THE JUBILEE GROUP IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND: THE PROPHETIC VOICE OF A COMMUNITY IN *EKKLESIA*

by

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this thesis is prophetic communities with a special reference to the Jubilee Group in East London. To date, prophetic communities have been examined within the context of theology, specifically Liberation theology but within the field of the social sciences, such as sociology and anthropology, there has been a lacunae on prophetic communities.

Prophetic communities, in the narrow sense, exist on the margins of the church. Those involved in them see their task as re-centering the institutional church: to bring the church back to its role and function as a place of equity for the poor and the oppressed; to be a voice for justice; to critique institutional power structures (secular and religious). Today, however, institutional religion often demonstrates a lack of concern for the poor and social outcasts. It is for the prophetic community within the church to raise a voice for these silenced and lost voices. In essence, prophetic communities are the heart and soul of the institutional religious communities, reflecting the earliest roots of the larger community. As such prophetic communities function to nudge institutional religious bodies to be the moral voice of outrage at the injustice levied by institutions of power that seek to dominate or oppress.

Prophetic communities are imagined communities, that is to say they are defined by an emotional and psychological component. The community itself becomes a symbol that arouses feelings of attachment and significance. Prophetic communities, in the Christian context, are informed by the memory of the Old Testament prophets such as Hosea, Amos and Micah and by the New Testament Gospels. In this sense, the

tradition of the early Christians and the early church becomes a way to offer an alternative to the present day power structures, to suggest a "vision of something new."

The Jubilee Group, a radical Anglo-Catholic "network", exists in places such as East London, Manchester, and Birmingham, places of the poor and social outcasts. It is as a result of their sacramental/incarnational theology which views the world as animated by a transcendent made immanent that prophetic communities such as the Jubilee Group see the inherent connection of religion and politics in dialogue with institutions of power. Through a theology developed out of praxis in a context of social injustice, prophetic communities begin to reflect a prophetic tradition that harks back to the early Christian church.

In short, the primary function and significance of prophetic communities is a transformative one; they function to transform society and the church so that society and church becomes a place where the poor and the outcast have a voice, where the poor and the outcast are treated with due care, with dignity, and made integral to the ongoing life of society, and where the church lives up to its original character as a community of justice and love.

Dedicated to

my father and mother

and Davinder, Adriánna and Ariel

The philosophers thought that justice might be defined as keeping common or public things for public purposes and private ones for individual uses. This is quite unnatural, for Nature lavished all things for all in common.

—Ambrose (Bishop of Milan).

No great political and social transformation has been made in the world without being accompanied and often preceded by an analogous movement in religious and philosophical ideas which direct the consciences as much of individuals as of society.

—Mikhail Bakunin

If the workingmen and women who have prepared the bread for us find little or no economic justice in their own lives, if a true freedom within the world of everyday choices is arrogated to the relatively few who are rich and therefore powerful in our present social order, then this bread cannot be accepted as a fit offering, except under violent protest on the part of all faithful Catholics.

—Frederic Hastings Smyth

The true mission of the church is not service to the community. It exists rather to challenge the very foundation upon which the community is based. The job of the church is not to provide attractive religious service, but to proclaim justice...

—Archdeacon William Paley

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I first took on the task to study prophetic communities in the context of the Anglican church, I was little aware of, on the one hand, how nescient people I met within the Anglican community in North America, especially Anglo-Catholics, are of a radical, political heritage that was and is concerned with social justice. Indeed, many Anglo-Catholics have no idea that Anglo-Catholicism is more than the aromatic smell of Catholic ritual. What's more, people within the present Anglican community who do not identify themselves with Anglo-Catholicism, people of the broad and low church traditions, have not raised many thoughts as to the serious political and social implications of an Incarnational theology.

This thesis attempts to take cognizance of the Anglican political and theological tradition by pointing out what Ian Henderson notes: the three basic theological ideas behind the whole Catholic social tradition in the Church of England are the Incarnation, the Kingdom of God and community.[1] Likewise, Stanley Evans believed that the social tradition defined by the Incarnation, a proper understanding of the Kingdom of God, and the unity of community is concerned with questions of justice and is central, not peripheral, to Catholic Christianity.

A second lesson I learned is that the history of the radical wing of the Anglican church is complex in the extreme. There are many interesting threads that would lead one from Great Britain to South Africa, Spain, the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, and even to Russia. These radical Christians linked arms with diverse

[1] Ian Henderson, The Renewal of the Catholic Social Tradition, A Jubilee Group Paper, (1976).

peoples such as Liberation Theologians on the one hand and with parallel people, the Anabaptists, in some instances, on the other.

The more time I spent searching out this tradition, the more I realized that this thesis just barely even scratches the surface. It would take a life time of study just to begin to understand at the most meager level all the nuances of this rich and varied history.

I have many people to thank for helping me along the way and any errors that will inevitably occur cannot be attributed to anyone but myself. To begin with, I must pay a great tribute to Ron Dart of the University College of the Fraser Valley. It was Ron who planted the seed to explore the idea of the Church as a prophetic community in the first place. Without Ron's insight, I too would be one of those who had never heard of a social tradition within the Anglican Church, much less of the Jubilee Group. Certainly, I would never have learned that an incarnational theology is social at its heart and soul. Along with Ron is the Monday Night Beer Group of Martin, Phil, Rick, Karl, and Ross who sat and listened to me over pints of ale and showed an equal excitement with each new discovery. While not part of the Monday Night Beer Group, Walter Driedger cannot go unnoticed. It was Walter who constantly reminded me that indeed, the emperor, in this case, did have clothes, paltry though they may be.

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support a family at home. The parish of St. Matthew's in Abbotsford, cannot go unnoticed, both for their financial and moral support throughout this long and sometimes tiring and demoralizing effort. In particular, I call attention to the parish of St. James, East Vancouver, who graciously awarded me the Fr. Gardiner Scholarship/Bursary for attempting to bring to light the voice of the radical Christian activists trying to give voice to the oppressed poor. The success of my efforts is minimal at best compared to the efforts of these radical groups.

Field work is not complete without the writing up of the data. Here I want to thank my committee, professor Robert Wyllie and professor, Michael Kenny. I want to pay particular attention to my supervisor, professor Robert Wyllie for his pointed critical comments, and refusal to allow me to wander into seeming quagmires of irrelevancy. His delightful cynicism helped keep me from taking myself too seriously. Thanks must also go to John Orens, of George Mason University in Washington DC, who graciously read my work and offered critical comments. Through this we have become close friends and kindred spirits, traveling along the road together, trying to articulate new ways of understanding the prophetic spirit.

I would also like to extend a debt of gratitude to Grace Davie of the University of Exeter. We spent a delightful Saturday afternoon discussing her views on religion in Britain, and the sociological significance, or lack thereof, of small disparate radical groups within the Church of England. I learned from her that difference in theoretical position can, indeed, be fruitful if not fun.

Thanks also goes to Lori Barkley, a fellow traveler and supporter. From Lori I learned about community existing in the hearts and minds of its people.

Of course, the people of the field are the heart and soul of this study. To the Jubilee Group goes the lions share of these acknowledgments. Three and a half weeks

was too short a time to spend with the Jubilee Group and yet, I fear, my presence could have become an encumbrance had I stayed longer. The people, however, were far too gracious to indicate any such feelings. Thanks must go, first of all, to Ken Leech and David Nicholls (who, sadly, passed away shortly after my visit with him and my return to Canada). In addition thanks go to Peter Barnett, Janet Batsleer, Paul Butler, Andy Delmege, Arthur Downes, Terry Drummond, Chris Ford, Savi Hensman, Jenny King, Gresham Kirkby, Sara Maitland, John Milbank, Margaret Ronchetti, Marybel Moore, John Rowe, Greg Smith, Matt Thompson, and, of course, Gregory who liked my accent.

While not a member of the Jubilee Group, Rev. Fr. Ed Morrow, once Vicar General of the Anglican Church Namibia and exiled in London, has lived the rich and sometimes privileged experience of the outcast and radical and paid the price. His unstinting prophetic spirit was the inspiration to me that truly, here is something worth the time to make the effort to understand.

A great debt of gratitude must also go to Archdeacon emeritus William Paley, simply for being the Archdeacon, who also, sadly, passed away within two weeks of my having had the privilege to meet him.

I cannot forget my parents, Isaac and Frieda who instilled in me as a child the conviction that justice and compassion is a greater gift than lifestyle.

Finally, to my wife Davinder, and my children Adriánna and Ariel, goes the greatest debt of thanks. They have had to endure a husband and father who sought the refuge of a word processor rather than their warm comfort. Nothing can repay the cost of loneliness they have had to pay for my absence. Any and all mistakes herein are inevitably due to my lack of attentiveness to the higher and more laudable values of life a family can give than the selfish pursuits of academia.

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INTRODUCTION

The focus of this thesis is prophetic communities with special reference to the Jubilee Group in East London, Manchester, Birmingham and Exeter. The concept, prophetic communities, is not new to theology. With respect to the field of sociology and anthropology, however, prophetic communities have not heretofore been a subject of particular interest. It is my intention to make prophetic communities the primary subject of interest of this thesis but in an anthropological context. Let it be known at the outset that in no way will my work have the definitive voice. This work is but a beginning that will need unraveling by many more people than just myself.

With respect to prophetic communities, let me state that the point of this work is not to identify prophetic communities in positivistic terms but rather to define a prophetic community as conceived within the framework of the Jubilee Group relative to the perceived ills of the present socio/economic order, and secondly in relation to the wider Christian concept of the church community.

The context surrounding this inquiry is the Christian church, specifically the Anglican Church in England. Immediately, a question comes to the fore, namely: what is meant by the Christian church? This last question is not so easily answered; it is not for this thesis to give a definitive answer for it will undoubtedly encompass a host of understandings that need more space than allowed herein to wrestle with all the possibilities. Nevertheless, a brief statement is necessary.

Briefly, there are two models of the church that are of interest here. There is the model of the institutional church and of the church as a prophetic community. Both exist together under the common rubric, *the church*.

The institutional church may be understood in the most mundane sense as that "thing" many of us were dragged to early on Sunday mornings kicking and screaming. It is a place many have since heartily repudiated for better or worse. The institutional church is a bit more complex than that, however.

To have a sense of the institutional church, one needs to understand that as modern and civilized as the institutional church thinks it is, it is still very much part of an older but still living era, the Constantinian age. What is meant by this claim?

For the first 300 years of Christendom, the Christian church did not exist as it does today. The early Christian community consisted of many small disparate communities trying to make sense of a new message of care and compassion, brotherly/sisterly love, love of neighbour, even love of enemy in a context of dominance and oppression.[1] In the third century these communities began to coalesce into one large community. That was the beginning of what we know today as the institutional church. Burton Mack, in his controversial book, Who Wrote the New Testament; points out that the event which triggered the creation of the Christian Bible and the church as an institutional community was the conversion of Constantine, in 313 CE, to the Christian religion.[2] With his conversion and ascendancy to the role of

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[1] For a detailed discussion on the ecclesiastical history of the church in the first and second centuries, see F.D. Maurice, Lectures on the Ecclesiastical History of the 1st and 2nd Cneturies, Cambridge: Macmillan and Co. (1854).

[2] There is a great deal of debate on the conversion of Constantine. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church recounts that in 312, "at the Battle of Milvian Bridge, Constantine adopted the *Labarum* (the military standard adopted by the Emperor Constantine after his vision. In form it seems to have been an adaptation of the Roman cavalry standard, with the pagan emblems replaced by a Christian

Rome's sole emperor in 324, after the victory at Chrysopolis, came the sudden reversal of status experienced by the Christian church. Prior to this event, the Christian church had little or no status and Christians in great numbers were put to death in the great Circus of Rome, the Colosseum, and in many other places. With the establishment of Christianity as a legitimate form of worship, Constantine called the first council of Christian bishops to meet in Nicaea in 325, known today as the Council of Nicaea.

Within a few short years, under Constantine's prodding,

> baptistries and basilicas dotted the landscape, the site of [Christ's] empty tomb had been "discovered," and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built upon it. Christian iconography announced to the world its themes, bishops gathered in councils to agree upon Christian doctrine, ritual was regularized, the calendar of festival events was established,

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monogram, viz. the two Greek letters X and P intersecting) standard as the champion of Christianity, and shortly afterwards toleration and Imperial favour were given to the Christian faith, though whether there was ever a formal and comprehensive proclamation, such as the Edict of Milan (early in 313 the Emps. Constantine and Licinius met at Milan and agreed to recognize the legal personality of the Christian Churches and to tolerate all religions equally), is a matter of disagreement among historians.

"It was Constantine's policy to unite the Christian Church to the secular State by the closest possible ties and therefore, even before he formally professed Christianity himself, he was concerned with the internal affairs of the church.

"In 325, contending parties within the Christian Church led Constantine to summon the Council of Nicaea to settle the Arian dispute about the Person of Christ. The Emperor himself presided, though unbaptised, a circumstance which foreshadowed the Byzantine theory of the emperors as supreme rulers of Church and State alike.

"Throughout his reign he did his best to conciliate both pagans and Christians, and it is difficult to say when he first decided to embrace Christianity. He was not baptized until just before his death, but deferment of baptism was common in those days and his policy and legislation, though not free from grave blemishes, show a strongly Christian tendency from the first.... He humanized the criminal law and the law of debt, mitigated the conditions of slavery, made grants to support poor children, thus discouraging the exposure of unwanted babies, freed celibates and unmarried persons from special taxation, legislated against incontinence, and exempted Christian clergy from the burden of the decurionate. In 321 he ordered that Sunday should become a public holiday."

But are these indicators that Constantine was converted to Christianity? It is noteworthy that the modern notion of conversion is a late post-Reformation concept and is not that significant to Catholicism. It was common practice during the Biblical period and later that when the elder male of the household adopted one religion over another, the entire household, servants and their entire families as well as slaves, followed suit as in the example of the Philippian jailer (Acts 16: 25-34). It seems, then, that formal public and verbal declaration, as in the mode of the late post-Reformation period, are not always indicators of "conversion".

> piety took the form of pilgrimage, salvation took the form of eternal life in the heavenly world[3]

and Christendom was launched. In a short span of time, these Christian communities were transformed from existing as a group of renegades, persecuted by the authorities for subverting religion and the gods, to a position of power.

There were a few years after this when the church was *non grata* but in reality, the church as an institution had been permanently established. With Constantine, Christianity became the unofficial state religion.[4] Hierarchies were established and became wedded to political power. The official voice of the church was to reflect the official voice of the state. Where the state went, there was the church to uphold the power of the state. The wars of the Reformation, such as the 30 Years War, and the colonial history of Great Britain, France, or Spain, clearly attest to this claim. Even the reformation could not fully stamp out Erastianism—the ascendancy of the State over the Church in ecclesiastical matters.[5]

The other model referred to is the church as a prophetic community. To date, very little has been written on prophetic communities within the Western tradition. What little there is, is found, for the most part, in the field of Christian theology. Writers such as William Stringfellow, The Politics of Spirituality (1984), Jim Wallis, The Soul of Politics (1994), and Agenda for Biblical People (1976), Sharon Welch, Communities of Resistance and Solidarity (1985), have articulated an understanding of

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[3] Burton Mack, Who Wrote the New Testament, San Francisco: Harper, (1989), p. 289.

[4] Christianity became the official state religion in 381.

[5] Some would argue that destroying Erastianism was the aim of the Reformation, although the history of the Anabaptists would clearly show that in its infancy, the church was commanded to pray for the state as the state is instituted by God but in matters of faith, the church owed its allegiance to God. In time, however, the division of the state and the church, among the Mennonites (Mennonites claim Anabaptist roots in theology) was not so clearly demarcated: it has become difficult, at times, to know just which defines which. Nevertheless, the question of Erastianism is complex. It is much more than a simplistic understanding of Church/State relationship.

the nature of the prophetic community in the context of the Christian church. As already indicated, a lacuna exists within anthropology with respect to an understanding of the structure, function, and significance of these prophetic communities.

An important theme of this thesis will be the connection prophetic communities make between religion and politics. Prophetic communities, it will be seen, mediate between these two powerful forces. In The Political Dimensions of Religion, Said Amir Arjomand, writes that religion is intricately related to and intertwined with the foundations of political order, and to a variety of forms of political action.[6] Here, Arjomand examines political order in the context of what he refers to as "absolute" politics, which he defines as the state of affairs where no boundaries are set to political will and everything social is seen as transformable by politics.

Religion can, in a variety of ways and under various circumstances, provide a source of normative guidance for political action. According to Arjomand, a type of millenarianism "is perhaps the most dramatic instance of the religious motivation of revolutionary action, and one of the oldest forms of absolute politics. Millenarian beliefs motivate political action by upholding utopia, an ideal order to be realized by revolutionary action"[7]

If religion and politics are inextricably intertwined as Arjomand suggests, is it not reasonable to suggest that religion may also be capable of transforming the social? It is this merging of the political and the religious that I will term *prophetic politics*. This leads me to the secondary question of this thesis, what is meant by prophetic politics. I will expand on this question in greater depth in chapter four but for the moment, by

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[6] Said Amir Arjomand (ed.), The Political Dimensions of Religion, Albany: The State University of New York, (1993).

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

prophetic politics I mean political action (some would define this as praxis) that is deeply committed to the meaning of restored relationships between individuals in a religious context.

Prophetic politics encompasses the whole person in the totality of existence in this world, not some "fragment or scrap or incident of a person."[8] In this sense, prophetic politics runs counter to a private religious faith that contents itself with a form of "individual spirituality," and embraces the notion of social transformation in the realm of the political and economic spheres defined by a sense of justice as articulated by the Old Testament prophets, the Gospels and the early church Fathers in the context of community.

Prophetic politics embraces such issues as economic justice, and a social morality that mandates individual as well as corporate responsibility to a community, and at the same time the responsibility of the community to its individual members. This sense of community responsibility is absent from communitarians such as Etzioni who seek to identify admirable human behavior as that which enhances the community of "common good."[9] Furthermore, prophetic politics understands the dignity of humans and defines human rights as pre-eminent over self-interest; the individualism of Etzioni, for instance, is anathema to the notion of the prophetic community that is animated by a sense of prophetic politics.

Prophetic communities do not exist exclusively within the Christian framework, however. Prophetic communities exist wherever there are people who come together to try and re-center the larger groups of which they are a part back to an "imagined"

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[8] William Stringfellow, The Politics of Spirituality, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, (1984), p. 22.
[9] Amitai Etzioni (ed.), Rights and the Common Good, New York: St Martin's Press, (1995).

earlier vision;[10] to rekindle a sense of solidarity within the larger institutionalized group with those who are on the margins and have no power. As such, prophetic communities may exist within, for instance, the Jewish or Muslim traditions as well. Because of constraints, this thesis will only examine the Christian context.

The Question and Methodology

As already set down, this thesis is concerned with the overall question, how is a prophetic community conceived within the framework of the Jubilee Group in East London relative to the perceived ills of the present socio/economic order, and secondly in relation to the wider Christian concept of the church community?

Under the umbrella of the foregoing question, my secondary task is to find the answer to the question, who and what is the Jubilee Group? Part of the answer comes from the literature the people of the Jubilee Group have produced in the form of newsletters, pamphlets and working papers dealing with social or political issues identified as significant.

A second part of this answer came from visiting Jubilee people in England in such places as London, Birmingham, Manchester, Exeter, Cambridge, Oxford, and elsewhere. These people recounted in interviews why they are part of the Jubilee Group, what they understand the vision of the Jubilee Group to be, what is the "Jubilee Spirit."

In an interesting way, this thesis is also about a man—Ken Leech. Later, in chapter two, it will be demonstrated that the radical groups that have influenced the Jubilee Group are often the reflection of strong individuals at the helm. It is so with

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[10] See Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, London: Verso, (1991).

the Jubilee Group. Ken Leech is one of the founders of the Jubilee Group and for many in the group, the guiding light. The Jubilee Group would not be what it is without Ken Leech; so say several of the people of the Jubilee Group I had the privilege to interview such as John Milbank, for instance. It is for this reason that much of the understanding with regards to who the Jubilee Group is, comes from Ken Leech himself.

At this point, a short explanatory detour may be necessary. The question of methodology is *semi*-central to any anthropologist's enterprise. The question as to how the people of the Jubilee Group tell their "story" posses some significant problems; the complexity of these problems can run very deep indeed and to expertly address each problem so that a satisfactory solution is found might require the skill of the best sleight-of-hand trickster.

Keep in mind that amidst a choice of methodological variables, there was the one variable that was firm and could not be negotiated: time. I had three and a half weeks in which to gather the data. Was this enough time to become a participant observer (some critics might wonder whether this is the most effective way to engage the subject) or as Kirsten Hastrup might refer to it as part of a *lived experience*[11] where there is a profound relationship between acting out the cultural values (with the people) and incorporating them sufficiently into ones psyche, a dialectic between performing and learning?[12] Was three and a half weeks enough time to meet with the people, to

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[11] See Kirsten Hastrup, o*p cit.*

[12] The question might be raised, to what extent one can really learn what is at the core of the people without actually being part of the people at the heart and soul of the matter. It might be more true to say that the values are learned at a cursory level. To simply suggest that living in an environment and thereby absorbing the values and the culture is very much akin to Claudia Strauss and Naomi Quinn's argument that the "lived experience" notion reduces socialization to a process of getting the original through the fax machine.

gain their trust and have them "recount their story" as those who utilize the narrative method?

The dilemma with the lived experience in the shortness of time highlights a problem identified by Clifford Geertz, that confinement to the lived experience leaves the ethnographer awash in "immediacies as well as entangled in the vernacular"[13] that cannot be sufficiently sorted out and decoded. Of course the problem with ethnography from afar, without the lived experience, leaves the ethnographer, according to Geertz, "stranded in abstractions and smothered in jargon."

What of the narrative technique, of having people tell their stories, as opposed to the interview technique? When comparing these two methods, several problems become apparent. Johannes Fabian reminds us that the interview style, where the ethnographer comes with prepared questions and notes the answers with a kind of "ethnographic communication where the ethnographer does not call the tune but plays along"[14] is problematic since no one has enough information to simply be called up and expressed in discursive statements. In other words, "most cultural knowledge is stored in action rather than words. The methodological consequence is that we cannot hope for a coherent logical structure determining the meaningful in any one setting but have to comprehend meaning as it emerges from practice."[15] In the realm of experience, there is no external standpoint of knowing; knowledge is inherently reflexive.

A further criticism might be that actions are not meaning driven in categorical terms. There is no absolute meaning attached to action, even within cultural patterns. "Social actions," says Hastrup, "are not rule governed in any simple way" (p. 80). Certainly, the epistemologists such as Dilthy would argue in favour of this. "Actions are always acts allowing for improvisation as well as shared comprehension" (*ibid.* p. 80).

[13] Clifford Geertz, Local Knowledge, New York: Basic Books (1983), pp. 55-70.

[14] Johannes Fabian, Power and Performance, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, (1990), quoted in Kirsten Hastrup, A Passage to Anthropology, London: Routledge, (1995), p. 82.

[15] Hastrup, p. 82.

The power of narrative, as Rosaldo points out, allows for the emergence of aspects hidden from other types of ethnography. Rosaldo highlights this in the narratives of the Ilongnot hunters who recount hunting stories about responding to the unexpected when game does not appear on demand. Psychologist Jerome Bruner argues that stories shape action because they embody compelling motives, strong feelings, vague aspirations, clear intentions, or well-defined goals.[16] Sherene Razack, in her essay, Storytelling for Social Change, argues that narratives, or storytelling, refers to an "opposition to established knowledge, to Foucault's suppressed knowledge, to the experience of the world that is not admitted into dominant knowledge paradigms."[17]

Clearly, the narrative is a powerful technique, but there may be drawbacks. Julie Cruikshank, who collected the life stories of three Yukon native elders, points out that narrative accounts may differ from individual to individual recounting similar events.[18] This is not to say that one or the other account is suspect, for both are interpretations of the same event. Each story presents a different aspect and each stands in its own right and the event is still the same; but in terms of understanding, confusion can arise with respect to similitude.

Secondly, narratives need a great deal of time; time to establish connections, to establish trust, time to tell the story (three and a half weeks was not enough time to utilize the narrative technique). Consequently, I adopted the interview technique, allowing for its inadequacies, but I tried to allow each interviewee latitude to expand

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[16] Quoted in Renato Rosaldo, Culture and Truth, Boston: Beacon Press, (1989).

[17] Sherene Razack, *Storytelling for Social Change*, IN Returning the Gaze, Himani Bannerji (ed.), Toronto: Sister Vision Press, (1993).

[18] Julie Cruikshank, Life Lived Like a Story, Vancouver: UBC Press, (1990),

their responses into a type of narrative. Furthermore, I extended to each subject the right to examine the transcripts of the interviews with the provision that they could change their responses or even have the entire interview deleted.

All in all, I interviewed roughly 30 people but included only eight of these in the final draft of the thesis. Several of those interviewed suggested changes to the interviews and these were taken into account. Each person interviewed was ensured anonymity and to that end, I have identified persons in the text and quoted interviews with a coded alphabetical letter. Only Ken Leech is identified by name with respect to quoted interviews and he gave permission to do so.

Theoretical Framework

As already stated, prophetic communities have not been particularly studied in an anthropological context. What exactly is meant by the concept, *prophetic community*? To answer that question, I will need to unpack two concepts: prophetic and community. Very briefly the term prophetic comes to mean a present system of values which is informed by a tradition but offering the present a vision of something new, an alternative.

Let me put this into a context. The context of the prophetic is religious; it is defined by a religious tradition. In the case of this thesis, the context is the Christian church but more specifically, the Anglican community. This beginning is somewhat broad and altogether vague. We need to delve a little bit deeper in order to come to a fuller knowledge of what the term prophetic is all about.

I would like to focus, for a moment on this notion of tradition. What exactly is meant by a reaching back to a tradition that informs the present in order to fulfill a

vision of something new? The church, after all, has many traditions: some better than others and some downright ugly. Furthermore, what is this new thing referred to?

The logic of the term prophetic is defined by a particular theological understanding. That being, what is the point of the church in the first place? In order to understand this, we need to go back to the roots of the church, to its Old Testament origins. These beginnings form the foundation of the New Testament community of believers.

With respect to the New Testament, the church is the extension of the incarnation, what Irenaeus refers to as the Godhead becoming flesh and humankind being taken into the Godhead. As humans participate in the church, they are participating in the physical manifestation of Christ on earth which is the outward expression of his personality and the means by which that personality impresses itself upon the world.

A significant aspect of this personality is justice; it is to be a voice of justice for those who have no voice, for those who are dominated, oppressed and made poor—the social outcast—by those who would maintain the status quo. This has been a dominant theme of the Old Testament prophets, of the New Testament writers, of the Early Church fathers and of the people of the Christian Socialist Movement such as F. D. Maurice, John Ludlow, B. F. Westcott, Stewart Headlam, Conrad Noel, William Temple and the people of the Jubilee Group today.

The tradition referred to is one in which the church as a community stood against institutions and powers that dominated and oppressed the weak. Those who did not reflect the status quo of these powers and often of society at large were trampled upon. History has shown, however, that the church as an institution has been linked to these institutions of powers and conspired to concretize the status quo of these power

structures so much so that the church itself has become an institution of power that needs transformation.

What fuels this sense of justice? In short, it is a belief in a transcendent God made immanent: God made flesh indwells creation and engages the created being. The point being that God's purpose for humanity is to come to a fuller and deeper understanding of our own createdness and thereby come into a fuller participation in the Godhead. This can only happen in a context of communal relationships of social and political interaction.

The prophetic tradition points to a belief that the transcendent as subject (rather than object) widens our horizons within which we think, act, judge and decide. This necessarily governs our judgments of values but always mutable within a context of an inherited tradition. Tradition seeks to give meaning but must also allow for change mediated by culture. In this context, religion is not a propositional truth claim. Nevertheless, the prophetic tradition mandates social integration and transformation of society. The religious faith of the prophetic, by pushing us towards the transcendent made immanent, relativizes every existing social and political order. In so far as any existing social and political order absolutizes itself, the prophetic tradition becomes subversive and revolutionary but in a transformative sense. The prophetic tradition must always contest the propensity for existing orders to make their truth claims nothing more than an ideology. The prophetic voice rejects all absolutism—both that of the existing social order and that of particular revolutions. The authentic prophetic tradition rejects the fanaticism of both the right and left, and even of its own values when the prophetic voice tends towards ideology. How does this understanding of the prophetic relate to community? To answer that, let me briefly outline the concept of community.

Community is best understood herein in terms of Benedict Anderson's notion of *imagined communities*. For Anderson, the idea that communities are positivistically defined is not workable. Anderson is interested in exploring the emergence of nations after the colonial enterprise has failed. These new nations he identifies as forms of communities. His understanding of nation-*ness* is most instructive for the purpose of exploring communities with respect to the prophetic vision.

Anderson begins by stating that communities exist foremost in the imagination of its people. He makes this point because the people of even the smallest nation or community will never know most of their members, they do not have face-to-face contact but they are connected in their hearts and souls to an ethos. The key point here is not that people may or may not know one another but that an image exists in the mind for the people that binds them to a common body that is greater than the individual. Furthermore, community is imagined because there is a style in which the people hold to the image of community that is often articulated in an outward expression, in praxis. Finally, a community is imagined, says Anderson, because it is mediated by a deep horizontal relationship almost bordering on comradeship.

A questions that needs addressing is what engenders this imagination in the first place? Does this imagination emerge *ex nihilo*? Anderson argues that in the process of community formation the people must be cognizant of a political expression that emerges out of an immemorial past. For Anderson, the new imagined community is what it is because it is not what it was but also, the people of community must be fully aware that their present is linked to the past which in turn informs the future, what Walter Benjamin refers to as Messianic time. Members of community are connected through time to those who have come before and will come—a simultaneity of past and future mediated by the present. The ethos of community exists, not in isolation of time

but in the fullness of time. For the members of the community the imagination that bonds the members is a common theme and story told in the continuity of time. If a common theme is justice, as in the prophetic tradition, the common story of the community is the contestation of all institutions and structures of power that seek to impose an unjust will on the people.

Anthony P. Cohen, in his The Symbolic Construction of Community (1985), gives us an additional glimpse into what makes for community. Cohen, borrowing from Geertz, refers to webs of significance. These are created and recreated through a free social interaction. But this interaction is contingent upon certain prescriptions framed by symbols that equip them to be social and indeed political. The quintessential referent of community, says Cohen, is that its members make, or believe they make, a similar sense of things either generally or with respect to specific and significant interests. The reality of community in people's experiences thus inheres in their attachment or commitment to a common body of symbols. For the people, the community is the common repository of these symbols. These symbols, however, do not exist somehow set apart from the people as though they were some abstract merchandise. There is an actual participation in the symbols and their values. That is to say the symbols generate a cohesive bond by ascribing meaning for the community but as well, the symbols themselves can function as a stage acted upon in a communal context.

This is very much what the sacraments in the Christian community such as Baptism and the Eucharist, to mention only two, are all about. Indeed, as Grace Jantzen, in her book, Power Gender and Christian Mysticism (1995), says, that for the Christian, Christ is encountered in the sacraments. Participation and encounter are the key words and the act of engaging in the symbols or the sacraments are not acts

performed or encountered in isolation but acts of community. As Anderson correctly states, each communicant is well aware that the ceremony of the sacrament performed, also, meaning participated in, is being replicated simultaneously by thousands of others whose existence is assured and this enables the community to be imagined in the most powerful of terms creating the strongest of bonds. Certainly, for communities such as the Jubilee Group that are markedly identified as catholic the Eucharist is striking and participation in the eucharistic sacrament is this powerful bond alluded to; but it only begins to take on meaning and value in the context of community. For groups such as the Jubilee Group the eucharistic sacrament is a logical link between the notion of the prophetic vision discussed above and a sense of community—the eucharistic sacrament provides the context of the community's style of the prophetic tradition.

How the Jubilee Group a fitting linkage between the prophetic and community? The people of the Jubilee Group see themselves following in the tradition of the church from the Old Testament to the radical Christian socialists. The tradition of justice forms the web of significance and becomes what Anderson envisions as the style, or the outward manifestation or expression of what is at the heart and soul of a community or group such as the Jubilee Group.

A tradition of justice linked to the imagination of the community must extend beyond the abstract into the real. How is this manifested in the Jubilee Group? It is significant to note that the Jubilee Group had its beginnings in the East End of London, a place that has historically been a place of the poor. It is also a place that has, historically been a place that has witnessed some of the most significant social activism in all of Great Britain. People such as Annie Besant, Charles Bradlaugh, Keir Hardie, Eleanor Marx, George Orwell, and George Bernard Shaw; world figures such as Lenin, and Stalin, in 1907, visited London and made their presence known in the East

End of London. Many of these radical socialists formed close connections with the radical Christian socialists of the day. Karl Marx, for instance, elicited comment from Ludlow on Das Kapital; Shaw frequently debated Headlam; Sylvia Pankhurst was a frequent visitor of Conrad Noel.

The Jubilee Group was founded to raise a voice in solidarity with those who suffered injustice. People such as Ken Leech have been on the cutting edge in England with respect to raising their voice on issues such as anti-racism, drug abuse, unemployment, and housing. Their voice has not gone unheard. Margaret Thatcher once referred to the Jubilee Group as the most subversive group within the religious community in England. The Jubilee Group ardently believes that the church and the state are poor bedfellows; that the church has a role to play which is to be a gadfly to institutional power and to be an offense to the status quo.

Members of the Jubilee Group believe passionately that their place is to stand along side in solidarity with those who suffer the power of dominating forces. People such as the Rev. Fr. Peter Barnett, who was charged with court action because he challenged the imposition of a poll tax on the people of Great Britain; people such as Janet who was involved in the women's protest at Greenham Common; people such as Savi, a Sri Lankan in East London, who speaks up against racism; people such as Jean who was offered a well paying job but choose to stand, for more than a year, alongside 5,500 subsequently fired newsprint workers during the major labour management confrontation at Rupert Murdoch's Wapping plant.

Sometimes members of the Jubilee Group stand alone against what they perceive as the abuse of power on the grand scale. Here I am thinking of Arthur Downes, the mayor of Tower Hamlets, who refused in protest, while all other mayors of London

accepted, to board the French warships when they docked in London because of the French policy on nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

These are only some of the many individual stories that hearken to a prophetic tradition of the church as an imagined community in which the poor and social outcast could hope for justice.

The people of the Jubilee Group feel they cannot do otherwise than to come prophetically alongside those who suffer injustice. They are part of a long prophetic tradition that goes back thousands of years, to a time they believe God first made a covenant with Abraham to love justice, to give those suffer injustice a voice. This long standing tradition, they believe must inform their life in the present and offer a vision of hope for the future. They do so as a community tied together by an ecclesiastically symbolized unity with the imagined body of Christ.

Chomsky writes that the emphasis on community in itself makes good sense; but he asks the question, what is it that is destroying our communities and civil society generally? "Precisely the kind of state capitalist corporate structures that [communitarians] either support or ignore".[19] He goes on to say that one of the major goals of corporate structure held by communitarians such as Etzioni and the neo-conservatives, is to dissolve communities and "turn people into atoms of consumption and tools of production, isolated from one another and subject to easy manipulation and control".[20] Perhaps Chomsky is a bit extreme. R. D. Laing, on the other hand, has a gentler gaze on the subject of communities. For him there is an element of hope.

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[19] Personal communication.

[20] Personal communication.

Laing writes out of a deep concern for the misplaced individual in a context of community. He says that

> in the society of men the truth resides now less in what things are than in what they are not. Our social realities are so ugly if seen in the light of exiled truth, and beauty is almost no longer possible if it is not a lie. We are bemused and crazed creatures, strangers to our true selves, to one another, and to the spiritual and material worlds—mad, even, from an ideal standpoint we can glimpse but not adopt.[21]

We are born, he believes, into a world where alienation awaits us. Alienation as our present destiny is achieved by outrageous violence perpetrated by human beings on human beings. This is the scenario that seems to await us if we follow the logic of communitarians such as Etzioni, a logic that does not often see the role of the community as succour to the individual, a view where the individual is entirely subordinated to the life of the community and not related through an interiorized relationship of the kind Laing hopes for.

Kenneth Leech argues that the biblical community recognizes this alienization; and the model offered by Laing offers a way beyond the outrageous violence perpetuated by human beings through a pathological monologue (contrary to a creative critical dialogue in which there is the presumption of partiality) and interiorization.

Fundamentally, the communitarian notion of the individual does not have ontic value and lacks authenticity. The fundamental question of what it is to be human is not broached. Without a sense of the human being as *being* there can be no true sense of community. For Leech the essence of humanity is a question very important to an understanding of the community. For him, community stands or falls on the significance of the individual, but not an individual subordinated, to the dominant will of the community.

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[21] Laing, The Politics of Experience., Middlesex: Penguin Books, (1967), pp. 11-12.

Where community will is predominant and the individual is a mere adjunct, as is inferred by communitarians such as Etzioni, the rule of law governs the "democratically" defined law of the community. We need to pay close attention to Daniel Berrigan in The Rise of Christian Conscience where he states that

> the law as presently envisioned, formulated, pushed, and administered in America literally and mercilessly descends, crushes all who impede, subverts conscience, and both creates and condemns victims. The law that crushes the powerless and holds the powerful unaccountable; the law that kills the conscience first of all; *the law that creates and maintains a system of misery, exclusion, and mindless violence; the law that holds property sacred and refugees, the poor, and the powerless in contempt, needs salvation, that law needs to be saved from itself* (italics added).[22]

While this thesis is not a place for debate between the communitarian view of community and the radical theologians that put forth a notion of a community faithful to a prophetic tradition the two views are inherently distinct. Underlying much of the communitarian debate is the sense of the healthy good community reflecting family values. On the other hand is the view that the church is a community but must address larger political questions about justice. This position holds that a unity between theology and praxis must exist but presupposes that theology grows out of praxis. Praxis itself arises out of a belief that action must reflect belief. Chapter one examines such a context but in geographical terms, namely: East London. Context, however, is not just geographical but also historical, social and political as chapter two illustrates. Chapter three takes us into the Jubilee Group itself. This is done by examining the Jubilee Group from three points of view: 1) the birth of the Jubilee Group, 2) its Anglo-Catholic context, and 3) the women of the Jubilee Group. Chapter four

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[22] Daniel Berrigan, *Foreword,* IN The Rise of Christian Conscience, Jim Wallis (ed.), San Francisco: Harper & Row, (1987).

examines the concept of prophetic politics. Since prophetic communities presuppose a notion of prophetic politics, consequently this concept needs to be laid out in clear terms. Finally, in Chapter five we come to the primary question: what is a prophetic community? Chapter Six concludes and rounds out the debate, offering the ground work of a theoretical framework that undergirds prophetic communities in a social and political context.

The work only begins with this thesis. It needs to be carried on by a more in-depth study of communities such as the Jubilee Group, the Community of the Resurrection (Mirfield), Sojourners, and Jonah House. In addition, there needs to be an examination of restoration movements that are more pietistic in nature: are there loose connections between communities that are predominantly sacramental,[23] such as the Jubilee Group and the Mirfield community, and those that are informed and animated by a pietistic theology such as the Mennonite communities that have been formed on the basis of a renewed sense of authentic Christianity?

The primary task of defining prophetic communities as conceived within the framework of the Jubilee Group is presupposed by an identity, but also by the nature of political action in the context of theology—prophetic politics. With that in mind, I will answer the second question first and then deal with the primary question.

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[23] By sacramental I mean a theology based on an understanding of the centrality of the incarnation to the Christian worship. "Sacramental theology seeks to understand what these rites called sacraments have in common: how they find their common origin in Jesus Christ; how the ritual sign of each sacrament functions and communicates the grace it signifies" Essentially, the sacraments express the way believers understand the fundamental relationship between God, Christ, the church, humanity and creation. In simple terms, to become involved in the sacramental rite the person interacts with the *Ultimate Being* that gives impetus to the rite. For a more in-depth study of sacramental theology, see the essay by Mark R. Francis, cited in Modern Christian Thought, Alister McGrath (ed.), Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, (1993), pp. 581-587.

First, however, we need to have a sense of place of the Jubilee Group. In chapter one, I will explore the context of place.

CHAPTER ONE

POLITICS, RADICALS, AND GLASS BUILDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter I will examine the Jubilee Group within a particular geographic and social context. It should be clearly understood at the outset that the impressions expressed are not those of the residents of East London but of those of an outsider, a foreigner.

To come to an understanding of the Jubilee Group, it is important to have an ethnographic sense, that is to say, a geographical and social context. With this is mind, I will lay out as briefly as possible my experiences in East London and tie these experiences into an historical setting. To do this, I will examine two streets, Brick Lane and Whitechapel, in East London. These were the context of my field research, and are also the context of the East London Jubilee Group. I will also examine a broader field of East London; I will look at poverty in East London as well as the radicals of East London. I will end this chapter with a sense of the present, examining the juxtaposition of East London with the structures of power at its edges that make for tensions within East London.

It should be clear at the outset that this thesis is about the Jubilee Group and not East London per se. East London is the place where the Jubilee Group began. It is necessary, however, to have a sense of place out of which the Jubilee Group emerged.

1.i The Entry

My entry into the world of the Jubilee Group began some eighteen months prior to the field experience. In the early months of 1995 I was engaged in the study of AIDS in the context of ritual healing. Quickly, however, my interests began to shift. I sensed that while AIDS is an extremely important issue, I was becoming interested in exploring the church as a community, or more specifically, radical groups of dissent that stand within the church and try to articulate a critical voice of creative protest against dominant powers within the church. Having voiced my new interests, it was suggested that I might, perhaps, examine the Jubilee Group.

At that time, very few in the Anglican Church of Canada had ever heard about the Jubilee Group, and equally few within the academic community had any knowledge of it. Furthermore, groups, or communities of dissent in the context of prophetic politics linked with sacramental theology, have been little explored by sociologists or anthropologists.[1] The term prophetic politics was, in fact, new to me. I locate the term within a Christian context; in a short time I came to understand this term through the classic words of Frank Weston, the Bishop of Zanzibar (1923):

> if you are prepared to *engage Christ* in His Blessed Sacrament, then you have got to come out from before your *churches* and walk, with Christ present mystically in you, out into the streets of this country, and find the same Jesus in the people of your cities and your villages. To claim to worship Jesus in the Sacrament while ignoring Jesus in his sweated children in the slums is sheer madness.... Go out into the highways and hedges where not even Bishops will dare to follow to try and find you. Go out and look for Jesus in the ragged, in the naked, and in the oppressed and sweated, in those who have lost hope, in

[1] There is, of course, the work done on groups such as the early Methodists but these are not sacramental in terms of theology but rather pietistic (it is true that both John and Charles Wesley stood in the High Church tradition and were very sacramental, it was not long before the Weslians, followers of the Wesleys, departed from a strict adherence to sacramentalism to pietism. The social tradition that emerged from Weslianism, Methodism, reflected more a spirit of philanthropy than a sacramental spirit). There is also the work done on prophetic movements of African Christianity.

> those who are struggling to make good. Look for Jesus. And when you see him, gird yourselves with his towel and try to wash his feet.[2]

In the early stages, there was difficulty studying the Jubilee Group as there was no literature on this group I could examine (there is, however, a large collection of Jubilee publications; I simply did not have access to this material in the earliest stages). There is, however, a vast amount written on prophetic politics and communities that function as prophetic communities from a theological stance. Writers such as Kenneth Leech, one of the founders of the Jubilee Group, William Stringfellow, a Harlem lawyer and theologian, Jim Wallis, the founder of the Sojourners community in the United States, Robert McAfee Brown, Walter Brueggemann and Stanley Hauerwas, American Protestant theologians, have written extensively on prophetic politics and the prophetic community. My interests, however, are anthropological.

It wasn't until several months after beginning this study, and searching through existing texts for anything written on the Jubilee Group that I received a large collection of Jubilee pamphlets. As it turned out, this has proven to be, perhaps, the most substantial collection of Jubilee material in Canada.

1.ii East London: The Place

One can only begin to understand the Jubilee Group in the context of place. For Ken Leech, one of the guiding lights of the Jubilee Group, place has been East London. The East London Jubilee Group is the oldest of the Jubilee groups in England. East London, says Leech, is the context in which he articulates his prophetic vision. It is there, he says, that he learned to pray and there that his theology was put

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[2] John Orens, *Priesthood and Prophecy*, IN Essays Catholic and Radical, Kenneth Leech and Rowan Williams (Eds.), London: Bowerdean Press, p. 176, (1983).

to the test; and, he goes on, "I have ... located the discussion of social and political issues within this context."[3] It was, therefore, to East London that I had to go to discover something about the Jubilee Group that I could not flesh out from the literature.

I arrived in London on a bank holiday; the public transit schedules were in disarray and consequently, I had to take a London Taxi from Victoria Station to East London. Along the way, we passed by some of England's symbols of political and economic power; Westminster, Buckingham Palace, the War Office, Scotland Yard, Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's, and the financial district, as well as many of the historic sites I had visited while a "tourist" in London some twenty years earlier.

Ken Leech met me at the taxi stand opposite the Whitechapel Art Gallery. From there, we walked a short distance to his flat on the third floor in the old St. Mary's Clergy House. Where there once had been a church there was now only the outline of the outer walls in the park that had been the parish grounds. Of the 700 churches in London before W.W.II, only 70 were untouched by the bombing; and the old Whitechapel at the corner of Whitechapel Road and Whitechapel Lane had been destroyed, both by fires and bombs.

After settling in, he took me on a short tour of Brick Lane. He pointed out that East London is the most densely populated area in all of London and has the largest Bengali community outside Bangladesh.

East London, according to Bill Fishman, a leading authority on Victorian England and East London, is "a host of diverse communities, segregated and self-identified according to street, alley, ethnic root, religion, occupation (often unlawful),

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[3] Kenneth Leech, The Eye of the Storm, London: Darton Longman and Todd, (1992), p. ix.

fixed urbanite or immigrant countryman—a patchwork quilt of settlements with interwoven subcultures."[4]

To walk through the streets of East London, one will rub shoulders with "Irish cockneys, Russo-Polish Jews, Chinese, Somalis, West Africans, Indians and white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, and colored minorities always ensconced in their sharply defined ghettos."[5] But three and a half weeks is too short a time to become immersed enough in the culture of the place to fully appreciate Fishman's perceptions of East London. Three and a half weeks allowed me only to sense the culture of Brick Lane and a short distance along Whitechapel Road. Even within the square mile bordered on two sides by Brick Lane and Whitechapel Road there was a vibrant life lived.

Brick Lane, one of the oldest streets in London, dating back to the Roman settlement, is a center for Bengali commercial interests. Along its way are the shops of clothing merchants, crammed so full of bolts of brightly colored cloth that it is impossible to walk around inside; outside, on the sidewalks, many of the merchants hang on display *Saris* or *Shalwar Kami*, a particular type of women's clothing often referred to by sub-continental women in North America as a suit which includes pants and a long overshirt. Apart from the clothing merchants are the Balti houses: small Bengali restaurants, just large enough, in some instances, to serve a handful of customers.

Brick Lane is a narrow street, allowing enough room for small vehicles to maneuver around the cars parked halfway on the sidewalk. Pedestrian traffic mingling about slows the auto traffic, often to a standstill; arguments ensue between the drivers and the pedestrians. These interlocutions seem to be a significant element in the

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[4] William J. Fishman, The Streets of East London, London: Gerald Duckworth and Co., (1979), p. 8.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

culture of the place; but to understand it, to be a part of it, one would need to be immersed in the Bengali culture to the point that it is intricately woven into the individual's psyche. Questions such as under what circumstances is it acceptable to carry on these intense discussions? at what point do they end? who can be involved? what kind of language is acceptable? are the arguments confined to gender? can only be answered by those whose cultural DNA is Bengali.

The interplay of the mingling of the cultures of the "stranger" is highly visible. There is a mixture of dress among the Bengali people of Brick Lane. Some of the older generations of men and many women wear clothing identifying them as Muslims, whereas the younger men and women wear "western" garb. Inside the restaurants, the Balti houses, the patrons are, for the most part non-Bengali; they may be middle to upper-class white Anglo-Saxon (in this case British),[6] North American, or European. A few young Bengali men do come but often sit in the back reading newspapers.

These nuances are noticed in other places as well. Some of the first residents of East London were the Huguenots. The early Huguenots constructed a chapel in 1742 but in 1809 it became a Methodist chapel, and in 1897 "it was bought by the Jewish ultra-Orthodox immigrant *Machzikei Hadath* society and named the Spitalfields Great Synagogue."[7] Today, the Jewish community has moved out and the Bengali Muslim community has moved in. It is interesting to note a Muslim mosque with the Star of David still adorning the architecture.

On Sundays, sections of Brick Lane to Petticoat Lane become a large "flea market." Merchants selling fruit and vegetables, shoes, records and CDs, video tapes,

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[6] There is a picture of Prince Charles with the owner of the Balti house, *Aladin*, in the window.

[7] Fishman, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

dresses, shirts, tools of every kind, raise voices in a vain attempt to be heard over competing merchants. On Sundays the pickpockets are out in force.

Whitechapel Road is very different from Brick Lane. Whitechapel Road is a major thoroughfare traveling through East London. Contrasting with Brick Lane are the much larger shops, ranging from more upscale franchised restaurants to more sophisticated clothing stores, book stores, stores selling home entertainment products, betting shops, the East London Mosque and the Royal London Hospital. The wide, expansive sidewalks along Whitechapel Road are utilized during the day by street vendors selling clothing, jewelry, magazines, and fruit. Many of the vendors are Muslim, and veiled women purchase fruit and clothing while men haggle over prices in Bengali, or argue energetically, or are engrossed in quiet conversation.

The area's poverty is severe. The Salvation Army has a large hostel, William Booth House, on Whitechapel Road; and it was the Blind Beggars Pub, a pub on Whitechapel Road, across the street from the Royal London Hospital, that "witnessed the first incursion of Salvation Army lassies selling *War Cry*."[8] It was not unusual for me to see the homeless sleeping on the steps of William Booth House.

1.iii Poverty in East London

"East London is not depressed, it is destitute, it is desperate."[9] These are the words of Sara Maitland, a prolific writer, radical feminist, and member of the Jubilee Group.

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 137.

[9] Personal communication.

To understand the context of East London, it is important to have a sense of its history. While this thesis is about the Jubilee Group, not about the history of East London, it is important to understand that the Jubilee Group was born in East London and exists today in a place of extreme poverty; it is the place where Jubilee Group works out its vision. To understand this context it is also necessary to have a sense that poverty in East London is integral to its history; it has always been poor.

From my flat window I could see the tall glass buildings of London's financial center— symbols of power. Also, from my window, on Whitechapel Road, I could see Angel Alley, "once inhabited by Irish and later Jewish immigrants .... who kept the rent collectors and the police at bay for months."[10]

East London is a place marked by tensions and contradictions. Only a short distance separates the grinding poverty of East London and England's centers of power. It was a ten minute walk from my flat to the Tower of London, a few minutes by underground transit to Trafalgar Square, Buckingham Palace, the Houses of Parliament, and Scotland Yard. The tall glass buildings of the financial district loom high above the landscape, looking down on East London. I often wondered, looking up at these buildings from my flat, if the people in these great glass buildings could see us looking up at them as they looked down on us.

Everywhere construction raises skyscrapers, pushing at the edges of the place of the poor. East London is a place where power and powerlessness are juxtaposed, existing in tension. In 1902, when Jack London was writing the People of the Abyss, he noted that "the poor quarters of the City proper are constantly being destroyed and the main stream of the unhoused is towards the east."[11]

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[10] Fishman, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

[11] Jack London, People of the Abyss, quoted in Fishman, p. 34.

The East End of London, writes J. H. Mackay in The Anarchists (1891), is an 'Empire of Hunger.' He saw it as "the hell of poverty. Like an enormous, black, motionless, giant kracken (sic), the poverty of London lies there in lurking silence and encircles with its mighty tentacles the life and wealth of the city and of the West End ..." (p. 152).[12]

Before Mackay wrote his account, Henrietta Barnett described the parish of St. Jude's (Whitechapel) in 1873 in, Canon Barnett: His Life, Works and Friends (1918), as follows:

> ... the whole parish was covered with a network of courts and alleys. None of these courts had roads. In some the houses were three stories high and hardly six feet apart, the sanitary accommodation being pits in the cellars; in other courts the houses were lower, wooden and dilapidated, a stand pipe at the end provided the only water. Each chamber was the home of a family who owned their indescribable furniture, but in most cases the rooms were let out furnished for 8d. a night. In many instances broken windows had been repaired with paper and rags, the banister had been used for firewood, and the paper hung from the walls which were the residence of countless vermin.... If the men worked at all it was as casual dock labourers, enjoying the sense of gambling, which the uncertainty of obtaining work gave. But goods, they hawked, begged, cadged, lived on each other with generous indiscrimination, drank, gambled, fought, and when they became too well known to the police, moved to another neighbourhood. (vol. 1, pp. 73-4)[13]

East London was (and is) a culture of poverty in which women and children were the worst affected, the worst casualties. If children survived their first handicap—being born—their survival rate was more than dubious. Jack London records that: "in the West End 18% of children die before 5 years of age; in the East End 55% of the children die before 5 years of age"[14]

For women, often the most vulnerable, the degradation was intense, writes Fishman.

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[12] Mackay, The Anarchists, quoted in Fishman, p. 28.

[13] Barnett, Canon Barnett: His Life, Works and Friends, (2 vols.), quoted in Fishman, p. 28.

[14] Jack London, quoted in Fishman, p. 30.

> As a child she would be 'mother' to a large ever-increasing brood, should her own be out charring or 'taking out laundry' to augment her man's meager income (if he was not already unemployed!). At the lowest level she faced continual hazards: an incestuous attack by father or brother, a beating by a drunken parent, perhaps only relieved by taking to the streets.[15]

In 1903 Jack London asked his readers to:

> Conceive of an old woman, broken and dying, supporting herself and four children, and paying three shillings per week rent, by making match boxes at 2¼d. per gross. Twelve dozen boxes for 2¼d., and, in addition, finding her own paste and thread! She never knew a day off, either for sickness, rest or recreation. Each day and every day, Sundays as well, she toiled fourteen hours . Her day's stint was seven gross, for which she received 1s. 3¾d. In the week of 98 hours' work she made 7,066 matchboxes, and earned 4/10¼d. less paste and thread.[16]

The past is as inexorable as the present, says Fishman. In personal communication, he stated that if Dickens and Mayhew, who described at great length the conditions of East London in their work, were alive today, they would not recognize any changes.

> Itchy Park (the ever-diminishing gardens adjoining Christ Church Spitalfields) still persists as a rendezvous for the homeless and destitute, as it was well before its 'discovery' by the Victorian scribes. Mackay's Brick Lane derelict is still around. Even now down the side street a drunken form is feeling its way along a wall, muttering to itself and [in an animated style] gesticulating, perhaps overcome by a single glass of whiskey because the stomach had been without food.[17]

With regards to the homeless that abound in places such as Itchy Park, or lie on the steps of William Booth House, 6,000 (1977) were registered on a housing waiting list.[18] Local Statistics monitoring areas of 'distress and deprivation' recorded in 1977, for example:

(1) *Children in care on 30 September 1977:*
1,106—the highest in London.

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[15] Fishman, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
[16] Jack London, quoted in Fishman, p. 33.
[17] Fishman, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-4.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

(2) *Disabled:* 4,073

(3) *Unemployment at April 1977:*

(a)Poplar Employment Office—2,325, 14% adult males only, i.e. *three* times the national average.

(b)Stepney Employment Office—2,173, 12.7% adult males only.

(4) *Homeless families—officially aided:*

159 in shorter life property (short term residence)
133 in bed and breakfast accommodation
013 in reception centers
009 in hostel accommodation
013 forced to stay with relatives.

(These are the known 'legal' homeless. What of the unknown who walk the streets seeking 'doss' for the night in unaided hostel or empty house or tenement?)[19]

While the grinding poverty of the Dickensian age may be gone, Fishman argues, there are still vast pockets of deprivation and underprivileged and a "casual stroll through the deserted alleys and by-ways" of East London may suddenly "plunge one into the inescapable reality of the past." In the garbage choked Angel Alley of the present,

> it is no strain on the imagination to conjure up the raucous yells of those mad Irish casuals who, armed with cudgels and knives, for three years held their filthy rabbit warrens against the onslaught of predatory bailiff and police posse; their unpaid rent diverted from the pockets of their landlords to the more insatiable demands of the liquor palace.[20]

[19] Supplied to Fishman by Stephen Carey, Tower Hamlets Borough Council (p. 44).

[20] Fishman, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

1.iv Radicals, Politics and Restaurants

In May, 1975, Prime Minister Harold Wilson opened the first National Museum of Labour History at the Limehouse Town Hall. It was a fitting location, he said, that it was within a square mile of that building that were enacted some of the "greatest dramas in the saga of working class liberation."[21]

East London is a place of ironies; it is a place of great social upheaval; it is a place where contesting powers exist side by side. At the edges of East London are the dominant powers of church and state. Not more than ten minutes by underground is St Paul's cathedral. St. Paul's, it seemed, was an excellent example of the marriage of church and state in England. What was to be a place of worship had become, in effect, a museum piece administered by Parliament. All those who entered had to pay admission of £3.50 for the maintenance of the church. At the same time the visitors were asked to stop for a moment and remember the poor and the unemployed. What struck me was that the poor and unemployed could ill afford to attend St. Paul's. Inside, in the crypt, were the many monuments to the heroes and heads of state who defended England's glory; not any who died in defense of the church as critic of the state or the defenders of the poor and the oppressed against institutional powers, of which the church was one. While in St. Paul's, I was reminded of what John Milbank referred to when speaking of the church touching sacredness of space. With respect to a personal observation, the irony was that the space in St. Paul's effused a sense of secular power rather than a sense of sacredness. This power was there for the people in East London to see.

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[21] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

Within East London, however, exists a different form of power moving, seen and unseen, in and through the lives of those who have and those who have not; the shop keepers, and the marginally employed; the homeless, the unemployed, and the sick; drunken derelicts, and prostitutes; the char women, and the matchbox girls; and priests with a prophetic vision. The forces of power in East London mobilized, sometimes in great forces to challenge, sometimes forcefully, the powers of the state and the powers of the church. In chapter two, I will examine in greater depth the history of the Christian Socialist Movement (the precursors of the Jubilee Group) which was born in the misery of East London. For the present, however, I will provide only the briefest glimpse of the history of the radical political movements that existed in East London.[22]

In 1874, Annie Besant (1847-1933), the pioneer of New Unionism for women, in partnership with Charles Bradlaugh, campaigned for secularism and for publishing birth-control pamphlets.[23] This action brought her before the Queen's Bench in the famous trial of 1877 that ultimately drew her through Fabianism into the Social-Democratic Federation.

While Karl Marx wrote about social injustice, about relieving the burden from the "backs of working classes," he never crossed the border from High Gate into "plebeian London."[24] His daughter, Eleanor Marx-Aveling did, however. Fishman writes that she chose to explore, sometimes alone and sometimes with novelist Margaret Harkness, the "shadowy global image of the oppressed poor."[25]

Fishman, referring to Yvonne Kapp's, Eleanor Marx (1976), writes:

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[22] See Fishman for a detailed look at the history of the radical movement in East London, pp. 115-31.
[23] Fishman, *op. cit.*, p. 115.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 117.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

> Here she saw the reality for the first time: in terms of individual human beings, suffering terribly in the everyday fight for survival. In the East End Marx's daughter first crossed the 'the line between serving a cause and identifying herself with the women and men that cause was intended to serve ... Eleanor had never known real hunger: debts and duns and short commons, yes, and sometimes "doing without", but not the ravening need of those clinging to the brink of survival who asked bread and were given a stone.' Eleanor, unlike her father, openly declared her ethnic relationship with the Jews, and was sensible enough to learn Yiddish in order to help in the effort to unionize the immigrant tailors *(Kapp,. vol. II, pp. 261-2)*[26]

She served for a brief time as an activist apprentice in Whitechapel and her practical voluntarism in the London Gasworkers' Union helped gain her skills in organization so that by 1889 she effected the task of unionizing 90% of the unskilled gas workers.

It seemed that where women led, men followed. Such is not entirely the case, however, for in 1889 Ben Tillet led the Dock Strike which became a focus of labour solidarity internationally.

> On August 16, John Burns, leader of the Amalgamation Society of Engineers, who had initially rejected an appeal to support the strike, after consulting with Tillet at strike headquarters (the *Wades Arms* pub in Poplar) found himself heading a procession of 6,000 marchers as he walked back to confront the dock directors in the City along the since famous East End route: West India Dock Road, Commercial Road, Fenchurch Street, and Leadenhall Street. Subsequent marches addressed by Ben Tillet and union leaders John Burns, Tom Mann and Will Thorne, national and international financial support of which eloquent testimony is recorded in the strike committee's Statement of Account, totaling £48,736. 3s. 1d. (of which £30,000 was contributed by the Australian 'warfies'), and the efforts of a sympathetic and persuasive mediator, Cardinal Manning, brought ultimate victory to the dockers. On 16 September the five week drama ended with all their demands met.[27]

Clearly, the impact of the social tensions and upheaval in East London were felt, not only in England, but abroad as well. Nowhere was this more evident than at the corner of Fulbourne Street and Whitechapel Road, across the street from the Royal London Hospital and just a short walk down Whitechapel Road from my flat. Today, it is the

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[26] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

Premier Camera shop and warehouse but in 1907 it was the Jewish Socialist Club which echoed to the voices of Russian and Polish delegates gathered together for the holding of the 5th Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. Present at these meeting were the founding fathers of the Soviet Union, including Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, Litvinov and Gorky.[28]

The memories of these struggles are still present in the back, dark alcoves of the narrow streets and courts of East London. Sometimes they appear to emerge. The *Aladin* restaurant had become my favorite Balti house. It was possible to order the meagerest of meals and not feel pressured to move along when finished. In fact, lingering was welcome. The restaurant was small, only room for a small number of people. I usually came early and sat in the back. It was where the young Bengali men sat. There were usually about ten in all and they came and went periodically. Sometimes different individuals would come and then leave again, but there was always the same core of ten.

They never ordered food but would bring in beer from the store next door (the Aladin did not have a license to sell beer), sometimes drank coffee but always smoked cigarettes and read the newspapers together. More-to-the-point, one young man with a goatee and scarf wrapped around his neck would read and then expound very loudly and with seeming anger on what he had just read.

This group fascinated me. They did not speak English and I could not understand Bengali. I noticed that the pictures in the newspapers seemed to be

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[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 124 and 136. It is somewhat ironic that these radicals fled Europe and found sanctuary in an imperialist/capitalist state such as England. What is also ironic is that in the place of the poor and the powerless, there arose a voice for a time that was imbued with such power that much of the resources of the dominant western capitalist states were focused on trying to overcome and defeat this alternative voice.

political; there were pictures of men with raised arms speaking to large audiences and pictures of soldiers with guns and tanks. One man turned to me, perhaps realizing my fascination with what this group of ten was doing and said, with a smile, that they were discussing politics. At this point several in the group also turned to me and smiled, some laughed. The man in the goatee just ignored me.

I remembered, that evening, Fulbourne Street, 1907, and the Jewish Socialist Club, and I wondered at the links there might be between the present and the past.

1.v Places of Power

Before I left Canada for England, I experienced some dread. My main concern was that I would meet the people I was supposed to meet and be able to ask the right questions. That, of course raised the question: are there right questions? I had come to England to work; I was not there to be the stereotypical tourist from North America, assuming there is such a thing. That, of course, immediately raised another question: do or do not North American tourists experience something of the nuances of culture offered by a visit to England. Are English and North American cultures homogeneous?

On my first Sunday in London I walked down Regent Street from Trafalgar Square, past Admiralty Arch, the Queen's Horse Guards and the War Office to Westminster. It is a short distance. The first thing that struck me was the grandeur of Trafalgar Square itself. Nelson's column, with St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church in the background, is an imposing monument to past glories. Four large, very strong bronze lions guard the column and the square itself is the foot, the firm foundation, the ultimate symbol of power with Parliament, the fortress-like Westminster Abbey, and St. Margaret's (the MPs' church) the crown: for a crown cannot be without a foot.

Trafalgar Square may act as a constant reminder to those in Westminster and in the Church of England's glory in which Napoleon's navy was defeated by the might of the British navy. All along Regent Street are monuments to other past glories such as Richard I, the Lion-Hearted crusader; victories long since past, some forgotten by England's young, some ignored, but most vilified by those colonized.[29]

There is an irony attached to these monuments. While they may be symbols of a great and noble past, some have become shelters to the present day homeless.

Within East London there are other symbols, however. Along the walls, doors and barricades are symbols of hate that reflect a hated past and an ugly present. In Brick Lane and Whitechapel Road and throughout Tower Hamlets and Newham, are swastikas, the symbols of the BNP (the British National Party which is, in fact, the Nazi Party in England), and words such as "Fire bomb all houses with Niggers" and "Fuck Coons and Apes."

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[29] It is important to point out reiterating what has already been stated, that these images are interpretations of impressions made on an outsider looking in. They may not be those of the Londoner's. In fact, Summerson, The Architecture of Victorian London, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, (1972), and Olsen, The City as a Work of Art, New Haven: Yale University Press, (1986), show how much of the architecture of Regent Street was about aesthetics. Both Summerson and Olsen point out that the new style of architecture was concentrated on making London a desirable place of residence for the middle class. Olsen writes: "the most impressive aspect of Georgian London was not the monuments to the vanity of the great and powerful but the extent and decency of the districts that housed the middle class, and the splendor and variety of the shops dedicated to their wants" (12). In fact, the architecture was designed to keep the monarch and the church visually unobtrusive and understated. Sophisticated Victorians, writes Summerson, never really considered the Houses of Parliament, for instance, to belong to them with respect to taste and style. "They either ignored or detested the building"(2). To Ruskin, in 1854, "it was the most effeminate and effectless heap of stones every raised by man" (2). To the Victorians, Trafalgar Square, with Nelson's Column, was considered "our great national eye-sore" (11). To these Londoner's, it was hardly, therefore, a place that epitomized colonial dominance as implied by my interpretations of impressions. Rather, the area of Regent Street focused more on town planning, improvements, investment (acquisition of property), and on the fringes of Regent Street, according to Summerson, suburban estates projecting the sophisticated ideas of a "residential settlement of consistent and picturesque character" (7). In short, Regent Street and its environs of Victorian London were mostly about a style of living that embraced comfort and leisure, not about power and domination, although there certainly was implied power in its sharp differentiation from East London, not far away, which did not get its face lifted in the name of improvement, comfort or leisure.

These symbols are not just in the abstract, but embodied in some of the police in East London. "Refugees in East London are subject to increasing policing as the list of racist measures affecting asylum-seekers continues to grow," reports the Newham Monitoring Project Annual Report (1995/96).[30] The NMP goes on to report:

> Using the general racist climate and the whipping up of populist anti-refugee, anti-black hysteria, the police are taking on the role of *de-facto* immigration officials and using the cover of their uniforms to conduct their own unique form of immigration control-'fishing' raids.[31]

The following case studies illustrates the activities of these embodied symbols of power.

Case 1

> *Late last year an NMP worker was woken up at his home at 6 am by a taxi driver who was worried about a raid taking place at the home of a refugee family in Forest Gate. The NMP worker arrived at the house to find several police officers interviewing a 7-year-old boy and threatening him with arrest if he did not tell them where the person they were searching for (an asylum seeker) was. The boy and his mother were crying and in obvious distress. The NMP worker intervened and the police left threatening, 'Well be back'. They left behind them a terrified family who were obviously at a loss as to what crime they had committed.*[32]

Case 2

> *The M family are Algerian refugees living in Ilford. One evening ... when a man stood outside their home threatening them, Mr. M called the police. Minutes later a group of police officers came charging into the house. They demanded to be allowed into the kitchen. When Mrs. M, who was standing in the doorway, refused to allow them through they violently forced her aside and entered anyway. When Mr. M, who, like most of the family cannot speak English, tried to explain the reason for the call, he was viciously assaulted. Officers hit his head against the wall and stamped on him, kicked him in the*

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[30] The Newham Monitoring Project is an independent agency which exists to monitor the racist activities associated with the BNP.

[31] NMP Annual Report (1995/96), p. 12.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

head and then dragged him into a waiting van. Mr. M was arrested and taken to Ilford police station.[33]

Case 3

AR and a friend were out riding bicycles in Canning Town when three officers in a car yelled at them to pull over and stop. AR, seeing one of the officers pull out a truncheon, began to ride away fearful of what could happen.. The police gave chase and trapped them both in a dead end street near Eastleigh School. Four other police officers joined them and they approached the youths. One officer began to beat AR repeatedly with a truncheon, and as AR fell to the ground he was warned, 'Don't fuck with me' and kicked several times. Another officer pulled AR to his feet by his hair and threw him against a nearby fence.

The police continued to threaten them saying, 'You're going to own up to doing two cars'. This haranguing continued until one officer explained they were '... just having some fun'. In all, seven officers were involved in this incident.[34]

Conclusion

In this chapter, I raised the question this thesis will examine: what is the Jubilee Group? Questions following this come out of the Jubilee language, namely: what does it mean to be prophetic? The Jubilee Group defines itself to be a loose network of Socialist Christians in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. I will examine the idea of a network touching the ethos that bonds the Jubilee Group together and demonstrate that in the light of Benedict Anderson's work on *imagined communities,* Jubilee reflects a sense of community, but in this case a community of protest on the margin of the church. Such a community is defined, in the context of the church as a prophetic community.

To answer this question, it is important to locate Jubilee within place. The question *who is Jubilee Group* addresses the concept of identity. The *who*, in this case, is very much dependent on where it is located. That is to say, the Jubilee Group draws

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[33] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

on the context of its place to shape its own identity. Communities, or groups of protest, are shaped by the context of place; what is happening in the "place" gives rise to reasons why communities of protest emerge in the first instance.

In this chapter I have briefly explored the "place" of East London. I have looked at the poverty that has existed in East London as it does today. I have looked at a short history of radical movements that began in East London and showed that the Jubilee Group is part of a long tradition of radical protest against the incursion of power structures. Finally, I examined East London in a context of tension in the juxtaposition of power and seeming powerlessness. At the same time I have showed that the institutions of power are not just located on the margins of East London but also within East London. These tensions exist, not just on the edges but inside as well; dominant powers have the ability to invade place and operate within it. In the next chapter, I will begin to explore the question of who is the Jubilee Group in the context of an historical tradition.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MAKING OF AN IDENTITY

We are in danger of forgetting, and such an oblivion—quite apart from the contents themselves that could be lost—would mean that, humanly speaking, we would deprive ourselves of one dimension, the dimension of depth in human existence. For memory and depth are the same, or rather, depth cannot be reached by people except through remembrance

—Hannah Arendt

Introduction

In order to understand a mountain, it needs to be viewed form many vantage points; each vantage point has its own unique aspect. As in a mountain, so too does the Jubilee Group have many aspects.

The question who is the Jubilee Group has many facets. There is the historical context; the biblical prophets, the early church Fathers and the Christian Socialist Movement. There is simply the Jubilee Group—people of color, men and women, young and old, clergy and lay; the Jubilee Group in the context of Anglo-Catholicism and the C of E; the Jubilee Group as a voice protesting within and against institutions of power, either secular or religious; there is the Jubilee Group as a place for those who are secular Socialists, Marxists, Leninists, atheists, and those who have no religious affiliation but see the Jubilee Group as the only legitimate place to articulate their political voice; and finally there is the work of individual Jubilee Group members.

In this chapter and following, I will address the question of who the Jubilee Group is and what their identity is within a context of tradition. It should be pointed out at the outset that further questions, namely: what is prophetic politics? and, does

Jubilee manifest itself as a prophetic community? are interlaced with the question of identity. How prophetic politics are articulated with respect to action in the context of the Jubilee Group, and the manifestation of the Jubilee Group as a prophetic community, is predicated on their identity.

In this chapter I will focus on the historical context. In chapter three I will address the question of identity with regards to Anglo-Catholicism, gender, and politics.

Respecting the historical context, I will focus on the Christian Socialist Movement in England and leave the analysis of the Gospels and the early church Fathers for another time. Such a venture is too great to be covered in this work; it would require a text of its own.

2.i Historical rationale

Who is the Jubilee Group? This is a complex question. The question of identity is nuanced in intricate ways. To begin, the question needs to take into account Jubilee's historical antecedents. John O'Neill writes:

> Our communal life, its beliefs and practices, is 'world-historical' through and through, that is, it involves the integration of the realms of predecessors, contemporaries, and successors as temporalized regions of our collective life. The integration of these domains of our communal being is achieved by means of an explicit repetition or recovery of the Dasein that 'has been', in the sense of 'having been there' (*dagewesen*). The past of a living communal tradition is thus not a determinate weight so much as a legacy, a 'handing down' (*Überlieferung*) of the authentic possibilities of Dasein that has been. Moreover, the authentic repetition of the past is critical to the present inasmuch as it is grounded in an anticipatory resoluteness, which is the recovery of Dasein from its circumscriptive, falling concern with everydayness.[1]

In referring to the "communal being," O'Neill is making reference to community. Inherent in O'Neill's understanding of community is an ontology, a fundamental spirit

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[1] John O'Neill, The Poverty of Postmodernism, London: Routledge, (1995), p. 88.

of the first order, an ethos which binds the community together and historically informs it; the past informs the present but with a vision of something new. This is also how Ken Leech understands the notion of the prophetic.

> I think it is difficult to conceive of prophecy, certainly within the Jewish and Christian tradition, without a sense of a tradition to look back to. So I think there are these two elements of going back to a past tradition and stretching forward towards a vision of something new.[2]

Jubilee as a group is very much informed by a history. We must understand in the clearest terms, however, that this history which informs is more than accurately reported factual events. It is what Ernest Gellner refers to as "real history which acts on the present in the present, by fulfilling a present social and emotional need."[3] Hannah Arendt sees this history "as a tissue of enacted stories, a record of conduct so exceptional that it deserves to endure in human memory."[4] Arendt makes an important distinction here. She understands history in the context of memory—history requires memory. Engaging a memory transforms history from the mere "history of progress"[5] to a living tradition; the reflection of a memory in the present enlivens it. For Arendt, engaging the memory is action but must be preceded with thoughtfulness; it is the substantive link with tradition.[6] O'Neill argues similarly when he writes that:

> The consequence of history is that the universality and truth pursued by thought are not an intrinsic property of the idea, but an acquisition which must be constantly established with

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[2] Personal communication

[3] Ernest Gellner, Anthropology and Politics, Oxford: Blackwell, (1995), p. 97.

[4] Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, (Eds.), Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays, Albany: State University of New York Press, (1994), p. 75.

[5] See George Grant, Philosophy in the Mass Age, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, (1995), pp. 38-48.

[6] See Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, (1958). It is through the commonality of action in the context of a human struggle against structures that produce an imbalance of power, that produce spaces which are occupied by the voiceless, that agents in the present become part of a web of human relationships that reach back into the past. It is only because we are capable of action that meaning is attached to these "rich fabrics" of life that comprise the "communal being." "Meaning is not given," writes Kirsten Hastrup,"...from a preexisting scheme. It occurs in practice." (Kirsten Hastrup, A Passage To Anthropology, London: Routledge, (1995), p. 163.)

> a community of knowledge, which calls for and depends on the free response of its members.[7]

O'Neill's notion of a "communal being," Gellner's "real history," or Arendt's "tissues of enacted stories," is articulated within a framework. Charles Taylor pays particular attention to the significance of the notion of frameworks. While he is trying to understand these frameworks in the context of the construction of the self within the context of modernity (in which an attempt is made to define the self and reach a sense of the good guided by a perception of morality, an affirmation of the ordinary life) his understanding of frameworks, can be applied here. We can take morality, in this case, to mean a *guiding spirit*, an ontological foundation that overarches enduring disparate ideologies that might tend to fracture a group such as the Jubilee Group. By this I mean that there exists with a group a perceived system of beliefs that must remain mutable by culture but still function as the ethos of a community; effort by the group must be made to avoid a tendency to reflect whatever various existing ideologies that might prove injurious to the groups existence. Nevertheless, there is commonality: "what is common ... is the sense that no framework is shared by everyone, can be taken for granted as *the* framework *tout court*, can sink to the phenomenological status of unquestioned fact."[8] This sense will be applied later, in the conclusion, to the notion of religious belief.

A basic understanding of this *spirit* "refracts differently in the stances people take."[9] What is essential is that within the context of a framework, a crucial set of qualitative distinctions are made. That is to say that to think, feel, and judge within a framework is to "function with a sense that some action, or mode of life, or mode of feeling, is incomparably higher than others which [may be] more readily available to

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[7] O'Neill, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[8] Charles Taylor, Sources of the Self, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, (1989), p. 17.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

us".[10] Taylor goes on to make the argument that these frameworks have a necessary function. Doing without frameworks, he says, "is utterly impossible" and to step outside the horizon, or the limits of the framework would in effect undermine identity.

Importantly, these frameworks do not exist in isolation. They form a chain that links the present to the past; they are part of a "web of human relationships,"[11] they enable a common language in which the past and present are in effect merged into a unified whole.

In the next section, I will begin to look at these precursors that are one with the Jubilee Group and similarly inform Jubilee action.

2.ii Christian Socialists: the Prophetic Voice?

From the late 1600s and early 1700s the urban population in Great Britain increased considerably.[12] To attribute this growth to industrialism alone gives only part of the total picture.

With the depopulation of the rural regions, the cities swelled and most of the new "immigrants" to the cities ended up in the slum areas of London, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, etc. ... contributing to the ever-growing working classes.

K. S. Inglis examines the relationship between the church and the working class during a time when the working class was, for the most part, ignored by the establishment of the Church of England. Christian communities other than the English Church, such as the Methodists, Salvation Army and the Labour Church, saw the need

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[11] Hanna Arendt, *op cit.*, p. 184.

[12] See Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, Middlesex: Penguin Books, (1922), p.7-13, for a discussion of population demographics in Great Britain from 1685-1881.

to invest themselves in the lives of the working class; but for the most part, the church was considered irrelevant to the working class in the cities.[13] W. D. Maclagan wrote:

> it is easy to see how the artisan and labourer fresh from the country villages where, at least, they might find room, and often sought it, in the House of God, should gradually lose the habit of worship and devotion, where there was neither place for them to worship nor pastor to lead them in the ways of God.[14]

The problem, it seemed, was that the churches were non-existent in the cities, at least in the areas where the working class lived. "Among the masses of working-class people born in large towns, many—perhaps most—had grown up from childhood attending no place of worship. Some had barely heard of churches."[15] What was St. Paul's, Henry Mayhew asked of one coster monger? "A church sir, so I've heard, I never was in a church." A parish in Portsmouth, in 1884 served a population of 27,000 with one vicar and one curate.[16]

To a greater extent, there existed a hostility between the church and town. To the High Churchman, the town had been seized from God by Mammon; "among the Tractarians and their secular allies of Young England, the hateful urban present was often contrasted with an imagined past in which the church helped to keep society firm, seamless and serene,"[17] and the towns, they believed, offered a special hostility to the church.

Likewise, Inglis points out, the working man held the church in contempt. Working men, he writes, denounced the social distinctions made within churches, their

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[13] See K. S. Inglis, Churches and the Working Class in Victorian England, (1963). He writes that by 1886 there was a recognition that the church was irrelevant in the cities. By 1851, half the population of Britain was urban and the church had no significance for the greater part of these. Most of the city dwellers had come from the country. While in the country the people were regular church goers, in the city their attendance in church dropped off.

[14] W. D. Maclagan, The Church and the People, (1882), p.11, quoted in Inglis, p.4.

[15] H. Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor, (1851), I. 21, quoted in Inglis, p.4.

[16] Inglis, *op. cit.*, p.29

[17] *Ibid.*, p.5.

"worship of respectability and contempt for the poor, the almost total want of sympathy manifested by the ministers of religion of every denomination with the privations, wants and wastes, of the working classes, and the aristocratic character of religious institutions."[18] Christians had a morbid horror of poverty, and "among the London poor, there was the feeling that going to worship was an activity appropriate only among classes higher than their own."[19]

In contrast to the London slums such as East London, rural parishes were the most desired places of service for young clerics. Clergymen such as Samuel Wilberforce, the future Bishop of Oxford, in 1829, turned down an urban parish for a rural one and was praised because an urban parish could not possibly cultivate devotional feelings and spirituality of mind.[20]

Perhaps the most insidious belief infecting 19th-century Englishmen, clergy included, was the notion that poverty was morally tolerable to them "because their [hearts and minds] were trained by evangelical religion and political economy."[21] This view held that the poor were so because of their own sin; poverty was the natural moral consequence. A preacher could believe, surrounded by poverty, that

> many poor were suffering for their own sins, and that the plight of the rest was the result of spiritual ordinances which it would be impious to question and of economical laws which it was foolish to resist....[22]

And so, the belief among many of the High Church clergy was that the slums and its residents ought to be left alone, for nothing good could come from them. This, however, was not the view held by the Christian Socialists.

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[18] *Ibid.*, p.18.
[19] *Ibid.*, p.19.
[20] A. R. Ashwell, Life of the Right Reverend Samuel Wilberforce, (1880), p.42, quoted in Inglis, p.8.
[21] Inglis, *op. cit.*, p. 251.
[22] *Ibid.*, p.251.

With regard to the English Church, the Christian Socialists such as John Ludlow, F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley were "trying as Churchmen to be mediators ... between England of the middle and upper class and the working people, and to free Christianity from 'caste morality"[23] and by 1882, the condition of the poor masses was one of the most pressing issues of the radical element of the English Church because the poor were a group of people not being reached by the church.[24]

The slums were regarded as mission fields, much like Africa, China, and India, and the clergy, who went into the slums, were viewed as missionaries out to establish mission stations. Mission churches became a popular idea and were supported by a number of public schools and universities. By 1887, at least 16 schools and colleges were taking partial or entire responsibility for the English Church missions in working-class parts of London. The mission churches helped prepare the way for the parish churches which followed.

They failed, however, as a device for widening the appeal of the church. The intention was to reach the unchurched, whereas what occurred was that they raised the level of church life of the already-churched.

> Since 1830, the Church of England had been shedding ancient abuses and accommodating herself in many ways to the industrial society. Formal opportunities for discussions were greater through the diocesan conferences and convocations than had ever been. The Ecclesiastical Commissions and voluntary donors had helped the church to distribute her strength more evenly and to keep closer to the urban masses.... But the English church was still a chaotic institution. History had spread power in the church irregularly between crown and parliament, private patrons, bishops, and incumbents of parishes.[25]

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[23] F. D. Maurice, Social Morality, (1866), p. 453, quoted in Inglis, p.19.

[24] The Year-Book of the Church of England, (1883), p.83, "reports that the Church of England has one plain and solemn duty which God seems to set so clearly before her now as the Church of the nation—namely, to multiply every force at her command, and by methods and with teaching of the simplest possible kind to go in and out among the masses of mercy to the world."

[25] Inglis, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

It was these historic abuses the Christian Socialist Movement tried to address. The Christian Socialist Movement is comprised of several groups but for purposes of this thesis I will focus on three specific historic antecedents of the Jubilee Group, namely, the Guild of St. Matthew, the Catholic Crusade, and the League of the Kingdom of God.[26]

2.iii The Guild of St. Matthew

The Guild of St. Matthew (GSM) leaned towards an active socialism, i.e., a praxis oriented theology reflecting the values of the more radical Christian Socialist societies.

The GSM was founded by Stewart Headlam in 1877, at Bethnal Green[27] in East London. From its inception it was clear that Stewart Headlam's palmprint was all over it. He guided it throughout its life as a loving parent. It is difficult therefore, to separate the Guild from the man. Inglis argued that the GSM had no life apart from Headlam and that essentially, the movement was, in reality, a reflection of the man.

With that in mind, the following examination is a conflation of Stewart Headlam and the GSM. It becomes necessary to understand that when speaking of Headlam in this context, one is also speaking of the GSM.

Stephen Mayor argued that the GSM arose out of Headlam's Anglo-Catholicism rather than his socialism. "The immediate occasion of the formation of the Guild,"

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[26] See, Kenneth Leech, Report on Some Recent Initiatives in the Area of Social Change, Urban Theology Working Paper No 12, November (1995). For a more detailed analysis of the history of the Christian Socialist Movement, see G. C. Binyon, The Christian Socialist Movement in England, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, (1931); Peter d'A. Jones, The Christian Socialist Revival: 1877-1914, Princeton: Princeton University Press, (1968); Conrad Noel, Socialism in Church History, London: Frank Palmer, (1910); Maurice B. Reckitt, For Christ and the People, London: SPCK, (1968), Maurice To Temple: A Century of Social Movement in the Church of England, London: Faber and Faber Ltd. (1967); Andre Reid, (Ed.), Vox Clamantium, London: A. D. Innes & Co. (1894).

[27] Leech also was rector of Bethnal Green for a time.

says Mayor, "was nothing more than the introduction of an early morning celebration of Holy Communion."[28] Mayor is, perhaps, a little simplistic in his assessment; nevertheless, the celebration of Holy Communion had significant political implications of which Headlam was certainly aware.

Anglo-Catholics believed, and still do, that the sacrament of Holy Communion was celebrated in accordance with the belief that all people were one and equal in the sight of God, that hierarchies among people ought not to exist. The working class is equal to the gentry and even the clergy. Holy Communion, therefore, brought the working masses into the church and honoured them which had hitherto excluded them.

Whether simplistic or not, Mayor makes the point, and is supported by Bettany,[29] Headlam's biographer, that the GSM placed a primary concern on theology rather than social action. Members had to pledge themselves first to observe feast days and to be present at Holy Communion on Sundays and on Saints Days. Only after Headlam's departure from St. Matthew's, mainly because of his interest and support of dance halls and a Theater Guild linked to worship in the church, did he take the GSM into the larger spectrum of society.

The GSM began at a time when the church and churchgoers were regarded by the working class with hostility and as fraudulent.[30] For the most part, the working class, as already noted, were made to feel less than welcome.[31] By 1883, however, the GSM

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[28] Stephen Mayor, The Churches and the Labour Movement, London: Independent Press LTD., (1967), p.188.

[29] F. G. Bettany, Stewart Headlam: A Biography, London: John Murray, (1926).

[30] Reg Groves, Conrad Noel and the Thaxted Movement London: Merlin Press, (1967), p.28.

[31] Inglis points out that the system of pew rentals particularly marginalized the poor and the working classes. Quoting Horace Mann, Religious Worship in England and Wales, (1854), p.94,

> "Working men, it is contended, cannot enter our religious structures without having pressed upon their notice some memento of inferiority. The existence of pews and the position of free seats [at the back of the church], are, it is said, alone sufficient to deter them from our churches; and religion has thus come to be regarded as a purely middle-class property or luxury."

Groves writes of a similar problem Conrad Noel faced with the Bible Box Kneelers.

identified publicly with socialism, preceding the Independent Labour Party (ILP) by several months. Clearly, Headlam was the inspiration in setting about the task of "proclaiming anew the liberating and revolutionary doctrines of a social and sacramental Christianity."[32] The Guild shocked church people not only by its socialism but also by challenging the rationalists such as Charles Bradlaugh (he attacked pietistic religion for its apparent disregard of misery—for them suffering was nothing more than a preface to the blessings of a future spiritual realm: the present reality of pain and suffering was quite irrelevant[33]) to openly debate in public halls and working men's clubs their "distorted account of the Christian religion and its origins, setting against them the teachings of Jesus and the early church and the social ideas of Christian Socialism."[34]

According to Peter d'A. Jones the GSM was the pioneer Christian Socialist society of the revival period in Britain and performed the essential ground-breaking tasks which made it possible for larger and more effective organizations such as the

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"Another cause of trouble was the Bible Box Kneelers. The owners of them used them to reserve the best seats in the church for themselves, compelling the working people to sit at the back and in the side isles. Noel wanted all seats in the church to be open to anyone; but in an attempt to conciliate the Bible Box owners, he offered to allow them up to three minutes before the start of the service to occupy their seats. The Bible Boxers ignored the offer; and, in any case, it proved unworkable. There were scuffles and arguments between the late-coming Bible Boxers and people already in these seats; and Noel abandoned the unsatisfactory compromise, announcing that from henceforth all seats in church would be open to everyone. He did offer the Bible Boxers storage space in the church for their Bibles and Prayer Books, but this offer failed to mollify most of them, who resented the loss of their special privilege.

Churchwarden Franklin sought Noel out in the church one day to say that unless the new arrangements were rescinded, he would resign. Noel shook him warmly by the hand, thanked him for his help in the past, and accepted his resignation. Franklin now picked up his Bible Box—he was taking it with him. 'It is my private property,' he said.

'And what is your private property doing in God's house?' asked Noel" (pp. 78, 79).

[32] Groves, *op. cit.* p.28.

[33] Bradlaugh's death was a great loss to Headlam. There was nobody who could debate with Headlam at Bradlaugh's level.

[34] Groves., *op cit.* p.28.

Church Social Union (CSU), and the Catholic Socialist League (CSL) to follow.[35] Its influence through Headlam was profound. Bernard Shaw came often to Guild meetings and used the occasion to debate Headlam. It was said of Shaw that he used the meetings to hone his own public speaking and debating skills.[36]

The GSM had only three objectives. In the main, the articles of its constitution reflected the doctrine of the Incarnation.[37] Hancock, a left-wing Christian Socialist, referred to the Incarnation as the "universal relation of man *as man* to God."[38]

These objectives were:

> (i) To get rid, by every possible means, of the existing prejudices, especially on the part of the Secularists, against the church, her sacraments and doctrines, and to endeavour to justify God to the people.
> (ii) To promote frequent and reverent worship in the Holy Communion, and a better observance of the teaching of the Church of England, as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.
> (iii) To promote the study of social and political questions in the light of the Incarnation.[39]

Headlam's theology had direct application and it was necessarily linked to his understanding of socialism. Theologically, he was a sacramentalist, but socially he was influenced, in the main, by Henry George (1839-1897)[40] and his theory as it

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[35] Peter d'A. Jones, *op. cit.*

[36] Bettany, *op. cit.* p.87.

[37] See John Macquarrie, Modern Christian Thought, Alister McGrath (Ed.), Oxford: Blackwell, (1993), pp. 269-272. Incarnation is central to Christian doctrine, writes Macquarrie, according to which the Son or Word of God, the second Person of the divine Trinity, assumed a fleshly human body in Jesus Christ and lived a historical existence on this planet, subject to all the constraints and limitations of such an existence.

[38] Peter d'A. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

[39] Bettany, *op. cit.* p.79.

[40] See Hillel Steiner, IN The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Political Thought, David Miller, Janet Coleman, William Connolly and Alan Ryan (Eds.), Oxford: Blackwell, (1995), p.176. Henry George's doctrine of the Single Tax is both an ethical position and an economic theory. "It incorporates a Lockean conception of natural rights which assign exclusive unfettered ownership of labour's products to owners of labour but subjects ownership of unproductive natural resources to some sort of egalitarian distribution constraint. Social injustice consists in the effects *both* of restrictions on the free disposal of labour and its products

pertained to land values. Headlam demanded that Westminster nationalize land for the unrestricted use by the working classes. Further, he outlined four additional policies that were adopted by the GSM:

> (i) To restore to the people the value which they give to the land;
> (ii) To bring about a better distribution of the wealth created by labour;
> (iii) To give the whole body of the people a voice in their own government;
> (iv) To abolish false standards of worth and dignity.[41]

Headlam was most concerned about the contrast between the workers and the owners, between those who consumed the labour of the worker at the expense of the worker without the worker benefiting from that labour. It was contrary, he argued, to the Christian doctrine of "brotherhood and justice."

In 1884, Headlam took his concerns to the public at Trafalgar Square, where he not only argued Henry George's ethical and economic theory on land value but also demanded a progressive income tax, universal suffrage, and the abolition of the House of Lords. It was this last demand that precluded him from any advancement within the English church; Headlam went without a parish appointment for sixteen years. Ironically, Bernard Shaw stated during this time that finally, "religion was alive again, coming back upon men, even clergymen, with such power that not the Church of England itself could keep it out."[42]

The irony, however, was that not all Christian Socialists endorsed Shaw's support for the GSM. By the early 1900s, the GSM was slowly being eroded from within and without by more mild-mannered, more respectable socialists. Internally, Headlam lost

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and of unencumbered private ownership of unproduced natural resources." The economic theory is an account of the manner in which such restrictions and ownership bring about those effects.

[41] Gilbert Clive Binyon, The Christian Socialist Movement in England, London: SPCK (1931), p.143.

[42] Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

support from many members for putting up bail for Oscar Wilde during his trial[43] and externally, the mildness of the social doctrines of CSU helped make it sanitary to a larger membership. "The more academic and less revolutionary socialists in the church could embrace it."[44]

From the above discussion, it seems clear that for Headlam, the church functioned as a moral voice opposing the State which functioned to maintain dominant structures of power that in the end crushed the poor masses into lifeless submission. Headlam, in this regard, could not reconcile himself to the politics of archbishop of Canterbury, Frederick Temple, who supported the linkages between the church and the state. Temple's view was that the English Church, after all, represented the English people in all things religious, and it was only prudent that the church and state should be linked.

The end for the GSM came when it was proposed, in 1908, that the GSM should line up with socialists defined by the Fabians, ILP, and the Social Democratic Federation (SDF). The suggestion was that any expression of socialism contrary to the understanding of the aforementioned would be contrary to the teachings of the GSM. Headlam would have no part of this new thinking and he managed to stave off the "secular socialists;" but by 1909 Headlam realized that a new wave of thinking about social justice reflected in the rhetoric of the CSU was upon the church. The CSU had 6000 members and the GSM could only muster some 200 with nearly 70 in Holy Orders at its height. Headlam described the CSU as the daughter of the Guild but he added, "the parent was a much stronger plant than the daughter."[45]

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[43] Headlam did not know Wilde; he had read about the trial and had only briefly met him just before the trial, but he felt that as a Christian, he had no choice but to come to the aide of Wilde when no other would. And likewise, Headlam was the first person to meet Wilde when he was released from prison and it was to Headlam's home that Wilde went before he left England on his self imposed exile.

[44] Bettany, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

Looking back, Maurice Reckitt points out that "the GSM was perhaps primarily a mission among the clergy to teach them a right understanding of work and worker, and to exhort them in this instance less to charity than to justice."[46] The real and lasting contribution of the GSM, Binyon argues, was in reinterpreting the traditional doctrines and rites of the church in such a way as to meet the demands of the working poor; it revived moribund dogmas by revealing their significance for life.[47]

2.iv Conrad Noel and the Catholic Crusade

To understand the Catholic Crusade it is imperative to get a sense of its founder, Conrad Noel. Noel looms large in the history of the Christian Socialist Movement. Clearly, he is its most colorful character and his persona is still very much present. John Orens tells us that as a young man

> he went up to Cambridge and was quickly sent back down, rusticated for the singular zeal with which he evaded lectures for the pleasures of elaborate supper parties, effigy burning, serenading the young ladies at Newnham and careering about the country in a dog cart.[48]

Noel was the odd man out from early on. He was born and came to maturity in an age of extraordinary social and political ferment. As Orens tells us, the political upheavals of that era "entered into the mythology of the Left: the new unionism, the founding of the Labour Party, the rebirth of Irish nationalism, the emergence of modern feminism."[49]

Woodifield tells us that Noel was born in a house on Kew Green, one of the royal cottages inhabited by ladies in waiting to Queen Victoria, and lent to his father, Roden

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[46] Reckitt, Maurice To Temple London: Faber and Faber, (1967), p. 134.
[47] Binyon, *op cit.*
[48] John Orens, *Conrad Noel: Visions and Paradox*, IN Conrad Noel and the Catholic Crusade, Kenneth Leech (Ed.), London: The Jubilee Group, (1993), p. 23.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Noel, during the period of his service at court.[50] His aunt, Lady Gainsborough, exercised great influence in the rearing of Conrad and his siblings. As a boy, he had access to the best education the palace could offer. His inclinations, however, were not to reflect a mindset that might be associated with the gentry. As an adolescent, he wrote an essay for his school in support of Irish Home rule and suggested that the Irish might be better served if the English "got out".

When Noel entered "Chichester Theological College he urged the principal to invite Rabbis, Buddhist monks, Muslims, Nonconformists and Jesuits to lecture to the students."[51] He scoured the most radical writings of the early church Fathers "denouncing private wealth which he then plastered on the walls of his room, taking care to conceal the author's names. When his classmates complained about such arrant socialism, Noel revealed that these were the words of Ambrose, Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Basil."[52] He certainly made an impact. "The Bishop of Exeter refused to ordain Noel to the diaconate, and the Bishop of Chester refused to ordain him to the priesthood."[53] Once ordained, he refused to be mollified and settle down. He attacked the Boer War with such ferocity, Orens tells us, that the munitions workers in Newcastle threatened to blow up St. Philip's Church where he was curate.

He spent most of his clerical life in the village of Thaxted. Here he was the bane of his Bishop. He made no attempt to hide his politics but clearly believed that his politics emerged out of his understanding of the Scriptures. He was "enraptured by a sacramental vision of reality.... God is present in the bread and the wine, and 'oil, salt, flowers, water, fruit; ... the colour of the tulip, the scent of the rose, the sounds

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[50] Robert Woodifield, *Conrad Noel, 1869-1942: Catholic Crusader*, IN For Christ and the People, Maurice Reckitt (Ed.), London: SPCK, (1968), p. 135.
[51] Orens, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

of the sea, the grace and symmetry of the human body."[54] But this same God, he believed, is "perpetually 'thrusting himself afresh into the world below,' breaking down the walls which the religious have erected between heaven and earth."[55]

In his church he hung three flags, the flag of St. George, the Red Flag, and the Flag of the Sinn Fein. Students from nearby Cambridge would come at night and pull them down but the next day he would simply hang them higher; it was the Cambridge students who finally gave way. It is significant to note that Noel only raised the flag of the Sinn Fein after the 1916 Easter Rebellion in Ireland, and preached sermons in support of the Irish claim to independence. Noel held to the principle that the Christian faith necessarily must support the right of nations to self-determination.[56]

Noel was a Leninist and an ardent supporter of the Russian Revolution; he believed that it would usher in the Kingdom of God on earth. His brand of socialism went a different route than secular socialism, however. He had no patience with the Fabians and argued that Christian socialism was the most accurate form of socialism because only the Christian Socialists were truly cognizant of God working in and through the lives of men to bring about the reality of the Incarnation; God had sent his church into the world, as "the organ of the coming age, the nucleus of the universal Kingdom."[57] Secular socialist organizations, he said, were more than able to organize multitudes, but only the church could prepare them for Heaven.[58]

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[54] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[56] Woodifield, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-48.

[57] Orens, *op. cit.* p. 27.

[58] *Ibid.*, p.30. Given Noel's position on secular socialists it is somewhat difficult to reconcile the fact that Noel should align himself with Lenin as he does. John Orens, an historian, and member of the Jubilee Group, writes: "... Noel was a very impatient and often autocratic egalitarian. In Lenin's ruthless energy Noel perceived a kind of creative leadership which rested upon and then invigorated what he called "the latent will" of the masses. The problems with this glorification of inspired leadership are obvious, both politically and theologically. Indeed, Noel's difficulties are more than temperamental; they are intellectual as well. Noel's conception of the coming of the Kingdom was rooted in an apocalyptic urgency which led him to imagine that the messianic age could be pulled down from heaven

Noel drew men to him. Gustav Holst, the great English composer, became Noel's church organist, and G. K. Chesterton made the Thaxted church his spiritual home for a time.[59] Internationally, Noel also had an impact. It was claimed, by no less than George Orwell, that Noel and the Catholic Crusade were the ecclesiastical equivalents of Trotskyism[60] and one of the reasons given for the expulsion of the Trotskyites from the communist party was their close associations with Noel and the Catholic Crusade.[61]

Noel was an enthusiastic supporter of the Church Socialist League but in time he became dissatisfied with its theological position. In 1918 he resigned and formed the Catholic Crusade. Woodifield tells us that the first public meetings of the Crusade were held in November of 1919 on the subject of why the Crusade supported the Russian revolution; why the Crusade welcomed the Irish Revolution; and why the Crusade argued for an English Revolution. In Noel's opinion the "Lenin dictatorship was not only a necessity in the circumstances, but was actually a true form of democracy which was that of a 'creative leadership' expressing the 'latent will' of the people."[62] Donald Grey discusses in detail the Catholic Crusade and points out that Noel was concerned to form a society that linked, at a substantive level, the Catholic Creed and a deep commitment to a socialist faith.[63] Noel was out to change the world.

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by the sanctified will of revolutionary enthusiasts. He sneered at pacifism in all its forms, finding in it cowardice and sentimentality only. But was Lenin's will sanctified? Noel allowed himself to believe so, taking Headlam's insistence on God's presence in secular radicalism to an extreme Headlam himself would have rebuked. Noel, of course, wasn't the only man to allow himself to be so deluded. And like his fellows, alas, he led many on the Left astray" (personal correspondence).

[59] Chesterton eventually left the Church of England to join the Roman Catholic church.

[60] George Orwell, Inside the Whale and Other Essays, Middlesex: Penguin Books, (1957), p. 35.

[61] Kenneth Leech, The Anglo-Catholic Social Conscience: two critical essays, London: The Jubilee Group, (1991), p. 3.

[62] Woodifield, *op. cit.* p. 146.

[63] Donald Grey, Earth and Altar, Norwich: Canterbury Press, (1986), pp. 99-104.

The aims of the Crusade were frankly revolutionary.[64] The revolutionary character was set out in the 'Catholic Doctrine of Revolution' in which Noel said:

> If you believe in seizing power from below and not in social sops from above; if you believe in doing things for yourselves instead of waiting till the rich fling you a few slices of what you want, or the bishops allow you to do what the church commands you to do, or till the great Slug-God Evolution evolves something, or Progress pushes you down into hell,[65]

then there was no alternative, there was only one way to act and that, according to Noel, was to join the Crusade. This meant helping

> shatter the British Empire and all Empires to bits, wrestling against principalities and highly-placed powers; to Create a Free England in a Communion of Free Nations—a Free England.
> IN WHICH, in the freedom of the Redeemer,
> the last shall be first and the first last;
> IN WHICH, in the Spirit of Saint John the Herald,
> the valleys shall be raised and the hills leveled;
> IN WHICH, by the prayers of Saint James,
> the workers shall rejoice in that they are exalted,
> and the plutocrats in that they are brought low;
> IN WHICH, in the eager desire of Our Lady,
> the mighty shall be dragged from their seat,
> the hungry filled, the rich sent empty away;
> IN WHICH, in the prophecy of Saint John the Evangelist,
> the traffickers in oil and wheat and cattle and
> the bodies and souls of men shall lament, as
> the smoke of their burning cities ascends to
> the heavens;
> IN WHICH, in the hope of Saint Cyprian,
> the essentials of life shall not be held by the
> few to the exclusions of the many;
> IN WHICH, in the teaching of Saint Ambrose,
> the common property of the people shall be
> restored and all enslaving ownership disallowed;
> IN WHICH, following Saint Gregory, who sent us Our Religion,
> the land will be for the workers, and none shall
> be owned by the shirkers.[66]

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[64] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

[65] Manifesto of The Catholic Crusade, Available from The Literature Depot, Snyed Vicarage, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent.

[66] *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

For two full decades, Noel was the real leader of the political and ideological Left in the Church Of England.[67] The Catholic Crusade demanded much of its members but never numbered more than 300. It eventually broke up on the Trotsky-Stalin issue.[68] The stalwarts of the anti-Stalin camp, Grey points out, (Conrad Noel, Henry Mason, Jim Wilson, Jack Bucknall and others) quickly formed the Order of the Church Militant.[69]

We now turn to Percy Widdrington's League of the Kingdom of God. Its efforts were directed towards recapturing for the church its lost and forgotten traditional social beliefs in a context of sacramentalism.[70]

2.v The League of the Kingdom of God

Leech has stated that the Jubilee Group is the successor of the League of the Kingdom of God.

Perhaps the strongest link between the Jubilee Group and the LKG is the strong belief that sacramental theology[71] is the "transvaluation of all values." In the words of Elizabeth Koenig, "the church is constituted of Christians who are constantly living into peace and who have no interest in any institutions or political agenda that dominates, destroys, or creates violence,"[72] or as John Milbank writes, "the individual searching for peace and harmony ... must ... situate himself/herself within a progression that ... is, in its tendency to God, itself perfectly harmonious."[73]

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[67] Reckitt, *op. cit.*, p. 181.
[68] Grey, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
[69] *Ibid.*, p. 104.
[70] *Ibid.*, p. 101.
[71] See introduction, fn. 23, for the definition of sacramental.
[72] Elisabeth Koenig, *From Fiery Prophecy to "Simple Gaiety": John Neville Figgis Speaks out to his Age and Ours*, IN Anglican Theological Review, **78** (3), Summer (1996), p. 446.
[73] John Milbank, Theology and the Social Sciences, Oxford: Blackwell, (1990), p. 405.

Essentially, what Koenig and Milbank are arguing is that political action that has any substantive significance must emerge out of, or be informed by, a sacramental theology. For the LKG and the Jubilee Group the key element is this sacramentalism.

It is from the Oxford Movement, from men such as Keble, Newman and Pusey, that the Christian Socialists derived their sense of sacramentalism but departed from these Tractarians at the point of political action. The Christian Socialists were more interested in marrying social action with sacramentalism. The six objectives of the LKG were:

1. The insistence on the prophetic office of the church, and the Kingdom of God as the regulative principal of theology.
2. The awakening of Churchmen to the lost social traditions of Christendom and the re-creation of a Christian sociology consonant with the needs of the age.
3. The restoration of the Eucharist as the central act of Christian worship—the Sacrament of fraternity and the embodiment of Christian values.
4. the recognition and enforcement of the church's social discipline over her own members.
5. The winning of those indifferent or hostile to the Catholic Faith while standing for justice in the common life, and those within the church who resist the Christian ordering of society.
6. Co-operation with other bodies, religious or secular, on occasions when fundamental issues of social righteousness are at stake.[74]

These Sacramental Socialists believed that they had an important part to play for only they could clarify Catholic doctrine and state forcefully the practical implications of a Eucharistic emphasis.[75] Sacramentalism, they argued, provided the most definite sanctions for Christian ethics, sociology, and politics. For them, the Mass, the Eucharist, was saturated with ethical and political implications. The Eucharist reflected on a grand scale the sentiments of Robert McAfee Brown who states that "the simple

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[74] LKG Quarterly: The Organ of the League of The Kingdom of God, **1**, January (1926), p. 2.
[75] Grey, *op. cit.* p. 134.

act of breaking bread at the Lord's table empowers people to engage the more complex act of breaking structures of oppression that perpetuate the lack of bread elsewhere."[76]

The LKG intended, says Grey, "to remind the church of the constructive social meaning of the sacraments,"[77] and through the League's Guild Socialist activities, it "brought back to the Christian Socialist tradition (and to British socialism in general) the forgotten ideal of worker participation, the producers' cooperative associations of the ardent J. M. Ludlow."[78]

A Short Reflection

The Christian Socialist Movement's look to the past was not a romantic sentimentalistic revival of the past. It was a stark realization that only a deeply reasoned out adherence to the Eucharistic (sacramentalist) tradition demanded a critique of social institutions that produced a set of values that manifested themselves in social injustice.

The history of the Christian Socialist Movement is a *vita activa,* thinking leading to action, of individuals who had a passionate belief that the church's true function was to become involved in the social life of the people; that the church existed to help transform the lives and values of the people in a way that lifted them out of poverty. These men believed that the church existed as a voice against institutions of power that dominated, that oppressed, that produced a value system that became the status quo, and those who did not reflect this status quo, for whatever reason, were marginalized.

The line of action these individuals took often marginalized them; they stood against the institutions of power of the day and as a result suffered dire consequences.

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[76] Robert McAfee Brown, Spirituality and Liberation, Philadelphia: the Westminster Press, (1988), p. 94.

[77] Grey, *op. cit.* p. 135.

[78] Jones, *op. cit.* p. 302.

The cost they bore to themselves, however, was often not all that great with respect to finance. Headlam, for instance, was independently wealthy, receiving his wealth from his father; Noel was the nephew of Lady Gainsborough, and received a patronage appointment from Lady Warrick. He did not need to worry about the financial cost of making grand political gestures; it cost him relatively little in terms of security.

All this, of course, might give cause to wonder about the sincerity of their message, but not its truth as they understood it. What is significant is that for Kenneth Leech life may not be all that comfortable with respect to financial security. Leech is not independently wealthy; he has a modicum of financial support from the Jubilee Group as well as from the Reckitt Urban Fellowship Trust, which gives his political voice a clarity that seems to be missing from his predecessors. For Leech and many of the members of the Jubilee Group the cost can be high, but the need to articulate a dissenting voice within the church overshadows the comfort that position can give.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused on the historical antecedents of the Jubilee Group. I have argued, as Koenig does, that history has a decisive meaning for theology in the context of political action. Koenig forms her argument in the light of J. N. Figgis's teaching. Figgis, in The Fellowship of Mystery, argues that a harmonious connection with the living traditions of the past and representatives of Jesus Christ's reconciling presence, "will recognize the necessity of real separation from those institutions in the present who, in the thrall of *libido dominandi,* cannot, or will not exist in such harmony."[79] Figgis boldly insists that religion must have its "foundation in the concrete actuality of history because he wants 'a religion that can move the world.' No

[79] Koenig, *op. cit.* p. 445.

religion based on isolated subjective experiences of ecstasy could ever possibly have that effect."[80] Quoting Charles Marson, one of the most influential and widely known members of the Guild of St. Matthew,[81] Figgis writes, "Religion drawn solely from the individual consciousness ... is limited, confined to those who have attained to a special culture ... essentially of the mind and not of the heart or of life.... A subjective religion brings with it no element of progress and cannot lift man out of himself."[82]

The history of the Christian Socialist Movement is not only a history that is specific to the church or to the Jubilee Group in regards to building a context. It is also a vision of an age in which certain elements of the church engaged institutions that produced sets of values that articulated the markers and sign posts of a dominant culture and society. Those who were able to reflect these values where enabled to maintain positions of acceptability within that culture and society. Those who could not, or would not, for whatever reason, were deemed pariahs.

That the Christian Socialist Movement and its leaders had an impact on the culture and society of the day cannot be disputed. Marx may have recognized this (though history may want to silence him). Ludlow, one of the founders of the Christian Socialist Movement, recounts in his biography that Marx sent him a first edition of his *Das Kapital,* asking Ludlow to read it and make critical comments.[83] Groves tells us that Sylvia Pankhurst, one of the founders of the suffragette movement, was a regular visitor of Conrad Noel's at Thaxted. There was also the relationship of the CSM with the founders of the Labour Party, the relation of Headlam with the Webbs, G. B. Shaw, Oscar Wilde and many other such examples.

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[80] *Ibid.*, p. 448.

[81] Binyon, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

[82] J. N. Figgis, The Fellowship of the Mystery, London: Longmans, Green and Co. (1914), p. 24f.

[83] John Ludlow, John Ludlow: the Autobiography of a Christian Socialist, A. D. Murray (Ed.), London: Frank Cass, (1981), p. 177.

The history of the CSM is a rich tradition and the Jubilee Group is its inheritor, trying to take this tradition into the present day church which has been powerfully influenced by American-style religion, neo-conservatism, right-wing fundamentalism and certain branches of communitarianism. John Milbank has referred to Ken Leech as the modern day Conrad Noel and certainly, this has not been disputed by any within the Jubilee Group.[84] It is, then, to Ken Leech and the radical Jubilee Group that I shall now turn.

[84] Personal communication.

CHAPTER THREE

RADICAL POLITICS: THE CONTEXT OF IDENTITY

Introduction

In this chapter, I will examine the identity of the Jubilee Group. I will answer the question, *who* are the people of the Jubilee Group. It must be made clear at the outset that the identity of this group is defined by the Jubilee people themselves. It is through interviews/narratives and their writings that this identity becomes clarified.

The Jubilee Group is made up of men and women, people of color, clergy and lay people. At the heart of the Jubilee Group are people infused with a desire to reflect a prophetic spirit. In chapter four and five I will explore further what this prophetic spirit is with regards to political action in the context of a network of people linked together by a common desire to realize God's sense of justice on earth.

To understand exactly what is meant by a radical spirit in the previous statement, it might be useful to begin by unpacking the word radical. In the modern context the word *radical* has often come to mean anything that is at odds with the status quo, but often for no very good reasons except to be at odds. Those who are radical are usually on the fringe. In point of fact, radical people are, for the most part, marginal people; radical groups are, in the main, dissenting groups. But do they exemplify the meaning of radical in its original sense? The word radical, from *radix*, is simply, "the direct source of sense," "of or pertaining to a root."[1] To be radical, then, means to reflect

[1] Oxford English Dictionary.

what is at the core, at the center of being. It is not to reflect the status quo which gives the impression that it is the core. In relation to the core, however, the status quo does not reflect core values but rather values that are in opposition and in this sense removed from the root, from the community's ontology. In chapter four, I will go into greater depth on the meaning of prophetic which emanates out of a radical understanding of the writings of the Old and New Testament and the early church.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is an examination of the birth of the Jubilee Group, how it emerged. Its beginnings are predicated on an understanding, or interpretation of the Kingdom of God in the present. How the people of the Jubilee Group viewed this concept helped them articulate what they saw regarding the substantive function of the Jubilee Group. Secondly, it is important to frame the Jubilee Group within a social and political environment. The Jubilee Group was formed, after all, within a social and political context.

The second section looks at the Anglo-Catholic context. It is important to view the Jubilee Group from this perspective because the people of the Jubilee Group define themselves as a "loose network of Anglo-Catholic Socialist Christians". It is important to note that not all members of the Jubilee Group are Anglo-Catholic, not all are Christian in fact, and not all Christians are Anglo-Catholic, yet it is still the theology of Anglo-Catholicism at the mast-head of the Jubilee Group that informs its style or, its praxis.

The Jubilee people want to make clear that Catholicism is more than "bells and smells," it is more than ritual; there is ritual but integrally linked to the ritual is also a social voice. Without this voice the ritual is clanging bells and sounding symbols signifying nothing. But while the Jubilee people make clear that they align themselves with Anglo-Catholicism, they are also cognizant of the weaknesses within Anglo-Catholicism.

In the last section, I will examine the women of the Jubilee Group. The women of the Jubilee Group play a unique role. In many respects they are the symbols of the Jubilee Group. Women, for the most part, experience marginalization, even, according to some women's experiences, within the Jubilee Group itself. It is, therefore, important to hear the voices of those who have, historically, been silenced.

It is in the margins that conflict is engaged. As marginal people, the women of the Jubilee Group often define issues that raise conflict such as questions focusing on hierarchy/patriarchy as in the ordination of women, for instance, or on questions centering around community and individualism. In trying to resolve the conflict, marginal people may appropriate the symbols of the dominant groups and rework them in such a way that the reworked symbols become meaningful to the marginalized ones alone.

Finally, within the context of the women and the Jubilee Group I will examine the Jubilee Group as a place for women, the Jubilee Group as a place where women's voice is heard.

3.i The Birth of Jubilee

In this section, I will focus on the birth of the Jubilee Group. It is important to be able to understand the context of formation of the Jubilee Group before we can understand how the individuals function within it.

In an undated newsletter, What is the Jubilee Group and How does it Function?, Ken Leech writes that the Jubilee Group began, in a sense, by accident, in November 1974. A group of eight priests, all "Anglican Catholics and all socialists of various kinds, met together at Saint Matthew's Church, Bethnal Green, for mutual support."[2]

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[2] It is interesting to note in another newsletter (date unknown) produced by Gresham Kirkby (Gresham gave the Jubilee Group its name) and Ken Leech about St. Matthew's Bethnal Green that

The meeting was in response to a letter, dated 25 September 1974, in which Leech wrote:

> A number of us I know are very disturbed at the trend in the Catholic movement towards a sickly pietism and a right-wing reactionary stance in social and political issues. This trend represents a serious betrayal of the social tradition of Anglo-Catholicism, and it may spell the death of the movement as such. Whether the present organs of Anglo-Catholic opinion are reformable remains to be seen: it is hardly likely that any of them will be more concerned with changes in the liturgy than with changes in the world, and one fears that for too many within the Catholic movement, religion has become a substitute for life.
>
> I wonder therefore if it would be useful to start a duplicated broadsheet from the Catholic Left which could begin, in a small way, to try to reverse some of these trends. I think it is important to start in a small way, and what I have in mind is to get together a small group of priests and lay people who share a common outlook, and who believe that the Catholic faith has major consequences in social and political life. A close parallel, although the situation is quite different, is the various *Populorum Progressio* groups which have sprung up in South America, and which have used the encyclical as a basis for working out a Catholic social voice.
>
> .... I think I want to say that the fundamental truths behind the Oxford Movement are still valid, but they need to be applied in the terms of, and in relation to, the 1970s.

Essentially, the group met, Leech goes on to tell us in his newsletter, primarily as a support group

> to create a space where this group of East End socialist priests could reflect on what we were about. We were all active in anti-racist issues, in youth work, in struggles around housing and employment, and we wanted some space to think and relate what we were doing to our theology.

G , an ardent feminist, seems to reflect these same sentiments.

> G: The Jubilee Group, I think, and I suspect that Ken wouldn't disagree with this, but my feeling is very much, it's a place of consolation, not a place of mass organization. That most people who are involved in the Jubilee Group are involved in other sorts of left activities which is what you're not supposed to do on the hard left.[3]

"It was at this same church that Stewart Headlam founded a devotional fraternity, the Guild of St. Matthew, in 1877. From the first the Guild was concerned to relate faith to life, and before long it became a larger and non-parochial group. It adopted the principles of common ownership and so became the first socialist society in England."

[3] All quotes from interviews with members of the Jubilee Group begin with an alphabetical letter. These letters are codes that ensure the person's anonymity.

For a time, Leech tells us, they remained primarily a group of priests "but over two years or so, lay people, men and women, joined, and groups grew in places beyond East London, in Birmingham, Oxford, Boston (Mass.), Manchester, and elsewhere." It is interesting to note that the first lay group grew into the East London Women's Group which is also the oldest continuing group within the Jubilee Network (the women's group will be the focus of a more in-depth study).

For the first while, the Jubilee Group had virtually no public identity, no "public face." It did attain "some national publicity through a critical response to Archbishop Coggan's Call to the Nation of October 1975," and through "an attack on Margaret Thatcher's 'Swamping' interview on immigration of January of 1978."[4] "By 1978, some reporters had noticed us: Robin Page, in the Daily Telegraph, referred to *the Jubilee Group as a bunch of neo-Marxist trendy clerics in East London.*"[5]

> By 1990 the curious document British Briefing No 12, one of a series of briefings to Mrs. Thatcher on subversion, referred to the problem of Christian left wing groups, noting that the Jubilee Group was *"the best known and probably the most influential of these groups."*[6]

3.i.i The Vita Activa

From the start, there was a strong commitment to link the existence of the Jubilee Group to that of the life of the prophetic church. It is how this "life" is interpreted, however, that gives Jubilee its distinctiveness. For the people of the Jubilee Group there is a necessary link between thinking and action, a *vita activa*. That is to say, reflection and text is, in Ricoeur's words, action itself[7] but on a more mundane level

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[4] A. Sivanandan reports Thatcher's comment: "This country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture." cited in Communities of Resistance: Writings on Black Struggles for Socialism, London: Verso, (1990), p. 53.

[5] Daily Telegraph, 4, September, 1978, quoted in a Jubilee newsletter, What is the Jubilee Group and How does it Function, (date unknown).

[6] British Briefing, No 12 (1989) p. 3, *ibid.*

[7] Paul Ricoeur, From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, (1991).

contemplation and reflection tempered by a prophetic and often subversive memory must be externalized in praxis. This action is predicated, as Gresham Kirkby points out, by an understanding of the Kingdom of God (I will examine the concept of prophetic politics in the context of an understanding of the Kingdom of God in chapter four). For Kirkby, this action is revolutionary in nature.

> Our concern is with the recovery of the whole Catholic Faith, with a healthier theology, and especially with the Kingdom of God as a hope for this world involving justice and liberty for all men. We see a need to recover the original Jewish understanding of the 'eschaton' as the dawning of a New Age in Christ, a process to transform the world. We value the essentially Jewish, though secularized, eschatology of Marxism as a pointer to an authentic Christian interpretation of history. Our inspiration is the Year of Jubilee of Leviticus 25. We see the return of the land to the people as a fundamental principle of liberty.... The coming of the Kingdom of God is a process which is at work in the world. Its achievement is the goal of history, before history is over and done with. We believe that this is an eschatology more fundamentally revolutionary than Marxism since it is rooted in the being of God, penetrating more deeply into the soul of man, and of external significance.[8]

This is not unlike the position Gustavo Gutierrez takes in A Theology of Liberation. Here he articulates the function of a liberation theology that has emerged from the *Populorum Progressio* groups referred to earlier in Leech's letter.

> Theology as critical reflection on historical praxis is a liberating theology, a theology of the liberating transformation of the history of mankind and also therefore that part of mankind—gathered into *ecclesia*—which openly confesses Christ. This is a theology which does not stop with reflecting on the world, but rather tries to be part of the process through which the world is transformed. It is a theology which is open—in the protest against trampled human dignity, in the struggle against the plunder of the vast majority of people, in liberating love, and in the building of a new, just, and fraternal society—to the gift of the Kingdom of God.[9]

Clearly, the theology reflected in Gutierrez, and now in the Jubilee Group, is of a fundamental, radical nature. It demands of them that they confront immediate dominant power structures within a given social and political context. It is important, therefore, to examine this context.

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[8] Gresham Kirkby and Ken Leech, The Jubilee Group, (date unknown).

[9] Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, New York: Orbis Books, (1973), p.15.

3.i.ii The Social and Political Context

David Edgar in his article "Bitter Harvest", argues that Margaret Thatcher harvested the seeds Enoch Powell planted, and the Falklands war, handed to her on a plate, concretized her political power in England.[10] But this power, noted Peregrine Worsthorne, of the *Sunday Telegraph* (12 June 1983), was the sting of a two headed beast; "on one side the cold and calculating face of economic logic, and on the other the equally harsh but more emotive face of nationalism and social authority." Worsthorne goes on to point out that the Falklands war became a metaphor of dealing with "the enemy within;" those who couldn't shoulder the value system defined by Thatcher's form of Reaganomics became objects of vituperative attacks.

> The nationalism unleashed by the Falklands war as an externalized form of what Stuart Hall has called 'authoritarian populism', and to acknowledge that zapping the enemy without on the beach-heads of the South Atlantic was an effective and timely corollary to confronting the 'enemy within' on the streets of London, Toxteth and Moss Side.[11]

Edgar tells us that "Enoch Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech (delivered, quite coincidentally, on the anniversary of Hitler's birth, 20 April 1968)," validated pressure groups on the right that "were obsessed with immigration as a mocking reminder of the death of the Empire." These groups, Edgar points out, voiced their racist positions within a context of sociobiology; a biological determinism which claimed that "such social phenomena as the arms race, altruistic self-sacrifice, male dominance" were inevitable features of a society shaped by "biological imperatives of human evolution derived from a remote hunter-gatherer past." Consequently issues of dominance were naturalized; "the pursuit of profit, the maintenance of social and sexual hierarchy, the instincts of tribalism and xenophobia are all locked, not only into our institutions and our history, but into our very genes." On the other side are those who reflected the

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[10] David Edgar, Kenneth Leech & Paul Weller, The New Right and the Church, London: The Jubilee Group, (1985).

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

"bad seed" of permissiveness were the reification of a morality gone awry and the objects of a pietistic, puritanical outrage, against the "natural law" of God.

The ground was made ready for the values of communitarians such as Etzioni and Bellah to articulate notions of the good society.

The language, while quite seductive,[12] after being unpacked reveals a hegemony that excludes any and all who don't reflect the dominant notions of family constructs defined by heterosexual values, or notions of law and order that emerged out of an era of American politics dominated by Reagan and Bush. The place of women is in the home, sexual activity among the poor is discouraged, and unemployment is be reduced by forcing the indolent youth into military service.

In The Simplistic Prophets of Community, Leech is critical of these communitarians but he is careful to point out that there are "mixed blessings" in the rhetoric of the communitarians. It needs to be critiqued, however.

In his critique he clearly posits the Jubilee within a context in which the Jubilee Group has two functions: the one, critical of a secular world that exists as a dominating and oppressive force; the other, and perhaps the more important from the Jubilee Group's point of view is a critical stance towards the institutional church for its allegiance with these secular institutions and for disregarding what Leech in The Eye of the Storm (1992), and Subversive Orthodoxy (1992), and Sharon Welch in Communities of Resistance and Solidarity: a Feminist Theology of Liberation (1985), refer to as subversive or dangerous memories. Drawing on Foucault's notion of genealogies, Welch points out that the function of remembering, of honoring the memory of the Biblical history and the tradition of the church—to be a place of

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[12] The language of the communitarians is about defining the good society, about building strong healthy communities. Very few people might argue that healthy communities are not desirable. The question that begs to be asked, however, is who defines what a healthy community is and what are the substantive values. When this language is unpacked it is reveled that, for instance, single mothers are, for the most part, left out of the equation, as is the gay community, or anybody else existing on the margins.

nurturance for the poor and the oppressed—for groups such as the Jubilee Group has a material component. It "recognizes actual challenges *to the* repressive aspects of society and of the institutional church and its theology."[13] Johann Baptist Metz argues that this aspect of theology is the "dangerous memory of conflict ... the church becomes the vehicle for these dangerous memories."[14]

In Leech's critique of the communitarians, he raises the point that:

> Much current communitarian thought is very anti-feminist and pays little attention to the role of women, apart from regular attacks on single mothers. Many of the tightly knit urban villages of London such as Hoxton, Bethnal Green and Notting Dale (all of them areas where I have worked) were districts with low rates of movement, strong patterns of kinship, and fierce levels of xenophobia and racism. It is not surprising that it was in these areas that Sir Oswald Mosley found much of his support for the fascist movement,[15] and the first two are still targets for fascist activities. Community can turn to fascism very quickly if it does not connect with other values such as diversity and minority rights. Yet Etzioni wants a moratorium on civil rights, and much of his thinking seems to assume a normative view of sameness. Nor are these thinkers strong on economics. Yet it is the globalization of capital which is the biggest threat to community.[16]

In Leech's critique of communitarianism, he is also leveling his attack on the established church for its complicity with the secular world when he points out that the church, in the main, has a tendency to latch uncritically onto "some new movement in each decade" and the 90s is no different than the 70s and 80s when the institutional church, for the most part, became quite silent during the Thatcher years.[17] Leech further points out that within a year of New Labour's Tony Blair having adopted the

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[13] Sharon Welch, Communities of Resistance and Solidarity: A Feminist Theology of Liberation, New York: Orbis Books, (1985), p.37.

[14] Johann Baptist Metz, Faith in History and Society: Towards a Practical Fundamental Theology, New York; Seabury Press, (1980), quoted in Welch, *ibid.*, p. 35.

[15] It is interesting to note that Adolf Hitler was the best man at Mosley's wedding. One might raise the question why Mosley received a knighthood.

[16] Kenneth Leech, The Simplistic Prophets of Community, , Jubilee Group Discussion Paper No 110, (1996).

[17] This is not meant to imply that the church in its entirety was silent. Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, made strong public statements critical of Thatcher but, for the most part, the institutional church seemed quite comfortable with the status quo.

communitarian party line, the new Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, aligned himself with the communitarianism of Etzioni.

In a newsletter dated 31 January 1978, Mrs. Thatcher and Immigration, Leech *et al* pointed out the dangers of this new line of thinking.

> ... in Mrs. Thatcher's statement on immigration of January 30th, we see in its most extreme form yet, the racism and creeping fascism within that party. It is a phenomenon which is far more dangerous than that of the National Front, since it is more respectable, has greater financial backing, and assumes a 'liberal' guise,

and possibly, from Leech's point of view, what made it more insidious was that in many cases, these views had the blessing of the institutional church.

Instead of aping those in power, the church's real place, wrote Leech, quoting Stanley Evans in the discussion paper, The Rebel Church in the Back Streets - Where Are We Now? (date unknown), was in the back streets, identifying with the poor. Evans was brutal in his view of the established church's position towards the poor: "... once you reach the stage of despising people, " he wrote, "your attitude to them has ceased to be Christian at all, and that you had best haul down your flag and pack your bags, for you have no function left to fulfill."[18] It is perhaps in the back streets of Whitechapel Road and Brick Lane that Jubilee identifies itself as the real church, at least in the eyes of Evans, who says:

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[18] Stanley Evans, The Church in the Back Streets, Oxford: A. R. Mowbray & Co., (1961), p. 13. See also, Fr. Peter Barnett, Letters From Seven Churches, Kenneth Leech and Terry Drummond (Eds.), London: Jubilee Group, (1984). Barnett recounts the suffragan bishop in the Bristol diocese, Peter Firth, who said of the function of the church in Bristol: "If the Christian church has nothing to do or say in this parish that is meaningful and effective, then we may as well pack up completely." Of Bristol, Joshua Harris et al write in, To Ride the Storm: the 1980 Bristol Riots and the State, Heinemann (1983):

> "On the 2nd April the St. Paul's area of Bristol became the scene of a prolonged and violent confrontation between the police and the predominantly black crowd. The confrontation was significant not only because of the scale and intensity of the violence, which included the burning and looting of private property, but also because race and racial issues were closely involved. Additionally events in Bristol proved neither to be singular or isolated. Little more than a year later the same basic pattern of violence was to be repeated in almost every major city with a black population, precipitating a crisis of race unprecedented in the post-war era, and a crisis of law and order unprecedented since the 1930s" (p. 7).

> it is my considered opinion that when you have read the biographies of archbishops and bishops and theologians and polemicists and outstanding preachers and all the rest, you will not have found the real heart of the Church of England, because it is to be found in the lives of men who have not and who will not be recorded—a great mass of very ordinary clergymen who have been and who are content to eke out their years in the back streets, constantly fanning into little flames the embers of a fire which appears no longer to emit heat, but whose continued existence they rightly judge to be more important than anything else in this world.[19]

Much more could be written of the Jubilee Group with respect to its social and political identity. I shall turn now, however, and examine the Jubilee Group in the context of Anglo-Catholicism.

3.ii The Jubilee Group and Anglo-Catholicism

G tells us in an interview: "First of all, the roots of Jubilee are in the Anglo-Catholic tradition." Unpacking this, Leech writes:

> When we speak of the Anglo-Catholic tradition we may mean one of at least three movements. There is, first, the Tractarian movement, which began at Oxford in July 1833, focusing on the spiritual autonomy of the church and looking back to the early church Fathers, emphasizing Catholicity and the revival of the sacramental life. Or, secondly, there is ritualism which began with the spread of sacramental religion to the new towns and to city slums such as London Docks in 1856. Ritualism became a political issue and priests were imprisoned for ritual and ceremonial offenses under the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874. Or we may think, thirdly, of the Catholic socialist tradition which began with Stewart Headlam and the Guild of St, Matthew in the 1870s and continued with Conrad Noel, John Grosser, Stanley Evans and many others in the 20th century.[20]

As the above notes, there are three distinct aspects of Anglo-Catholicism. Does Jubilee reflect all three? Careful observations and consideration needs to take place to begin to see some of the important and critical distinctions. "What became known as Anglo-Catholicism," Leech tells us, "was a fusion of the first and second movements." This is generally understood by the Catholic community. "It was a form," he says, "of

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[19] Evans, *ibid.*, p. 2.

[20] Kenneth Leech, The Anglo-Catholic Social Conscience: two critical essays, London: The Jubilee Group, (1991), pp. 1-2.

Christianity which emphasized the centrality of the sacramental confession, and the need for intense personal devotion." It is this tendency that has "increasingly cut [the Anglo-Catholic community] off from all the creative currents in the Christian world."

3.ii.i Socialism and Anglo-Catholicism

It is the third aspect, however, the Catholic socialist tradition, that manifested itself in groups such as the Guild of St. Matthew, the Catholic Crusade and the League of the Kingdom of God, that is not much recognized. In a lengthy quotation, Leech is highly critical of the Anglo-Catholicism of the first two movements and points out the surprise of some to find out that there is this third element.

> K. It is interesting, at the moment, that a lot of that prophetic tradition, and I'm thinking particularly now of the prophets of Israel and the way in which Amos and Isaiah keep coming back, is it's coming out of the different cluster of churches now. It's interesting to see the way in which the Black and South American Pentecostal churches, or some of them, not all of them by any means, but some of them, are recovering that kind of prophetic character. You get somebody like Cornell West who's very much influenced by the Black Pentecostal tradition (probably one of the most creative Christian radical thinkers in North America at the present time). If he'd been living a hundred years ago, he probably would have identified with the Anglo-Catholic left. So I think it comes in different forms at different times. When I say in the United States that I belong to the radical wing of Anglo-Catholicism, people look at me with utter astonishment. The whole notion of Anglo-Catholicism could have a radical wing, or ever did, is so alien to North American thinking unless you happen to bump into one of these odd people who come across Frederick Hastings Smyth, or the Church of the Carpenter in Boston, or one of these groups. For the most part, Anglo-Catholicism in North America, and I think in Canada too, with one or two exceptions, is identified with reaction and with gynæphobia and with piety, piety in its pejorative sense.
> R: Yes, yes.
> K: I think part of the reason for that is that the radical tradition of Anglo-Catholicism was not, for the most part, exported to North America. What was exported was its ritual, syrupy species. So you got the paraphernalia of Catholicism without the content.... What you've actually got here is not Anglo-Catholicism, it's not Catholicism of any kind, it's fundamentalism with incense. What you've got is people who like the trappings of Catholic worship; they like the liturgy, they like the smells, they like the smoke, they like the paraphernalia, but you haven't actually got the doctrine. They don't actually understand what it's all about. So they've got an individualistic, pietist theology which could have come from the Church of the Nazarene with Catholic ceremonial piled on top of it. Now this is a very unstable compound, it's not a compound at all, it's an unstable mixture which is bound to disintegrate and I think that is much more the norm in the Episcopal Church which produces a lot of strange aberrations. I don't think that at the end

> of the day you can have Catholic ritual without Catholic theology. Sooner or later you're going to get some upheaval. This is why Headlam, I think, suggested, "those who assist at Holy Communion are bound to be holy communists." He was clearly exaggerating in one sense because lots of people do assist at the Holy Communion and they have no sense of what it means in political terms. But he was right to the extent that it must be very, very difficult, unless you're a complete schizophrenic, to celebrate the Eucharist, and to witness in that liturgy day by day, year in year out, to the values of Koinonia and sharing and equality and then have a totally different set of values to the world outside. Unless you are complete schizophrenic and regard the church as a totally different world then that is an impossible situation. So I think that Headlam assumed, and I think here he was a bit too rationalist, that eventually it was bound to rub off on you; if you went on celebrating the Holy Communion you were bound to become a socialist. But there is something about the toxic power in liturgy that is quite important here.

It is the presence of a sacramental theology combined with a socialism that binds the Jubilee Group to its prophetic vision. Anglo-Catholicism is the only form that offers Jubilee this logic. "It is not possible to maintain the Eucharistic [sacramental] principles of common life and equality without those principles being extended to the social order outside the sanctuary—unless, of course, one maintained a kind of dualism which preserved church and society in separate compartments."[21] The irony, however, is that while Anglo-Catholicism is Catholic (they lean towards plurality—a liberal acceptance of a plurality of understandings of God), Jubilee showed inclinations, in its early period, towards elitism.

> K: We wanted to make it very clear that we stood within the tradition of Catholic orthodoxy, that we were not liberals, we were not revisionists, we didn't want to change the nature of the faith and we felt that a lot, a kind of radical, and I put 'radical' in inverted commas for the moment, a lot of radical Christian groups sat very lightly to credal faith and I think that if anything we probably were acceptedly triumphalist and rigorist in the early period in the way in which we asserted our orthodoxy. I think we were leaning over backwards to say that we stand firmly within the Catholic movement and our difference from other Anglo-Catholics is not that we watered down the doctrine, but that we take the doctrine with great seriousness and enjoy its social and political consequences.

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[21] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

A further irony exists in that while Catholicism is about universality, there are strong indicators of individualism of the pietistic sense within Anglo-Catholicism as well. Leech notes:

> K: Concerning piety, I mean it's an interesting term, piety, because, Conrad Noel used the term piety in an entirely pejorative way, you know, we reject the gentle Jesus of the pietists....
> R: Right.
> K: We do not want to go to their glucose heaven, he said, and many people who assist at Mass will be most assuredly be dammed (paraphrased). One of the Catholic Crusade pamphlets was called, "Down with Heaven." What we want to do at Thaxted, he said, is bring Heaven to earth, we do not want to coat the way to a sugary heaven with the pietists (paraphrased). Now, in other traditions, the word piety is not used in that sense. It's quite a noble word. Moravians, and Methodists are quite right when they say that piety is not necessarily the same thing as escapism. It may well be a corporate piety which has social consequence.
> R: Didn't John Wesley argue that you can't separate the social ...
> K: He said, "there's no holiness but social holiness," but in actual fact, Wesley was wrong in practical terms because a lot of Methodists do have a concept of holiness which is not at all social.
> R: But often the followers tend to veer away from ....
> K: Yes. You get the same sort of individualism with a lot of Anglo-Catholics who don't seem to have a kind of split between their theology and their piety. I mean there's such a lot of things here. The modern day Roman Church, for example, has an extremely good liturgy which witnesses to social values and then they sing hymns which totally contradict what the liturgy is all about. If you want to hear really, luscious, sentimental, individualistic, pietistic, hymns, go to a Roman Church and you get the most appalling drivel.

While Leech is critical of the individualism of the pietists and the piety of Anglo-Catholicism, the Jubilee Group also has a tendency towards individualism as noted below.

> R: What I find quite interesting and ironic as well is that in the literature that comes out from Jubilee, they are very critical of individualism, and they are very strong in the sense of community and yet if you look at how Jubilee itself is structured as a network, it seems very individualistic to me.
> G: I think that is right. I'm absolutely a member of Jubilee and I suppose I've got to take some responsibility for all the criticism but that doesn't mean that I'm not critical as well. Does that make sense? I really do feel what happened is just historical.... It's that Jubilee is made up of a bunch of people who believe they don't believe in individualism. We're not liberals we're radicals, we're anti-individualists because we're anti-Thatcherism. I think Thatcherism is a creed, not just a government; we're anti-individualists, we believe in community, yet we are all exceptionally eccentric.

But on a more positive note, individualism aside, there is a sense that this radical tradition linked to sacramental theology is about celebration and gaiety—a sense of celebration is very important to the Jubilee Group. This sense of celebration refocuses the Jubilee Group and the radical Anglo-Catholics back to community. For Anglo-Catholics, the Eucharist is the significant celebration and it can only be celebrated in a communal relationship. Its function is to give voice to God's created world, to symbolize that there is a connatural relationship between God and his creation and that God engages his creation to transform it. But out of the transformative relationship emerge acts of protest against the immediate powers that try to subvert the transformation of society and the world. The celebration of the Eucharist in fact necessitates protest where injustice abounds. In this context there are some very interesting contradictions: acts of protest are forms of celebration as noted below.

> K: There's always been, particularly within Anglo-Catholic socialism, this mixture of flamboyance and festivities on the one hand with protest on the other. I think of John Grosser, for example, when the first "Keep Britain White," slogans appeared in East London after the war. There was a procession that took place which became the Procession of the Paint Pot. A whole group of the congregation with incense and lights and banners walked to the "Keep Britain White" slogan and John Grosser carried a pot of Red Paint and painted it out in bright red.

3.ii.ii Weaknesses of Anglo-Catholicism

While the Anglo-Catholic tradition has its strengths which the Jubilee Group tries to reflect, there are also profound weaknesses.

> It has been a very English movement, at times arrogantly nationalist in its perception of Catholic identity, It has promoted clericalism, that distortion of priesthood which has so defaced and damaged the Christian church. In its English and its exported forms, it has not been untainted by racism though the majority of Anglo-Catholics are black, and its traditional strongholds are in Central and South America and the Caribbean. Yet in its public face it manifests the perspectives and the interests of white men of English and North American backgrounds.

> *There is* a profound inability to cope with issues of human sexuality, resulting in a dread of women which often reaches the point of real gynæphobia.[22]

With all that has been stated about the strong social voice of Anglo-Catholicism, it would be a mistake to ignore that much of Anglo-Catholicism is more concerned with ritual and less with a social voice. Leech certainly does not ignore this when he defines Anglo-Catholicism as a fusion of Tractarianism (focusing on spiritual autonomy for the church) and ritualism. This fusion, Leech points out, exists as a "marginal movement which is increasingly cut off from all the creative currents in the Christian world. It represents ... an exhausted religious culture."[23]

Leech goes on to write, referring to Valerie Pitt who describes the growth of Anglo-Catholicism, that much of it is "a type of cultural distortion which deviated more and more from the world of reality" by creating a world within a world.[24] It is no wonder, than, that Leech would say that for many Anglo-Catholics who abide by the two currents mentioned above, Anglo-Catholicism offers no social vision; but Leech is also quick to point out that for all the lack of a social vision there emerge the fruits of a new vision, a vision of a social hope which has a great deal of relevance.

A question remains, however: is the Jubilee Group cognizant of these weaknesses and are they demonstrable or are they buried within the psyche of the Jubilee Group? Below, H recounts a tension and conflict within the Jubilee Group on two fronts: gender and race.

> H: ...probably in terms of gender there would. I would guess that the male/female imbalance wouldn't be as marked as, say, the black/white imbalance. Obviously in British society there'd likely be less women than men but a much smaller proportion of black people than white people, but certainly the urban areas where Jubilee Group is strongest, I would guess, there is a substantially higher proportion of black people particularly within the churches, including the Church of England, I would guess, than in the Jubilee Group. There's a problem there ....

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[22] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[23] Kenneth Leech, The Eye of the Storm, p. 123.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

Clearly, from H's point of view, the Jubilee Group has its blind spots and herein lies a significant irony within the Jubilee Group. It seems that some of the worst of Anglo-Catholicism has penetrated the mind of the Jubilee Group. The Jubilee Group, as a prophetic voice within the church, has stood in a tradition that critiques institutional power structures and has been a voice for the silenced. The net result has been that the Jubilee Group has been marginalized within the institutional church and yet the Jubilee Group also participates, it seems, to a point, in marginalizing certain groups. People of color and women have historically been the silenced ones, and yet it is within the Jubilee Group that they have also experienced silencing at times.

I will turn now to an examination of the women within the Jubilee Group. I should say, however, that as a male, I need to approach this subject with delicacy, aware that I am a male commenting on experiences I will never have and likely never fully understand.

3.iii The Women of the Jubilee Group

As previously mentioned, the East London's Women's Group was the first lay Jubilee group. G tells us:

> G: The oldest running Jubilee Group, the one that just met continuously without breaking up is the East London's Women's Group.
> R: The person involved in that is M?
> G: That's right.
> R: I may meet her tomorrow. Ken very much wants me to meet with her.
> G: Well, then you should. You should because that might correct the balance. You'll see that there's four or five women there now, all of them who are over thirty five. I was in that group and B was in that group. That group has met for fourteen years; I was in the East End. I've had a kind of core group with these three or four women who are a bit older than I am. But it's now only the first turn over of younger women who are moving through that and other women who are in training but who do live in the East End. You know what I mean?

M recounts her introduction to the Jubilee Group and the formation of the women's group.

> M: I was very flattered you know, it was rather nice to come away from the community that I was working with. One of the priests, RM, thought that it was a bit elitist and thought that we should have a group of lay people, or a mixed group. So we met in his house in the late seventies, I'd say, on a Sunday evening, whereas his meetings were during the day time for clergy. That was a lovely mixture of people, of priests and lay people looking at Jubilee issues. It gradually, gradually, gradually became a woman's group. We started meeting on Monday evenings and G's was one of the places; we went down to each other's homes. It was based on a meal by this time and a bit of, worship's too strong a word but we had some sort of prayer and a meal and then a discussion usually arising out of what has happened in the immediate area. But we were all East Londoners so I mean, I think that was important.

3.iii.i Jubilee and the Feminist Voice

The thing about the women is very interesting, says G. "Women are under-represented in the Jubilee Group but Feminism is over represented." This phenomenon makes for a very interesting study. On the one hand, the Jubilee Group has defined itself as part of Anglo-Catholicism but within Anglo-Catholicism women are grossly under-represented, according to G. On the other hand, the Jubilee Group has been highly critical of Anglo-Catholicism for its position on the ordination of women—Anglo-Catholics have, in the main, consistently refused to support the move towards the ordination of women—and yet women's voices, to a large extent, have also been silenced in the past within the Jubilee Group as the following narrative points out.

> B: Well, you think about who we have in what roles in the Group, in the Network. I think you come out with an extremely patriarchal history as this network goes. You have a tradition that traces itself through the great priests of the past, wonderful men, men who I would have, probably would have fought with and yet I have a tremendous admiration for them. One imagines, when you read Ken's account, that man [inaudible whisper] but nevertheless you can't but recognize here's somebody you have something in common with but you have to fight.... Given that that's were the whole thing comes from, then inevitably, I think the women's cry, any voice is very hard. If you were to do a study of publications of the group, or a study of the female writers, I mean if you would, if you go to the library and look at the archive, I think you would see that it was still quite strongly male dominated. But, in that it is no different from any other part of the left....

And indeed, a very unscientific survey of the Jubilee publications at the Manchester Workingman's Library revealed that in the years from 1974-1993, out of a total of 77 publications on hand, 10, or roughly 13%, were from women. Of course,

this is not an accurate representation, nor is it a complete representation. Many publications are not catalogued in the library; but it does give a glimpse, albeit an inaccurate one, of a less than significant voice the women may have overall.[25]

3.iii.ii Women as Symbols

In many ways, the women of the Jubilee Group, it seems, are ironic symbols. As already noted, the Jubilee Group functions on the margins within the Church of England. But within the Jubilee Group, the women, it appears at times, are the marginal ones.

Focusing on the women within the Jubilee Group will help one to understand the Jubilee Group concerning political action, identity, marginality, and voice. At the same time, a glimpse of the women within the Jubilee Group also points out the Jubilee Group's internal contradictions.

Margins, writes bell hooks,[26] is the place where marginal groups or communities engage the institutions in a creative way, where marginal groups or communities are in "creative conflict" with the institutional power structures.[27] Anna Tsing argues that margins indicate an "analytical placement which make evident the constraining, oppressive quality of cultural exclusion and creative potentials of rearticulating, enlivening, and rearranging the very social categories that peripheralize a group's existence."[28] What Tsing is trying to argue is that the margin is a place where marginal groups or communities skew the differences between themselves and the institutional value system by appropriating the language and values of these institutions

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[25] The survey was done by simply counting all the publications on hand. There are, of course, many publications by both men and women that have not been catalogued in the library.

[26] bell hooks quite deliberately signs her name in lower case. It would be presumptuous of me, therefore, to impose a formality and fashion upon her that she has repudiated in her own work.

[27] bell hooks, Sisters of the Yam: black women and self recovery, Toronto: Between the Lines Press, (1993).

[28] Anna Tsing, From the Margins, *Cultural Anthropology*, 9[3], (1994), p. 279.

skewing these for their own purposes.[29] This blurring of the barriers acts, then, as a form of resistance; in the case of the Jubilee Group the attempt at creative resistance is in the hope of transforming the institutional church as well as being part of a transformative work with respect to society.

While the institutional system may not quite make out the blurring, the marginal groups or communities enunciate a passionate claim that they are not part of the institutional value system, but are decidedly different.[30] I will look at three themes that identify women as decidedly different within the Jubilee Group but at the same time embody some of the dominant themes of the Jubilee Group.

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[29] Radical feminist writers such as hooks, see Sisters; Yearning: race, gender, and cultural politics, Toronto: Between the Lines Press, (1990), and Lee Maracle, *Racism, Sexism and Patriarchy*, IN Returning the Gaze, Himani Bannerji (ed.), Toronto: Sister Vision Press, (1993), write about women appropriating male symbols and language but redefine these to take on new meaning that has significance for women only. This technique is also highlighted by Jean Comaroff in her work (see fn. 26, this chapter).

[30] For a more detailed analysis of this resistance in the margins see Jean Comaroff, Body of Power Spirit of Resistance, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1985). While Comaroff is primarily interested in the relationship of differing cultures in contact, the principals that she lays out apply. She argues that a form of resistance arises when some of the dominant symbols of a dominant group may be appropriated by those who are subdued and then given a value that is shared and understood within a new context, i.e., the context of the subjugated group. A good example of this may be when some of the Christian rituals of the colonizers were adopted and introduced into the dominated cultures but were redefined in such a way that only the dominated peoples understood them. Haitian Voodooism, for example, appropriated elements of Catholicism into its ceremony. The Catholic church often did not recognize the new forms but at the same time the Catholic church observed that Haitians attended church and concluded that they had made inroads into the Haitian culture in terms of Christian missions. Comaroff refers to this process as a dialectical articulation, that is the putting together of two differing strands to make something new, but the new is in resistance to the old.

The Jubilee Group, in this case, stands within the Church of England but on the margins. The symbols it operates with are the same as that of the Church but would argue that the symbols need to be redefined so that they once again reflect the values of the early church. These symbols are in a dialectical tension. The symbols of the Eucharist, for instance, are the same but not necessarily articulated in the same way. The Jubilee Group would argue that the symbols of the Eucharist have significant political implications that are not necessarily voiced by the institutional, or established church. In this sense, then, the dialectical articulation of the symbols become acts of resistance to a religious expression that has dominated the church, that ignores or minimizes the relationship of the theological with the political that is manifested in social responsibility.

3.iii.iii Hierarchy/Patriarchy

The first theme is *hierarchy/patriarchy*. The issue of hierarchy/patriarchy with respect to the Jubilee Group is best demonstrated in the question of women's ordination to the priesthood.

To begin with, however, it will be helpful to reflect on, once again, how the women's group came into being. It will be helpful to keep in mind that the Jubilee Group was founded partly as an organ of critical dissent against the "sickly pietism" that had crept into the church. It has been noted that the Jubilee Group at its inception was primarily a group of white males and clerics (a group that represented the hierarchy within the church). But as Leech has already pointed out, there was, within two years, the sentiment that Jubilee ought also to be a lay group. It is interesting that this first lay group eventually became the Jubilee Women's Group and it became, essentially, a revolt group as Leech points out.

> K: I think that the beginning of what was originally called the Stepney Jubilee Group subsequently became a women's group, although that wasn't designed. It was a kind of historical accident. The beginning of that was a kind of lay revolt. A substantial number of lay people wanted something like this too. The fact is, they had a life more continuous in a sense than any other group in the country.

The women revolted against the idea that Jubilee should be so narrowly defined.

> B: I think there were probably more lay people than priests in that group. That was a great relief to the lay people I should think and probably to the priests actually, to be fair. Before that it had a very clericalized .... it was a group of clergy and I think some of the earliest documents probably say the Jubilee Group is a group of clergy that meets in East London.
> R: So therefore it's men....
> B: it's men, and it's clergy men. It's men of a particular composure. So that group (women's group) meet....

In this sense the women become symbols (for Jubilee) of revolt against hierarchy, against patriarchy, and male dominated clericalism. Interestingly, it was the women who awakened, within many men, the need to become sensitive to the issue of the ordination of women. While some of the men in the Jubilee Group focused on

inequalities within the church, the irony was that these same men failed to see inequalities right in front of them, i.e., the disparity of women in the priesthood. The fact that the first Jubilee Group was a group of clerics and women were not part of this group may attest to this fact. In this instance, some of these men reflected the gynæphobia of Anglo-Catholicism as is pointed out in the following narrative.

> B: They use to sort of say, "it doesn't matter," you see. There was this view, I call ....
> R: Who's they?
> B: The men in Jubilee Network.
> R: What didn't matter?
> B: That the ordination of women ....
> R: Ah
> B: was a deliberate feminist, rather bourgeois preoccupation. Actually, I think it was the general impression men got, the men in the Jubilee Network. This wasn't feminism, it was liberal feminism, it's bourgeois feminism, it's women wanting to join the middle class club. And so, on the whole, people like Ken never took public issue in relation to the issue for quite a long time.

In fairness, it should be pointed out that this was not necessarily the predominant view. Some of the men, certainly Ken Leech, did recognize, after a time, that Jubilee needed to be in the vanguard of the radical change in terms of bringing women into the priesthood. What is significant, however, is that much of this change, it seems, came at the impetus of the women's voice within a context of a predominantly male dominated group. Women simply wanted no part of it, as B goes on to say.

> B: Those changes happened in the early eighties that were to do with lay people and women organizing strongly and saying strongly they didn't want to be cast with the male dominant, a movement that was committed to male dominance, or a movement that was committed to clerical dominance. Certainly, I think we were part of creating up a change. I think it was a change that clergymen were wanting to see anyway. It wasn't like we were marching against clergy firmly fixed. I wouldn't like to present it as a firmly shut door because I think some of the people who were most resistant to those changes were well on their way out, actually. So the men who were still around, particularly Ken, were more than ready to see those sorts of changes by then. So it's that sort of dynamic. But I kind of think that my whole sense of the early eighties, were much more open and fluid. Now things are very entrenched again and that's reflected everywhere. It's reflected in the church, it's reflected in the Jubilee Groups, it's reflected in the Labour Party, particularly the Labour Party.

3.iii.iv Community and Individualism: Symbols and Boundaries

The next theme is *community,* a counterpoint to individualism. Anthony Cohen suggests that community implies similarity and difference defined by boundaries and symbols held in common.[31] I would further suggest that a community is an entity in which individuals take an active stand in living mutual relationships; in which there are shared definitions of what counts as relevant[32] which is in keeping with our understanding of the community's ethos. How do the women of the Jubilee Group exemplify community as against individualism?

As has already been noted, the women's group is the oldest of the Jubilee groups with some of the original members still active. Essentially, it is a supper club that meets monthly. How is this a community, though? What are the common symbols, what are the boundaries, what is the ethos of this group, and how is the East London Women's Group more a community than any other group?

Symbols

The symbols of the Women's group make for an interesting study. Are they the same as those of the men? Are they the same but have different meaning?

According to Geertz's argument in his essay, Religion as a Cultural System, members of Jubilee, regardless of gender, would necessarily have to ascribe to common symbols. Symbols define the group regarding religious expression. Without the sense of unity with respect to common symbols the group, and here one would inject the Jubilee Group, not just the Women's group, would simply fracture. "Sacred symbols," says Geertz, "function to synthesize a people's ethos."[33]

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[31] Anthony Cohen, The Symbolic Construction of Community, London/New York: Routledge, (1985).
[32] James Scott, Weapons of the Weak, New Haven/London: Yale University Press, (1985).
[33] Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures, New York: Basic Books, (1973), p. 89.

> If sacred symbols did not at one and the same time induce dispositions in human beings and formulate, however obliquely, inarticulately, or unsystematically, general ideas of order, then the empirical differentia of religious activity or religious experience would not exist.[34]

It is not special pleading to suggest that Geertz is arguing that these symbols need to be held in common in order for a state of harmony to exist between genders within the Jubilee Group touching symbolic identity. What is important to understand, though, is that symbols may be held in common but, in answer to the question raised, may not necessarily have univocal meaning; meaning, in this case, is nuanced.

Grace Jantzen, the John Rylands Senior Research Fellow at the University of Manchester, demonstrates in her book, Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism, how the symbols associated with a sacramental theology echo hooks' and Tsing's argument that symbols may appear to mean the same thing but in reality when considered from differing contexts may speak more about contested knowledge.

Jantzen, an acquaintance of Kenneth Leech and several members of the Jubilee Group, is interested in examining the role of power with respect to mysticism. "The connection of questions of power to questions of mysticism," she says, " is obvious as soon as one stops to think of it: a person who was acknowledged to have direct access to God would be in a position to challenge any form of authority."[35]

Jantzen examines the sacraments central to Catholic worship, such as the Eucharist, and shows how symbols are understood within the sacramental rites: women themselves can become symbols in the celebration of the sacraments. Her work is complex; it contains a wealth of information but for present purposes, only a single analysis will be offered. Her work shows how dominant symbols within a sacramental rite can be turned on their head when women are considered.

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[34] Geertz, *ibid.*, p. 98.

[35] Grace Jantzen, Power Gender and Christian Mysticism, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1995), p. 1.

Let us examine, for a moment, the sacrament of the Eucharist. Jantzen rightly points out that the Eucharist was administered predominantly by men. But as women participated in devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus, they emphasized the role (thereby helping to define it) of the dominant male and a controlling ecclesiastical body. An interesting and subtle twist occurred, however, in the celebration of this rite. Women, it was believed, were symbolic of the flesh and as such were weak and frail, open to temptation and fall. But a second and perhaps more interesting development took place.

When women entered orders they were often associated with food. Whereas

> men who entered monasteries or who wrote about the spiritual life were more preoccupied with the renunciation of wealth and power as a means of holiness, women (who did not usually have wealth or power to renounce in any case) were much more likely to give a large place to food (or its absence) in their spirituality.[36]

As women became more preoccupied with their own spirituality, they voluntarily forewent ordinary food. A connection was made between refusal (fasting) of this ordinary food and being fed solely on the Eucharist, the body of Christ. As Jantzen points out,

> it becomes clear that if a women fasted to such an extent that her body could be said to be fed only by the Eucharist, then her body was no longer to be seen as an ordinary human body, but was rather a body like Christ's: fed on the body of God, it became divine .... Their bodies had become so united with the body of Christ by their feasting on the Eucharist to the exclusion of everything else that they were able to be his presence in the world.[37]

As symbols of Christ present in the world, women's bodies took on a new meaning in contradistinction with the first symbol of weakness. In this new likeness, women became symbols of healing for which men were dependent. The question of control, however, was never far from the minds of men who issued instructions to the

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[36] *Ibid.*, p. 208.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

women to cease the fast if the men felt the women were becoming too "spiritual". This sense, of course, makes for some very interesting contradictions which highlighted men's dependence upon women's knowledge. It was men's knowledge that became suppressed but in order to obviate this, men had to resort to force to suppress women's knowledge and this, then, make men vulnerable to seek healing from women in a spiritual sense.

One can clearly see here how meaning can become turned on its head when articulated by different perspectives mediated by contradictions.

On the point of symbols and the Eucharist, Kenneth Leech offers an important insight, but certainly not the last word for women.

> I doubt if most men realize the courage and persistence, not to mention the ability to cope with weariness, which is required for such women to remain faithful to the church in which they constantly find themselves 'overwhelmed by linguistic form that excludes them from visible existence'. For such women the Eucharist, which is meant to be a focus of unity and solidarity, becomes a point of paradox and contradiction. It is desperately important that men try to understand the seriousness of this position, and the intensity of the darkness into which women are plunged in their encounter with the Christian tradition.[38]

Another of the Jubilee Group's more significant symbols is the Magnificat {*Luke 1: 46-55*}, which is associated with Mary, the Mother of Jesus. It is essentially the Christian Socialist's manifesto. I will address this point in greater depth as the next theme, "Mary the Mother of Socialism."

Boundaries

Clearly, the women's group exists within boundaries. You have to be a woman to be a member of the East London's Women's Group. Secondly, an implied boundary would be that members would be left-wing radical feminists; women of a right wing, evangelical, fundamentalist persuasion would more than likely exclude themselves.

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[38] Leech, *op cit.*, p. 86.

The ethos of this group is linked to an ethos that is reflected in the Jubilee Group as H, a radical feminist, points out.

> H: Yes, I think it's quite difficult to decide because as I said the membership is quite broad; people who are admirers of what the radical clergy of the 19th or early 20th century fought for. Quite a lot of members would be interested. There would be a belief that Christian faith, on the whole, is linked with social issues and with watching for the poor, or however we put it.
> R: Does the gospel exclusively inform the Jubilee spirit, or is it something else? Are there other belief systems out there that have an impact with respect to defining how Jubilee will function or who Jubilee is?
> H: I suppose most Jubilee Group members would have a background in the British Left in the broadest sense. So there would be that as well, the Left tradition.
> R: But what about the gospel? Is that necessary, is it exclusive, is the Jubilee informed exclusively by the gospel?
> H: Exclusive as opposed to ....
> R: Well its belief system. The heart of the Jubilee spirit is the gospel.
> H: I wouldn't have thought so. I mean there's a left ethos and there would be a lot of people within the left, obviously, who wouldn't count themselves as Christian. There would be people within the Jubilee Group, including probably lot a of the women in the group, who probably wouldn't count themselves as Christian but retain a kind of fascination with Christianity. I suppose that within the Catholic tradition, the radical, especially the radical elements in the Catholic tradition, there's the question, or they raise the question of ownership and power and so forth.

H understands the radical nature of groups such as the Jubilee Group to be decidedly left. Those who located themselves in this tradition would be at one with the Jubilee Group. The leftist ethos is intrinsic to the heart and soul of groups such as the Jubilee Group and out of this heart and soul emerges a voice for justice.

With regards to identifying themselves as a community more so than most Jubilee Groups, there is a closeness among the women that may not be manifested by other groups. As already pointed out, they meet once a month over a shared meal. They practice what is referred to as "table communion;" the building of communal relationships around the preparation and sharing of food.[39] No other group does this.

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[39] Karl Kautsky, in his Foundations of Christianity, makes a very interesting observation with respect to the common meal. In his study of the early Christian communities, he examines their sense of communalism. He points out that as these communities became more organized, their commitment to a communal order was lost. Kautsky's argument was that the communal nature of these group remained in theory but in practice they became much more individualistic. His reasons were that due to economics,

Furthermore, their ties to the Women's Group are quite substantial to the exclusion of the larger network as evidenced by the fact that some of the women in the Jubilee Groups are unaware that they are even part of a larger network. M points out:

> M: Three of us now have any association of the original lay group and yet we are still very Jubilee oriented. We've now got four people that probably never have been to an AGM of Jubilee and hardly know that we identify with Jubilee. I mean, that's silly because we call ourselves the Jubilee Group.

Yet while the women of Jubilee tend to align themselves along lines that point to community it should also be noted that even the women reflect a tendency towards individualism They are, it seems, still very much part of an overarching ethos of individualism as the following quote from G points out.

> R: The way in which Jubilee was structured was deliberately not along a structured community model because you don't want committees. You don't want have to answer to somebody, you don't want to be accountable. You want to have this autonomy, you want to do your own thing, you want to set the agenda you need, but you want to come back into the group and have support.
> G: That's right. What is community, how do you build community, how big does something have to be to become a community? I've been doing some work, not directly for Jubilee, about the concept of household. Instead of family, we start talking about household and I think that the Jubilee idea of community is a household model, household church model rather than by :...

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the rich needed to be courted in order for these groups to sustain themselves. Consequently, the harsh criticism of the rich that had existed in the early stages of these communities needed to be toned down if not stopped altogether. The rich, in fact had to be recruited so that these communities could continue. So, while the communism of the early church ceased to exist in practice there were still holdovers such as the practice of the common meal. The common meal, says Kautsky, had no significance as a meal but they were celebrated for the purpose of participating in the congregational life. It was not meant to satisfy physical needs but spiritual needs in a context of the community. But once the church became a dominant force, according to Kautsky, there was less felt need for the participants to continue with the common meal and they fell into disuse. It is interesting to note that for Kautsky, the symbolic value of the meal was a sense of communalism and with the decline of the common meal, the sense of communalism also feel into decline. Whether this is a bit of revisionist history remains to be seen nevertheless, he does make a reasonable argument as to the significance of the common meal. J. W. C. Wand, The Church, its Nature, Structure and Function, argues that the common meal was, in fact not a meal in itself but refers to partaking of the bread and wine at Holy Communion. Wand seems to base his argument, in part, on the logistics of numbers. There were simply too many people to share in a meal at any given time in one given place which a common meal would imply. Nevertheless, the sharing of bread and wine during the Eucharist is very much an act of participation of the community and the fact that the women's group is the only group that celebrates this common meal may attest to a communality that is lacking among the men.

R: Something defined by space and time.
G: That's right. It is personalist and profoundly humanist even though we might not wish it to be
R: Sort of along a Mertonian notion of authenticity; the individual linked with universality.
G: That's right. The difficulty is that most members of Jubilee, not all but most, come from the left where we're not allowed to use that language. I'm absolutely with Ken, I'm anti-individualism, I like the concept of community, but we're all non-joiners. I bet if you took a survey, there would be very, very few of the kind of active Jubilee people, that would be doing that boring old party membership of the Labour Party. People in Jubilee are constantly resigning from the Labour Party, leaving their trade unions, or, you know.
R: I talked to K and said, "you talk about this sense of community, and you write about it, and yet, you're the most individualistic bunch I've ever seen."
G: That's right and I think we're not very good at facing up to that. But we can't find a model that satisfies. It's a lot of fuss, there is no consensus within the Jubilee Group except a broadly anti-conservative, anti-racist but I can't think of any ideas that I would have that I had not read it in a Jubilee Group context because it would be unacceptable to raise them.

What seems to emerge from this discussion is that community can embrace the individual but individualism is anathema to the notion of community. It is in community that the individual can begin to flourish because the community nurtures the individual. The relationship of community and individual is congruent where the individual is made whole within community; but a community needs the passion of the individual as a corrective agent.

In the next theme, I will explore a root of Jubilee's radical voice. In many respects, the Jubilee voice emanates from a woman's voice.

3.iii.v Mary, the Mother of Socialism

In this third theme, I will continue with the ironic line highlighted by the women. In this theme I will explore Mary's Song, the Magnificat. For Anglo-Catholic socialists, it is, perhaps their dominant statement, their manifesto, in relation to political action linked to a sacramental theology. It is imperative to understand at the outset that it is a woman who first articulated it, but over the years it has been appropriated by men. Nevertheless, it is through their gender and a radical voice that

will not be silenced that the women of the Jubilee Group are integrally linked to this manifesto.

To begin, it is necessary to examine the Magnificat, Luke 1: 47-55.

My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced in God
my Savior.
For He has regarded the lowly
state of His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all
generations will call me
blessed.
For He who is mighty has done
great things for me
And holy is His name.
And His mercy is on those who
fear him
From generation to generation.
He has shown strength with His
arm;
He has scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts.
He has put down the mighty from
their thrones,
And exalted the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with
good things,
And the rich He has sent away empty.
He has helped His servant Israel,
In remembrance of His mercy,
As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed
forever.

Closing the Circle

The identification with Mary forms a complete circle for the women of Jubilee touching the prophetic voice. It is through an identification with Mary that the women of the Jubilee Group are ambassadors of the socialist message. Herein lies a twist and a further irony. Sue Dowell picks up on the dilemma women experience.

> Mary is more than a main player in the Christian story: she is the saint above all others, that Christians are required to love, venerate[40] and, in women's case particularly, emulate. But she has frequently been (re)presented in terms which make this nigh impossible. *The problem neatly summed up*, how can one, wholly set apart from human femaleness, function as a model for female personhood?[41]

The irony is, Anglo-Catholicism, while reverencing the Mother of Jesus, is patriarchal. Orens writes that the awakening of the importance of Mary in terms of a social critique of English institutions and society came at the very time when English women were "demanding the right to work, the right to an equal education with men, and the abolition of laws treating them as chattel."[42] Clearly, when one compares the words of the Magnificat with Jesus' own manifesto {*Luke 4: 16-30*}, quoting Isaiah 61:

> The spirit of the Lord is upon
> Me,
> Because He has anointed Me
> To preach the gospel to the poor;
> He has sent Me to heal the
> brokenhearted,
> To proclaim liberty to the captives,
> And recovery of sight to the blind,
> To set at liberty those who are
> oppressed—

it is clear that Jesus announced a new era of liberation of the poor and the oppressed. This is the predominant theme of Mary's proclamation. The key to both messages is "a right ordering of male and female"[43] relations. "Mary is at the heart of the church softening the structure, harmonizing where there is conflict,"[44] and it is at this point that the women in the Jubilee Group offer hope, for the Magnificat speaks of changing structures of power to reflect a vision of something new, a vision of justice. But it is

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[40] Mary is accorded a unique place of worship—*hyperdulia*: a careful and useful distinction. Only God is owed *latria* (adoration) and the saints *dulia* (veneration).

[41] Sue Dowell, *How is it that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?*, IN Mary the Mother of Socialism, Andy Delmege, (Ed.), London: The Jubilee Group, (1994), p 2.

[42] John Orens, Dancing the Magnificat, *ibid.*, p. 38.

[43] Sue Dowell, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

also Mary's "crucial role of public witness that women are struggling to reclaim today"[45] a place in which they can articulate their public voice. Is the Jubilee Group that place for women?

3.iii.vi A Public Place for Women

It has been stated that women have been somewhat marginalized within the Jubilee Group. If this is the case, why would women, particularly radical feminist women, align themselves with the Jubilee Group? As already noted, there have been traces of anti-feminism among certain Jubilee group members but as H notes, this is not a predominant tendency.

> H: The Jubilee Group is radical in its support of women priests, although some members aren't. In fact I'm pretty certain some members aren't. I think you can include one or two priests who left the Church of England ....
> R: and joined Rome?
> H: Yes.

With all its contradictions and tensions, feminists like G, H, and B, continue to feel drawn to the Jubilee Group. "I think feminists are in Jubilee today because they're trying to find a position around being an intelligent woman who happens to be an Anglo-Catholic." For radical feminists such as G, Jubilee is the source for her ideas. "I can't think of any ideas that I would have that I had not read in a Jubilee context." For B, another radical feminist and activist involved with Greenham Common, "the group was a place where we were able to explore issues standing around war and violence and patriarchal social relationships, and do that in a relationship that very, very direct action..." Likewise for H, the Jubilee Group is a place in which she can raise her voice on issues that concern her as noted below.

> H: I find it very important in that it's a network of people who don't all think alike by any manner of means. I wouldn't exactly define myself as an Anglo-Catholic. I wouldn't be the only one within Jubilee Group; there are people who aren't Anglicans, so we would

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[45] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

> have quite a shade of political opinion. But I suppose we would all be struggling in one way or another with what the gospel means for us today and we would all, or on the whole, have some kind of radical emphasis or edge. I think Jubilee creates a space where true discussion at a local level or occasional national meetings, and also through its publications, both the papers it circulates and the booklets that come out, where people can actually discuss issues, think about issues that are relevant. That 's quite important to me too. It's not just a vague radicalism that's been progressive. There's also been a deepening of Christian tradition there. That's very important to me; it's not something I would get in my local parish church. So I think the Jubilee Group has brought that support in but it also stimulates thinking and involvement.

Apart from a created space in which to articulate a position on certain issues, Jubilee invites a creative involvement from all members regardless of gender. At a monthly executive meeting (I attended as an observer), there was a predominance of women and it was clear the women's voice had a significant influence.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the question of identity. Identity is defined and articulated within context. For the Jubilee Group their identity has been defined in a context of dissent; of conflict with the church as an institution of power; of challenging the status quo, either religious or secular. In this sense, Jubilee's identity takes on a radical nature defined by an understanding of the Kingdom of God and how this is manifested within a social and political context that valorizes the powerful and vilifies the weak. Identity, is the expression of what the Jubilee Group defines as the core values the church ought to reflect.

The Jubilee Group identity is specifically informed; it is framed within Anglo-Catholicism. It is an Anglo-Catholicism that goes beyond the merely ritual, however; there must be a link between the social voice and ritual. With respect to the Jubilee Group's identity in the context of the church, the social voice and ritual, or better yet, celebration, is at the heart and mind of Anglo-Catholicism, essential to a richer and fuller understanding of the life of the church. These two aspects, the theological and

the political are in a state of union (*homoöusios*,[46] if you will) and as such they become the essence of the prophetic voice the Jubilee Group tries to enunciate.

The thing about the women is very interesting. The Jubilee Group has become a home for some radical feminists and the women have emerged within the Jubilee Group as ironic symbols of the Jubilee Group. While marginalized within society, the women of the Jubilee Group have also experienced a modicum of marginalization within the Jubilee Group as well. At the same time, however, they become symbols of the struggle against hierarchy/patriarchy through their past struggles with hierarchy/patriarchy both within the Jubilee Group as well as outside the group. The question of ordination of women has functioned, in the past, as a flash point.

Women have become symbols of community. While the Jubilee Group has been highly critical of individualism,[47] the men, in the main, exemplify individualism and the women exemplify a sense of community. This seems to be in keeping with community construction but not exclusively so. Often it is in those who are historically silenced that we see strong evidence of community formation; for it is here that their common voice in a common struggle is heard; and it becomes a place of solace. But ironically, even here there are interesting contradictions because the women who formed the first Jubilee Lay Group, which has functioned primarily as a community for women, are themselves individualistic to some degree as G has previously pointed out.

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[46] While the term *homoöusios* means of one and the same substance with the Father (referring to the Trinity) this term has similar application here. The sense that is attempted here is to conflate theology and politics in a special way, animated by a special force, so-to-speak. The notion that is put forward here is that the political and the theological emerges out of a sense of deification. See Ron Dart, *The Oxford Movement and the Politics of Deification*, in Fellowship Papers, Winter 1996-97, pp. 10-21.

[47] In Eye of the Storm, Leech writes that "of all the distortions of Christian faith and discipleship, it is individualism which has most deeply penetrated the American spiritual consciousness " (p. 4). Quoting John D. Zizioulas, Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century, Leech writes: "Individualism is incompatible with Christian spirituality. None can posses the Spirit as an individual but only as a member of a community. When the Spirit blows, the result is never to create good individual Christians but members of a community. This became fundamental for Christian spirituality in the New Testament and was in direct line with the Old Testament" (p. 5).

Finally, the last ironic symbol is found in the link between the women and one of the more dominant symbols of the church concerning a Christian Socialist voice--Mary the Mother of Jesus. Through her veneration, Mary is set apart from humankind. The irony is that she is isolated most from those whom she closely identifies with, the oppressed—women and the poor.

By appropriating the symbols first articulated by men, women redefine these symbols so that they take on new meaning understood by women. In this sense, Mary becomes a symbol, not just for justice but a symbol of women's oppression, a symbol of women's marginalization, of their silence; yet by her words she unsilences the voices and thereby breaks these bonds building new bonds of relationship with women that men cannot understand or trespass upon.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROPHETIC POLITICS: POLITICS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore the concept, *prophetic politics*. To do this, I will need, first, to unpack the meaning of the word prophetic. The word has varied and interesting meanings. I will briefly show that the word prophetic has cross-cultural significance. But even within western culture, the word prophetic is understood differently by different people and groups of people. Secondly, the term prophetic politics is located within a Christian context. In this context, the notion of the Kingdom of God is of singular importance. Prophetic politics is predicated on the notion of the Kingdom of God. Herein, however, lies another context, that of sacramental theology over against pietistic theology. Is the Kingdom of God future tense as the Millenarians might argue or is it 'now/not yet' as some sacramental theologians argue? One of the foundations of prophetic politics is the concept of *justice*. I will very briefly explore different points of view on the concept of justice and show how the Jubilee Group understands justice in a biblical context.

4.i The Meaning of Prophetic

The terms prophets, prophecy, prophetic have come to mean for many the process of fore-telling the future. Prophets are seers into the future, they tell the unknown. Many cultures have people that divine the unknown. Evans-Pritchard in his Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande, looks at the function of oracles

among the Nuer. He tells of different techniques used to reveal what is unknown such as fowl; *benge,* poison tree oracles; *iwa,* rubbing-board oracles; *dakpa,* termite oracles; and *mapingo*, three sticks oracles.[1] Victor Turner speaks about divination that is not just used to diagnose the causes of an affliction and prescribe a cure but for a society without centralized political institutions, divination is shown to be a mechanism for social redress.[2] In short, divination is used in this context as a means of social control.

Michael Kenny explores a different avenue touching the prophetic. Kenny examines the life of one Elias Smith (1769-1846), an evangelical republican and preacher. According to Kenny, Smith referred to biblical prophecy as his guide to foretell "an already partially fulfilled New World Millennium."[3] Smith's view, Kenny tells us, was a universalist theology in which God intends, contrary to Calvinist doctrine which advocated a predestinarian stance, that all mankind should be saved. Smith believed that predestination was "antiquated and un-American." God was very much interested in the lives of the people and how they governed their lives, how politics manifested itself. Smith's position was that politics ought to reflect the will of God and he used the scriptures in a prophetically high handed way to make judgments on the political life of the people. He was not shy, Kenny points out, in using the books of Daniel and Revelation "as interpretive guides to contemporary politics, thus allowing him to discern 'what the hand of God has wrought for us'."[4] Kenny goes on to tell us that Smith used biblical prophecy as a "gloss on current events" and the

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[1] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande, Oxford: Clarendon Press, (1976).

[2] Victor Turner, *Divination as a Phase in a Social Process*, IN Reader in Comparative Religion, Lessa, William A., and Evon Z. Vogt, (Eds.), New York: Harper and Row, (1979).

[3] Michael Kenny, The Perfect Law of Liberty, Washington: Smithsonian Institutional Press, (1994), p. 5.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

biblical stories were used to "situate contemporary America relative to the mythic paradigms of sacred history."[5]

Smith and much of early American religious life was heavily influenced by the reformation. The religious life in America was dissenting in the main, imbibed with strong republican traditions heavily influenced by the teachings of Locke on the notion of liberty.[6] As such, Smith exemplified many of the negative aspects of a pietistic theology which leans heavily in the direction of individualism and a sense that God's Kingdom was of the future. There would be peace on earth once the Kingdom of God was at hand but there was always the sense of looking forward. Clearly, the way had to be prepared and Smith used biblical prophecy to usher in the future.

The problem with Smith's confessional theology was that it was congregational in nature. Kenny rightly points out that this tendency led to schism. It was schismatic because of the penchant to articulate a small portion of truth as though it were the complete truth. Also, truth becomes understood by only a select few. Those who do not see truth in the same way are outside the pale of truth. Smith fully demonstrated this. As Richard Hooker (1554-1600) points out in his classic The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, this disposition goes in one direction only, from schism to sect to heresy. In the end, Smith, and people like him, end up in Milton's "church of one".

It seems from the foregoing that prophets and prophecy have become something of a *bête noire*. There is, however, another aspect of the prophetic that may shed a different light on the nature of the prophetic.

Leech and members of the Jubilee Group understand the prophetic differently to that expressed above. In some ways, however, there are similarities to Smith but they diverge at some very important and critical junctions.

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[5] *Ibid.*, p. 137.

[6] See John Locke, The Second Treatise of Government.

I refer back to Kenny, who states that

> historical consciousness is socially constructed.... Reconstruction of the past is always a selective process that utilizes theories, metaphors, and myths to impose meaning and moral relevance on what is supposed to have occurred before us. Historical consciousness therefore provides an implicit rule for future action insofar as one places oneself in history.[7]

This understanding has been long held within the social sciences. Kenny is simply stating that our understanding of who we are and how we act is framed within an historical context and what we consider important will ultimately go into the making of our identity. This means, of course, that we tend, often, towards a form of historical revisionism; we blind ourselves to those things we deem as insignificant, or things that we have difficulty reconciling to our understanding of the truth. Some things are, in the new light of qualified understanding, simply not true or did not happen. To argue against this, to suggest that this does not happen is to propel myopia into blind ignorance.

The Jubilee Group has an historical context that has, for them, real and lasting significance that impacts the present. As we turn to the notion of the prophetic, it is important to realize that the Jubilee people understand the nature and the function of the prophetic within an historical framework. For Ken Leech this framework is called tradition. Tradition in this case is the reflection of the Old Testament prophets, the New Testament Gospels, as well as the early church Fathers.

> R: In the literature, different writers use the concept of prophetic. William Stringfellow uses it in much of his writings such as The Politics of Spirituality. Jim Wallis refers to it in his book The Soul of Politics. However, often there seems to be a presumption by these writers that the readers are familiar with the term, and in many cases they are but this is not always the case. How would you understand the term prophetic?
> K: I'm not sure if it is used very much in Jubilee literature, it might be. I haven't looked and it's a difficult term. I would much prefer to see it used by one person about another rather than by someone claiming to be prophetic. I'm always wary of people who claim they're making prophetic utterances. I think it's something that one recognizes in other

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[7] Kenny, *op. cit.*, p. xiv

> people, in other movements rather than in oneself. I think there are two elements in it really. One is a striving towards the new, striving to provide for an alternative way of looking at reality which is not the dominant one. In that sense I think Walter Brueggemann is very close to the essence of the prophetic when he talks about the prophet as a destabilizing presence in any community. I think the second thing is that there is something in any prophetic movement of looking backward to the past. I think this is where prophecy can go dangerously wrong because there are false prophets, there are reactionary prophets. I think the word prophecy shouldn't be used as if it were universally benign, it can be quite dangerous. I think it's difficult to conceive of prophecy, certainly within the Jewish and Christian tradition, without a sense of a tradition to look back to. So, there are those two elements of going back to a past tradition and stretching forward towards a vision of something new. Whether you can have prophecy without a tradition, I'm not at all sure. I think it's doubtful and therefore I suspect that prophecy becomes a moral ethic in communities which have lost a grip on any kind of tradition. I don't see how you could have it outside of a tradition.

While Smith and Leech place a heavy emphasis on tradition informing their prophetic message, how this prophetic message is pronounced is the crucial difference. Keeping in mind that this thesis is not about establishing linkages between Elias Smith and Ken Leech's Jubilee Group, it is helpful to understand the nature of the prophetic articulated by these two divergent thinkers.

Smith's view of the prophetic, according to Kenny, is predicated on the realization of the millennium of God's Kingdom. Hobsbawm writes that in a pure millenarian movement, the followers do not make a revolution but rather, they expect the movement to make it itself, by divine revelation, by an announcement from on high, by a miracle.[8] People must prepare themselves, however, for this miracle.

> The part of the people before the change is to gather together, to prepare itself, to watch the signs of the coming doom, to listen to the prophets who predict the coming of the great day, and perhaps to undertake certain ritual measures against the moment of decision and change, or to purify themselves, shedding the dross of the bad world of the present so as to be able to enter the new world in shinning purity. Between the two extremes of the "pure" millenarian and the "pure" political revolutionary all manner of intermediate positions are possible.[9]

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[8] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Millenarianism*, IN Lessa and Vogt, *op, cit.*

[9] *Ibid.*, p.441.

Clearly, from the above quotation there is a sense that those who understand the coming age are set apart from a "bad world."[10] There seems to be a Manichean dualism evident in those who reflect a millenarian ideology of the Elias Smith type.

There is a marked difference in how Leech sees the world. For Leech, a prophet embraces this present world yet always keeps in mind that how we live in the present must be informed by a past, by a tradition with a mind for a vision of something new—new, but not removed from a bad and evil world. There is a sense of transforming this present world. This transformation involves celebration as well as protest as Leech has already noted: "...there's always been this mixture of flamboyance and festivities on the one hand with protest on the other."

Clearly, there is the sense that prophetic characters are confrontational. Prophetic characters are, says Leech, "a destabilizing presence."[11] They are not about preaching that all is well. Those who do are often the false prophets; they foretell of what people want to hear rather than what might be the truth.

> This is a rebellious people,
> they are lying sons,
> sons who will not listen
> to Yahweh's orders.
>
> To the seers they say,
> "See no vision";
> to the prophets,
> "Do not prophesy the truth to us,

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[10] Hobsbawm argues that there are three significant characteristics to Millenarianism. First, there is a profound and total rejection of the present, evil world, and a passionate longing for another and better one; second, a fairly standardized "ideology" of the chiliastic type; third, millenarian movements share a vagueness about the actual way in which the new society will be brought about.

[11] Arthur Downes, ex-mayor of Tower Hamlets and member of the Jubilee Group exemplifies best this sense of protest, the destabilizing presence, linked to the flamboyance. When he was mayor, he was invited aboard the French Nuclear warships that had docked in London during the testing of nuclear weapons in the South Pacific (1996). Mayor Downes refused but invited the French Naval officers into Tower Hamlets for a reception and banquet. When the officers appeared, Mayor Downes gave a lecture why nuclear testing was, in his opinion immoral, and then left the banquet in protest while the French officers stayed behind.

"tell us flattering things;
have illusory visions;
turn aside from the way, leave the path,
take the Holy One out of our sight." {Isaiah 30: 9-11}

Instead of a message that all is well, the prophet, according to Abraham Heschel is a rather noisy, impassioned voice.

> The prophet is a man who feels fiercely. God has thrust a burden upon his soul, and he is bowed and stunned at man's fierce greed. Frightful is the agony of man; no human voice can convey its full terror. Prophecy is the voice that God has lent to the silent agony, a voice to the plundered poor, to the profaned riches of the world. It is a form of living, a crossing point of God and man. God is raging in the prophet's words.[12]

The prophet that Heschel, and Leech for that matter, deems significant is not interested in escaping the world as the millenarians of the Elias Smith variety. While the Heschel-type prophets see the world in all its "evil," it is a world that needs to be transformed rather than something from which to escape.

Ken Leech's model of the prophet, or the prophetic, is enunciated by Walter Brueggemann in his The Prophetic Imagination. The notion of the prophetic is based on the premise that society does not have to reflect the status quo as Leech points out in the following quote.

> K: And in fact in a sense conventional politics is exactly opposite to prophecy when one accepts Brueggemann's view that there is an alternative. I think it was Desmond Tutu who said the essence of the resistance to apartheid is the conviction that things do not have to be like this.... I think much Christian politics does tend to accept the dominant assumptions of the day whatever they are and so we have to work within the existing system. I think politics and the prophetic are always in conflict.

For Brueggemann, the prophetic character is very much concerned with tradition. They bring the claims, he writes, of the prophetic tradition of the church and the influence of enculturation into an effective interface. At the same time they are future-tellers; they are concerned with the future as it impinges on the present. How does that differ from Smith and the Millenarians? The difference is in the order. The

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[12] Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets, Vol. 1, New York: Harper & Row, (1962), p. 5.

Millenarians are concerned about how the present impacts the future. They are not too concerned with a view to the future as it transforms the present. Millenarians are future dwellers whereas the prophetic tradition of Leech and Brueggemann are concerned with living in the present.

How is this difference manifested? They do, after all, look very much alike; the differences are very subtle. The futurists of the Smith type do look at the present order of things and how it will impact the future. But their view is to try to remove themselves from the present evil world. They are not too much interested in transforming the present world; they do not offer much creative criticism of this present world in order to bring about a new life. Why, after all, worry about the present when the future counts for so much more and the present is beyond redemption anyway? They do, however, offer a critique of the present order but only as a form of contrast; the present is shown up for what it is in comparison to the future.

Brueggemann and Leech's view is that the future Kingdom of God requires a commitment to work in the present reality, to work to bring about justice, hope, freedom, love and a sense of well-being for individuals in community because these are the values instituted by God for all humankind.

The difference in more simple terms is that for the Millenarians the notion of the millennium is future tense whereas the Kingdom of God is present tense.

4.i.i Prophetic Imagination

Brueggemann is most concerned that prophecy reflect the conflation of theology with a social political reality. "Prophecy is born," he says, "precisely in the moment when the emergence of social political reality is so radical and inexplicable that it has nothing less than a theological cause."[13]

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[13] Walter Brueggemann, The Prophetic Imagination, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, (1978), p. 16.

Brueggemann's use of the term *prophetic imagination* is an interesting one and goes a great distance in helping us understand the notion of prophetic politics. To understand the meaning of prophetic imagination, one has to see the links between *the religion of static triumphalism* and the *politics of oppression and exploitation.*[14] The prophetic character stands in the confluence of these two and offers resistance to their union. Static religion is not disinterested in politics but inevitably serves the interests of the people in charge, "presiding over the order and benefiting from that order."[15] Politics, in this context, pays a ceremonial homage to religion but deep down has no heart for the religious; it is quite irreligious and religion is a convenient handmaid.

Ironically, politics is often very cognizant of the prophetic imagination. It is argued, says Brueggemann, "that a prophetic understanding of reality is based in the notion that all social reality does spring fresh from the word."[16] Text becomes action; substantive thinking becomes linked to sacrificial action and all is informed by a subversive memory of the prophetic tradition. The aim of every totalitarian effort is to stop the language of transformation, the prophetic memory, the vision of something new and vital that challenges the dominant status quo.

The point that the prophetic imagination must ponder, writes Brueggemann, "is that there is no freedom of God without the politics of justice and compassion, and there is no politics of justice and compassion without a religion of the freedom of God."[17] The merging of the politics of justice and compassion with the freedom of God is predicated on the notion of the Kingdom of God. It is to this we shall now turn.

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 9.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

4.ii The Kingdom of God

There has been a great deal of debate and literature produced in Christian circles on the question of the *Kingdom of God.* It is impossible to reproduce this here but I will try to synthesize some of this debate, giving just a brief overview.[18]

Key to the question of prophetic politics is the hermeneutics of the Kingdom of God. Ken Leech in an article published in 1962, Has Rebellion a Theology, argues that there are two notions of the Kingdom of God that need to be considered and it is on the basis of an understanding of either notion that determines political action. I shall return to these differences Leech highlights but first, we need to have a clear understanding of this *Kingdom of God.*

Ronald Preston writes that this kingdom is not territorial but "refers to Jesus' disclosure in his own ministry of the nature of Yahweh's rule as king over the world."[19] The sense Preston conveys is that the Kingdom of God is a kingdom turned on its head. It is in direct conflict with secular powers which concern themselves with power, lordship over people and dominance. God's kingdom is a kingdom defined by humility as demonstrated in Mark 10: 43 where Jesus says, "You know that among the

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[18] For a more thorough reading and understanding of the Kingdom of God, see: John C. Cort, Christian Socialism, New York: Orbis Books, (1988); Jacques Ellul, The Presence of the Kingdom, Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, (1989); Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, New York: Orbis Books, (1973); James Limburg, The Prophets and the Powerless, Atlanta: John Knox Press (1977); David Nicholls, Deity and Domination, New York: Routledge, (1994); Alan Richardson, The Political Christ, London: SCM Press, (1973); Sharon Welch, Communities of Resistance and Solidarity: a Feminist Theology of Liberation, New York: Orbis Books, (1985).

[19] Ronald Preston, Kingdom of God: Political and Social Theology, in McGrath *op. cit.*, p. 304. It is further interesting to note that Kautsky took an interest in the Kingdom of God as understood by Jesus and the early Christians. Quoting several biblical passages, he recognizes that Christ's view of the Kingdom of God as outlined in the Gospels was of the present rather than something in the future. Furthermore, Kautsky points out, demonstrating his understanding, that it was accessible only to those who shared their wealth with the poor. It is ironic that this Social Democrat and secretary to Friedrich Engels would seem to have an understanding of the notion of the Kingdom of God many ardent pietists do not fully comprehend. One cannot be too cautious, though, when referring to Kautsky's interpretation of the early Christian communities. While he may have had a correct understanding of the K of G, his understanding of how it comes to be is suspect. For Kautsky, the K of G was brought about through violent means. He understood the ministry of Jesus as a violent overthrow of this world's institutions.

Gentiles the recognized rulers lord it over their subjects, and the great make their authority felt. It shall not be so among you."[20]

Preston points out that the early Christians believed they were, in effect, living in two kingdoms, one closely related to the church and the other ruled over by the Emperor. But living in the Kingdom of God did not preclude the church from living in the world. There was a constant tension between the sense of living in the 'now' and the 'not yet'. How these views impact human culture regarding the historical, sociological, ethical and theological has a great deal to do with two views of the Kingdom of God; the sociopolitically conservative view or a radical view.

Conservatives, says Preston, are satisfied with the status quo. They do not raise challenges to the state of affairs. God has instituted the rule of the day and the Christian must pray for the state but not resist. The future holds the Kingdom and it is for the future that the conservative is concerned. The radical view, on the other hand is "disposed to criticize the status quo, by criteria drawn from the concept of the Kingdom, to reform social and political structures in the direction of a promised future."[21] The position of the church, in this context, was, and is, to challenge the state where it does not reflect a sense of God's justice.

Returning to Leech, he presents three assertions about the Kingdom of God that call for some kind of response. First, Leech argues that central to the notion of the Kingdom of God is that it is in the present, it is concerned with immediate reality but at the same time with an eye to the "not yet". This argument is supported by Colossians 1: 12-13 where we read that God "has taken us out of the power of darkness and

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[20] The use of the term *Gentiles* here is a generic one. It referred to those who had not chosen God, those who did not reflect the law of God. It has been argued in places that Paul, in his epistles, refers to Christians as the true Jews. Whether they were so by birth or not was immaterial. They are the true inheritors of the Kingdom of God. It cannot go without saying that Paul's ministry was to the gentiles.

[21] Preston, *op cit.*, p. 305.

created a place for us in the Kingdom of the Son." The context here is the present tense; not *will* take, but is doing it now, i.e. "Thine *is* the Kingdom," in the present and the Kingdom of the Son is inaugurated in the present.

The second significant truth is: the Kingdom is one of sanctification and grace; one in which truth and justice will reign. To understand this in all its significance is to understand that the Kingdom of God cannot stand in coalition with the dominant status quo. It stands in direct opposition to and in conflict with temporal power structures. In this the Kingdom of God is a revolutionary Kingdom.

The third significant truth is: the Kingdom of God is perpetuated in the church and the sacraments. "Here the bread and wine are not only signs but the instruments of the redemption of the world. Archbishop [William] Temple stressed that in the Mass we offer bread and wine, *not* corn and grapes: we offer the products of labour to be transformed into the very life of God and to transform the life of the world."[22] Those who partake in the Eucharistic rite come before the high altar as one. There is no hierarchy of persons, there is to be no injustice between the communicants. Those who *pass the peace* during the Eucharistic rite must be at peace with their fellows. To partake in the sacrament of communion is to commit to resisting injustice in all its forms; it is to be at one with the poor and the oppressed as well as the rich and powerful who are humble enough to be there.

The alternative to this view is one put forth by those who are more of a pietistic bent. It is a view that is individualistic and future oriented in nature. They would stress that the fundamental work of the church is to save souls and not be concerned with transforming the world. That is God's responsibility; the human's responsibility is to look to the heart. This view also stresses that the world is evil and our home will be in Heaven with God. This view supports the notion, Leech points out, that God's

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[22] Ken Leech, *Has Rebellion a Theology*, IN Prism, November, (1962), pp. 22-27.

Kingdom does not come by way of observation, by way of protest and resistance, but in the quiet of the individual heart. If this view is right, Leech argues, than Marx was right also: "religion is the opiate of the people, a drug to keep the masses quite, an escapist doctrine which offers humankind a crown in heaven when what they really need is half a crown on earth."[23] All too often, however, it is this second view that has held sway. As Tawney points out in Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, there is a

> close connection between Protestant individualism and the growth of free enterprise, capitalism and profiteering. Very often where Protestantism has freed the soul from the shackles of ecclesiastical law, it has delivered him over to the most uncompromising slavery to the civil power.[24]

I will turn now to the implications of Leech's view of the Kingdom of God. I will examine the question of prophetic politics and how the people of the Jubilee Group understand this concept.

4.iii Prophetic Politics: the politics of conflict and resistance

The implications of the Kingdom of God with respect to Ken Leech and the people of the Jubilee Group is that it (Kingdom of God) is at "variance with the empires of this world: it is at variance with profiteering landlords, with big business enterprise, housing freezes, nuclear weapons, racial hatred. It is at variance with a view of [the human person] as a marketable commodity, a cog in a machine and a dispensable cog."[25] Christians must work, Leech goes on, to oppose violence and always work for peace. The people of the Jubilee Group fulfill this function in various ways. In this section, I will focus on some of the many different examples of the politics of resistance by the Jubilee people.

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[24] Quoted in Leech, *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

First, however, we need to have a clear understanding of what prophetic politics is and for this I will turn to Neal Reimer. Reimer, in his latest book Creative Breakthrough in Politics, writes that prophetic politics are characterized by:

> (1) a commitment to the universal applicability of such values as life, peace, freedom, *falling under the rubric of* justice; (2) a commitment to fearless criticism of the existing political, economic, and social order in light of these prophetic values; (3) a commitment to creative constitutional policies and breakthroughs—to sane, practical action—to narrow the gap between the prophetic values and existing reality; and (4) a commitment to continuous prophetic scrutiny and futuristic projection—via imaginative scenarios—in order to guard against future evils and to plan for and anticipate problems of even the best imaginable order (italics mine).[26]

Reimer's model is derived from the biblical prophets of ancient Israel tied to a "living God," and a covenant with a people and mandatory commandments to: commit to life-affirming values of righteousness, freedom and justice and well being for all of humanity; a fearless criticism of actual conduct deviating from those values; action in accord with a covenant to fulfill prophetic values; and a long range and hopeful concern for these values.[27]

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[26] Neal Reimer, Creative Breakthroughs in Politics, London: Praeger, (1996), p. 14. In terms of commitment 1, it should be noted here that Reimer, an American, allows the spirit of the American constitution to impact his sense of personal freedoms and liberty. His is a classical liberal point of view influenced by John Locke. In this, Reimer adds prosperity and excellence to his list of what prophetic politics ought to commit itself too, claiming that God's desire for his people is that they ought to be allowed to live in relative comfort. Hence the concern for things like peace, freedom, prosperity and excellence. Nowhere do the biblical prophets claim a right to comfort. They, more than most, experienced extreme discomfort. Preaching a prophetic message critical of the status quo invited persecution yet their message was not one primarily concerned with comfort. Their primary commitment was for justice for all, not just for a select few, and this they preached with a white hot focus. Under the rubric of justice, fell concerns of life, freedom from oppression and peace. If there was justice, there would be peace in the land and people would not live in fear of oppression. Therefore, it is somewhat dubious of Reimer to suggest that prophetic politics is concerned about prosperity for it is, often, the concern for prosperity that brings on challenges to justice, to peace, freedom and excellence. Concern for prosperity has often been the seed of oppression. Concern for prosperity has been a basic tenet of capitalism and of capitalism, MacIntyre says, it has a tendency to produce a particular kind of personality who has a natural propensity towards injustice (taken from an interview with Ken Leech. Leech paraphrases MacIntyre here). So capitalism is not just bad for the poor; capitalism is actually bad for the successful as well because it produces an unjust type.

[27] Neal Reimer, Karl Marx and Prophetic Politics, London: Praeger, (1987).

What is important to note here is the Jewish understanding of God: God engaged the people (Israelites) in a very personal relationship which, according to Christianity, eventually culminated in a *hypostatic* union between God and humanity in the person of Jesus.

With regards to maintaining prophetic values, there must be an appeal to human reason. These values must be freely accepted by the people and must produce results that enhance life touching freedom and justice, concomitant with a sense of personal and community well being.

Prophetic politics exists in an environment of healthy and creative criticism of existing and immediate power structures and is informed by a biblical and church tradition in which justice is the watchword. Criticism, in this case, implies a call to action—action to prevent the violation of the prophetic values and action to enhance values that build for a community committed to the sustenance of these values.[28] The question begging to be asked is: are the people of the Jubilee Group committed to these values and do they practice healthy criticism?

Whether the Jubilee Group fulfills all four of Reimer's characterizations remains to be seen. Does the Jubilee Group demonstrate a commitment to the universal applicability of justice? First of all, what does justice mean? As previously stated, this thesis will in no way attempt to articulate a comprehensive view of justice. That would be a too great and lofty attempt. It has been covered by such luminaries in the world of philosophy as John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin, Michael Walzer and Michael Sandel, as well as Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor. I dare say that none of them have captured the absolute *being* of justice; I must, however, very briefly try to give some sense of it.

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[28] For a further examination of prophetic politics, see also Neal Reimer, The Future of the Democratic Revolution, London: Praeger, (1984).

Paul Tillich, in Love Power and Justice (1954), argues that there is a sense of ontology linked to the notion of justice. He refers to Heraclitus, who identified justice with *logos*, the law that determines the movement of the *kosmos*, "and applies the concept of the *logos* both to the laws of nature and to the laws of the city. According to Plato, justice is the uniting function in the individual man and in the social group."[29] According to Tillich, the ontological principles of justice are love and equality; love, because there is a great need for humans to be united with their fellow humans, and equality, because humans can only be united in love in an atmosphere of equality where law is equal to everybody in the same way. MacIntyre, in his books Whose Justice? Which Rationality? (1988), and After Virtue (1984), examines justice in the context of the Greek notion of virtue. According to MacIntyre, Aristotle understood virtue as "precisely those qualities the possession of which will enable an individual to achieve *eudaimonia*,"[30] a state of well being and doing well in being well. Simply stated, virtue is about achieving blessedness, happiness and prosperity. Justice, then, is that which enables individuals to pursue and achieve virtue.

But to state justice in such open-ended terms is somewhat simplistic. It doesn't answer the question of whether or not justice is a universal principle, at least within the Aristotelian context. Did justice apply to slaves? Charles Taylor tries to address this question in his essay, Justice after Virtue, where he says, "the basic intuition underlying justice is this: in any attempt to achieve the good, all genuine collaborators benefit from the contribution of others. They are, in a sense, all in each other's debt. But since some will make a more signal contribution, the mutual debt may not be entirely reciprocal."[31] For the slaves of Aristotle's Greece, the notion of justice would

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[29] Paul Tillich, Love, Power and Justice, London: Oxford University Press, (1954), p. 55.

[30] Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, (1984), p. 148.

[31] Charles Taylor, *Justice after Virtue*, IN After MacIntyre, John Horton and Susan Mendus (Eds.), Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, (1994), p. 37.

not apply; slaves were not equal and genuine collaborators. In a society where we do not have slaves in the Greek sense, all citizens are rightful collaborators, some more than others. In this sense, justice is fairness but not necessarily equality. Here, Reimer may have problems with a notion that justice is not equated with equality. That would fly in the face of the American constitution.

Have we wandered afield? What is the Jubilee concept of justice? While not a member of the Jubilee Group, Jim Wallis has the ear of Ken Leech.[32] Wallis writes that the Hebrew word *shalom* is the best definition of justice. It is, he says,

> a deeper and wider notion than the securing of individual rights. The vision of shalom requires us to reestablish "right relationships." It is a call to justice in the whole community and for the entire habitat. Shalom is an inclusive notion of justice extending even to the rest of God's creatures and the whole of creation. Restoring right relationships takes us further than respecting individual rights. It pushes us to begin to see ourselves as a part of a community, even as members of an extended but deeply interconnected global family, and ultimately as strands in the web of life that we all share and depend upon. The biblical vision of shalom could be a basis for a new politics of community and the social healing we so need.[33]

It seems then, that the basis of all prophetic politics is a strong sense of justice. Often this means that the distinctions between what is a fearless criticism of the status quo, sane practical action narrowing the gap between prophetic values and existing reality but never compromising prophetic values, to quote Reimer, and a commitment to prophetic scrutiny concerning guarding against future "evil" is blurred. Being critical of the present and being watchful of the future are near the same thing and the politics of justice in the context of prophetic values is about pursuing virtue.

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[32] Wallis is the founder of the Washington DC group, Sojourners. Its aims are very similar to those of the Jubilee Group although its makeup is somewhat different. Sojourners is not located within the historic church defined by a sacramental theology as the Jubilee Group but a reformation, free church history defined more by a pietistic theology but not articulating its more negative aspects. The people of the Sojourners community believe very strongly in becoming politically involved as the Jubilee Group does. Their view of the Kingdom of God would also parallel the Jubilee Groups, that is a sense of the 'now/not yet'.

[33] Jim Wallis, Soul of Politics, New York: Orbis Books, (1994), p. 73.

4.iii.i The Function of Prophetic Politics

The function of prophetic politics is to protest against the dominating power structures, to "challenge the assumptions of the status quo."[34] Prophetic characters, with respect to prophetic politics, stand in the gap and are a disturbing presence by their actions to the forces that dominate as Leech tells us.

> K: I think politics and the prophetic are always in conflict.
> R: Tension?
> K: Well, more than tension. I would say they are always in conflict because prophetic figures accept the interest in some alternatives so at least they can try to envision in some way, and prefigure, so prophets and prophetic movements tend to be disturbing to any political consensus but they're bound to impact on the political.

It is a commitment to justice that fuels the prophets. But the commitment must also be actualized as S a radical socialist priest and one of the founding members of the Jubilee Group recounts.

> S: Yes well, I mean, the thing which I focused on a lot in our group was the whole amount of the Poll Tax .... To the degree in which we were charged with court and appeared before magistrates, I did. I went with my cassock on, made a speech and got the television cameras there and did all that. I found a lot of allies. Jubilee Group people were very supportive but also I found a lot of allies in people in the Poll Tax campaigners who were non Christians who were the militant left and all the rest of it. I'd like to think that they saw clergy prepared to come alongside them. It also moderated some of their more, because the trouble with the left is that they see every issue as the eve of the revolution which is naive in the extreme.

Direct radical action is often the touchstone of prophetic groups such as the Jubilee Group, but, as D points out, true prophetic politics must function at a level that allows for healthy change. Prophetic politics must be a catalyst for creative change.

> D: I think it's a catalyst, I think what it needs to be is a kind of gadfly tricking the points at which it can find some rest, some flesh to sting so that it can stimulate thought about different issues particularly with the whole nature of politics and some public policy where the church at times can be very good and at other times terribly weak. It will challenge the status quo. So whilst it is always small in number, it's purpose must be, it seems to me, to be able to be that kind of gadfly. Certain people work where it might just get them

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[34] Ken Leech quoting David Nicholls, a long standing member of the Jubilee Group and vicar of the parish of ST Mary and Nicholas Littlemore near Oxford and Chaplain of Exeter College, Oxford. Sadly, Nicholls passed away shortly after my visit with him.

> to think about a new way doing things, a new way of approaching an issue, thinking through how issues can be developed and thought through.

In the context of change, prophetic politics, mindful of the commitment to justice, must be the voice of the silenced, must come along in solidarity with those who exist on the margins. In this, Jubilee has made its commitment clear.

> S: Because Jubilee people by and large are people who are in solidarity with those on the margins, with those who feel oppressed, or are discriminated against, we almost by definition see ourselves as a bit of a remnant, but not a remnant that just is bringing up the rear. We are, I think, trying to push out the barrier and so on.

> B: I think it's more specific, it's even more specific than that, really. In any given neighborhood or community, whose voices are getting silenced? Whose voices are being excluded? Whose voices aren't being heard? And then it's that praxis in relation to those voices because actually, some of the practical work will be done by a whole heap of people and they are not controversial. Everyone agrees they need doing....
> R: Should....
> B: And then there are others. They won't be done because they involve power structures. There's a broad agreement. There are things that need to be done. And then there are others where there isn't that broad agreement and very often that's in relation to the people who are most marginal, most violated, most exploited and depressed in that neighborhood or community. That's where I see my commitment being.

4.iii.ii A Voice Crying in the Wilderness

A voice crying in the wilderness that does not in some way effect change at some level is just that, a voice crying in the wilderness. When radical priests and lay persons are nothing but gadflies, the terror of their local MP, and are not involved in the day to day life of the community at its heart and mind affecting positive and creative change than all their radical protest is nothing but the sound of tinkling bells. It is at the level of the mundane that prophetic politics becomes significant. Historically there is precedent for Christians becoming engaged in the world and these have influenced the Jubilee Group significantly. During the Spanish Civil War, for instance, people such as Stanley Evans, (Evans has had a powerful influence on the life of Ken Leech with regard to the place and function of the church in the context of political action) took an active part in fighting in Spain. "Christians were to be found

speaking at meetings in support of the International Brigade, taking refugee children into their homes and campaigning to halt the progress of fascism in Europe."[35] In 1986, Jean Sargeant, a member of the Jubilee Group, and researcher at the London, *Sunday Times,* became involved in a crippling strike that turned violent. She chose to stay on the picket line for months on end protesting unjust working conditions even though she had opportunities to leave and find work elsewhere. She is very clear on the point that to cross picket lines would brand her a "scab."

> I had given some thought to the ethics of picketing. My priority was loyalty to my fellow strikers. No desire to be "kind" or "nice" must weaken the struggle. With that understood, one could vary one's approach to those who crossed the picket line, always bearing in mind our common humanity. Indeed, just because they were fellow human beings, they should be made aware forcibly of our presence and of having to make a choice each time they crossed the picket line; that was to treat them with the respect due to free moral agents. Tories who treat strikebreakers as heroes while commending loyalty to their own organizations, such as the regiment or public school, are showing contempt for workers' organizations and their ethics.[36]

As demonstrated by Jean Sargeant, the people of the Jubilee Group function as a destabilizing presence. But not all of it is as active in a volatile, or potentially volatile, sense as Stanley Evans, Jean Sargeant, or B at Geenham Common and as S demonstrated earlier (I will return to Jean Sargeant in chapter five). Those involved in prophetic politics are engaged in activism, and yet they must become aware that the constant drone of fever pitched activism "turns people off."

> S: There is a danger of being arrogant, you know, of claiming the moral high ground all the time which antagonizes people's....
> R: This is, yes, precisely, the question....
> S: and I think that is a danger which one has to be constantly aware of. Being rector of the biggest multi-racial parish in Bristol, where we had two large riots when I was there, I was continually going on about racism and about the plight of the black people. I was particularly angry that there was no black priest or employee in the whole of Bristol. I felt this was outrageous, a scandal and the rest of it. But I hammered that thing so much that

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[35] Ruth Charles, *Christian Socialism Past and Present*, IN Who Shall Sound The Trumpet, Ken Leech (Ed.), London: Jubilee Group, (1994), p. 19.

[36] Jean Sargeant, Liberation Christianity *on the* Wapping Picket Line, London: The Jubilee Group, (1992), p. 6.

people turned off. People thought that I was really self-righteous about it. I think that there might have been an element of truth in that. You can hammer a cause until people are, it's like hearing a record, you know, they don't hear what you are saying.

Aware of this, the people of the Jubilee Group are also involved in quite ways at the grass roots level.

K: There are Jubilee people involved at lots of levels in health, education, and so on. If you moved away from East London and looked at Manchester, or Bristol, you'd find, either people who were directly part of the Jubilee group, or people who have been shaped by its thinking in quite key positions within secular politics. I think it is actually quite considerable.

C: It's also to do with how, what priorities are so, I suppose, in a sense my priorities are trying to work with people, trying to create community and to work, and fight, and stand against injustice and all that entails. I've been working with homeless people in London and now here.... I think a lot of the current issues would be things like appropriate housing, properly foundation resourced psychiatric services and things like that; persuading people to take some notice of people's problems in a wealthy city like this. They would be things I probably would be doing anyway without Jubilee. I think it's perhaps giving people a chance to speak who don't ordinarily do that. It's not just the people that I work with, it might be people at the parish I go to, which is a very ordinary and ignored parish in the city. It's a matter of trying to get the people there to start articulating what they think and to start thinking about what they are doing; and their parish, what it means to them to be a church. Then, maybe, trying to reflect that into the wider community. I think that's very important and especially with homeless people who the idea of silence is one which is, being silenced is a very powerful one because people are silenced in so many ways. Particularly people who are homeless in this country don't have the vote so politicians don't take notice of them.

Finally, prophetic politics is about engaging the world in the context of community. A Christianity that draws inward is not prophetic and certainly not about politics. Biblical Christianity, says William Stringfellow in The Politics of Spirituality, is political in the most comprehensive, even cosmic sense. It is the expression of the politics of the Kingdom of God, signifying the effort of the Word of God in this world to redeem this world. [37] Anything else, any form of Christianity that does not engage injustice wherever it exists is "ersatz Christianity".

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[37] William Stringfellow, The Politics of Spirituality, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, (1984).

Ken Leech writes in his book, The Social God (1981), that the church is to engage the poor, the oppressed of this world, to hold them close to its breast, to debase oneself for the sake of the poor and the oppressed. The "church is only true to herself when she exists for humanity .... she must take her part in the social life of the world, not lording it over men and women but helping them and serving them."[38] The church's primary function, he goes on, is to confront the world and its values and then offer an alternative, a vision of hope, freedom and justice in the present—a vision of a new reality in the present but guarding against future incursions of injustice; fighting for a hope in which justice becomes the touchstone of interpersonal relations and relations between persons and institutions as well as intersocietal relations.

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been prophetic politics and its function. One cannot understand this concept without first coming to an understanding of the word prophetic. For the Jubilee Group, the concept prophetic is located within a biblical context. As such, it is informed by a biblical memory. For the Jubilee Group, this memory has powerful and subversive elements. Essentially, this memory demands that prophetic characters function as a destabilizing presence to the status quo, actively engaging in creative resistance and protest but in an irenical way, the powers that dominate.[39] In this regard, Reimer's criteria for prophetic politics have been met and yet Jubilee offers much more.

A Christianity that is the handmaiden of the status quo is an ersatz Christianity. For the Jubilee Group, genuine Christianity must be a place of hope for the silenced,

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[38] Ken Leech, The Social God, London: Sheldon Press, p. 10, (1981).

[39] Essentially, prophetic characters resist institutional power structures, be they church or state, but with a mind to transform these institutions in creative ways rather than tear them down.

for the marginal ones in society. Most often this translates to the poor and the homeless, the sick and the dying. From where does this calling come?

How prophetic politics manifests itself depends, in great measure, on how the view of the Kingdom of God is articulated. For the Jubilee Group one of the underlying premises of the Kingdom of God is the notion of justice. Secondly, it is imperative for the Jubilee Group to understand that the Kingdom of God is in the present but with an eye to the future, it is 'now/not yet'. This view is central to a sacramental theology. Sacramental theology is primarily community oriented as opposed to a pietistic theology which is marked by individualism and a sense that the Kingdom of God is in the future. In the pietist view, Christians are in the world but not of it so-to-speak, and consequently, there is no need to become actively engaged in the transforming of the world. This present world is evil and escape is the only alternative, much like the millenarian view. In the next chapter, I will answer the question, what is a prophetic community?

CHAPTER FIVE

THE JUBILEE GROUP: A PROPHETIC COMMUNITY AND THE POLITICS OF LIBERATION

Firmly rooted within the establishment, most evangelicals continue to operate with the establishment, most evangelicals continue to operate with a working vocabulary from which not only such concepts as revolution and social change, but even such biblical themes as body, humanity and kingdom, are absent.... Moreover, the stress in most social protest movements of evangelical origin is on personal (particularly sexual) morality rather than on structural injustice, a notion that seems strange to most evangelicals.

—Ken Leech, *The Social God.*

The idea of community of mankind has become more concrete, more closely related to the affairs of daily life, has become more practicable than ever before.

—Josiah Royce, *The Hope of the Great Community.*

Introduction

In this chapter, I will respond to the question, what is a prophetic community? At the outset a point of contention needs clarification. The focus of this thesis is the Jubilee Group and as such, the context is the Christian church. To reiterate an already stated point, prophetic communities are not exclusive to the Christian church; they exist in the Jewish, and Muslim communities as well.

Keeping in mind, for the moment, the narrow context of the Christian church (a detailed analysis of traditions other than the Christian tradition was not undertaken, much less a search for these traditions in the literature), there are a number of works that focus on prophetic communities. In almost every case, these works emerge from a

theological perspective.[1] Conversely, nothing could be found on prophetic communities in a thorough search through sociological and anthropological literature.

The purpose of this thesis is not to articulate a new paradigm concerning community formation and function. The purpose is merely to comment on a form of community and its purpose that has not hitherto been studied in great depth.

Because of the shortage of written texts on prophetic communities, I will attempt to bring an understanding to this concept by marrying several disparate works on community, communities of resistance and the theological understanding of a prophetic community. First, I will deal with how the people of the Jubilee Group see themselves with respect to a network. I point out, however, that because the people of the Jubilee Group identify themselves as a network this need not preclude a study of the Jubilee Group with respect to prophetic communities.

5.i The Jubilee Group as a Network

The people of the Jubilee Group are quick to point out that they are a network.

> S: For me, the Jubilee Group, is still best described as a network. But I am aware that different members of the Jubilee Group, their particular group, turn their particular part of the network into more of a community orientation.

Immediately, this sense of *network* S talks about implies a social connection defined by face to face interaction usually around some sort of need exchange. While there may be a sense of communality, networks are usually marked by a degree of individuality. But individuality need not necessarily imply an egocentric relationship between individuals. Individuality may, in some cases, refer more to personal, social

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[1] See, for example, Walter Brueggemann, *op. cit.*; Jacques Ellul, The Presence of the Kingdom, Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, (1989); Dorothy Day, The Long Loneliness, San Francisco: Harper, (1952); Gustavo Gutierrez, *op. cit.*; Jim Wallis, Soul of Politics, New York: Orbis Books, (1994); George W. Webber, Today's Church: A community of Exiles & Pilgrims, Nashville: Abingdon, (1979); Sharon Welch, Communities of Resistance, New York: Orbis Books, (1985).

projects. Individuals may be engaged with social issues at the individual level but the network as a whole may support the individual, as C points out.

> C: That's really how I became involved in Jubilee. I suppose through working at the parish and turning up at Executive meetings held in Ken's flat and meeting people who were thinking along the same lines as me which was really quite a new experience. It was quite affirming and good for me to do that. And then once I moved to London, I became more involved in things because I was physically close to people like Ken and D and the other people from the East London group. It became good for me because it gave me a place in which I could reflect on the work I was doing. Also, it meant that it has given me a kind of direction and also support from a supportive network, people who were thinking along these same lines which was very good to have. I think practical responses to identify the importance of Jubilee for me has been partially through having the network of people. Probably there aren't all that many of us who think the way we do. That is quite important. You can feel isolated. You can meet with people who think the same way. I can also feel isolated at times but there's a solidarity and support through that. It is also a place for actually trying to come to grips with the kind of hard work of living Christianity.

For C, a significant aspect of the Jubilee group as a network is that it is a place of solidarity and mutual support. This is confirmed by Leech who states: "I think the need for solidarity and the need for mutual support has become acute."[2] Jubilee is a place where people come together and work out what is important for them in the context of social justice but always with the support of the wider Jubilee network as C reports.

> C: A lot of people were involved in very important work; supporting each other, helping at work to be better at things like publications that are very important. They give people a chance to see the kind of theology we're trying to think about in an easily available and digestible form .... The thing is that Jubilee is really a place of support in a way that can over come the problems of disagreement. People need to have people around who are supportive, broadly, even if you might disagree with them on exactly where you are going or how you are going to get there, or what the causes are.

5.i.i The Jubilee Group and the Church: a network of resistance

C makes an important point when he states, "what it means to them to be a church." Here we get a glimpse that the Jubilee Group, while functioning as a network, is directly tied to a larger body, a larger community; its relationship to the

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[2] Personal communication.

church is intrinsic. A network, in this sense, does not preclude a sense of community, individuality notwithstanding. And indeed, as will be demonstrated, individuality is not anathema to the notion of community as has already been stated.

For Hegel, a sense of individuality, or in his case particularity, and universality are contingent upon each other.[3] It is the existence of reasonable antinomies such as individuality (particularity) and universality that give to community its sense of resonance. An individual, Hegel argues, cannot accomplish the full extent of his/her being unless there is a reference to other individuals within the same context, in this case a network such as the Jubilee Group. Through a "reference to others, the particular takes on the form of universality, and gains satisfaction by simultaneously satisfying the welfare of others."[4] Kautsky, following Hegel, similarly takes up this question but tries to understand the importance of the individual in a context of individualism. Individualism, he purports, does have its place, the arguments of the Jubilee Group notwithstanding.[5]

> ...individualism may never involve a complete isolation of the individual from his social connections; that would be entirely impossible. The human individual can exist only in society and through society. But individualism at least may go so far as to cause the social bond in which the individual has grown up, and which therefore seems natural and self-evident to him, to lose its power, thus facing the individual with the task of now making his way outside of this *former* social relation. The individual can only achieve this by uniting other individuals with similar interests and requirements, forming new social organizations. The nature of these organizations will of course be determined by the existing circumstances and not by the caprice of the individuals concerned.[6]

Clearly, as we have already seen, the Jubilee Group is comprised of individuals who function as individuals (and are suspicious of individualism) but are guided in their actions to a greater extent by a sense of community, namely, the church. Nevertheless,

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[3] Hegel, Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1991).
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 220.
[5] See fn. 39, p. 91, this text.
[6] Karl Kautsky, Foundations of Christianity, New York: Monthly Review Press, (1925), p. 114.

the question remains, what is the function of the Jubilee Group vis-à-vis the institutional church? Once again, recounting the words of C,

> C: I suppose what we're trying to do, on the one hand, is to nourish those of us who've got that vision, to help us articulate it better and to live it better for community in which we're able to be more effective. On the other hand, it's also ways in which we can articulate it better to society as a whole, to the church and helping that to happen.

In many ways this "articulation" C refers to becomes a voice of resistance to many of the practices of the church that have come to reflect the status quo.

> C: I suppose that in some ways it needs to be a network of resistance to changes in the church as the church becomes, or appears to be becoming more pietistic all the time; more about money and things like that. It needs to be resisting those changes as far as possible and speaking up for the people who are marginalized and strongly putting forward other points of view. It needs to put forward a strong and confident articulation of what Catholicism is to be. Catholicism is very much at the moment, in the Church of England, tied up with people who are opposed to women's ordination, and opposed to any sort of change. They are very conservative with a small "c".

These networks of resistance C refers to do not function as a destructive element (although those who occupy positions of power and whose positions are under threat by these networks may see them as such). They are, Leech points out, more creative and positive. They reflect the idea of *communities of cognitive dissent* which "very often start as negative movements who profess against something and then develop more creative and positive aspects."[7]

Even though these communities function in a positive manner, they tend to exist on the margins for the most part. It is from the margins that they seem to operate best for it is from this place that they can be a gadfly to the dominant status quo—to call the church back to a sense of being true to a tradition in which the church began as a voice for the poor, the widows, the sick and the lame, the orphans and social outcasts.

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[7] Leech, personal communication.

Works such as the *Shepherd of Hermas* laid out what it meant to be a Christian (for someone to be a Christian also meant to be linked to a community).[8]

> The rich must become detached from their wealth before they can be genuine Christians. One proves that he is detached from his wealth by his willingness to help all who are in trouble financially, emotionally, and spiritually.[9]

The kinds of behavior that was proper for Christian duty were: assisting widows, visiting orphans and the poor, show hospitality, and help oppressed debtors in their need.

St. John Chrysostom was somewhat less circumspect. He referred to those individuals who did not assist the poor as thieves. St. Gregory the Great had the following to say:

> The land which yields [the rich] income is the common property of all men, and for this reason the fruits of it, which are brought forth, are for the common welfare. It is therefore absurd for people to think that they do no harm when they claim God's common gift of food as their private property, or that they are not robbers, when they do not pass on what they have received to their neighbors. Absurd! because almost as many folk die daily as they have rations locked up for at home. Really, when we administer any necessities to the poor, we give them their own; we do not bestow our goods upon them. We do not fulfill the works of mercy; we discharge the debt of justice.[10]

The fourteenth century mystic, Ruysbroeck, according to Leech, commented that

> those who taught and practiced tranquillity and could not see their connectedness to those who suffer but easily turned their backs on social justice and preached that spirituality was more about individual attainment of peace, that relationship between God and man was personal alone and disregarded, what he referred to as fraternal charity and ethics, were guilty of spiritual wickedness.[11]

They were, he said, the most evil and most harmful men that lived.

With respect to the status quo, these dissidents were extremely dangerous. Chrysostom, the Bishop of Constantinople was exiled in 398 CE by the emperor

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[8] See William J. Walsh, S. J. and John P. Langan, S. J. *Patristic Social Conscience—The Church and the Poor*, IN The Faith That Does Justice, John C. Haughey (ed.), Toronto: Paulist Press, (1977).

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

[10] Quoted in Conrad Noel, Socialism in Church History, London: Frank Palmer, (1910), p. 108.

[11] Kenneth Leech, The Social God, p. 28.

Arcadius and died in exile. Chrysostom advocated the selling of the church's hardware and giving the money to the poor. Many other Christian Fathers also died in exile.

The Jubilee Group is identified as prophetic through linking back to a radical tradition and reflecting a subversive memory.[12] Leech, quoting Percy Widrington, points out:

> The Kingdom of God, wrote Canon Widrington, is the regulative principal of theology. This teaching has been betrayed, side tracked, forgotten, in one Christian generation after another but its roots are firmly planted in the official documents of the church especially in its Holy Scriptures. Constantly, it arises to trouble the waters and to challenge the defeatism of those who, in the name of Christianity, refuse to confront reality. It is this quality that makes those who preach the Kingdom of God prophetic.

Being true to a radical tradition that is common to the members of the Jubilee Group (as it is to the entire Christian church) is another factor that creates a context of solidarity, as C points out.

> R: Has the Jubilee Group had an influence, an impact, on your life?
> C: Certainly. I think it very much opened a lot of things up for me. It's opened up my church tradition for me, allowing me to be informed about currents within which I find nourishing life It's meant being linked to people like Conrad Noel and Headlam, and tracing all of those currents back which I was unaware of before I became involved in Jubilee. I guess probably, if I hadn't become involved I may not become particularly aware of them. It's been a supportive place in which I've met other people who see the world the same way as I do and can draw sense from that. we can sort of travel together. A lot of close friendships have grown up through Jubilee ant that's very important. It's also been a place that's been quite stimulating intellectually. In all other ways it has given place where I have been able to reflect and think and pushed and prodded and encouraged. That's been very good important and good for me.

It has been stated that the Jubilee Group is a network. But the question before us is, is the Jubilee Group a community? Can a network be a community? I will next explore the question: is the Jubilee Group, as a network, a community? First, however, we must come to an understanding of what a community is.

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[12] Cornell West understands prophetic thought as the capacity to provide a broad and deep analytical grasp of the present in light of the past. Prophetic Thought in Postmodern Times, Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, (1993).

5.ii The Meaning of Community

The concept of community conjures up a host of meanings. For some, it is something that exists in time and place, something that is identifiable over against those who are not members of a particular community. James Brow writes that community simply refers to a sense of belonging together.[13] In this sense, the notion of a community can be defined by its particular belief system. "The sense of belonging together," says Brow, "typically combines both affective and cognitive components, both a feeling of solidarity and an understanding of shared identity,"[14]

Benedict Anderson suggests that this shared identity, or ethos, is an *imagination*, that it exists first in the hearts and minds of the members.[15] Anderson links the notion of "imagined" to communities because, as he says, a bond exists between members; they have a strong affinity towards others of the same community at the most basic level even though many of the members of this community may never meet face-to-face. For Brow, this shared imagination extends to a sense of communalism which is defined by "any pattern of action that promotes a sense of belonging together."[16]

Clearly, as we have seen from C's comments, and from others, Jubilee offers a sense of affinity. But in the Jubilee Group's case most of the members do meet each other on occasion and know each other. There are, of course, members who have not met other members face-to-face, such as the women's group, but in Anderson's terms, a bond still exists between these people fashioned by the Jubilee "spirit." While there are those who have very little knowledge of other Jubilee Group members and do not know of them, this is the exception rather than the rule.

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[13] James Brow, Notes on Community, Hegemony, and the Uses of the Past, *Anthropological Quarterly*, pp., 1-6, (1990), cf. Weber, Economy and Society, Two Volumes, Berkeley: University of California Press, (1978).

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[15] Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, London: Verso, (1991).

[16] Brow, *op. cit.*, p., 1.

According to Anderson, the members of the community believe in the community, they accept the ethos of the community as theirs with respect to giving them identity and value. This is clearly the case for the Jubilee Group as both Leech and C have demonstrated.

Anderson further suggests that these imagined communities are held together and maintained through various mediums. Regarding religious communities such as the church these mediums are quite specific, such as a shared sacred language and written texts. It is through the linkages of a shared text and sacred language that the "religious communities conceive themselves as cosmically centered in a superterrestrial order of power."[17]

Importantly, for religious communities, this linkage has historical continuity; the consistency of the community is largely dependent on consonance with its memory. Again, the words of C and Leech above reinforce this point. Note Leech's previous reference to Percy Widrington's comments about the Kingdom of God and C's telling of how being a part of the Jubilee Group opened up a church tradition for him, an existence that he may not have been aware of prior to his introduction to the Jubilee Group.[18] The question immediately before us, is: is the community faithful to the memory of its earliest beginnings and to those who "had the vision?"

As far as a sacred language is concerned, Anderson argues that this language has an ontological reality. For the early Christian church, this language was Greek. Greek was imbued with sacred significance in the context of its use in the church; truth was only apprehensible through this single, "privileged system of re-presentation." The

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[17] Anderson, *op cit.* p. 13.

[18] I would suggest that many Anglican church people would not be aware of their own church tradition in terms of its socialist tendencies. The Jubilee Group provides a greater function than just to its own members. This is precisely the thrust of prophetic communities, that is, to create an awareness of its own "true" (whatever that may be) self. That is to say, to revive the memory of an early mandate, the point of its existence.

language was imbued with an impulse towards conversion, an "alchemic absorption," which was manifested in an "unselfconscious coherence" to a creed.

Anderson's understanding of language, I suggest, is putting too fine a point on the overarching significance of language as speech. The Christian church, after all, has abandoned the use of Latin as a sacred language. Language has a greater significance, however. It is an active expression of the spirit, of its meaning, rather than mere form. It is the mover of action. Language is a mode of being; it reflects the way one ought to live in the context of a common memory. With respect to a prophetic tradition, a Christian community that is inhered with the radical tradition of the ancient Biblical prophets regarding seeking God's justice on earth has as its imagination the prophetic memory—it is their bond. The language of the community, both spoken and lived must reflect this prophetic memory.

Psalm 82: 3 & 4, gives us a sense of this memory. "Let the weak and the orphan have justice, be fair to the wretched and destitute; rescue the weak and needy, save them from the clutches of the wicked!" And again, in Ezekiel 45: 9, "The Lord Yahweh says this: Let this be enough for you princes of Israel! Give up your violence and plundering, practice justice and integrity, crush my people no more with taxation—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks."

These prophets, uttering these injunctions, also had no end of warnings to those who ignored God's commands. Isaiah 3: 14, "The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for you have eaten up the vineyards; the spoil of the poor is in your houses" (very reminiscent of St. Gregory). The apostle James was much more severe and certainly more pointed in the following remarks.

> Now an answer for the rich. Start crying, weep for the miseries that are coming to you. Your wealth is all rotting, your cloths are all eaten up by moths. All your gold and your silver are corroding away, and the same corrosion will be your sentence, and eat into your body. It was a burning fire that you stored up as your treasure for the last days. Labourers mowed you fields, and you cheated them—listen to the wages that you kept

> back, calling out; realize that the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. On earth you have had a life of comfort and luxury; in the time of slaughter you went on eating to your heart's content. It was you who condemned the innocent and killed them; they offered you no resistance.[19]

The actions of a community of faith, on the other hand, a community that tried to reflect the prophetic spirit are exemplified in the book of Acts. Acts recounts the life of what some of the early Christian communities tried to live out.

> These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.
>
> The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone.
>
> The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.
>
> They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.[20]

Reference has already been made to Burton Mack's work on early Christian communities. As noted, he writes that for the early Christian communities, the sense of community, or group formation was very important. There was no one single, significant community, Mack points out, and these groups differed in important ways but the single most identifying feature was that they were all involved in thinking about what the kingdom of God was and how this was to impact their daily lives.[21]

The kingdom of God was, for these disparate communities, not necessarily worked out systematically or with distinct clarity.

> The kingdom of God referred to an ideal society imagined as a alternative to the way in which the world was working under the Romans. But it also referred to an alternative way of life that anyone could take at any time. In this sense the kingdom of God could be realized simply by daring to live differently from the normal conventions. The kingdom of God in the teachings of Jesus was not an apocalyptic or heavenly projection of an otherworldly desire. It was driven by a desire to think that there must be a better way to

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[19] James 5: 1-6 (Jerusalem Bible).

[20] Acts 2: 42-47 (Jerusalem Bible).

[21] Burton Mack, *op cit.*

> live together than the present state of affairs. And it called for a change of behavior in the present on the part of the individuals invested in the vision.[22]

In regard to having all things in common, it should be pointed out that the early Christian communities were engaged in a social experiment. Some things were adopted and retained such as care for the poor, the widows, the sick and the lame, the social outcasts as well as sharing meals. Table communion, as the sharing of meals came to be known, became the hallmark of the early church communities.[23] In time other practices fell by the way such as selling all property and living in common. As far as those practices that were adopted and retained, the Jubilee Group, too, has maintained many such practices.

5.ii.i Community as Symbol

Anthony Cohen follows very closely Anderson's notion of an imagined community.[24] Cohen, however, focuses more on the community as symbol. For Cohen, the notion of community is the arena in which people acquire their most fundamental values outside the immediate home. In the interaction with individuals with a common *imagination*, people unconsciously absorb the language and texts of the community which manifest themselves in daily living. It is where individuals learn how to live and act within a social context. The medium of significance for language and texts are symbols (social and cultural interaction is the basis for the creation of culture and its continuance). These symbols, Cohen argues, function in such a way that enable the adherents to make sense of the world. They are things for which people think with about the community but importantly, they do not have to think about them in the same specific way. There should, however, be similitude.

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[22] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

[23] What is interesting to note is that the women of Jubilee continue with this practice whereas the men do not.

[24] Anthony P. Cohen, The Symbolic Construction of Community, London: Routledge, (1993).

> The quintessential referent of community is that its members make, or believe they make, a similar sense of things either generally or with respect to specific and significant interests, and, further, that they think that that sense may differ for one made elsewhere. The reality of community in people's experience thus inheres in their attachment or commitment to a common body of symbols.[25]

Essentially, it is not the shared symbols so much as its meaning. For example, within the Christian church as a community, the cross is a shared symbol. For post-reformation pietist Christians (free-church), the cross, while an important symbol, is not significantly visible (or that much a part of) in the Eucharistic ritual. For Catholics, on the other hand, the cross as symbol is central. With respect to meaning, however, both pietistic Christians and Catholic Christians would hold a common belief about the significance of the cross as a symbol of Christ's atonement and salvation of mankind. When secular artists use the cross in a way that skews the meaning of the cross for Christians, the Christian church universal responds with anger in unison claiming sacrilege.[26]

As far as symbols are concerned, the community, itself, becomes a symbol according to Cohen. In this sense, Cohen argues, the structure of the community is not that significant. What is important is that the community as symbol becomes something important to think about. This will become an important theme in the discussion of prophetic communities. In seeking to understand the phenomenon of community, writes Cohen, "we have to regard its constituent social relations as repositories of meaning for its members, not as a set of mechanical linkages."[27] For the members, the community becomes a mental construct. The importance of this is that the community becomes the symbolic repository of a common language, both linguistically and textually. Note how Leech and C talk about the Jubilee Group as a place where they meet people who think along the same lines as they do and that the

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[26] Note the response of the Christian Church to singer Madonna's use of the cross in her music videos.

[27] Cohen, *op. cit.*, p.98.

Jubilee Group becomes a place where they can articulate how to address social issues.[28] Closely linked to this is the sense that the "symbolic expression of community refers to a putative past or tradition."[29] Again we are reminded by C of his discovery of a tradition he was unaware of prior to his introduction to the Jubilee Group.

While the Jubilee Group defines itself as a network, they do exemplify community traits in Anderson and Cohen's terms. The people of the Jubilee Group gather around shared visions, common symbols and boundaries that define members of the Jubilee Group as members and exclude others who do not share the vision.[30] Community, in Cohen's terms, is less about structure than it is about conjuring up meaning; communities are something to think about. In many ways, the Jubilee Group as a network qua community acts as a symbol to the members of the Jubilee Group. Thinking about the Jubilee Group conjures up ideas about what it means to be part of this small radical group, as C has explained. There is an implied praxis animated by the Jubilee Group's radical sense of theology and the political.

In the next section, I will explore the question of what a prophetic community is in the context of the Jubilee Group.

5.iii The Prophetic Community: a community of resistance

Anderson and Cohen envision community to be an entity that exists in the hearts and minds of the participating members. But what, exactly, is a community in terms of the prophetic? What is a prophetic community? Let us return to the words of Leech

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[28] More importantly, the people themselves become the living symbols of community and in sacramental language, the people are the living sacraments of the community.

[29] Cohen, *op cit.*, p. 99.

[30] Ken, in an earlier interview with M, indicated that neo-conservative Christians would themselves choose not to identify or share the radical vision of the Jubilee Group. So, in a sense, the Jubilee Group's boundaries are as much monitored and observed by people who do not want to be part of the Jubilee network as by the Jubilee Group.

reported earlier on the question of what it means to be prophetic and link that to the notion of community.

> K: I think that there are two elements in it really. One is a striving towards the new, striving to provide for an alternative way of looking at reality which is not the dominant one. In that sense I think Walter Brueggemann is very close to the essence of the prophetic when he talks about the prophet as a destabilizing presence in any community.
> R: At a mundane level, how would you see prophetic communities engage in society at large?
> K: Well I suppose they are bound to be small and concerned with specific issues when they begin. I think it would be difficult to envisage a movement which took on the whole culture although that might be the end result. I imagine that when such movements begin they see themselves as motivated by a resistance to a particular thing. I imagine something like simplicity of life styles is a very common one where communities quite deliberately avoid luxury, avoid television, avoid telephone, avoid a lot of the things we come to regard as necessary parts of life and deliberately opt for simplicity. That may not seem to be terribly threatening until it gains a wider range of acceptance in which case it does become threatening because it threatens financial power. When people don't buy consumer goods then it becomes very threatening to a society which depends upon them. I don't think that's the only thing though. I think quite often a group will begin as a movement of resistance against a particular form of oppression. I think one saw this in the confessing church in Nazi Germany and in parallel movements elsewhere where you get a community which comes together initially to resist a particular form of oppression or injustice and through this develops its own life almost as a survival strategy.

C has already pointed out that the Jubilee Group as a network of resistance exists to change the church from becoming "more pietistic, more concerned about money." The Jubilee Group is a network of resistance that speaks up for people who are marginalized.

Cornell West addressed this sense of resistance in the context of the prophetic. First, he says, people with a prophetic bent and concomitantly prophetic communities cut across the grain of the status-quo.[31] It is the people on the underside of life, he goes on, that keep alive the resistant nature of the prophetic tradition.

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[31] Cornell West, *op. cit.*

5.iii.i Communities of Resistance

The identifying feature of a community such as the Jubilee Group is that it is a community that resists, a type of community of resistance. We need, therefore, to examine this aspect of resistance and see how it links up to the notion of a prophetic community.

A. Sivanandan believes that the "struggles of the oppressed, be it black or women *or whomever*, which are only for themselves and then not for the least of *them*, the most deprived, the most exploited of them, are inevitably self-serving and narrow and unable to enlarge the human condition."[32] For Sivanandan, the struggle of the oppressed must necessarily be placed within a socialist context. He argues that any struggle for liberation which is not socialist in the first instance ends up as tyrannical.

Sivanandan looks at societies and the struggle for liberation of the deprived and exploited in a context of emerging technologies in which people are becoming more and more fragmented from an interdependent relationship with fellow members of society. In a capitalist framework, people as people are losing their sense of identity. Within a capitalist economic order the only interests that can be served are self interests and the ultimate result is that society becomes fragmented into individual universes. Civil society becomes the terrain in which political power and political will function to distance individuals in such a way that no interpersonal relationships can exist to raise the hope that there might be an alternative to hegemonic power.

In Britain, Thatcher manipulated civil society in order to limit this terrain, to "keep government from the people, undermine local democracy, abrogate worker's rights ... make education so narrow and blinkered as to make the next generation safe for Tories."[33] It is, Sivanandan writes, an ideology of selfishness in which society

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[32] A. Sivanandan, Communities of Resistance, London: Verso, (1990), p. 15.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

consists of a class of individuals in and for himself/herself. The self, in Sivanandan's make up, is a "small, selfish inward-looking self that finds pride in lifestyle, exuberance in consumption and commitment in pleasure."[34] The ideology of self, reports Sivanandan, "obscures from public view those who live in the inner cities, the low paid and the poor, the underclass of homeworkers and sweatshop workers, the casual and part time workers ... the refugees, migrants, asylum seekers: the invisible workers who have no rights, no claims, no roots, no domicile and are used and deported at will."[35] It is precisely this civil society and an institutional church that reflect the ideology of the self that the Jubilee Group and groups of resistance have withstood.

The uniqueness of these communities of resistance according to Sivanandan is that they are marked by a high degree of individuality but the people, the members, come together in solidarity with others to stand against the immediate power of aggressive institutions that dominate or oppress those who are "deprived and exploited," who have no voice, those who are removed by institutions of power to the margins of society.

These communities come together in solidarity for individuals to help each other out: they become an organic solidarity.[36]

This coming together in solidarity with many disparate groups is very much a part of the Jubilee ethos as Leech points out.

> K: I think that the first thing that I would think of was the occupation of the National Front Site in Bethnal Green which was not all organized by the Jubilee Group as such but a lot of Jubilee people were involved with it. The majority of the people who were involved with that were atheists, mainly from the Marxist perspective. I remember holding the first

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[34] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 51-52.

[36] By organic solidarity I mean that there is a solidarity based on a living participatory interdependence of parts to make up a unity. No one voice can be superimposed on or overshadow the significance of another.

> May Day party we've ever had in the pub and it was a Jubilee Group May Day party. The majority of the people who came were from the secular left who didn't quite know what the Jubilee Group was except that there were people whom they trusted who had been involved in a lot with anti-Fascist activity or with other things. I think of people like RD and myself and G and RJ at that time. There were people, you know, on the whole, people thought we were all right and a lot of people turned up at this May Day party and I remember joking with RP that, because they, the Socialist Worker Party came, and WD, who is a key figure in the Socialist Worker Party, who gave one of the Jubilee Lent lectures and the International Marxist Group came. There was a woman called E that I worked very closely with on anti-Fascist things, and there was a Communist, what was left of the Communists, and various Anarchists. All sorts of people turned up at this May Day party and I remember joking to R that this was the only place where all these groups would come together and not fight each other. I think that was quite an important point when a lot of non-Christians had some sort of link, some sort of tenuous link....

Above, we can see how the Jubilee Group tends to act as a magnet for many radical groups and individuals, not all Christian. Together, these individuals, coming together in solidarity, act as a large community of resistance. The sense that is derived in the above reference is one of festivity with comrades but individuals of the Jubilee Group also stand, in solidarity, in the breech with activists on the line: behind these individual Jubilee Group members is the entire Jubilee network offering support. Many examples of solidarity abound such as the young woman, a member of the Jubilee Group, who actively participated with the women of Greenham Common protesting the presence of American nuclear weapons on British soil or the priest protesting the Poll Tax.

Another example of solidarity already alluded to in chapter four is given by Jubilee Group member Jean Sargeant in her journal, Liberation Christianity on the Wapping Picket Line. Jean's account tells of the struggle of 5,500 *News International* printworkers at *Times, Sunday Times, News of the World* and *Sun* against the unfair dismissal in 1986 by Rupert Murdoch. MP Tony Benn wrote in the foreword of her account that "the truth is that this whole operation—the mass dismissal of printworkers—was planned in advance quite deliberately, and carried through with the knowledge and assistance of the government, which provided literally thousands of

police to support the company against the employees." Jean had several opportunities to walk away from the conflict and find work elsewhere but remained active on the picket line from Jan. 24, 1986 to Feb. 6, 1987, standing in solidarity with her fellow workers at great emotional and financial cost to herself.

In that time Wapping became a fortress with barbed wire, bright searchlights and a daily contingent of riot police in full battle gear. At one point there were in excess of 2,400 police stationed to quell the strikers. The total cost for the police over the period was £4.73 million. Camera men covering the event were attacked by police; the police used horses to charge demonstrating strikers. Of the workers, 472 were arrested, the union was fined £25,000 for contempt, £17 million assets were sequestered and tragically, one person was killed.

Tony Benn writes:

> If these events had been occurring in Eastern Europe, or in some Third World dictatorship, there would have been mass sympathetic coverage on television and in the newspapers, and the usual cries of protest from the liberal commentators, but because it was in London and working people and trade unions were under attack the TV and radio and other newspapers and directed their fire almost exclusively against those who had been sacked.[37]

5.iii.ii Communities of Resistance: the telltale signs

What are some of the identifying features of a community of resistance? Sivanandan gives five key factors that identify a community of resistance. In the first place, they are "collectives, movements that issue from the grassroots of economic, social and political life, from the bare bones of existence, from people who have nothing to choose but survival, and are therefore dynamic, open, organic."[38] Regarding solidarity with the grass roots movements, the people of the Jubilee Group position themselves along side these movements. As noted above, the people of the

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[37] Tony Benn IN Jean Sargeant, *op cit.*, p. iv.

[38] Sivanandan *op cit.*, p. 56.

Jubilee Group come together in action with these movements to oppose political, economic and religious institutions that give rise to communities of resistance in the first place. It is in solidarity that the Jubilee Group fulfills Sivanandan's first point as S, a priest in Bristol reveals below:

> S: Yes well, I mean, the thing which I focused on a lot in our group in Bristol was the whole amount of the Poll Tax. To the degree in which we, you know, were charged with court and appeared before magistrates, I did, yes, and I went with my cassock on, made a speech and got the television cameras there and did all that and, I mean, I found a lot of allies, I mean, yes, Jubilee Group people were very supportive but also I found, to answer your other question, a lot of allies in people in the Poll Tax campaigners who were non-Christians who were the militant left and all the rest of it. It was, in some respects, I'd like to think that they saw clergy who were prepared to come along side them.

Secondly, "these movements do not stop at the bounds of civil society or confine their activities to its boundaries."[39] They are very much aware that outside civil society lurks the state and the church. Their struggles, argues Sivanandan, stretch from civil society to the state and church and back again in a never ending continuum "effecting the material changes in the life and rights of ordinary people and extending the bounds of civil society itself."[40]

Thirdly, these movements find their authority in practice, test theory in outcome and work towards a wider political movement commensurate with the times in an unrelenting struggle against Capitalism. The Jubilee Group is defined in praxis, defying the dominant political and religious culture—a political and economic order that tries to articulate (construct) meaning touching social, political and religious identity.

Fourthly, these movements have little patience or sympathy with the notion that the politics is about individualism. People live in a context of other people and what individuals do impact other individuals. Individualism leads to fragmentation.

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[39] Sivanandan, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Individuals are accountable to society and have a responsibility to work for unity within society rather than schism. The political, however, becomes very personal and as such produces a radical society.

It has already been established that there is a degree of individuality within the Jubilee Group. Individuality, however, does not preclude a sense of community as Hegel and Kautsky previously argued. In opposition to Kautsky, there is the belief that individualism fragments community and the people of the Jubilee Group are highly critical of individualism as G points out.

> G: I think that, that is right. I'm absolutely a member of Jubilee and I suppose I've got to take some responsibility for all the criticism but that doesn't mean that I'm not critical as well. It's that Jubilee is made up of a bunch of people who don't believe in individualism. We're not liberals, we're radicals, we're anti-individualists because we're anti-Thatcherism. I think Thatcherism is a creed, not just a government. We're anti-individualists, we believe in community, but we are all exceptionally eccentric.... I'm absolutely with Ken, I'm anti-individualism, I like the concept of community.

Finally, there is an unspoken morality about these movements in that they engender a simple faith in human beings and a deep knowledge that individuals are nothing by themselves. Individuals need to confirm others and be confirmed. There must be a consciousness of one's own oppression and to "open one's sensibilities out to the oppression of others, the exploitation of others, the injustices and inequalities and unfreedoms (sic) meted out to others."[41] Again, these communities must stand in solidarity with the oppressed because when the individual is oppressed, the entire community is oppressed. This has already been amply demonstrated by the people of the Jubilee Group on issues such as racism as also noted below.

> S: I have lived more than twenty five years in multifaith communities. I have founded two inter-faith groups in the West Midlands, one of which is now the biggest in the country and have got very much involved in inter-faith matters, primarily as an anti-racist vehicle and as a reaction against racism and I cannot ever pretend again, I think, that Christianity

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[41] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

or the gospel has the sole preserve. It seems to me that L used the phrase, you know, we must follow the Holy Spirit as our bearer in front.

So far I have been addressing communities of resistance but how is this linked to the notion of prophetic communities. The linkage will become visible in the discussion below tying communities of resistance to liberation theology.

5.iii.iii Communities of Resistance and the Theology of Liberation: Dangerous Memories and Alternate Knowledges

The Jubilee Group has been significantly influenced by liberation theology.

D: Yah, I came to it when I first came back to London in '75. I was working at St. Botolph's and got to know Ken through that and I kind of followed him in at that particular point. I would identify myself quite clearly in the Jubilee mode, Catholic and socialist. To find a group of people who were thinking those kind of ideas through was quite interesting and useful to be able to do that. I came in at that particular time. I suppose through a friendship with Ken over the years and stayed with it in a way that perhaps other people haven't.... The fact that there was a group that was interested in thinking about Socialism and Social Justice and the whole political philosophy with theology. This was very important in the sense that I think, the point at which Jubilee came into being was a point when liberation theology was beginning to take off in this country. There's a whole debate going on in that particular arena, that relationship of theology to political action which was around before but was more clarified with liberation theology.

D concerns himself here with what Rowan Williams refers to as orthopraxis. Leech gives us some insight to this concept in a context of liberation theology.

K: I think the impact of liberation theology has been very important. Your question about Orthopraxis shows a completely different way of doing theology. *Orthopraxis* is a word that we used a good deal in the early months of Jubilee. We used it a good deal because we wanted to make it very clear that we stood within the tradition of Catholic orthodoxy, that we were not liberals, we were not revisionists, we didn't want to change the nature of the faith and we felt that a lot of radical, and I put 'radical' in inverted commas for the moment, Christian groups sat very lightly to credal faith. If anything we probably were, acceptedly, triumphalist and rigorist in the early period in the way in which we asserted our orthodoxy. I think we were leaning over backwards to say that we stand firmly within the Catholic movement and our difference from other Anglo-Catholics is not that we watered down the doctrine, but that we take the doctrine with great seriousness and enjoy its social and political consequences. I think that we were much more deductive in our style at that time. I wouldn't say that the influences, the concept of orthopraxis, had no influence on us. I think it clearly did but I think the tradition that most of the early people stood in was much more one of getting the doctrine right and defining it. It was more a kind of reflective mode that became popular. Remember that although the term liberation theology had been coined by Gutierrez in '68, it only really entered into the English

> language around 1973, in Rosemary Ruther's book, and that wasn't known in Britain, so that the literature on liberation theology and the concept of orthopraxis was actually very, very new.

But how, exactly, does liberation theology fit into this discussion of communities of resistance? Welch claims that liberation theology is a "proclamation of the ... God of liberation."[42] It is, she writes, "an impassioned critique of society and established religion and theology in the name of justice."[43] Institutional Christianity has failed miserably as far as addressing the substantive issues of justice, argues Welch. "The failure of Christianity is a failure of practice, a failure to transform the corruption and inhumanity of the world."[44] Quoting Johann Baptist Metz, Welch further argues that "the failure of Christendom is not a failure of intellectual understanding, but a failure to establish in practice its vision of the human community.[45]

Terry Drummond, a member of the East London Jubilee Group, writes that "the need for the Christian in Britain today is to be involved in the debate about contemporary requirements, and the need for a theology that takes seriously the issues of poverty and unemployment is very necessary."[46] Indeed, he goes on to say that an "underlying analysis is the realization that the church has often stood by capitalism to the detriment of the poor and that to redress the balance may demand an understanding of Marx's work."[47] Communities of resistance qua prophetic communities informed by liberation theology addresses this lacuna.

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[42] Welch, *op. cit.*, p.33

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 33

[45] Johann Baptist Metz, Faith in History and Society Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology, New York: Seabury Press, (1980), quoted IN *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[46] Terry Drummond, Liberation Theology and British Christians, Terry Drummond and Mary Pepper (eds.), London: Jubilee Publications, (no date), p. 2.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

To return to an earlier theme of solidarity highlighted by Sivanandan in his five points, Drummond quotes Sara Maitland, who argues that for groups such as the Jubilee Group, the

> humanity of Jesus means solidarity and identification of all Christians, not just with each other, but with the oppressed and enslaved people. Traditional theology has reduced the significance of God becoming human and still applauds a passive waiting for an Old Testament God to swoop down and do the 'liberating' for and to his people—probably after they are dead.[48]

The crux of Drummond and Maitland's argument is found in the words of Welch who points out that the liberation the communities of resistance (prophetic communities) try to formulate is founded upon the life and action of actual communities in the real and quotidian experiences of men and women struggling to create an alternative world to the one that exists to dominate the poor and the social outcasts. Their vision, she says, is forged in the context of a community of faith, a community that appropriates the Christian tradition in the context of political and social struggle.

Concerning discourse, communities of resistance/prophetic communities that are informed by a liberation, or rather a liberating theology, represent the resurgence of knowledge that has been subjugated by dominant theologies, ideologies and culture. These liberating communities, Welch goes on to say, do not separate the spiritual from the political, they are conflated. The political is one and the same with worship of God (*homoousious*). The worth of human life is undivided. The spiritual life, unlike that which William Stringfellow is so critical of when it is mere mysticism, is inextricably bound to social and political transformation. The trajectory of these liberating communities must be, then, linked to the past, to an earlier tradition. Finally, the aim of these communities is to reflect the memories of an earlier tradition and in the

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[48] Sara Maitland, A Map of the New Country: Women and Christianity, R. K. P., (1983) quoted in Terry Drummond, *ibid.*, p. 9.

present, these memories become dangerous and subversive to the religious status quo but also to the dominant political and economic institutions.

Keeping in mind that the context here is the Christian church first and foremost, it is this expressed need to reflect the Christian tradition, to be faithful to the radical memory of the early Old Testament prophets, the New Testament teachings of Jesus, and the early church (for that is essential to the tradition of the Christian church), the established communities of resistance similar to the Jubilee Group (in similar contexts) act as prophetic communities. In this context, prophetic communities, while they are communities of resistance similar to Sivanandan's taxonomy (they retain most of the same characteristics), veer off in a slightly different direction.

Sivanandan's model is useful in understanding the makeup of a community of resistance. He does not, however, provide us with an overarching ontology for these groups. The reason for this is because each group has a different reason for being. They come together on different issues. Groups or communities such as the Jubilee Group have as their reason for existence the tradition of the church and what this means theologically and politically. Being true to this tradition, or to an interpretation of this tradition, locates the Jubilee Group (and similar groups) within a prophetic tradition. I suggest here that this tendency to reflect a prophetic memory identifies a group as a prophetic community, a subset of a community of resistance.

Prophetic communities, in this regard are somewhat different than Sivanandan's communities of resistance. While Sivanandan's communities come together to protest injustice, there isn't the sense that these communities are necessary to the ongoing function and maintenance of society. Quite the opposite, in fact. While these communities protest to change the system, their function may not be specifically one of re-centering society but one of simply making known injustice and redress injustice in order for the victims to be extricated from injustice.

Prophetic communities, on the other hand function on the margins of a larger community (but within the boundaries of the larger community) to re-center the larger community but also to transform society. They act as a gadfly to call the dominant community, in this case the institutional church, to be faithful to a prophetic memory; to be cognizant of an original mandate. They exist to bring a critique on arbitrary forms of power that seek to dominate. In the case of the church, their purpose is to remind the church that it is to be a place, not only where the social outcasts find solace and protection, but also a place that brings critique to bear on market influences in the church so that the content of the gospel, according to Cornell West, doesn't get flattened out; "so that the message of the Cross doesn't become diluted; so that the preacher doesn't become just another businessman."[49]

For the Christian church, prophetic communities are essential to the ongoing life of the church. Recalling Stanley Evans' words, the real church is in the back streets ministering to the poor and the social outcasts. According to Evans, prophetic communities are symbols of the root of the church, they represent the sustaining life of the institutionalized community.

But it isn't the institutional church alone that feels the effects of their resistance. As Cornell West so ably expresses, the prophetic tradition and communities that make this tradition their focus, critique a culture that deracinates the soul by denying the requisites to "make it through life". Missing from modern culture, West claims, is

> what's needed to navigate through the terrors and traumas of death and disease and despair and dread and disappointment. And thereby falling prey to a culture of consumption. A culture that promotes addiction to stimulation.[50]

While Sivanandan's communities aim to change society so that marginal communities ought not to exist, prophetic communities operate with the knowledge that

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[49] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

the institutional church needs to be transformed. To do so will need the constant co-operation of the marginal groups and the established institution. There always needs to be a creative tension within the church in order for the church, in this case, to stay alive rather than lapse into sectarianism of the worst type such as Waco, Texas, or Jonestown. The prophetic memory, instead of becoming a dominant voice needs to function as a catalyst for correction.

A point needs to be made here. Prophetic communities seem to raise, by their very existence, contradictions within the larger community they are a part of. Are these contradictions irreconcilable vis-à-vis the institutional church? Do they constitute a challenge to the ethos of the entire community and thereby threaten the community's imagination? Such questions arise out of the language and action of the Jubilee Group vis-à-vis that of the institutional church. Can a group of radical Christians such as the Jubilee Group exist within a larger community such as the institutional church and at the same time reflect the ethos of the church when the two seem to be in conflict with each other, or do these two entities exist so much at odds with each other that the central message of their spirit is vitiated? Or, do marginal groups such as the Jubilee Group exist as a corrective agent for the larger institution (assuming that the larger institution needs correcting)? How is it that such opposing points of view can exist simultaneously within the same body and still the body survives? The answer to these questions lie in Rowan Williams' understanding of orthodoxy.

> K: In one of J's early papers he used the expression that liberalism is revisionist. He had a very clear sense, as Rowan did, although they put it slightly differently, that orthodoxy involved holding together truths which at first sight appeared incompatible. One of the characteristic features of heresy was a limited vision. Heresy took one part of the truth and hammered it and hammered it so that it seemed to be the whole truth, whereas one of the characteristics of orthodoxy according to this view was the ability to live with paradox and to hold together truths that were apparently incompatible. One of the interesting things about this, and I don't think we consciously thought about it at the time, but one of the theological influences on Jubilee was Eric Mascall who by the time Jubilee was formed must have been well into his seventies. One of his books is a book called *Via Media* in which he argues the position, that the central truths of Christian faith are, in fact, a via

> media which is not to be mistaken for comprehensiveness. He says the via media is actually a very precarious road and it's very easy to fall off it. It's a very narrow road between poles and it is in fact an attempt to hold together truths that appear to be incompatible with each other. Therefore, there is something about orthodoxy which has this characteristic of being somewhat messy and rather dangerous, whereas heresy tends to be very simple, very clear, there is no paradox in heresy. I think Irenaeus says somewhere that the characteristic of all heretics is their rejection of all paradox. Heretics like everything cut and dry. Jesus was either God, or Jesus was Human. Either God could suffer or God couldn't suffer, either this or that, and orthodoxy is an attempt to say this is true and this also is true and they appear to be in collision. I think Rowan was working that at a more sophisticated level when he wrote his 1983 essay. I think a lot of us would be more reticent and more, hopefully a bit more humble today, and the way that we would talk about orthodoxy then maybe we would have been then.

It seems that Williams and Mascall would argue that antinomies make for healthy communities. Communities that reflect dominant ideas only, often articulated by dominant groups within the structure of the community, may not be all that healthy. What Williams and Mascall seem to be arguing is that in order for communities to become vibrant, healthy and creative, tension (of a creative sort) is needed. Seeming contradictions build strength rather than create weakness. But how does one determine which tensions are healthy and which are pathological? These are questions reserved for further research that goes beyond the parameters of this thesis.

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the question, what is a prophetic community and secondly, is the Jubilee Group such a community?

It has been argued in this chapter that a community is a thing of the mind, of the imagination. That is not to say that communities are imaginary for they exist in very real terms. With respect to imagination, the notion of community conjures up in the hearts and minds of the participants in community a sense of belonging, a sense of solidarity with those who identify strongly with a shared identity.

The people of the Jubilee Group have stated clearly that they are drawn to the Jubilee Group because it is there that they can join with others who believe the same

way they do and act upon those same beliefs. But it is not enough to just come together in solidarity around political issues as members of the Jubilee Group have stated. It is important for this imagined community to be informed by a system of beliefs. For some members, the Jubilee Group has been a place where the prophetic tradition of the church has been learned. This same prophetic tradition has informed the praxis of the Jubilee Group.

The insistence of the Jubilee Group to simulate the prophetic tradition has, in many instances placed the Jubilee Group at odds with the established power structures within the church as well as without—the prophetic tradition is one in which the dominant status-quo is challenged. There is a sense of strong resistance to the status-quo and as such, the Jubilee Group is very much a type of community of resistance.

The linkage of resistance to the status quo and a prophetic tradition identifies the Jubilee Group as a prophetic community. While communities of resistance function to challenge the injustice of the larger society, prophetic communities have a much more irenical nature. Their purpose is to work with the larger institution in order to re-center it back to an original vision yet at the same time to transform society. Prophetic Christian communities are, in essence, the root of the church.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION: Planting a Seed

I am told that religion and politics are different spheres of life. But I would say without a moment's hesitation and yet in all modesty that those who claim this do not know what religion is.

—Mahatma Gandhi

The focus of this thesis has been the question: what is a prophetic community? The context has been the Christian church with a special reference to the Jubilee Group in East London. The probe into the prophetic community is predicated on several secondary questions, namely: what is prophetic politics and who is this Jubilee Group that engages in prophetic politics? In this concluding chapter, I will return to some of the dominant themes raised in this thesis as a recapitulation but also to lay the groundwork for further study.

Much of the discussion herein was located around terms such as tradition, identity, theology, politics, praxis, prophetic politics, networks, communities, and finally, prophetic communities

The people of the Jubilee Group have stated that they are not so much a community as they are a network. In fact, there was some puzzlement around my interest in trying to see the Jubilee Group in terms of a community. Perhaps this curiosity may arise from a notion that community exists in material place and time.

Such a view is not that uncommon, but the notion of community taken in this study digresses from this understanding. The notion of community herein is put

forward by Anderson and Cohen which suggests that community exists prior to its materiality; it exists in hearts and minds first. It is something that exists in the imagination of the people: imagined but not imaginary. This seems to suggest that community has an ontic reality. At the fundamental level there is a being; some people in the Jubilee Group referred to this as the "Jubilee Spirit" others as a "yeast" out of which grows something that has inherent within it a communal bond quickened by a communal relationship. It is with this view that I examined the Jubilee Group and tried to find some common threads that identified it first as a community and second as a prophetic community.

What is specific to the spirit of the Jubilee Group? What makes the Jubilee Group unique as a "community?" The defining feature of the Jubilee Group is its commitment to the spirit of the early Jewish prophetic writings (the Old Testament) and the New Testament as well as the early Christian community. To say that the Jubilee Group has a being, a spirit, or yeast, presupposes that something of the Jubilee Spirit existed prior to present time, that the Jubilee Group is imbued with a tradition. With respect to community, tradition forms a web of significance; tradition is the enacted stories of the community in a context of history and in this sense, tradition helps in creating a sense of identity. The Jubilee Group becomes a place where people gather together to think about things along with other individuals, a place to engage a spirit animated by a tradition.

Of course, some traditions are more about subjugated memories, even in the context of the community such as the Jubilee Group. To say that the tradition of all members of the Jubilee Group is the same is simply false. Within the Jubilee Group, we have seen, there are contesting traditions. There is the tradition of the clergy, historically dominant and at times exclusionary; there is the tradition of women, dominated, suppressed and marginalized; there is the tradition of "people of colour,"

again a tradition of the marginalized. Yet at the same time, these contesting traditions seem to be mediated by another tradition, the tradition of radical movements within the church.

In the case of the Jubilee Group, the radical tradition, defined by a memory of politics and theology in a context of praxis, mediates and ameliorates the contestations of opposing traditions. This context demands a critique of practices that produce sets of values that manifest themselves in social injustice. With a harmonious connection with the living traditions of the past, groups such as the Jubilee Group enact a separation from present power struggles that are voiced through social injustice. This animation of the group by its traditions is affected through an adherence to a religious tradition, the touchstone of which is a sense of God's justice on earth. This has been the tradition of the Jubilee Group as its imagination is fueled by the Christian Socialist Movement, the early Church Fathers and even beyond.

It seems, on the surface of things at least, that here exists something more than a network (albeit it is a network), here exists a community. The people gather together under a common banner. An ethos, an imagination, as in Anderson's words: a common memory holds these individuals together engaging a power, for them, in the apprehension of time with respect to celebrating a common celebration. Generally speaking, for the people of the Jubilee Group, this celebration is the participation in a sacramental/Incarnational vision of the world. This sacramental/Incarnational vision is the animation of their tradition.

This theological vision forms an unbroken line back to the Jewish prophets and forward to a vision of a new reality, a hope for a society in which justice becomes the watchword; a society in which the poor and social outcast find a place of peace. This sense of continuity with the past in order to create a vision of something new is the core of the prophetic vision as Leech and Brueggemann have argued. It is a vision

which embraces a radical politics and a radical theology in a context of community informed by a deep belief and faith in a God who is both transcendent and immanent at the same time concerned with justice in the present.

The sense of politics and theology wrapped together in one cloak, so that they are one, and then animated by practice that focuses on institutions of power to transform them (not to overthrow them) is the imagination of a prophetic community. This is the heart of the prophetic community.

Such a community does not sit well with the establishment, however. For this reason, prophetic communities exist, almost by necessity, on the margins of the institutional church (the institutional church needs transforming as well).

As a transformative power, the prophetic community engages in dialogue with society to work with society in order to achieve a transformation. Prophetic communities do not content themselves with the overthrow of society or systems but seek to bring healthy and creative change from within. In this vein, the church embraces society to the point that the division of sacred and secular[1] are blurred; a sacramental/Incarnational theology would argue that the whole of society is permeated with the presence of God.

Theory and religious practice: Transcendence and Immanence

There are many communities such as the Jubilee Group that do not emerge from a sacramental/Incarnational vision. Are these communities prophetic? Many of them are religious and are concerned about God's justice on earth. The position taken in this thesis is that central to the notion of a prophetic community is its link to the earliest manifestation of God's covenant relationship with man. This relationship is outlined in the writings of the prophets of Israel.

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[1] The division of experience into sacred and secular is certainly not prophetic. It is a reformation/enlightenment invention.

Some of these communities are political in nature such as the communities of the hard left liberation theologians. Some are more theological such as the pietistic communities. Pietistic communities of the radical reformation type such as the Anabaptist communities may be political and at the same time theological but will hold these two in tension. The distinguishing feature of the prophetic communities is that they see themselves part of an historic church, a community in which the language does not differentiate between what is religious and what is political, for the two are one. To do politics is to worship; worship is the most political act a human can engage in for it is in worship that humans engage other humans in the act of worshipping a God whose primary concern is for the created universe and those in it. One cannot begin to understand the nature of the prophetic community without a sense of the transcendent made immanent.

To begin to formulate a theory of prophetic communities, I will examine the nature of transcendence and immanence and argue that these two concepts, when viewed together as part of a unified whole allow for the unity of religion and politics—a key element for the Jubilee Group.

In order to begin to understand the fundamental nature of prophetic communities of the type exemplified by the Jubilee Group, it is important to keep in mind, once again, that prophetic communities are hinged to a sacramental/Incarnational theology. Essentially, this means that they are guided by a theology that is both transcendent and at the same time immanent.

Broadly speaking, transcendence means, according to the Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, the property of *being* of a higher order. "A being, such as God, may be said to be transcendent in the sense of being not merely superior, but incomparably superior, to other things, in any sort of perfection. God's transcendence, or being outside or beyond the world, is also contrasted, and by some thinkers combined, with

God's immanence, or existence within the world."[2] In the same dictionary, we find the definition of immanence: "a term often used in contrast to 'transcendence' to express the way in which God is thought to be present in the world."[3] By the sacramental/Incarnational view, God is present in the world working to transform the world by continually acting upon it to preserve its existence. The view of immanence presented here is contrary to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century deists such as Hume, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and Matthew Tindal who held that God created the world and instituted universal laws, but is basically an absentee landlord, exercising no providential activity over its continuing history.

The view expressed herein, the one adopted by prophetic communities such as the Jubilee Group, is one in which God does act upon the world but through the agency of human beings. Hence the radical and politically active view is that people engage the transcendent made immanent through social interaction with individuals and communities in the context of praxis.

The theoretical position taken in this chapter which will shed light upon what a prophetic community is with respect to its ethos, function, and significance follows the work of Eugene C. Bianchi and Charles Davis Catholic theologians.[4]

From the onset of this thesis, the claim has been repeatedly made that prophetic communities issue from a religious tradition. I do not intend to answer the question: what is religion (this thesis is not about defining religion but about how religion informs practice). This has already been done by luminaries such as Durkheim, James Fraser, Radcliff-Brown, Evans-Pritchard, Victor Turner, S. J. Tambiah, Ernest Gellner

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[2] Robert M. Adams, *Transcendence*, IN The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, Robert Audi (gen. ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1995), p. 807.

[3] William L, Rowe, *Immanence*, *Ibid.*, p. 361.

[4] See Eugene C. Bianchi, The Religious Experience of Revolutionaries, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., (1972), and Charles Davis, Religion and the Making of Society, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1994).

and many more.[5] What is interesting in all of these works is that there is very little consensus as to what religion is at its most substantive level, as Morton Klass notes: "Is it not astonishing to reflect that since the very beginning of the anthropological—and sociological—study of religion, we have been in continuous and fundamental disagreement about what we are talking about?"[6]

While the focus of this thesis is not about religion, per se, it is imperative to understand that religion is a form of social practice[7]—religion *is* social and consequently political practice. For some, religion and religious practice have been intricately linked to an ideology of the sacred and thereby differentiating from social activities identified with the profane—the secular. This has been Durkheim's argument. Melford Spiro rejects this view for what, he wonders, is sacred for Durkheim?[8] Patrick D. Gaffney argues that religion must be conceived as something other than merely reduced to the sacred as opposed to the profane. Such a view, he says, paraphrasing Durkheim, "fundamentally misrepresents the religious life which was not a matter of pursuing the sacred to the exclusion of the profane, but rather the generative fusion of both to produce the elementary forms of collective consciousness, a moral order, and ultimately society itself."[9]

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[5] Traditionally, the problem has been that a definition of religion was left to the anthropologist rather than the *people of the field*. As Raymond Firth rightly points out, see Religion: a Humanist Interpretation London: Routledge, (1996), the problem with this approach is that "elements of temperament and experience" of the anthropologists "are so complex, so subtly composed and intertwined" that any definitive word can only be superficial. Another problem Firth points out is that of language: religious experiences are rendered in verbal forms by anthropologists where images and words are presented to the field-worker in non-verbal, visual or aural terms.

[6] Morton Klass, Ordered Universes, Oxford: Westview Press, (1995), p. 8.

[7] See Eugene Bianchi, *op cit.*; Charles Davis, *op cit.*; Raymond Firth, *op cit.*; Patrick D. Gaffney, The Prophet's Pulpit: Islamic Preaching in Contemporary Egypt, Berkeley: University of California Press, (1994); Ernest Gellner, Anthropology and Politics: Revolutions in the Sacred Grove, Oxford: Blackwell (1995); Morton Klass, *ibid.*

[8] Quoted in Morton Klass.

[9] Patrick D. Gaffney, *op cit.*

The sacred/secular dualism has been the great legacy of the reformation and pietistic theologians of the free-church tradition, but it is a dualism that has been rejected by Catholic theologians and communities such as the Jubilee Group embracing a sacramental/Incarnational theology. It is this distinction that presents us with the seed of a theoretical framework of prophetic communities. They are, after all, Anglo-Catholic, by and large.

Eugene C. Bianchi in, The Religious Experience of Revolutionaries, argues that amongst revolutionary characters (the revolutionary character and the prophetic character will be linked), there is a distinct relationship between the political and the religious. This relationship is one in which a religious experience underlies political or traditionally religious rhetoric and this undergirding is intrinsic to the secular experience. The religious experience that is intrinsic to the "secular experience itself is a most profound dimension of what it means to be religious or 'to have religion'."[10] I shall return to this theme a little later.

This religiousness Bianchi refers to is predicated on the sacramental/Incarnational theological position of a world animated by the transcendent made immanent amongst us. Charles Davis in, Religion and the Making of Society, points us the way towards a proper understanding of the sacramental/Incarnational view of transcendence and immanence in a context of religion and politics that is inherent in prophetic communities such as the Jubilee Group.

He begins his analysis by showing his readers that it was as a result of the reformation that church and state were formally separated, relegating things of the church to the sacred and things secular to the state. A significant out come of the reformation was a hostility by the church towards anything "secular." This did not, however, preclude some "principal characteristics of secularity" from finding their way

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[10] Eugene C. Bianchi, *op cit.* p. 2.

into theology and influencing theological language such as "the priority of knowledge over love, the positivistic concept of reason, the search for certitude and necessary laws, the stress on identity instead of otherness, and plurality."[11] What Davis is arguing is that this ultimately leads to a theology of secularization. This comes as a result of "theology's dalliance with the rationalization of the Enlightenment" which frees the "secular to do its own thing without any check from the supernatural."[12] This trend, adopted early on by the reformation churches, proved to separate the transcendent from a material reality.

If we conceive of reality as a unity of three spheres, that is the cognitive, the normative and the expressive, the reformation, or the free-church understanding of the transcendent is that it is once removed from these spheres, thereby creating a fourth with the three untouched by the fourth. There is no communication between the three and the transcendent fourth. This fourth sphere is, then, very much like the God of the deists mentioned above, that is, creative but uninvolved.

Why is Davis concerned about the notion of the transcendent? What does he mean by transcendent here and what does this have to do with the question of this thesis, namely: what is a prophetic community? Clearly, he speaks about this in a context of some form of experienced reality, trying to make a link between a notion of the transcendent and this present reality.

To explore this question, let us return, for a moment, to an earlier statement that religion is a form of social practice. To do this, I will suggest that we must begin with the existentialist question: what does it means to be a human being in the context of social practice? After all, religion is as much a part of human agency as it is anything else.

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[11] Charles Davis, *op cit.*, p. 6.
[12] *Ibid.*, p.6.

Davis asks the question: upon what does the social and political life of human beings rest? What is the foundation of human society? He indicates that an important feature of society is the "intervention of human rational intelligence in articulating common needs and interests, and in further developing and institutionalizing the manifold instances of social interaction."[13] Simply stated, society is the product of human intelligence, a work of human reason.

Davis's argument is concerned, at this point, about society and not prophetic communities but we must consider all the implications here. What Davis is trying to do is to set up the theory that religious practice must be linked to the political. That is to say, religion cannot be separated from politics but more importantly, religion must function to transform politics in a way that reflects a prophetic tradition. Communities that embrace this belief are, then, in the prophetic tradition and are, simply, prophetic communities.

Let us return to the argument at hand. Davis's position, as is the sacramental/Incarnational position, is that society cannot be built on empirical values alone, even though society is the project of human reason. There is another dimension. To do so would hand society over to the technocrats. Society must, therefore, be based on higher values then empirical values that address the human condition.

What is this human condition Davis talks about? This question can only be answered in the realm of the philosophical or the religious, not in the pragmatic. This suggests that there is prior knowledge and the human condition, or community, emerges from this prior knowledge. To the sacramentalists/Incarnationalists, this argument suggests the importance of eternal truths about the human condition and the belief that society is pre-ordained. For Davis, that which pre-ordains is the transcendent *Being*.

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[13] *Ibid.*, p.31.

Davis quite courageously argues that this transcendent reality has relevance and significance. Transcendent reality, he suggests thrusts beyond "every human order of meaning, beyond all the particular forms through which it is mediated in different religious traditions."[14]

The basic principle of religious faith, such as that of the Jubilee Group, in the "transcendent as subject, not an object, is that the basic stance of the transcendent subject, like an originating idea, freely takes possession of the mind and heart and widens our horizons within which we think, act, judge, and decide."[15] This necessarily governs the judgment of values as well as judgment of facts. With regards to judgment of facts, Davis writes that "factual beliefs arise in the mind, animated by religious faith, striving to interpret the profusion of data about the external world and the interior world of consciousness."[16]

What is important to understand is that beliefs are always mutable within a context of "inherited tradition." Tradition gives meaning but also allows for change mediated by culture. To do otherwise would be idolatrous, "making the conditional unconditioned and confusing religious belief with religious faith."[17] Religious belief, in this sense, is not a propositional truth claim, it is not knowledge; it may be truth, however. Religious beliefs must always be changeable and limited, they are culturally particular manifestations of religious faith and in a political argument religious people must be prepared to see their beliefs challenged.

To bring this argument back on track, the religious and religious communities such as the Jubilee Group become relevant and significant to the church and society if they advance their beliefs as something other than the unchanging and unquestionable.

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 36.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Those beliefs can then enter fruitfully into the political argument. Ultimately, religious faith, says Davis, is best not viewed as a set of beliefs, or propositional truth claims, but as an unrestricted openness to reality.

In this capacity, Davis argues that religion plays a significant role, both as a socially integrative and revolutionary role in society. Religious faith and religious belief have contributed to society as a transforming agent. Religious faith, by pushing society towards the transcendent relativizes every existing social order. In so far as any existing social order absolutizes itself, religious faith becomes subversive and revolutionary, but not in the usual political sense. The difference between revolution and other kinds of social change, writes Davis, is that revolution calls into question the principles and the legitimacy of the existing social order. "Since every social order tends to make itself absolute, it is the constant function of religious faith to remind human beings that even basic principles are subject to revision as human understanding grows. Religious faith protects human creativity from social inertia."[18]

The revolutionary nature of prophetic groups such as the Jubilee Group is not to trivialize the transcendent but to articulate the transcendent made immanent, the Kingdom of God in the present existing amongst us. This is the heart and soul of the prophetic community. This is what makes the prophetic community singularly different from all other communities of resistance. It is the heart and soul of a sacramental/Incarnational theology that is formed out of praxis and this praxis demands a critical analysis of the present society intending to uncover the contradictions latent within it.

Religion, in this context, does not stand apart from society as though the transcendent is separate from reality, that is, totally removed. The religious faith and belief of the prophetic community embraces a sacramentalism and Incarnationalism that

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[18] *Ibid.*, p. 37-38.

necessarily envisions a world animated by the transcendent made immanent. "Religious faith and practice pervade the content of all the different areas of meaning and culture. They penetrate and transform the entirety of human thought and action, bringing about a transvaluation of all values."[19] They do this, however, not by creating a new system of values, a new system of thought, new rules, new actions, new images and new words but by linking every area of human existence of finitude to an openness to the Infinite. In this vein they are highly critical of hegemony, even to their own possible hegemonic tendencies.

Returning to Bianchi, we get an additional impress of the unity of the transcendent and the immanent. For Bianchi, the truly revolutionary Christian, and here I would inject the prophetic figure (linking the revolutionary character and prophetic character), has meaning and significance to a larger world when the prophetic figure develops the religiousness intrinsic to being human (the transcendent made immanent—the Incarnation of the truly Ultimate Being in creation). When this becomes the ethos, the heart and soul of the people in community, the community takes on a revolutionary, or prophetic nature. The significance of this community in the context of its Christianity is real but only in a context of social and political interaction which is often identified with the secular experience. But here again, the community's religiousness must be mediated by the transcendent indwelling creation.

The important thing to remember here is the agency of community. Any attitude or activity that promotes an otherworldliness or seclusion from the world by excessive inwardness as in isolationist contemplative experience is anathema to the religiousness of the prophetic community. Bianchi makes the claim that the truly religious experience can be found in its deepest dimensions within the secular experience, not in isolation from that secular experience. This seems to suggest that the

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[19] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

sacramental/Incarnational notion of the transcendent infills humanity on a completeness, that cannot be fully understood, in such a way that the human agent is not fully independent to form society. Society "becomes" with the transcendent becoming immanent embracing the human person.

When speaking about sacramentalism, then, "religious symbols are not tales about exterior happenings" in the cosmos unrelated to the human endeavor but rather imaginative modes of talking about the human condition in participation with the transcendent. "A living participation in these symbols tends to unify a fragmented existence and opens into creative relationships with others and the world."[20] The ultimate symbol for sacramentalists such as the Jubilee Group are people in community. As these living sacraments, or living symbols of community, are met in the context of community, we engage the human experience, or the human condition. Political action becomes more intense and value-enhancing and thereby participation in the realm of the transcendent life made immanent in this present reality.

A question begs asking: is this transcendence necessary to the notion of the Christian God? For Christians such as the Christian members of the Jubilee Group it clearly is. We must remember, however, that not all members of the Jubilee Group are Christian. Would this mean then that they are not fully part of this prophetic community because they do not ascribe to the Christian notion of God? Do these individuals not reflect the ethos of the prophetic community? Do they not also engage in a radical form of critiquing institutions in order to enable a transformation of society?

Bianchi provides a necessary understanding here. He argues that revolutionary individuals who are part of the transformation experience that is so intrinsic to the voice of the prophetic communities such as the Jubilee Group manifest "subjective

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[20] Bianchi, *op cit.; p. 16.*

symbols of transformation." In other words, their motivation experience takes them out of themselves to a higher plane of reality, of understanding, of experience. Subjective images of "coherence, wonder, and morality give a sense of wholeness and satisfaction" to their revolutionary life.[21] Bianchi believes that the self-transcendent person goes through a process which is not usually at the "threshold of explicit consciousness in any person.... The dynamism of self-transcendence is best described, therefore, as a continuous *metanoia*, a change of mind and heart experiences that includes retrogression and advancement, moments of dark and light, of suffering and exaltation."[22] An understanding of metanoia is best described by the Christian notion of death/resurrection, or the Hebrew story of the Exodus from slavery to freedom.

To explore the dynamism of human religiousness—self-transcendence— under the rubric of community, the movement of self-transcendence is toward a greater freedom in personal and communal life. Essentially, the dynamism of self-transcendence towards greater freedom and community—a new humanity (the cooperative community)—"reside in a true sense beyond the present realizations of history," says Bianchi. In a real sense, this dynamism exists open-ended beyond history engaging a mysterious power in the universe to achieve a kind of freedom only envisioned in the imagination. By their very nature such ideas point to a faith in a transcendent power to attain a certain perfection of freedom that, even though it exists in the realm of the *not yet*, for many oppressed peoples, exists in the imagination (memory) of a prophetic tradition that reaches back to an earlier community, in this case the radical communities of the early church informed by the radical voices of the Old Testament prophets and New Testament Gospels.

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[21] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

By linking into the imagination animated by the transcendent made immanent, new relationships are formed between persons and institutions generating new political, social, and economic forms. The revolutionary, prophetic, and prophetic communities begin to engage in a creative but critical dialogue and a sharing participation in a wider society. Critical dialogue and sharing participation is instructive in that the communal factor provides an interactive situation in which ethical judgments about constructiveness or destructiveness of the prophetic ideas, decisions and conduct can be made. Always, however, this dialogue towards creating new forms is tempered by the belief that the ruling class can be transformed into something new, into a prophetic community, if-you-will, in which exists a self-consciousness beyond the mere distribution of goods. The purpose of the prophetic community is to bring about a new morality in individuals and to establish more trusting/sharing relationships in society. Thus the liberation of the people as an ultimate focal point of value implies the dialectic of a YES to the immediate goals of the revolutionary changes coupled with a NO to resisting a conclusive satisfaction with goals.

The true prophetic figures that make up the prophetic communities always recognize the mutability of political ideologies, that are always fleeting, always changing, never static. When ideology, either political or religious become fixed and absolute, the prophetic becomes a false prophecy: "the dogmatic intransigence fixes the future of the people in the narrow confines of faulty vision."[23]

- *Some Difficulties*

For the bulk of this thesis, I have tried to identify in a new way what is a prophetic community. I have focused on a small group within the Church of England that identifies itself as a Christian Socialist network in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. As

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

already stated, the time spent with this group was rather short, perhaps too short to make an objective assessment of any weaknesses that might exist within the Jubilee Group. I have highlighted some of its strengths, but are there weaknesses? I would like to present the following observations more as questions for further study and consideration than as categorical observations.

From the briefest of observations, it quickly became apparent that the Jubilee Group is comprised of highly educated people, mainly white, male, and, for the most part over thirty-five years in age. I met only two individuals who were under thirty, both male and also white. "Non-white" working class people were not all that much in evidence (of the people of colour there were several women and an elderly gentlemen. It was obvious that none of these were working class).

From this representation, one might want to consider that some of the negative aspects of the Jubilee Group are that they really do not represent the voice of the silenced; those who have historically been silenced such as the working class, the young and people of colour.

The Jubilee Group may speak for these people but with respect to letting the people themselves speak, the Jubilee Group may be just another sophisticated ginger group that has very little relevance to the people whom the Jubilee Group is ostensibly there for in the first place. In this sense, the Jubilee Group is somewhat elitist. One cannot help but remember the words of Henry Mayhew who quotes a costermonger when asked about the church: "A church sir, so I've heard, I never was in a church." England's working class and poor may be too sophisticated to be "taken in" by the political language of the Jubilee Group. They have, after all, seen this phenomenon before.

In fairness to the Jubilee Group, a great deal more research will need to be done in order to determine to what degree the working class and the poor are directly involved, if at all, with the Jubilee Group to the point of unsilencing their voice.

Second, the fact that there are so few young members seems to be a problem that is very much in the mind of several members of the Jubilee Group. Leech in particular sees the dangers of the Jubilee Group reduced to old age. Without the youth, the Jubilee Group will inevitably die off. But is this necessarily a bad thing? If one considers for a moment that the Jubilee Group emerged out of a particular context, than possibly it is just as reasonable that it should die off gently. Contexts change, and the response to context may have a different form yet the voice is the same. Perhaps a new type of prophetic community needs to rise out of the ashes of the Jubilee Group. The danger of trying to maintain a radical political life is that the voice of the Jubilee Group becomes an ideology.

Third, on the surface of things, there seems to be very little communication with outsiders, with people who are not necessarily Anglo-Catholic, with people who do not have a radical political streak to their theology. There seems to be a dismissal of these people. Leech himself has pointed this out. This, of course, may be the result of non-Anglo-Catholics separating themselves from the Jubilee Group as much as the Jubilee Group separates itself from these types. This, I fear, is somewhat simplistic. It may be that the Jubilee Group is seen to be too ideological for other groups trying to effect a prophetic stance and little dialogue on substance can be sustained between these different groups. The question remains, however: is this truly a mark of the prophetic tradition or of a truly catholic tradition for that matter.?

It has been argued here that the strength of the prophetic tradition comes from a context of a unity in community. The hallmark of Catholicism at its best is the notion of unity: where there is no unity, there must be an irenical spirit to create such. C

referred to a strength of the Jubilee Group that it offered a sense of solidarity for those who wanted to discover something of the radical tradition and be immersed in that tradition (the radical tradition offered a vision of how to engage unjust institutions—C's work with the homeless was all about offering hope for justice in a society that was governed by a spirit of injustice). But what of a sense of solidarity with those who are not of the radical tradition, that tend more towards a sense of spirituality in a 20th-century mystical sense? Here, I am referring to those individuals who find themselves governed by a more contemplative spirit that places an attachment to radical politics outside the framework of their spirituality or their theology. Perhaps solidarity is best defined by a commitment to extract the very best of the many different expressions of the reality of the church existent in the world rather than a singularity of vision.

The Jubilee Group defines itself as a loose network of socialist Christians. But how socialist are they, in fact? Robert J. Bocock, a sociologist analyzing the socialism of the Anglo-Catholics, points out that a critical element for groups such as the Jubilee Group is their Catholicism which is their acceptance of the authority of tradition as well as the Bible.[24] This duality may prove somewhat problematic, however. Bocock further points out that the tradition of Catholicism, be it Roman Catholic or Anglo-Catholic, is somewhat antithetical to socialism. Socialism, ideologically, tries to separate itself from all forms of authoritarianism (all too often, socialism fails just as miserably as the church). On the one hand is respect for authority and on the other is egalitarianism.

These two essentials would tend to be in conflict. With respect to authority and tradition, socialists would argue that different traditions would have different experiences with authority. Women's experiences is quite different from that of

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[24] Robert J. Bocock, *Anglo-Catholic Socialism: A Study of a Protest Movement within a Church*, IN Social Compass, **XX**, (1973/1), pp. 31-48.

clerics. The notion of equality simply muddies the waters, for here again, socialists would argue that some groups have more equality than others.

"Given some of the traditional teachings of the church on social questions, especially on the need for obedience to political authorities, it may seem odd for there to be any links at all between the two beliefs and value systems."[25] Nevertheless, there can be a strong argument linking a theology taught by a group such as the Jubilee Group and socialism. These connections are the three basic beliefs: (1) the Incarnation, (2) Kingdom of God on Earth, and (3) the notion of community.

With respect to the Incarnation, as has already been amply pointed out, there is a strong belief among Anglo-Catholic Christians of the Jubilee type that through the transcendent made immanent there is a "positive elevation of the material and social worlds and of men and women."[26] Their belief, put forth by Athanasius, is that God and Humanity are united first by God becoming flesh and secondly, by the taking of Humanity into God. This relationship is separate but still in communion and secondly the emphasis is placed on a universalism of all men and women. "In the light of this doctrine the Gospel teachings to love all [persons] takes on a new meaning and urgency. [Persons], and nations, are to be transfigured and transformed by concrete actions in history."[27]

Touching on the Kingdom of God, Anglo-Catholics of the Jubilee Group type hold that the Kingdom is meant to refer to a world of history rather than the supernaturalist's position, something "semi-divine" yet to come. The radical Socialist Christians see the church as the body of the Incarnate Christ establishing a Kingdom in the context of space and time: right here, right now. The church, in this sense, as a

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 34.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

major agency aids in building a new life here on earth, not of a utopian order, but rather one that is fully cognizant of the reality of conflict with institutions that dominate and oppress. Socialist Christians attempt to engage the institutions to work with them to transform (rather than overthrow) these institutions and society.

Concerning communities, groups such as the Jubilee Group hold to a doctrine of the church which implies a "corporate body of men and women, and not just a voluntary association of like-minded individuals who happen to come together for a specific purpose."[28] As a community, it judges capitalism in the harshest of terms because capitalism leads to individualism, the antithesis of community.

Has the Jubilee Group effected any change on its own in terms of social justice? Have they been successful in bringing about policy changes at the administrative level that would reflect some of their ideals? Are they less political than they actually think they are?

These questions put the emphasis in the wrong place, it seems to me. Politics is not necessarily the same thing as policy. Simply put, politics is the process of interaction; it is the practical expression informed by a particular belief contextualized by interpersonal relationships. For the Jubilee Group, it is more important to be involved in interaction with other individuals or groups to bring about, in some instances, a critical awareness of injustice. Out of this awareness comes change and transformation. Who gets the credit is simply not the point.

This thesis has tried to address the question: what is a prophetic community? The context has been the Jubilee Group, a struggling little group in East London, throughout England and parts of America.

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[28] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

The Jubilee Group is trying to articulate a voice against injustice but the path the individuals seek to follow is to engage society and its institutions to transform society. This voice is animated by a sense that the Kingdom of God is present in the here and now, defined by a belief in the transcendent made immanent and manifested in the participation of the sacramental symbols of the church such as its people, the Eucharist, or Mary "the Mother of Socialism" (for Socialist Anglo-Catholics).

A central feature of this manifestation is the belief that these symbols do not exist in isolation but have meaning in a context of history; that there is a sense of continuity with a rich prophetic tradition going back to the Jewish prophets, the New Testament Gospels on through the early Christian communities, the Christian Socialist Movement and into the present.

It was always the position of the earliest members of the Christian communities that these communities were a place of refuge for the poor and social outcast of society. In this sense the sacramental symbols referred to are imbued with a life of radical politics and theology made real in praxis. By intermeshing with this tradition, the Jubilee Group participates in a prophetic memory that becomes the basis for an act of imagination, of an essence that is the heart and soul of all who become a part of the Jubilee Group. This, then, becomes the mark of a community, but not just any community—a prophetic community.

APPENDIX

The Catholic Social Tradition Today: Some Questions

The following is taken from the Jubilee Pamphlet The Gospel, The Catholic church and the World: The social theology of Michael Ramsey (1904-1988), (Archbishop of Canterbury and member of the Jubilee Group[1]). These words are excerpts from a paper given by Bishop Ramsey to a conference of the Jubilee Group at St. Matthew's Church, Bethnal Green, on 30 June 1977, to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the Guild of St. Matthew by Stewart Headlam.

In speaking about the Catholic social tradition today, I have a lot of questions. First, some thoughts concerning the theological basis of Christian Social teaching. Let us take two concepts: the Kingdom of God, and Incarnation.

The Kingdom of God

When it is said that we need to have a 'return of the Kingdom of God' as the dominant theological idea for Christian social teaching, my response is both No and Yes. There can be a way of using the concept of the Kingdom of God which is inadequate and misleading. I think of that aspect which sees it as a kind of commonwealth which can be pictured as an ideal to work for, as embodying the divine will and purpose in history. Now if the divine will is discovered and followed, there will certainly be a society of a better shape, in conformity with God's will. But to be depicting a kind of commonwealth of human affairs toward which we are working can be misleading, for two reasons. Such is the corruption of humanity, and the human ability to corrupt good things, and such is the relativity of the human grasp of God's purpose in different historical situations, that the realization of a divine commonwealth in the world may be something that has still a great number of ups and downs, achievements, corruptions, warnings of divine judgment, and so on. That is one difficulty of thinking of the Kingdom of God as a kind of commonwealth.

The second difficulty is this. I think it is very hard to define how far the goal of God's purpose for the world is going to be within history or beyond it. If we speak of it in one way, we are caught into speaking of it the other way. But while I am a little suspicious of a 'commonwealth' interpretation of the Kingdom of God, and while I believe that its coming into Catholic sociology was in part not derived from Catholic truth but from a kind of liberal Protestant hangover, yet there is a way, theologically,

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[1] Archbishop Ramsey became a member of the Jubilee Group after he retired from his position. The Jubilee Group didn't come into existence until after Ramsey's retirement.

in which the concept of the Kingdom of God is vital, and its recovery urgently necessary, The divine sovereignty, and the bringing of human affairs into line with what is known of the divine sovereignty: that enables us to have a bit of a picture of what things will be like when the divine sovereignty is followed, while avoiding any blueprint of it. And we may speak of the divine sovereignty in terms of the reflection of some of God's own attributes in human life: God's compassion perfectly imitated by human creatures in their dealings with one another, and God's justice reproduced in human creatures in imitation of the justice of God. So let the concept of the Kingdom of God be a dominant concept, but I believe that certain distinctions are really important.

Incarnation

Secondly, the concept of Incarnation. Here not only does Catholic theology give Catholic social teaching its backbone, but also social teaching may be a means of helping theology not to make such an ass of itself, as it often does, in connection with the Incarnation. The depth of Catholic understanding of Incarnation has so dropped out of certain theological circles that it appears to be thought that all that is required is a Christ who performs the functions of revealing the will and purpose of God, and who assists the human race in carrying out that will and purpose. There is a world of difference between that, and the Incarnation of God whereby humanity through Christ is actually united to God himself, so that incorporation into Christ becomes the way of incorporation into God. That is what Incarnation is all about: the actual union of humanity with God. When theology gets in a mess about Incarnation, it does so through thinking of the Incarnation one-sidedly, as God coming down to participate in human affairs, and neglecting the converse truth that humanity is caught up into the life of God through Christ who is born and lives and also ascends. I note with great gratitude that a phrase in the Athanasian Creed is now coming back into Catholic social teaching, and when it comes back into Christian theology generally we shall be in a better case: 'One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the [personhood] into God.' We can think of the ways in which the Incarnation not only gives to theology its true shape, but also gives to Christian social teaching both theological backbone and a great deal of practical understanding. Looking at the witness of Stewart Headlam, I would say that much of it is due to the fact that he saw the Incarnation as 'the taking of [personhood] into God'.

As regards the theological background of Christian social teaching, there is also the doctrine of creation, and the character of the created order as ordained by God. I will not use the term 'natural law' since that involves some difficult theological questions of definition. Let me say rather those God-created institutions in the created world such as the state and family.

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