 2022.

11 HF, 4; FT, 8.

12 "'Among the most important causes of the crises of the modern world are a desensitized human conscience, a distancing from religious values and the prevailing individualism accompanied by materialistic philosophies that deify the human person and introduce worldly and material values in place of supreme and transcendental principles'." FT, 275.

13 The author cannot do justice to critical engagement with the term "fraternity" in this brief essay, but this is an important conversation, one that has been had in popular media and needs to continue. (The web snippet for the official English translation of FT on the Vatican website still reads "Encyclical Fratelli tutti (All Brothers) of the Holy Father" as of December 30, 2021.) The response of Andrea Tornielli, of the Dicastery for Communication, asserting the term's gender inclusivity was published in the upper right of this page: https://media.vaticannews.va/media/osservatoreromano/pdf/quo/2020/09/QUO_2020_212_1709.pdf. The Catholic News Service article by Cindy Wooden released on October 4, 2020, provides a broad background of some of the objections and responses. It was widely added to various publications and can be seen here: https://catholicphilly.com/2020/10/news/world-news/fratelli-tutti-shows-need-for-dialogue-in-the-church-speaker-says. Both accessed December 30, 2021.

14 The loss is more than simply community; it is also financial security, but sources such as The 2016 Edelman Trust Barometer Global Report (a 28-country survey) demonstrate that declines in trust of the four institutions of government, business, nongovernmental organizations, and media correspond to rates of income inequality.

15 The author of this paper follows the definition of terms for immigration, migrant, and international migration established by the International Organization for Migration: https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms. Accessed November 16, 2021. International migration is "The movement of persons away from their place of usual residence and across an international border to a country of which they are not nationals." Migration is the "movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State."

16 Pew Research, *International Migration: Key Findings from the U.S., Europe and the World* (fact sheet compiled by Phillip Connor, December 15, 2016), http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/12/15/international-migration-key-findings-from-the-u-s-europe-and-the-world. Accessed June 15, 2018.

17 International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2020*, 2, https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf. Accessed November 16, 2021. Labour migration is a "Movement of persons from one State to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment."

18 International Organization for Migration, Key Terms, 2, https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms. Accessed November 16, 2021.

19 International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2020*, 7.

20 International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2018*, 1, https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/country/docs/china/r5_world_migration_report_2018_en.pdf. Accessed November 10, 2021.

21 International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2020*, 176.

22 Ibid.

23 Sara R. Farris, *In the Name of Women's Rights: The Rise of Femonationalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 2017), 78.

24 International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2020*, 195–96.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid., 7: "Social media technology is also increasingly impacting the politics of migration, with a surge of far-right activism on social media platforms seeking to influence political debates and ultimately political decisions."

27 HT, 11: "History shows that religious extremism, national extremism and also intolerance have produced in the world, be it in the East or West, what might be referred to as signs of a 'third world war being fought piecemeal.'" And FT, 11: "instances of a myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalism are on the rise. In some countries, a concept of popular and national unity influenced by various ideologies is creating new forms of selfishness and a loss of the social sense under the guise of defending national interests."

28 Johan Verstraeten, "Towards a Theological Ethics of Migration: Implications for Catholic Social Thought," *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 14:1 (2017), 4.

29 Farris, *In the Name of Women's Rights*, 14.

For an Inclusive Populism

Politics and Peoplehood in Chantal Mouffe and Pope Francis

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Noted political theorists Chantal Mouffe's and Ernesto Laclau's reflections on the nature of politics and populism[1] are enjoying a renaissance. Mouffe contends that the current "populist moment" in Western democracies is the result of contemporary neoliberalism's misguided efforts to construct a politics "beyond hegemony." According to Mouffe, the rise of populist movements that challenge the status quo mark the re-emergence of what Carl Schmitt terms "the political." Schmitt's contention that political identities are collective identities whose existence is predicated upon some form of exclusion overlaps with the analysis of populism developed by Mouffe's long-time collaborator Ernesto Laclau. Laclau conceives populism as a political logic that finds expression in diverse struggles to define "the people" against those who hold power. Far from transcending Schmitt's friend/enemy distinction, neoliberal post-politics has moralized it in ways that risk radicalizing right-wing populist movements critical of the status quo. In responding to this conflict between mutually reinforcing extremes, Mouffe calls for the adoption of an agonistic pluralism that diffuses rather than denies the antagonistic character of all politics and for a left populism that constructs the "people" in inclusive rather than exclusive ways.

In recent years, Catholic theologians have highlighted similarities between Mouffe's and Laclau's critical and constructive projects and Pope Francis's reflections on politics.[2] Like Mouffe, Francis understands crisis as a time of trial or testing that challenges a community's standard categories and politics as a set of practices dedicated to the construction of a people. Unlike Mouffe, Francis connects his analysis of crisis to the practice of reading or interpreting the signs of the times, a process of discernment that enables individuals and communities to distinguish between the presence of the bad and good spirit in contemporary realities. Francis links the bad spirit with fundamentalisms of the left and right that find expression in friend/enemy dynamics that mark both neoliberal globalization and those exclusivist forms of populism that are its mirror image. In his recent work, Francis contends that the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the inadequacies of both ideologies and has opened a "space" in which to discern the good spirit, the voice of God that inspires us to construct a genuinely inclusive people. Informed by the Argentinian strand of liberation theology known as the "theology of the people," Francis contends that the principal task of "a better politics" is the construction of a people committed to encounter and dialogue and attentive to the voice of those living in poverty.[3] In my judgment, Francis's conception of the Church as people of God and its complex relationship with the people-as-nation and the people-as-poor confirms but also complicates and enriches elements of Mouffe's twofold call for agonistic respect and radical democracy. More specifically, Francis's emphasis on our shared humanity, together with his support for popular movements that serve the dignity of all in society, provides tools essential for the construction of an inclusive common good.

Mouffe and Laclau on Our Current "Populist Moment"

Mouffe conceives liberal democracy as the product of a contingent conjunction of two principles or traditions: (a) liberalism's emphasis on individual liberty, the rule of law, and universal human rights; and (b) the democratic tradition's focus on popular sovereignty and equality.[4] Mouffe argues that the rise of neoliberal forms of individualism and rationalism have led to the erosion of the democratic tradition's two foci. Mouffe ties the eclipse of popular sovereignty to the rise of what she calls "post-politics."[5] Post-politics presumes that liberal democracy's victory over communism has ushered in a world "beyond hegemony" that finds expression in the policies of "third way" politicians who celebrate a "consensus at the center."[6] In the absence of viable alternatives, politics has become synonymous with management by elites of the neoliberal order. In practice, social democracy's adoption of the dogma of neoliberal globalization has fuelled a process of "oligarchization" that has benefited the rich and powerful at the expense of those its policies are

purportedly designed to assist.[7] The resulting multiplication of unsatisfied democratic demands has led to an "interregnum," a "period of crisis" that marks the reactivation of what Carl Schmitt terms "the political."[8] According to Schmitt, "the political" refers not to a particular "type of institution" or "sphere" of society but rather to the constitutive role that conflict plays in the discursive construction of social orders.[9] More specifically, Schmitt contends that political identities are affectively laden collective identities that depend upon the formation of a homogenous *demos* or people predicated upon some form of exclusion. This relational conception of identity underscores the impossibility of defining any "we" or "us" apart from what Derrida calls its constitutive outside, the "they" or "other" from which it is differentiated.[10] Since the construction of every social order requires the "exclusion of other possibilities,"[11] Schmitt's conception of the political forecloses the possibility of a "perfectly reconciled and harmonious society."[12] Schmitt's account of the political is closely related to Ernesto Laclau's conception of populism.[13] Laclau's approach depends on a distinction between institutionalist and populist discourses present in all societies. Roughly correlative with the established social order, institutionalism is centred on addressing and absorbing democratic demands to "secure the complicity" of various parties in society.[14] By contrast, populism is not a specific ideology but rather a "way of doing politics," a particular form or logic of "the political" that arises in diverse contexts marked by democratic deficits.[15] According to Laclau, populism requires a "dichotomic division of society" that distinguishes between "underdogs" or "outsiders" and those who hold power.[16] Populist subjectivity is constructed by linking unmet democratic demands into a "chain of equivalence" structured around certain "floating signifiers" that have been transformed into affectively charged "nodal points" such as "the people" or "workers" or "the nation."[17] When Mouffe speaks of our current "populist age" or "moment," she is highlighting the return of "the political" that pits alternative constructions of the "people" against each other in a hegemonic struggle to overthrow the reigning neoliberal order.

Neoliberalism's inability to account for the role that collective identifications play in politics hinders its capacity to respond to the rise of mass movements that challenge the status quo. Far from evading the friend/enemy distinction constitutive of "the political," neoliberal post-politics has moralized it in ways that justify branding its opponents as enemies of liberal democracy.[18] Neoliberalism's tendency to condemn, disqualify, and exclude its opponents has contributed to the rebirth of exclusionary forms of traditionalism that are its mirror image. In their retrieval of democratic sovereignty and equality, right-wing populists tend to construct "the people" in exclusivist terms and to restrict the ascription of democratic rights to ethnic and/or religious in-group members.[19] Motivated principally by fear, proponents of right-wing populism scapegoat enemies perceived to threaten the cultural heritage and economic well-being of the nation, especially immigrants, religious minorities, and the political elites that support them.[20] This xenophobic conception of the *demos* coupled with right-wing populism's unwillingness to directly target neoliberal individualism has aided the rise of "nationalistic authoritarian" forms of neoliberalism that threaten the recovery of democracy.[21]

Mouffe on Agonistic Pluralism and Left Populism

Mouffe argues that the first step in overcoming this polarized debate between competing absolutisms is to provide an outlet for distinctive voices that have been marginalized by the status quo. The goal is not to evade the antagonism constitutive of "the political" but rather to sublimate conflict in ways that enable an alternative account of the we/they relationship. At the heart of Mouffe's efforts to transcend Schmitt's friend/enemy relation lies her distinction between an antagonism in which parties treat their opponents as enemies to be destroyed and an agonistic conflict where both sides treat each other as "adversaries" deserving of respect.[22] Unlike enemies, adversaries share a "common symbolic space" that finds expression in a "conflictual consensus," a shared commitment to the "ethico-political values of liberty and equality for all."[23] Like other empty signifiers, the meanings of these principles are temporarily stabilized by different discursive practices, but they remain subject to dislocation and agonistic struggle. Agonism not only enables the retrieval of popular sovereignty; it also sets important conditions for a left populism that radicalizes "existing democratic institutions so as to make the principles of liberty and equality become effective in an increasing number of social relations."[24] By contrast with various forms of Marxist essentialism that privilege class struggle, Mouffe advocates the adoption of a left populist strategy that focuses on constructing a "collective will"—a "we" or "people"—that defines itself in opposition to "the oligarchy."[25] This inclusive conception of "the people" is a discursive construction, the product of a "chain of equivalence" that unites persons fighting against diverse forms of oppression.[26]

Mouffe's agonistic pluralism and left populist approach to democracy succeed in walking a middle ground between liberal individualism and exclusivist forms of populism. Her efforts to widen the scope of democratic debate to include those marginalized by the status quo and to construct the people in inclusive rather than exclusive ways are to be commended. According to Mouffe, the shift from antagonism to agonism as

well as the adoption of radical democratic politics constitutes radical changes in political identity that are the result not of "rational persuasion" but rather of a "conversion" that depends upon the transformation of desire.[27] Although I am very sympathetic to this claim, it is my contention that Pope Francis's vision of politics and peoplehood can shed light on these transitions and, in the process, complicate and enrich Mouffe's critical and constructive projects. Central to Francis's alternative approach to social transformation and the construction of the people is his account of discernment.

Pope Francis on Crisis, Discernment, and the Bad Spirit

According to Francis, a crisis is a time of trial or testing that, by exposing the inadequacies of a community's standard "categories," "priorities," and "lifestyles,"[28] generates "a sense of trepidation, anxiety, upset and uncertainty in the face of decisions to be made."[29] Francis connects his analysis of crisis with the dialectical tension between tradition and innovation that marks post-conciliar Catholic theology and with a particular interpretation of that relationship that focuses on reading or interpreting the signs of the times. The latter refers to a process of discernment that enables individuals and communities to seek the truth in "changing contexts and specific situations" by distinguishing between events and trends that are a function of the good and bad spirit, respectively.[30] In *Let Us Dream*, Francis links the bad spirit of "supposition and suspicion" with "closed ways of thinking" that "shelter people from destabilizing situations."[31] The bad spirit finds expression in an "isolated conscience" that fears the loss of an "acquired fortune," entitlement or privilege such as "power, influence, freedom, security, status, money, property," or some combination thereof.[32] Francis contends that the tendency to justify one's own privileges by accusing or scapegoating others contributes, over time, to the formation of "Manichaean fantasies that divide the world into good and bad."[33] In his recent work, Francis links these friend/enemy dynamics with radical forms of individualism and traditionalism that regard the tradition-innovation relationship not as a contraposition marked by fruitful tension but rather as a contradiction that hinders the authentic resolution of crises.[34]

First, Francis argues that neoliberalism's "hyper-inflation" of the individual has contributed to the emergence of a culture of consumerism or consumption that breeds indifference to others.[35] The resulting rejection of a "positive view of community" that transcends personal gain reduces society to a collection of individuals who have come together to protect their narrow self-interests.[36] Implicit in these conceptions of the person and society lies a "neo-Darwinist ideology of the survival of the fittest" that undergirds neoliberalism's obsession with free markets and short-term economic growth or profit.[37] According to Rafael Luciani, neoliberalism's "capital fetishism" or "market totalitarianism" has, in practice, subordinated the human person to the demands of finance and the economy.[38] The resulting deification of money has contributed to the emergence of an "economy of exclusion and inequality"[39] and to a "throw-away culture" that regards humans as disposable commodities.[40] At the same time, critics of neoliberal globalization or "globalism" characterize it as a form of cultural colonization or homogenization that weakens communal identity and that destroys the distinctiveness of individual peoples and the cultures that give meaning to their lives.[41] Although the imposition of this global culture claims to unify the world, Francis contends that it inevitably "divides persons and nations" while increasing the profits of the rich and powerful.[42]

Francis laments the way in which Christians have inappropriately accommodated the Christian tradition to neoliberal individualism. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, he is critical of the rise of "adulterated forms of Christianity"[43]—typified by theologies of "prosperity" or "well-being"[44]—that reduce the focus of the Gospel to a personal and purely interior relationship with God.[45] Luciani connects Francis's criticism of "privatized" and "individualistic" forms of Christianity with what he terms "ecclesial culture." Ecclesial culture finds expression in a "self-referential and self-centered" conception of the Church defined by "group affinities of a ritual and disciplinary – as opposed to a Gospel – nature."[46] Ecclesial culture's tendency to correlate Christian faith with formal membership in the Church evacuates the kerygma of its social content and insulates believers from the reality and needs of the poor and marginalized in ways that weaken the Church's credibility. By contrast with ecclesial culture's tendency to reduce evangelization to a process of doctrinal transmission, Francis calls the Church to a form of "pastoral conversion" that foregrounds encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ.[47] The latter "does not mean simply professing him or offering him sacrifices or devotional practices but doing today the equivalent of what he did in his life."[48] Faithfulness to the praxis of Jesus requires not merely a series of isolated charitable acts but rather an ongoing commitment to the "sociopolitical transformation" of those very "peoples" thrust aside by neoliberal globalization.[49]

A second major trend that hinders fraternity and the common good in the contemporary world is exclusivist populism. Whereas Mouffe views populism as an ideologically empty "way of doing politics," Francis views it as a "local" form of narcissism embodied in us-versus-them mentalities that dehumanize those who are different, especially migrants and religious minori-

ties.[50] Much like Mouffe and Laclau, Francis connects the rise of right-wing exclusivism to growing disillusionment with neoliberal globalization. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Francis characterizes the resurgence of fundamentalism as a reaction to the "vacuum" left by the global spread of a "materialistic, consumerist, and individualistic" culture.[51] Similarly, in *Let Us Dream*, Francis contends that the loss of communal ties and popular sovereignty that are a function of neoliberal hegemony has given rise to "genuine anguish" that is manipulated by right-wing demagogues for their own political gain.[52] Although the financial crisis of 2007–2008 provided an opportunity to "develop a new economy, more attentive to ethical principles," those most invested in the neoliberal order stubbornly defended the status quo in ways that fuelled right-wing populist reactions.[53] In *Fratelli Tutti*, Francis connects the latter with what evolutionary biologists term parochial or group altruism and with "ancestral fears" that biologically predispose us to care for in-group members at the expense of outsiders.[54] Francis highlights the way in which the rise of economic inequality and the ongoing migrant crisis have reinforced these "primal reactions," leading people to withdraw into their own safety zones and to build walls, both physical and psychological.[55]

Just as Christians have accommodated the gospel to liberal individualism, so, too, the gospel has been co-opted and twisted by right-wing populist movements that radicalize ecclesial culture's tendency to conceive of the Church as a closed community. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Francis notes that many Christians claim to be justified and even encouraged by their faith to defend xenophobic conceptions of nation and Church that exclude and demonize those who are different.[56] Many Christians in North America and Europe are invested in what Samuel Huntington terms a clash of civilizations narrative, a battle of apocalyptic proportions that pits the Christian West against outsiders, especially Muslims, Jews, and the European Union or the United Nations.[57] Francis also shares Mouffe's concern that right-wing populism's unwillingness to directly target neoliberalism has contributed to the rise of openly xenophobic forms of individualism. The latter have found expression during the pandemic in an "angry spirit of victimhood" present among some Christians who view mask mandates and church closures not as "restrictions necessary for people's protection" but rather as a "political assault" on "personal freedom."[58]

By momentarily reviving the sense that we are a global community, the COVID-19 pandemic has done us a service by exposing the inadequacies of both neoliberalism and exclusivist forms of populism. Whereas Mouffe tends to ontologize antagonism, Francis views the bad spirit of suspicion as a distortion of a prior and more basic desire for communion with God and neighbour.[59] Liberal individualism and right-wing populism are, from this perspective, the expression of concupiscence, predispositions to individual and group selfishness that conflict with, distort, and suppress the human person's orientation to communion. According to Francis, the gap between "the realities and challenges we face and the recipes and solutions available to us" has become a "space" in which to discern the good spirit, the voice of God that inspires us to build a better, more fraternal post-pandemic world.[60] It is the good spirit, the gift of God's love, that enables the construction of a people committed to encounter, dialogue, and the common good of all. This connection between horizontal love of neighbour and the experience of vertical communion with God sits at the core of Francis's "theology of the people."

Pope Francis on the "Theology of the People"

The roots of the "theology of the people" lie in the Latin American Episcopal Council's (CELAM) and the Argentine Bishops Conference's (COEPAL) appropriations of the Second Vatican Council. Both groups are indebted to *Gaudium et Spes*'s call to interpret the signs of the times in service to "the birth of a new humanism, where people are defined first of all by their responsibility to their brothers and sisters and to history."[61] These emphases were further developed by Paul VI in his reflections on the relationship between evangelization and integral human development in 1967's *Populorum Progressio* and by CELAM II at its ground-breaking 1968 meeting in Medellín.[62] Informed by the work of theologians such as Lucio Gera and Rafael Tello, the Argentinian bishops developed a national pastoral plan that applied the conclusions of Medellín at its 1969 meeting in San Miguel.[63] Argentinian bishops and theologians articulated their distinctive insights on the connection between faith and justice in close dialogue with *Lumen Gentium*'s conception of the Church as people of God. In *Lumen Gentium*, the council fathers argued that the Church is not first and foremost an institution but rather a people called to make present in human history the mystery of communion with God and neighbour.[64] This vision of the Church is central to what Luciani describes as a "relational soteriology" that transcends ecclesial culture's focus on the individual's relationship with God.[65] As Francis notes in *Evangelii Gaudium*, God calls humans "together as a people and not as isolated individuals. No one is saved by himself or herself individually. God attracts us by taking into account the complex interweaving of personal relationships entailed in the life of a human community."[66] Transformed by the gift of God's love in Jesus Christ and guided by the *sensus fidei*, a special gift of the Spirit that enables the entirety of the people of God to discern the signs

of the times, the Church is called to a pastoral conversion in service to the kingdom of God. Informed by *Gaudium et Spes*'s pluralistic conception of culture,[67] the people of God—and those mysteriously related to it—is present or incarnate in the individual peoples of the earth, each with its own way of viewing the world.[68] Functioning as a leaven in human history, the people of God interacts with and serves these peoples by proclaiming and witnessing to the mystery of communion to which all humans are called. It is this connection between the Church as people of God and the distinctive peoples of the world that helps differentiate the Argentinian theology of the people from some forms of liberation theology that analyze the people principally in terms of "class."[69]

According to Francis, the people-as-nation is a "mythical" rather than a "logical" or "legal category" defined by something more than shared citizenship or physical location.[70] To be part of a people is to "be part of a shared identity arising from social and cultural bonds,"[71] the latter of which can only be "approached through intuition, by entering into its spirit … and traditions."[72] This shared "personality" is not "automatic" or static but rather a "living reality" that entails a "slow, difficult process … of advancing towards a common project" by adapting and responding to specific challenges and crises in its history.[73] In *Let Us Dream*, Francis contends that the solidarity constitutive of the people is typically born in and through its struggle for "dignity and freedom." By contrast, in times of "peace and prosperity," the people tend to "dissolve into a mere mass, with no unifying principle to bind them."[74] This loss of the common good typified by the rise of neoliberalism's culture of "complacent well being" pits those at the centre against those who live on the margins and, by extension, fuels the emergence of exclusivist forms of populism that are its mirror image. Francis differentiates his own conception of the people from distorted notions of globalism and populism by noting that a "true people" is an open-ended and dynamic reality capable of achieving a "new synthesis through its ability to welcome difference."[75] In a culture of encounter and dialogue, persons are faithful to their own principles and commitments but also open to learning from and with those who are different. This account of dialogue as a form of intercultural gift exchange not only applies to the formation of the people-as-nation but also specifies conditions by which a global people may be constructed. The result is a variation of Mouffe's conflictual consensus—a consensus grounded in our common humanity yet compatible with diversity and disagreement—that transforms the friend/enemy dynamics that mark antagonistic conflict into agonistic dialogue. According to Francis, the unity of humankind is greater than conflict, and our differences, provided they are not understood antagonistically, can generate new insights and solutions to collective problems.[76] Although reason can discover the reality of human dignity and the call to communion that conditions the possibility of this thin "we" or inclusive conception of the people, genuine unity-in-diversity is always a function of humankind's cooperation with God's love. Only "self-accusation"—a sense of humility that acknowledges one's faults and that opens one to relationship with God and neighbour—can move us beyond the cycle of accusation and counteraccusation that is a function of the "isolated conscience."[77]

The struggle for dignity and freedom that is constitutive of the people-as-nation's identity is born from and closely connected to the notion of the "people-as-poor." Commentators note that the term "people" is typically used in the post-conciliar Latin American context to denote especially those "lower classes and popular social sectors"[78] that are "marginalized and excluded from sociopolitical and economic participation."[79] According to Juan Carlos Scannone, it is the poor who "hold on to the historical memory of the people and ensure that the interests of the people coincide with a common historical project of justice and peace."[80] The poor's role as keeper of tradition and the common good is grounded in their unique capacity for giving to and receiving from others.[81] This sense of solidarity finds expression in the rise of popular or grassroots associations and movements that assist the poor and excluded in organizing and issuing demands for the three Ls: "land, lodging and labor."[82] Reflecting on his own involvement with such movements, Francis labels them "social poets" and contends that their struggles to transform society are a "source of moral energy" and of "civic passion" essential to the revitalization of democracy in an "age of exclusion and indifference."[83] The goal must be to support and to help coordinate these movements—to walk with and accompany the poor in their quest for dignity—rather than to "absorb … direct or dominate them" in paternalistic ways from above.[84] The latter is a trend common among some left-wing populist movements whose progressive activism—"exercised largely *on behalf* of the poorest communities"—perpetuates the poor's disenfranchisement.[85] By contrast, Francis contends that only by "including the excluded in the building of a common destiny" is it possible to build a "world of lasting peace and justice."[86] Here, there are clear overlaps with Mouffe's efforts to construct an inclusive form of the people by unifying diverse grassroots movements against oppression. Yet Francis's emphasis on the priority of unity over conflict provides a basis for criticizing left populist movements that portray their opponents—including neoliberals and religious believers—as enemies to be eradicated. It is Francis's distinctive emphasis on the role that the

people of God is called to play in the development of a "better kind of politics" that differentiates his brand of radical democracy from approaches that reproduce the exclusivism common on the right today.

According to Francis, the people of God permeate the people-as-nation not by imposing a one-size-fits-all ecclesial culture but rather by inculturating the Gospel within the "national experience of the people," especially the lifeworld and culture of the people-as-poor.[87] Inculturation entails embracing, defending, and advancing the culture of the people, but it also demands a "real and sincere closeness" to the poor, including their faith, as well as solidarity with their yearning for liberation.[88] According to Luciani, it is "in taking on reality in faith" that the poor become a "faithful people" whose experience of encounter with God in shared everyday life finds expression in popular piety or spirituality.[89] "Born of the incarnation of Christian faith in popular culture," popular mysticism or religiosity—an expression of the *sensus fidei*—inspires and strengthens the poor in their popular and grassroots struggles for liberation.[90] At the same time, the reality of their faith and witness to the common good can function as a *locus theologicus* capable of evangelizing others, especially those captive to ecclesial culture, and of motivating them to assist the marginalized in their quest for dignity.[91] In both cases, the gift of God's love made manifest in Jesus Christ can inspire a pastoral conversion that finds expression in a truly "popular" politics. In this way, the Church as people of God can play an important role in the constitution of an inclusive people, committed to encounter and dialogue and attentive to the voice of the poor in its midst.

Conclusion

Chantal Mouffe's diagnosis of our current populist moment and her efforts to cultivate an agonistic pluralism that is responsive to marginalized voices as well as a left populism that unifies diverse protest movements against "the oligarchy" are to be commended. Developing an underexplored connection between Mouffe and Pope Francis, I argued that Francis's accounts of crisis, conflict, and peoplehood—themselves heavily indebted to the Argentinian "theology of the people"—can complicate and enrich Mouffe's work. Francis's approach to reading the signs of the times distinguishes between the bad spirit of suspicion and supposition that breeds antagonism and the good spirit of God's love that enables authentic forms of communion. Francis's complex understanding of the relationship between the Church as people of God and the people both as nation and as poor sheds light on the shift from antagonism to agonism as well as on the nature of radical democracy. His emphasis on shared humanity and dignity enables the construction of an alternative form of agonistic pluralism, a thin "we" compatible with diversity central to what he terms a culture of encounter and dialogue. His conviction that unity is more basic than conflict, together with his call to support popular movements, helps differentiate his brand of radical democracy from pejorative forms of progressivism that reproduce the exclusivism of the right. In both instances, Francis contends that the Church as a people formed by God's love has a particular role to play in constructing a genuinely inclusive sense of the people-as-nation and global community during times of crisis. The combination of insights from both authors can, in my judgment, provide guidance for the cultivation of a better or truly popular post-pandemic politics.

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1 My summary of Mouffe's work in this introductory paragraph is indebted to the succinct account of populism and politics that she has developed in her recent *For a Left Populism* (London: Verso, 2018). My references to Laclau's work here draw on his account of populism in *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2005).

2 See, for example, Bradford Hinze, "Synodality and Democracy: For We the People," in *Vaticanum 21: Die bleibenden Aufgaben des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils im 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Christoph Böttigheimer and René Dausner (Freiburg: Herder, 2016), 202–10; and Emilce Cuda, "Latinoamérica en el siglo XXI: posmarxismo, populismo y teología del pueblo," *Cuadernos de Filosofía Latinoamericana* 121 (2019): 57–75.

3 Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* – On the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World (2013), 185. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html. Accessed February 27, 2022.

4 Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993), 151.

5 See Mouffe, *For a Left Populism,* 16–17.

6 Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 2, 3, 5.

7 Mouffe, *For a Left Populism*, 11–12, 18.

8 Ibid., 11–12, 5–7.

9 Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, 3. See also Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically* (London: Verso, 2013), 2–3.

10 Mouffe, *On the Political*, 18–19.

11 Mouffe, *Agonistics*, 2.

12 Ibid., xi.

13 Laclau, *On Populist Reason*.

14 See Joan Miró, "Beyond Populism and Institutionalism: Anti-Populism and the Management of Austerity in Spain," *Constellations* 26 (2019): 118–19.

15 Mouffe, *For a Left Populism*, 11.

16 Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 83.

17 Ibid., 166, 69–71.

18 Mouffe, *On the Political*, 5.

19 Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, 102–16.

20 Mouffe, *For a Left Populism*, 24.

21 Ibid.

22 Mouffe, *On the Political*, 20.

23 Ibid.

24 Mouffe, *Agonistics*, 133.

25 Mouffe, *For a Left Populism*, 5.

26 Ibid., 61–62, 80.

27 Ibid., 76–77. See also Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000), 102.

28 Francis, *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2020), 1.

29 Francis, *Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Roman Curia* (December 21, 2020), 5, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2020/december/documents/papa-francesco_20201221_curia-romana.html. Accessed February 27, 2022.

30 Francis, *Let Us Dream*, 55.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., 69–70.

33 Ibid., 73.

34 Ibid., 78–81.

35 See Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2, 55–56.

36 Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* – On Fraternity and Social Friendship (2020), 163, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html. Accessed February 27, 2022. See also Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 61.

37 Francis, *Let Us Dream*, 116.

38 Rafael Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2017), 105.

39 Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 53.

40 Francis, *Address of Pope Francis to the Participants in the World Meeting of Popular Movements* (October 28, 2014), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/october/documents/papa-francesco_20141028_incontro-mondiale-movimenti-popolari.html. Accessed February 27, 2022.

41 Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 28–38.

42 Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 12.

43 Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 94.

44 Ibid., 90.

45 Ibid., 180, 182.

46 Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 134, 142.

47 See Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 46.

48 Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 153.

49 Ibid., 79–80.

50 Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 146.

51 Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 63.

52 Francis, *Let Us Dream*, 117–18.

53 Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 170.

54 Ibid., 27.

55 Ibid., 41.

56 Ibid., 86.

57 Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72 (1993): 22–49.

58 Francis, *Let Us Dream*, 26–27.

59 See William McCormick, "The Populist Pope? Politics, Religion, and Pope Francis," *Politics and Religion* 14 (2021): 7.

60 Francis, *Let Us Dream*, 59–60.

61 Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes* – Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (1965), https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html. Accessed February 27, 2022.

62 See, for example, Barrett Turner, "*Pacis Progressio*: How Francis' Four New Principles Develop Catholic Social Teaching into Catholic Social Praxis," *Journal of Moral Theology* 6 (2017): 112–29.

63 See Juan Carlos Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," *Theological Studies* 77 (2016): 121; Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 3–4.

64 See Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium* – Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (1964), chapters 1–2, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html. Accessed February 27, 2022.

65 Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 4–5.

66 Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 113.

67 See Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes*, 53. See also Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 33.

68 See Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, 13. See also José Comblin, *People of God*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004), 9.

69 Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 17.

70 Francis, *Let Us Dream*, 101–102.

71 Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 158.

72 Francis, *Let Us Dream*, 102.

73 Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 158; *Let Us Dream*, 102.

74 Francis, *Let Us Dream*, 98.

75 Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 160.

76 Francis, *Let Us Dream*, 77.

77 Ibid., 74.

78 Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 121.

79 Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 20–21.

80 Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 121.

81 Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 16.

82 Francis, *Let Us Dream*, 121.

83 Ibid., 120.

84 Francis, *Address of Pope Francis to the Participants in the World Meeting of Popular Movements.*

85 Angus Ritchie, *Inclusive Populism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019), 13–14.

86 Francis, *Address of Pope Francis to the Participants in the World Meeting of Popular Movements.*

87 Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 101.

88 Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 199.

89 Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 23.

90 Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 68.

91 Ibid., 126.

The Empire Sings Back

The Implications for Theology of Confronting Coloniality in Hymns

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Introduction: Decolonizing as Part of a Liberating Praxis

I begin with a land acknowledgement. I have been working on this article in Turtle Island, the northern part of lands now known as the Americas, both in Toronto, traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, the Haudenosaunee, and the Mississaugas of the Credit River, and in Saskatoon, Treaty Six territory and homeland of the Métis. These two places are now home for many nations from across the Americas and around the world. We have been invited to share land and life in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect.[1] But the Americas—known by Indigenous peoples as Abya Yala, Aztlán, and Turtle Island—have been under the shadow of European colonialism for 500 years and the heinous physical, cultural, and epistemic violence inflicted upon people groups and the earth since then. My understanding of coloniality, decolonizing, and liberation emerge out of these contexts. As a result, I draw inspiration for theological reflections from the peoples of these lands, particularly those who come from Latin American liberationist currents, especially decolonial thinking, as well as those emerging from my context in Turtle Island.

After more than 25 years of animating community singing in a variety of settings, I observed that when people gather to sing and worship, they bring their lived experiences with them, representing many cultures, languages, and social and economic classes. I draw on liberationist thinkers as a way to lift up the experience and the cultural traditions of the people as a place for doing theology and for transforming our world as part of a liberating praxis, which includes the recognition that coloniality remains pervasively operative in our singing and our liturgies as well as in our theologies and in our very lives. As a result, for me, a liberating praxis must include a commitment to decolonizing.

Another way of coming at the question of decolonizing congregational singing is to ask about the function of songs to express experiences, traditions, knowledges, as well as Christian faith and theology. What are the cultural, social, and ideological values that make it possible for some songs, some expressions, to be understood as universal and as better than others, while others simply don't appear as part of our repertoires? Decolonizing stances can help us analyze these dynamics and interrogate the coloniality in our patterns of worship, in our singing, as well as in our theological articulations and church structures. Latin American decolonial thinkers call this "all-encompassing residual web of colonizing processes, tendencies, and practices" coloniality; it "affects who we are, regulates how we understand the world, and conditions all our relations" and is built upon systems of white supremacy, capitalism, and Christianity, systems that have benefited people like me and our churches.[2] Confronting empire in congregational singing requires wrestling with these ongoing impacts of coloniality in Christian worship practices.

Broadly speaking, there are at least three aspects to a decolonizing stance for congregational singing**.** First, it recognizes and affirms other ways of doing/knowing from the global South and from marginalized contexts in the global North. Akin to the liberation notion of a preferential option for the poor, excluded, or marginalized, this first step affirms that songs rise up and are voiced in fragile and contested spaces that have already been opened up by those from the underside.

This affirmation of other ways of ritualizing, praying, and singing sometimes includes rituals, prayers, and hymns that might appear to be instruments of the colonizer at first glance, such as Victorian hymns that are imbued with ideologies of empire in text, music, and performance practice. But such examples of European hymnody are often inverted, or flipped, by the people who sing them, as they subvert theologies of empire and colonialism through singing and use songs as spaces of resistance and rebuke and as sources of forbearance, strength, and hope. Latin American decolonial scholars name this kind of dynamic "epis-

temic disobedience," as expressions of other ways of knowing, thinking, and being—and, I would add, singing—that point beyond the modern-colonial-world system. This is the second aspect.

The third aspect of a decolonizing stance in liturgy and congregational singing is an interrogation of the ways in which rituals and hymns do preserve, reproduce, and reinscribe ideologies and theologies of empire in order to expose coloniality in text and music as well as in leadership practices. This is a fundamental interrogation of our "traditions," of Christian coloniality in worship. The way "we've always done it" cannot remain beyond scrutiny. This paper focuses on this third aspect—confronting coloniality in hymns—and concludes with some implications for the theological task more broadly.

In English-speaking Canada, and much of the English-speaking world, hymnic canons in historic mainline churches draw significantly on the repertoire and values of the church music inheritance from Victorian England. This hymnody—its text, its music, and its context—was interwoven with and conditioned by the ascendancy of the British Empire. The conviction that a "superior, English and then British, identity would enlighten and civilize"[3] those who became part of the empire was bolstered by the construction and then entrenchment of systems of racialized classification that placed Anglo Saxons at the top, establishing white supremacy as a key mechanism to enforce colonialism throughout the British Empire.[4] One means of culturally entrenching this superiority and its expansionism was (and is) through hymn singing. As a result, congregational singing from this inheritance is imbued with coloniality, expressed through theologies of empire and the glorifications of monarchy, militarism, triumphalism, xenophobia, racial superiority, and patriarchy.[5] Let us briefly examine how.

(Music)Coloniality in Hymn Texts

Hymnic coloniality is most evident in 19th-century mission-focused hymns that travelled with the British in their imperial and colonial pursuits. In addition to promoting a theology that had at its heart the view that *the* superior religious cultural expression known to humanity was emphatically European Christianity, these hymns display notions of divine providential chosenness, use the militaristic language of conquering, and are marked by racialized language that unflatteringly depicts cultural groups beyond Europe. The structures of coloniality can also be found in its entrenched patriarchy.

For instance, "O'er the Gloomy Hills of Darkness" by William Williams Pantycelyn (1717–1791) embodies the imperial values that were on the rise when he wrote it in 1772. The hymn displays a missiology where "earthly imperial conquest is intertwined with the language of winning and conquering on behalf of God's Dominion, along with a doctrine of racial superiority, in the name of spreading the gospel from 'Pole to Pole.'"[6] In verse two, the author otherizes—or orientalizes, to use Edward Said's term—the Indian, the Negro, and the rude Barbarian.[7] In this verse and in verse six, the language of conquering is adopted, and in verse seven, the results of the anticipated conquering are laid bare. At the time Pantycelyn wrote this hymn, Britain and France were competing to gain control of the Indian sub-continent. The Victorian era was to see the establishment of the British Raj/British Crown that ruled India from 1858 to 1947; the Queen was made Empress of India in 1874.

Verse 2:

Let the Indian, let the Negro,
Let the rude Barbarian see
That divine and glorious *Conquest*
Once obtain'd on Calvary;
Let the Gospel,
Loud resound from *Pole to Pole.*

Verse 6:

Fly abroad, eternal Gospel,
Win and conquer, never cease;
May thy eternal wide *Dominions*
Multiply, and still increase;
May thy Scepter,
Sway th'enlight'ned World around.

Verse 7:

O let Moab yield and tremble,
Let Philistia never boast,
And let India proud be scatt'red
With their numerable Host;
And the Glory,
Jesus only be to thee.[8]

More than one hundred years later, in 1897, when Britain was celebrating Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee, the success of the British Empire was affirmed in hymns like "Arise, O Church of England" by Jackson Mason,[9] which bound the Queen, the titular head of the Church of England, together with the gospel in the task of spreading "peace," "rich abundance," "lightness," and "freedom." The direct connection between England's monarch, the Church of England, and the divinely sanctioned task of converting and conquering in the name of the gospel are here made explicit.

Yes, peace in rich abundance
Has flourished in her time,
While with her flag, the Gospel
Speeds on to ev'ry clime.

Light from her sixty summers
Dark Afric's shores have seen,
And India's sons of freedom
Give thanks for England's Queen.[10]

In most English-speaking Protestant churches, these hymns, replete with racist and imperialist overtones, were standard fare. Moreover, this vision of the British Empire was indivisible from the particular brand of Christianity with which it was enmeshed and which it exported. Dr. John Clifford, in his volume *God's Greater Britain*, sums up the prevailing attitude.

> For we are called with a high calling … We must march in step. Ours is a single aim, a single task, the regeneration of Man. Our place is in the ranks of the great Anglo-Saxon missionary race, to whom is given the grace of preaching amongst all peoples the unsearchable riches of Christ. We are going to all men. They are coming to us. The world is becoming *one … God chose us His colonizers and missionaries …*[11]

Other examples are perhaps more subtle, but nonetheless display a coalescence between European, and especially English, imperial desire and a vision of God's reign flourishing across the globe. Hymns like Isaac Watt's "Jesus Shall Reign," written before the apex of the British Empire, articulated Europe's ascendency and called on other nations—Persia, India, and the unnamed "barb'rous" nations in verse three—to submit and bow to the Christian Lord. It also "characterized heathen lands unflatteringly as being in the darkness or shade of death, soon to be enlightened by a [European] Christ."[12] These verses are not usually sung today, but the hymn still rings out with the majestic and triumphalist strains of a universal monarchy, as Jesus' kingdom stretches from shore to shore.

Along similar lines, "Faith of our Fathers, Taught of Old" by Thomas Alexander Lacy (1853–1931), a Church of England clergyman and member of the committee of *The English Hymnal* (1906), issues a stirring call that connects Christian missionary zeal with such things as the "hallowing of our nation" (verse 1).[13] The second half of each verse begins with "Arise, arise, good Christian men, Your glorious standard raise again." This standard, the clarion sounding of Christ's "great call," is described using military language like "marshals" (verse 2) to urge "Christian men" to follow "the cross of Christ, who bought you; Who leads you forth in this new age, With long-enduring hearts to wage The warfare he has taught you" (verse 3).[14]

One could also consider "Thy Hand, O God, Has Guided" (1864), by Edward Hayes Plumptre, with the well-known and arousing musical setting by Basil Harwood, which affirms Ephesians 4:4-5 (one Lord, one faith, one baptism) with each chorus: "One Church, one Faith, one Lord."[15] Here again, the Church, presumably of England, is the engine that drives the missionary project, proclaiming in the last verse that "the victory shall be won."[16] Michael, N. Jagessar recognizes the problem of what he calls this "terrifying singularity—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, etc." in today's diverse and plural contexts. What is needed, he argues, is an inversion of the "'logic of oneness'—[which] must be critically engaged with, given its imperializing and totalizing tendencies."[17]

Even Victorian voices that responded both to the pastoral concerns of ordinary people—especially the working classes who struggled with infant mortality, exhaustion, hopelessness, and premature death—or agitated against the status quo for things like pacifism, an end to racial discrimination, universal suffrage, and socialist values are haunted by the imperialism of the day.[18] Hymns like "These Things Shall Be: A Loftier Race," by John Addington Symonds (1840–1893), envisioned a "loftier race" aspiring to arts in a "loftier mould," with "mightier music." While Symonds was articulating a deep hope for building a better society, the "pulse of one fraternity" of verse three still evokes a united nation, albeit with a different vision binding it together.[19] William Blake's (1757–1827) "Jerusalem" is another example. His text critiques the "dark Satanic Mills" of the Industrial Revolution but still holds up the vision of a new Jerusalem built on "England's green and pleasant lands."[20] These hymns do speak to a different set of experiences and offer another vision—more egalitarian and compassionate—that reveal some cracks in the hegemony of the predominant view of what the British Empire ought to be, but they do so under the banner of a British Empire nonetheless. Coloniality was in the air.

(Music)Coloniality in Hymn Tunes

Because coloniality was in the air, the music itself—hymn tunes, their arrangements, and the way they were performed—was also vulnerable to these forces. Elite and organ-centred musical styles associated with the middle and upper classes, as well as with Anglicanism, were generally viewed as superior. A hierarchical structure ensued in which tunes in a more popular genre, like FRIENDSHIP by Charles Converse for "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," were criticized for their "vulgarity, sentimentality, emotionalism," and effeminacy.[21] In other words, popular lower-class music styles were seen as inferior in favour of "serious, rugged, majestic, 'dignified' tunes typical of serious music composers at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."[22] This prejudice for a certain type of tune and style also exposes a gendered bias against the stereotypically feminine qualities of the

more popular styles, as noted above, and toward the more masculinist approaches of later composers.

For example, the music for "Thy Hand, O God has Guided," mentioned above, composed by Basil Harwood, leads toward a triumphant musical conclusion beginning with the word "church." The melody leaps up a fourth to the highest note of the scale and is held for a full three beats (a dotted half note). It is then immediately followed by a half note (2 beats) on the word "faith" and an extremely long note on the word "Lord" that stretches over two bars as the accompaniment strides forward, leading us back to the beginning of the next verse. The tune, THORNBURY, modulates to the third of the scale in a minor mode, signifying a struggle before returning to the tonic (home key) and the aforementioned triumphant conquest of "one church, one faith, one Lord." Ralph Vaughan Williams's tune SINE NOMINE (published in 1906, first line: "For all the saints") and Sir Sydney Nicholson's CRUCIFER (first line: "Lift High the Cross") have similar patterns: perpetual motion in the bass that supports the melody and text, modulation to the minor third, and triumphant conclusions in which the melody is extended with long held notes or, in the case of SINE NOMINE, a melisma on "Alleluia." Indeed, while Vaughan Williams believed in the importance of congregational singing—he wrote the introduction to *The English Hymnal* of 1906—he also epitomized a snobbery against certain kinds of tunes and arrangements, evident in his comment from that introduction that "the average congregation likes fine melody when it can get it, but it is apt to be undiscriminating, and will often take to bad melody when good is not forthcoming."[23]

Victorian hymnody as a whole dominated and still dominates many hymnic canons. I am not in any way advocating for a wholesale abandonment of Victorian hymns. What is needed is an interrogation of this dominance with a view to exposing coloniality in text and music along with a concerted effort to open up these canons to make space for hymns and songs that have been excluded. With respect to Victorian hymns, the result of such interrogations varies; communities may decide not to sing certain hymns, to rewrite them, or to engage with them theologically from their context to reclaim them with new meaning. This is the first aspect of a decolonizing stance mentioned above. The second aspect entails a study of how some hymns can be flipped in their meaning, their theology resignified along more liberationist lines by the communities that sing them.[24]

The dynamics of coloniality are indeed complex. A few years ago, as I worked on this research about coloniality in Victorian hymnody, I consulted my father, who is a scholar of Victorian England. As we discussed the imperial residue in hymn tunes, he grew thoughtful. The conversation turned to his own text "Let Streams of Living Justice," "written in 1989 as a response to the events in Tiananmen Square, in Beijing, China; and dedicated to the mothers of the disappeared (in Argentina), the author's home community of Holy Trinity in Toronto, and the people of Tiananmen Square."[25] The text "sings of liberation, healing, and a vision of the city of God built to music by God the composer, made from the lives, faith, dreams, and love of humanity called to follow the way and path of Christ."[26] It is set to the tune THAXTED by Gustav Holst, which Holst adapted from the Jupiter movement of *The Planets.* Holst extracted the tune from the orchestral work to go with another text, "I Vow to Thee My Country," by Sir Cecil Spring Rice, which articulated the duty of loving both earthly countries (in this case, Britain) and the heavenly realm.[27] Though a longing for peace is articulated in the second verse of Rice's text, the tune is nevertheless associated with British nationalism, the Commonwealth, and a commemoration of military endeavours. My father wondered whether his text might be tainted by empire through the tune. This is an example of both the complexity and the interwoven nature of the dynamics of coloniality even in cherished hymn tunes. It is also the kind of interrogation that I am proposing. For my part, I continue to love the tune THAXTED. It stirs strong emotion in me; I feel an ethical tension because of the nationalistic taint; and I celebrate the fervent call for justice along liberationist lines articulated so powerfully and poetically in my father's text—all at the same time.[28]

(Music)Coloniality in Context

A number of complex social factors contributed to this flourishing of hymnody in Britain that bolstered it as a cultural force bound up with the rise of the British Empire. First, hymns from the Evangelical Revival in the second half of the 18th century, especially by Isaac Watts (1674–1748) and Charles Wesley (1707–1788), "contributed to an invigoration of congregational singing, especially in nonconformist settings, and paved the way for the exponential burgeoning of British hymnody in the nineteenth."[29] Second, the Oxford movement in the Anglican Church sought a return to what they saw as a more authentic worship which relied on more austere chanting and singing. Though this second factor pulls in the opposite direction of the revival movements, it nonetheless also emphasized the importance of singing and is related to the third factor, which was the choral revival through which congregations were trained in order to be able to fully participate in singing.[30]

The fourth factor is the exponential proliferation of hymn books. This growth went hand in hand with the "development of and investment in musical education in Victorian England," which in turn was part of Victorian

drives to educate the masses and to inculcate the people in English/British Christian culture more generally.[31] Notably, this growth in hymnals included hymnals for schools and Sunday schools—children were also being enculturated—and it encouraged hymn writers and composers to create new works. A final factor is the entrenchment of ideas about music generally, which relied upon a "serious-music ideology" or "classical-music ideology" that firmly established the superiority, dominance, and sacrosanctity of "Western European art music over and against 'other' musics both in European contexts and beyond."[32]

This flourishing of hymnody in Britain was also happening amid the turmoil and complexity of Victorian socio-cultural contexts, including rapid industrialization, movements for democracy and universal suffrage, the struggles of the working classes, and, of course, the unfettered expansion of the British Empire. Though "there was no single 'culture' that was established, no single British identity … the drive toward a national cultural uniformity was strong."[33] The main point here is that hymn singing was so widespread as a practice that it actually boosted the overall sense of (imperial) British cultural identity and superiority, and this superior cultural identity—and hymnody—was exported and imposed around the world.

This intermixture of socio-cultural factors was not uniformly "bad" because it was associated with the British Empire. Drives to improve education and literacy, along with suffrage and democracy movements, were also intertwined with the flourishing of hymnody, all of which led to a robust culture of community singing which is, after all, something to celebrate. Yet, coloniality remained—and remains—pervasive.

Though there are positive benefits to the act of singing, the use of hymn singing in Canadian residential schools is a case in point. Children were "disciplined into the conformity of Anglican [and other denominations' traditional] dress, ritual, and music."[34] Christian hymn singing, along with liturgy, was used as part of a curriculum designed to "civilize" Indigenous children in order to expunge their sacred Indigenous practices, languages, and cultures.[35] As such, students "were given a constant drilling in English, and spent much of their time memorizing and reciting religious texts and hymns."[36] Hymn singing here was a culturally genocidal enactment of coloniality through singing, which marginalized, silenced, and even erased other practices and expressions.

Conclusion: Implications for Theology

The pervasive authority given to these canons still impedes the full expression of complex cultural identities present in church contexts, and it continues to perpetuate theologies of empire. While hymn singing can embody the glorious sounding of the Body of Christ through song, we must wrestle with this troubling incommensurability between the people's singing and the forces of empire that are always and already at work. What are the broader implications for theology of this hymnic analysis? How can decolonizing congregational singing—and liturgy—help us think about some principles for decolonizing theological education and the theological task?

First, congregational singing and liturgy take us into our bodies; these practices roots us. As such, a liberating praxis for theology, within which the work of decolonizing is nested, lifts up the experience and cultural traditions of the people as a place for doing theology and is unapologetic about seeking transformation. In the midst of a variety of global crises, we can thus turn to grassroots movements for guidance and wisdom about transformative action. These other ways of thinking, being, and doing, as well as worshipping, learning, and teaching, help make spaces for the voices, experiences, and wisdom of the marginalized and excluded beyond Europe and Euro-North America.

Second, as these spaces are opened up in theological education, we need to ask not only what we are teaching, who is teaching, and how we are teaching, but also what is at the centre of our tradition and teaching. We can interrogate the "tradition" whether it is what hymn is sung, what ritual is practised, or what theologian is taught in order to help churches confront and confess their complicity.

Third, decolonizing congregational singing is rooted in relationship. The theological task, at least in seminary contexts, has been often conceived of as the work of an isolated individual set apart in the academy. Doing theology in a decolonial key, in contrast, happens at the grassroots, rooted in community and in the everyday; it is what Latinx theologians describe as *lo cotidiano* and *teología en y de conjunto.*[37] It also affirms leadership and scholarship from communities who have been marginalized, especially racialized communities and communities from the global South.

Fourth, decolonizing congregational singing is attentive to power imbalances especially because of the power we have as ministers, teachers, and song leaders. For white Euro-Anglo folks, power needs to be shared or given up. And for those who are marginalized, it might mean claiming power and taking on leadership. Following Jesus, we can relinquish power and privilege to make space for an-other, enter into solidarity with the marginalized and excluded, and help to create the structures of the long-awaited beloved community.

Fifth, confronting complicity with coloniality requires an openness to our own conversation: conversation to an-other person, an-other cultural tradition, an-other way of doing things, in the spirit of Jesus' commandment to love our neighbours as ourselves. Another way of understanding conversion along these lines is to affirm making space for diversity, not just occasionally, but all the time. Rather than using models of inclusion, however, we can create alternative models by building instead communities of radical mutual enrichment**.**

A sixth principle entails confronting systems that maintain, reproduce, and leave unquestioned power and privilege. Needed not only for analyzing how we sing and worship, such a challenge is necessary in our theological and ecclesial institutions as well. How can we interrogate coloniality in these contexts along the lines of what I have demonstrated here? How can we also affirm other ways of engaging theology and structuring our institutions? For instance, how might theologies of atonement and our understandings of sin be interrogated for their misuse in colonial projects as tools for the conquering and annihilating people groups by essentializing them as depraved? Sinful perversions of the love that is at the heart of the gospel need to be confronted. Extending this line of questioning, how were/are our understandings of God, of salvation, of Christ's sacrifice, and so on, articulated in ways that support(ed) the colonial project or became the lenses for understanding God's mystery?

Finally, I propose that these principles are undergirded and empowered by the provocative breath of the Holy Spirit. Decolonizing the ways we sing, worship, and teach, as well as the ways we do church, means interrogating colonial structures along the lines I propose and also affirming other ways of being, doing, thinking, feeling, etc. It means affirming people at the grassroots who are doing theology as they live their lives in community. They are guiding the way, modelling for the church our own conversion to these other ways in a decolonial key. Decolonizing singing—and decolonizing theology—challenges us to expand our ecclesiologies, to recreate how we do church so that other modes of being, doing, thinking, and feeling are embraced in the church, becoming the very structures with which we live out the gospel.

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1 I have borrowed some language in this territorial acknowledgement from Néstor Medina with his permission.

2 Coloniality includes the conquering/settling of the Americas, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the financing of global European supremacy. A fuller definition of coloniality follows: "The concept of coloniality describes the all-encompassing residual web of colonizing processes, tendencies, and practices and its ongoing manifestation, especially in present capitalist, globalizing, neoliberal systems. Decolonial scholars argue that coloniality brings together the axes of colonialism, modernity and capitalism. They insist that 'modern' history be read from the perspective of the conquest of the Americas [with modernity beginning in 1492 and not with the Enlightenment]. Coloniality affects who we are, regulates how we understand the world, and conditions all our relations. Coloniality also unmasks the ideology of superiority in which the church, the empire, and notions of what was 'civilized' were understood to be inseparable; this ideology permeated the European and Euro North American colonial projects." Becca Whitla, "Coloniality in 'Glossary of Key Terms'," in *Decoloniality and Justice: Theological Perspectives*, ed. Jean-François Roussel (Saõ Leopoldo: Oikos: World Forum on Theology and Liberation, 2018), 22.

3 Becca Whitla, *Liberation, (De)Coloniality, and Liturgical Practices: Flipping the Song Bird* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020), 84–85.

4 Here, my reference to empire and imperial refers specifically to British contingent of the expansion of European colonial projects.

5 For an extensive analysis of these themes, see Whitla, "The Empire Sings," in *Flipping the Song Bird*.

6 Whitla, *Flipping the Song Bird*, 95.

7 See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003).

8 The full hymn is quoted in Jeffrey Richards*, Imperialism and Music: Britain, 1876–1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 388. Richards notes that this hymn was republished as late as 1933 in the *Baptist Hymnary.* Italics mine.

9 Richards writes that this hymn praises "the Anglican Church, God, Queen and Empire [and] … explicitly connects the cross and crown." He also notes that it was published in *Hymns for Use During 1897, Being the Sixtieth Year of the Reign of Queen Victoria* (London: Skeffington & Son, 1897). See Richards, *Imperialism and Music*, 405.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., 384. Richards quotes Dr. John Clifford, *God's Greater Britain* (London: James Clarke & Son, 1899), 167, 175.

12 Whitla, *Flipping the Song Bird*, 98. See also Isaac Watts, "Jesus Shall Reign," http://www.hymntime.com/tch/htm/j/s/r/e/jsreign.htm. Accessed January 7, 2022.

13 "Faith of Our Fathers, Taught of Old," Hymnary.org, https://hymnary.org/text/faith_of_our_fathers_taught_of_old. Accessed January 7, 2022.

14 Ibid.

15 "Thy Hand O God Has Guided," Hymnary.org, https://hymnary.org/text/thy_hand_o_god_has_guided#Author. Accessed January 7, 2022.

16 Ibid.

17 Michael Jagessar, "Holy Crumbs, Table Habits, and (Dis) Placing Conversations: Beyond 'Only One is Holy'," in *Liturgy in Postcolonial Perspectives: Only One is Holy*, ed. Cláudio Carvalhaes (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 226, 227.

18 See Ian Bradley's chapter on the themes in Victorian hymnody: "Tell Me the Old, Old Story: Themes in Victorian Hymns," in Ian Bradley, *Abide with Me: The World of Victorian Hymns* (London: SCM Press, 1997), 108–39.

19 John Addington Symonds, "These Things Shall Be: A Loftier Race," https://hymnary.org/text/these_things_shall_be_a_loftier_race. Accessed January 9, 2022.

20 William Blake, "And Did Those Feet in Ancient Time," https://hymnary.org/text/and_did_those_feet_in_ancient_time. Accessed January 9, 2022.

21 Bradley, *Abide with Me*, 163, 202. These types of hymns were generally meant to be sung in four-part harmony, often with lush chromatic settings, and were strongly influenced by the popular part song and parlour ballad styles of the day.

22 Whitla, *Flipping the Song Bird*, 110.

23 See Vaughan Williams's Introduction to *The English Hymnal* of 1906 in David Music, ed. and comp., *Hymnology: A Collection of Source Readings* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1996), 171.

24 For a full discussion of this "flipping," as well as affirmations of songs from the global South, see chapter 5, "Singing Back Against Empire (or the Subaltern Sings Back)," in Whitla, *Flipping the Song Bird,* 127–62.

25 Becca Whitla, "Let Streams of Living Justice," in *Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*, https://hymnology.hymnsam.co.uk/l/let-streams-of-living-justice?q=William%20Whitla. Accessed January 11, 2022.

26 "Worship in the City #142," Hymnary.org, https://hymnary.org/hymn/WITC2015/142. Accessed January 11, 2022.

27 See Wikipedia, "I Vow to Thee My Country," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Vow_to_Thee,_My_Country. Accessed January 11, 2022.

28 For the full five-verse text, see Holy Trinity, "Hymns: Streams of Living Justice," https://holytrinity.to/2010/09/hymn-streams-of-living-justice. Accessed January 11, 2022.

29 Whitla, *Flipping the Song Bird*, 86.

30 Bernarr Rainbow, *The Choral Revival in the Anglican Church (1839–1872)* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1970).

31 Whitla, *Flipping the Song Bird*, 89.

32 Ibid., 112.

33 Ibid., 92.

34 Ibid., 118.

35 See Sarah Kathleen Johnson, "On Our Knees: Christian Ritual in Residential Schools and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada," *Studies in Religion* 47:1 (2018): 3–24.

36 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The History, Part 1, Origins to 1939, The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, Vol. 1 (Canada, 2015), 86, https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Volume_1_History_Part_1_English_Web.pdf. Accessed January 12, 2022.

37 See Néstor Medina, "Theological Musings Towards a Latina/o Pneumatology," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Latino/a Theology*, ed. Orlando O. Espín (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2015).

Book Review

A Trinitarian Comparative Theology

John Thatamanil. *Circling the Elephant: A Comparative Theology of Religious Diversity.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2020. 320 pp.

John Thatamanil's *Circling the Elephant: A Comparative Theology of Religious Diversity* constructs a Trinitarian comparative theology by drawing upon his expertise in Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. He begins by describing himself as a "1.5 generation" American who emigrated from India as a child and affirming that comparative theology is rooted in one's social location. He then uses the ancient tale of four blind/blindfolded persons walking around and describing an elephant to build his argument for a comparative theology of religious diversity.

For Thatamanil, a constructive theology of religious diversity (TRD) "emerges in, through, and after comparative theology" (34). He clarifies his theological approach toward other religions by pointing out the errors and blind spots of inclusivism and pluralism. In conversation with process theologians, he argues for a relational pluralism which acknowledges that religious traditions are neither incommensurable compartmentalized entities nor simply variations connected to or centred on one single reality. However, he disagrees (with John Cobb) that one needs to conceptualize multiple ultimates for a truly open pluralist position. Using Trinitarianism as his interpretative lens, Thatamanil suggests that there is internal diversity within the divine life, allowing multiple conceptualizations of Ultimate Reality and ends for different religious traditions. As convincing as this argument might be, one wonders whether at the end, Thatamanil unconsciously offers (yet) another variation of John Hick's pluralist position.

Thatamanil accepts that the above positions are not necessarily mutually exclusive or fixed, since religions are not insulated compartments and religious identities intersect with several other identities and issues. Recognizing that "religion" as we understand it today was shaped during the modern (colonial) era, he insists that interreligious scholars must be cautious about dealing with issues of normativity. Otherness is an ever-present reality in our conception of religion(s), making us vulnerable to easy essentialisms and reifications. Thatamanil prefers the the adjective "religious," since religious experience is a common human feature that goes beyond what is normally understood as religion. Religious, for Thatamanil, could be defined as Comprehensive Qualitative Orientation, which is constituted by *interpretative schemes* that represent a systematic construal of the world as particular human communities imagine it and *therapeutic regimes* that are needed to discipline and regulate the disposition of those communities toward the world/universe. In this sense, the religious would also include typically non-religious phenomena such as capitalism. In other words, people always live with multiple religiosities, including those that are popularly considered as secular. If his definition of "religious" is accepted, interreligious learning is no longer an impossibility or something out of the ordinary.

Turning to more concrete examples of interreligious learning, he focuses on Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., who were influenced by other religious traditions, Christianity and Hinduism respectively, thus making them exemplars of interreligious activism and social transformation. Thatamanil avoids painting glorifying hagiographies of both men, who were not free from blind spots and shortcomings.

The final chapter appears to provide the perfect climax to this insightful book. Here, Thatamanil reimagines and rerepresents the doctrine of Trinity in a comparative theological framework. Drawing upon Hindu and Buddhist resources, he offers an interpretation of the Trinity as ground (of being) which could be (inadequately) compared to Brahman, with and in whom the world exists non-dualistically, as the essence of singularity that ensures that creaturely individuality and freedom are not lost, and as relation that keeps all that is/exists permanently connected, and hence, in a state of impermanence and dependent co-arising (*pratityasamutpada*). While this conceptualization is relatable and does correspond to the classical Christian doctrine, he reminds us that Trinity is not about the numerical value but about ontological plurality within the divine.

Circling the Elephant is an enlightening seminal work of constructive theology that invites us to consider religious diversity as a blessing. Thatamanil could have presented more explicitly the sufferings of vulnerable communities in the United States and beyond. Nonetheless, this book will have a profound influence in the fields of theology and religious studies.

Rev. Dr. Joshua Samuel, Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, New York

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