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Experience(s) of Spiritual Capital:

Towards a process perspective on embodiment and enculturation

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Dedication

For Kelly, Jyothi and Anya.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This project interrogates notions of spiritual through a lens of process theology and asks how it might be developed. The project offers a practical theology which draws from Bourdieu's theory of practise to conceive of spiritual capital as necessary for the development of 'orthopraxis' (right behaviour) which is characterised by loving and caring for other people, and being in solidarity with the marginalised and oppressed. The project seeks to articulate a means by which this capital may be developed beyond the walls of the Church. It further proposes process theology as a suitable and helpful framework for this examination.

Research was carried out by a mixture of surveys and then further interviews of a purposive sample of participants who engage in works for, or on behalf of, the 'common good' in order to examine the role and development of spiritual capital in their lives. The data from both the survey and interview stages were then analysed using categories derived from process thought. Thematic analysis highlighted the importance of positive childhood (formative) experiences, as well as the apparent importance of negative adult experiences in the development of their practice. Particular attention was paid to ideas of becoming and perishing, the 'lure' of God, and the nature of divine power – in particular the sense of the divine as co-sufferer.

Summative observations were made concerning the nature of the spiritual capital that was observed in participants, and the way this may be understood in the light of process theology. Notably, spiritual capital is developed in response to experience of suffering, which should be understood sociologically as the field of spiritual struggle and theologically as an act of communion with the divine.

The project challenges the Church in North America and Western Europe to avoid the distraction of concern about perceived diminishing power and numerical decline, recognising the pattern of perishing and becoming in all things. The Church should instead develop a sharp focus on the 'high hope of adventure' which is a persistent and uncompromising practise that depends on the 'weak' power of persuasion, advancing unconditional love where possible and creating opportunities for others to do the same, actively encouraging the becoming of the new.

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Glossary

This glossary sets out the meanings of some words and technical terms used in this project. The intention is not to provide a full explanatory definition of each term, but rather to explain what is meant in this particular context.

Actual entity

An 'actual entity' is the only fundamental 'reality' that exists. In process, specifically Whiteheadian process, thought this is characterised by 'events', also termed 'occasions of experience' or 'actual occasions' which are constantly in the process of perishing and becoming. For Whitehead God is also an 'actual entity' although not momentary in quite the same way. God though is constantly experiencing change so in that sense exemplifies the reality of such occasions.

Church

When capitalised as "the Church", this should be understood as referring to the broader body of those who consider themselves Christ's people (the 'body of Christ'); individual fellowships or expressions of gathered people will be referred to individually as 'church' or collectively as 'churches' without the capitalisation. The Greek word *Ekklesia* (ἐκκλησία) does not make this distinction but it is helpful here to distinguish between the general and the particular.

Classical

In this project 'classical' refers to a school of thought that positions the divine as immutable (unchanging), impassable (invulnerable), and timeless. This idea of God, process theologians argue, is derived from Greek and Roman (particularly Aristotelian) notions of deity, and does not adequately represent the personal, involved and 'moved' God of Judaism and Christianity. The God of classical theism is sometimes referred to as an 'omni-God'.

Experience

An occasion of experience is an actual entity as above, but it is helpful to understand that for Whitehead and some process thinkers experience is not just had by humans or

even humans and animals, rather he conceives of all of reality being composed of these occasions of experience. Therefore, everything experiences, and it is this ongoing, dynamic, process of experience that reality consists of.

Idealism

In this project 'idealism' is taken to mean the theory that ultimate reality is found only in the mind and that consequently 'the material' is not independently real.

Immanent

Immanence can have a dual meaning in theology, in this project it is used to describe a relational understanding of God that is meaningful when contrasted with the concept of transcendence. To speak of God as immanent in this context is to speak of God as close, involved, and intimate rather than remote and unengaged.

Materialism

The concept of 'materialism' is used here in the sense of a school of thought which in its strictest sense asserts that matter is real and that minds are products of material processes. Dialectical materialism is a form or version of this philosophy that allows that mental 'events' occur and claims these are formed by external forces.

Neoclassical

The idea of a neoclassical theism stems from the philosophy of Charles Hartshorne, an early process theologian and student of Alfred North Whitehead. It shares with classical theism the sense that God is ultimate (an idea with which Whitehead would not necessarily agree), but it extends away from the idea of the divine as immutable and impassable. Instead, it suggests that where humans have the ability to feel pain and pleasure, God is the ultimate exemplar of this ability. Similarly with the concept of change, while humans continually change, God constantly receives this change, and all other change, in a constant process of responsive change. God is therefore not the exception to the rule, but the ultimate example of it.

Nones

I shall use the term 'nones' to refer to people who identify as having no religious affiliation, but who also do not specifically identify themselves as being 'atheist' which is, in effect, treated as equivalent to a religious tradition.

Open/relational theology

Reference is made in this project to theologies which are open and/or relational. Relational theologians understand the divine as being in a 'giving and taking' relationship with the world. This means that God is affected by (for instance) the suffering of the world. Open theologians, meanwhile, consider that the future is not 'closed', as such they reject a determinative teleology and consider that God experiences each moment with 'us'. Process theology is both open and relational, but there are also various expressions of both open and relational thinking to be found in different theological streams.

Prehension

Sometimes considered the most important of Whitehead's ideas, prehension is both simple and complex. Simply put it means 'to grasp', it therefore describes the moment of experience, such as the moment one 'prehends' an object or person. But to prehend something is actually to prehend a 'nexus' of actual occasions, we may think we experience a drop of water, for example, but we actually experience the nexus of occasions that constitute that drop of water. The moment of prehension is therefore the transition between perishing and becoming, each prehension constitutes a new actual occasion. Prehensions therefore underlie reality.

Realism

Despite his association with key thinkers of the pragmatist movement, Whitehead is generally understood as a philosopher of a 'realist' persuasion which, to (over)simplify, effectively means that he is positioned as neither an idealist nor a materialist, instead he is concerned with the reality of actual occasions, or of experience.

Superject

As a new occasion emerges in the moment of prehension, it is sometimes called a 'superject'. This is used to describe the way that a subject takes on the experience of the past and moves into the new as a superject. This demonstrates the way that the past informs the present, but is not intended to imply a determinism.

Thomist

'Thomist' is used here to describe the theology and philosophy of the medieval scholar Thomas Aquinas, who is at times used as the archetype of classical theology. This may be (probably is) something of an unreasonable over-simplification, nevertheless Thomism, with its development of Aristotelian thought, is characterised in some process literature as the prime exemplar of problematic classical thinking.

Introduction

This project must be prefaced with some introductory and auto-biographical remarks that serve to contextualise it and to help the reader understand both the motivation of the writer, and the nature of the project that stands before them. This work is, fundamentally, one of practical theology, which is to say that it sits within an evolving part of the theological discipline but ultimately seeks to reflect on the realities of Christian life and practise. Readers will, however, note a tension throughout between a theology which is based upon the experience of practise and a more speculative theological theory which is to be applied.

This, at times uneasy, tension reflects my own situating as a practitioner, living and working in one of the most economically deprived parts of the UK. Having lived here for over a decade, and having lived in various similar places through the majority of my life, I have had opportunity to observe, reflect upon, and learn from, the lives of those around me. In particular I have had occasion to note and reflect upon the way that the Church sometimes does, but often does not, engage with the needs and concerns of people in my locality. I have noted too that neither religiousness, nor irreligiousness, necessarily correlates with a willingness to work for the betterment of the community in which I live. Something else, that is to say 'something other than Christian religiosity', is apparently at the heart of a drive to work for the common good. At the same time as observing and reflecting upon these things, I have also been on a voyage of personal, theological discovery. In particular I have struggled to make sense of the way that God is understood in what one might describe as mainstream, but what will largely here be referred to throughout this project as 'classical', Christian theology – particularly with regard to the problems of theodicy. The reality of experiential suffering, which I have known first personally by way of experiences such as bereavement, and second communally as my community have struggled through systematic deprivation and hardship, is not well addressed by the kind of Christian theology that insists on conceiving of 'God' as a transcendent 'omni deity'.

Working with, and on behalf of, charities and other bodies who are keen to know how to develop the sort of 'spiritual capital' required to mobilise the kind of activists I met, knew, and worked alongside over the last decade, led me to first grow interested in and investigate that term. At the same time the recognition of a need for

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an alternative theological vision which more adequately begins to address the issue of suffering required that I undertake this task by way of a theology of process. Process theology, as will be further developed in the project, is often and necessarily linked back to the work of Alfred North Whitehead, a speculative philosopher of the early twentieth century, who made a curious and dramatic turn from mathematics to philosophy toward the latter part of his career. In investigating his ideas, I also became curious as to how this turn was made – the answer to that question was itself insightful, and it is included by way of an interesting biographical diversion in the first chapter.

To an extent one might characterise process theology as a controversial school of thought. As such it is perhaps helpful to say that although I unpack some of its core tenets in the early chapters of this project, revisiting them again through the eyes of experience in the latter chapters, it is not necessary that one fully 'buys in' to the ideas in order to be able to take away some of its insights. The process analysis of iterative becoming and perishing, for example, is helpful regardless of your personal philosophical stance or religious conviction.

Readers will note that I take a thematic approach to the structure of the work, and that it splits, more or less neatly, into two halves – I term these 'triads'. There are some important reasons for this deliberate approach. In the first place the project is intended to embody something of the shape of the ideas it contains, it is itself a process. Here experiences build upon one another to form new ways of thinking constantly informed by what has gone before. Secondly, we might, with Whitehead and other process thinkers, consider the research journey as being analogous to the flight of an aeroplane (Whitehead, 1978, p. 5), as such we begin with the construction of some helpful ideas and then we take off to adventures of experience with them before bringing them back to the ground to be examined again. Crucially this is an ongoing iterative process, and as such readers will find that, ultimately, the project has a sense of provisionality in its conclusions; it is not, in itself, intended to be or to propose a final 'end point'. Because of this structure theory may be perceived to be privileged or prioritised by appearing first. If anything, we might say that the reverse is true. The reader should simply understand that it is helpful to develop a theoretical 'runway' before we take off into adventurous exploration of experience, the theories explored in the early chapters provide the analytical tools applied in the latter ones.

Finally, readers will note that theoretical and methodological boundaries are not always deferentially respected in this project. This reflects both the transgressive nature of the philosophical theology which is applied, and also the context in which it is developed. The community in which I live and from which I work is one which does not always respect boundaries, and, indeed, consistently seeks to challenge accepted hierarchies. Where authorities erect signs and symbols of exclusion, this community will consistently challenge, question, undermine them, pull them down, or otherwise violate them. That a similar approach at times leaks into the structure of this work reflects not only my philosophical approach, but my context.

To briefly explain the structure of project then, I may say that Chapter 1 begins a triad of introductory chapters. It first seeks to set out the aims of the project, then to conduct something of a literature review and ultimately to conclude with some proposed definitions which will travel through the remainder of the project. Following on from this, Chapter 2 then delves more deeply into the roots of process theology, paying some attention to the philosophical traditions from which it stems, and then applying some of its principles to the lives of real people. Closing out this triad, Chapter 3 endeavours to break some new ground by reading the social science of Pierre Bourdieu, whom we must thank for the capitals theory which is key to this project, through a Whiteheadian process lens. This challenging task brings together speculative philosophical theology and complex social science in a new way.

The middle chapter, Chapter 4, sits somewhat on its own as a methodology chapter, although, characteristically perhaps, it dwells somewhat upon the epistemology at work in the project as well as setting out the practicalities of the research method. Chapter 5 then begins the second triad, this time of interpretative chapters. As such it sets out some of the findings of the initial survey research dealing with them first by question and then again by theme. As the first of two chapters which engage with interview data, Chapter 6 sets out to '(de)scribe experience' in a discursive style which sits somewhere between a more traditional approach to findings and analysis. Chapter 7 which concludes this second triad, returns to the same material but rather than begin with experience it focuses analysis by way of three interpretative centres derived from the discussion in Chapters 1 & 2. Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter, and it seeks to draw together the threads of the previous chapters offering some provisional observations and recommendations, rather than outright conclusions.

Chapter 1: Spiritual Capital: a work in process?

"Whitehead, by distinguishing between the primordial essence or personality, and the consequent state or actuality… of deity is almost the first to deal seriously with the individuality of God." (Hartshorne, 1950)

"Error is the price which we pay for progress." (Whitehead, 1978)

RESEARCH AIMS

"Imagination is a contagious disease." So wrote the mathematician turned philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (1970, p. 145) in one of his many essays concerning the purpose and practise of education. As with many of his provocatively pithy statements, this one may be applied to a range of contexts. Imagination, as Whitehead conceived of it, is communicable; passed from one to another in a range of words and actions. As ideas are passed on they grow and change. This project concerns itself partly with ideas, and particularly with change. As a work of practical theology, however, it is not solely concerned with theory. Rather it is deeply concerned with practice – in particular the way in which the acts of love and service, sometimes characterised as the 'work of God', may be encouraged and enabled.

Taking a lead from theorists of 'spiritual capital' who posit this particular idea as the resource which enables such work, in the following chapters I will seek to explore and address the following theoretical and practical research themes: 'What is spiritual capital and how is it developed?' 'How might interested parties best encourage the enculturation of this resource?' In the course of doing so I shall also ask: 'Does process theology give us the conceptual and linguistic ability to speak meaningfully about spiritual capital in a new and helpful way?' 'Is a philosophical theology of process helpful in considering this very practical issue?' In the conclusion of this first chapter, I shall propose a hypothetical definition of spiritual capital which will be tested throughout the project.

Although a conventional, Aristotelian, metaphysical approach is to say that the world is made up of independent substances, process thinking contends instead that the world is composed of an ongoing chain of interdependent events. In taking a process metaphysic as the primary point of view as I necessarily reflect on the situation of the Christian Church as it exists in western Europe and north America in the 21st century, I shall consider whether what has been understood, through a substance lens, as religious decline and even demise might actually be perceived positively as part of a wider, ongoing, process of becoming.

As noted in the introduction, I shall approach this task by means of two triads – the first is an introductory triad of chapters, which will survey the literature and introduce the ideas that lie behind the project, develop on the theological ideas which form its structure, and then engage in an attempt to reconcile the realist philosophy that lies behind the theology with the sociological ideas which give rise to the theory of capitals. The fourth chapter will explain the research methodology of the project, with an emphasis on the epistemological framing, and then the second triad of chapters will explore 'experience' by way of the results of my research. The project will round off with a concluding chapter which will seek to discursively address the fundamental research questions by means of a series of observations and will then go on to make some recommendations.

For at least three specific reasons this is a somewhat unconventional project. In the first place it is written by someone who is considerably more of a practitioner than a theorist, and yet has engaged in a project which strays into the realms of speculative philosophy. Secondly, although it is a theological work it has interdisciplinary tendencies, not only in the inclusion of empirical data but also in the way that it seeks to extend across apparent theoretical divides to attempt elusive (or illusory?) connections: thereby seeking somewhat slippery connectivity. The premise of the project: an examination of spiritual capital through a lens of process theology, is self-evidently an unconventional marriage of social science and speculative philosophical theology. Thirdly, besides reaching beyond disciplinary boundaries this is a project which seeks to approach an idea with some measure of practical currency (spiritual capital), with a lens that, in the UK at least, has long fallen from favour (process theology). In the first place, one must ask why 'this' lens and not 'that'? And to what do we owe the consideration of spiritual capital anyway? In this opening chapter therefore,

we will attempt three key initial tasks: firstly to clarify the cultural situation (context) we are investigating; secondly to introduce the literature of spiritual capital as it presently exists in such a way that we are able to conceptualise the term in context; and thirdly to develop an initial understanding of the gamut of theological thinking that underpins this project – leading to a primary engagement with some of the fundamentals of process theology. Having addressed these tasks we will conclude by developing an initial working hypothesis of what spiritual capital might be, with which we shall attempt to work in this project.

A note concerning biases: readers are likely to note a dialectical tone in this project, as well as a tendency toward speaking of, or alluding to, a sense of personal belief. These and other theological and methodological biases stem in part from my situating as someone living and working within the Protestant tradition – it is not irrelevant to this project to note that Protestantism might itself be best understood (relatively speaking) as a 'New Religious Movement' within Christianity, as such it represents the perishing (for some) of an older religious system (really several older systems) and the becoming of a new one, an ongoing theme in this work. Besides this Reformation heritage the astute reader will also note a leaning toward a school of thought heavily informed first by the liberal theological turn of late modernity and then again by the so called radical theological movement of the 1960s which, in the words of Kenneth Leech, did so much to 'democratise' and 'popularise' theology, and to make 'matters of fundamental belief' into talking points beyond their traditional confines (1997, p. 43). Again, the theme of perishing and becoming is scarcely hidden. This particular leaning, toward what some might describe as progressivism, is demonstrated both overtly and in underlying ways of thinking that it can at times be hard to distinguish in order to acknowledge or articulate. Other biases which arise from identity factors such as ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality or age may be so deeply interwoven into the sub text as to be irretrievable.

POST SECULARISM

As a practitioner (chaplain, community worker and activist) I have encountered, consistently, something that has been observed and much commented upon by pollsters and analysts in Western Europe and North America: the decline of adherence to organised religion – at least as a force to be reckoned with – in society. If I were to

cite the membership roll of my own local United Reformed Church (URC) congregation and note that in the 1990s it numbered in the hundreds, and contrast this with today when plummeting numbers leave us, at times, in danger of single figure congregations, this may be written off as anecdotal. The broader picture, however, is all too supportive of this observation. Since the early 20th century, the United Kingdom has unquestionably experienced a sharp decline in church attendance, a trend that has become particularly marked in the last half-century. Philip Larkin wrote with prescience of this in the middle of the 20th century, when, in 1954's 'Church Going', he pondered "when churches fall completely out of use, what we shall turn them into?" Less than a lifetime later, many have been forced to consider this question very seriously indeed.

In the United Kingdom the Church of England records what it describes as the 'Usual Sunday Attendance' of its core committed adherents and activists, and noted by 2013 that the percentage of English residents who attend church had halved, from three to 1.5 per cent of the total population over a period of forty years (Research & Statistics Department, 2014). Similar trends were to be found within a variety of traditions and contexts, even in America, where church attendance has historically been high, a growing proportion of the population had begun to report that they had never attended a church service (Twenge, et al., 2015). The trends in the USA have since been well documented and quantitatively analysed by the political scientist Dr Ryan Burge (Burge, 2021 a). Burge, who writes for scholarly and popular audiences, noted that in 2020 the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the largest Protestant denomination in the USA, reported its biggest ever annual loss of members. From 2019 to 2020 more than 400,000 people left the denomination, taking the estimated number of departures to more than 1.1 million over a four-year period. Although the SBC remains numerically large, with a membership of 14.8 million in 2020, this is down from 16.3 million in 2006 (Burge, 2021 b). This social shift away from Church attendance in North America and Western Europe has been accompanied by a steady decrease in numbers of people who describe or identify themselves as belonging to a religion. The number of so called 'nones' has grown to take account of the fall in religious adherence, as has the number of self-described atheists (Spencer & Weldin, 2012) (Burge, 2021 a).

The sustained movement of people out of church over a prolonged period of time gives this phenomenon (the rise of the nones) the appearance of a genuine societal shift, and appears at first to support the secularisation hypothesis which broadly

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suggests that changing social attitudes will ultimately lead to a (total) decline in religion, and a growth of secularism. This is an idea with significant pedigree, memorably including Weber's appropriation of Schiller's *entzauberung* to describe a rational 'disenchantment of the world' (Weber, 1974 b, p. 155), and with the 'magic' of religion, leading to a general decline in the power of religion as a living and active force and a means of shaping the way we think and behave.

My own qualitative experience, both personal and professional, though, is that this situation is substantially more complex than the numbers would immediately suggest. In the first place, church decline is not linear. Complex interrelated cultural and relational factors can muddy the waters somewhat, such that trends are difficult to predict with accuracy and claims of unalloyed decline are hard to justify. As Burge (2021 a) goes to some lengths to describe: the reasons that Americans leave church are complex and multifaceted, this same issue is highlighted for the UK by Aisthorpe (2016). The choice of an individual to leave a church may be related to a loss of belief, or a theological disagreement, or a practical issue such as the time of a meeting, or a simple falling out between church members. What is more, churches sometimes grow as well as shrink. A survey of the American 'Religious Landscape' in 2020 (Jones, et al., 2021) showed a period of growth in 'White mainline Protestantism' (mainline is the term applied to denominations such as the Lutherans, Presbyterians and United Methodists in the USA) such that it has now overtaken 'White evangelical Protestantism' in numerical terms. This is despite various dire warnings of impending doom, most notably including Kelley's famous thesis of 1972 which posited that mainline or liberal Protestantism wasn't able to compete with conservatism (Kelley, 2000) on the grounds that, as Iannacone later put it, 'Strict churches are strong' (Iannaccone, 1994). The survey also shows that at the same time the apparently non-stop 'rise of the nones' has slowed. It certainly hasn't stopped, however, and when differentiated ethnicity isn't factored in, American Protestants are still much more evangelical (22%) than mainline (11%) (Burge, 2021 c). For clarity, this is not the same picture that is emerging in the global south, as Hardy describes in her recent exploration of the growth of Pentecostalism (Hardy, 2021).

Secondly, a decline in church attendance hasn't simply translated into a move toward a genuinely secular society. To return to personal experience again, I have found that people who don't identify with any religious tradition often consider 'spirituality',

and even to some extent religious ritual, to be an important part of their lives. They talk to me of 'spiritual experiences' they had while listening to music, going on holiday or walking through a forest; and they speak in reverential tones of ceremonies to mark rites of passage. This in marked contrast to the ongoing 'noises off' from dogmatic secularists who grumble that "religious beliefs are dumb and dumber: super dumb…" (Dawkins, 2007). These observations too are supported in literature as further studies have shown that while attendance levels have unquestionably declined, religious or spiritual beliefs remain important to people. According to one (decade old) study, approximately 30% of those who belonged to no religion at all claimed to believe in life after death; 7% of self-professed atheists believed in angels; and approximately a quarter of the population believed in reincarnation, including one in seven atheists (Spencer & Weldin, 2012). Revisiting the themes of her 2018 Gifford Lecture for a 2021 journal article, the sociologist of religion Elaine Howard Ecklund notes that even in the hyper rational world of contemporary professional scientists the distinction between supposedly secular scientific thought and religious belief is not so clear as it may appear (Ecklund, 2021).

This shift in social attitude and behaviour has occurred during a period of time in which, more broadly, British culture has become notably more diverse; with a growth in the number of religious and cultural identities reported in surveys. These include novel religions, such as Jedi-ism, which some describe as a joke or parody religion arising from the popularity of the Star Wars film franchise but also serves to underline an anecdotally popular/widespread belief in a beyond human 'other' variously described as a 'force', or sometimes as 'the universe'. Although this shift has not necessarily yet meant that novel religious movements are considered entirely 'respectable' there has certainly been a shift away from the time when membership of a church was necessary to demonstrate one's propriety or the 'moral qualities of a gentleman' (Weber, 1974 c, p. 305). Indeed, continued revelations of impropriety from within the Church, including scandals of a sexual and financial nature, have perhaps had rather an opposite effect. My assertion, therefore, is that the contemporary social climate, which on one level allows for, or encourages, a liquidity or plurality of belief, and is characterised by a marked decline in the size, scope and power of the mainstream religions (notably but not exclusively Christianity), rather than being purely secularist, is more broadly indicative of what has been consistently described as post secularism. Within a post-secular society, religious thought continues to play an important part,

actively shaping 'social life at different levels and in a variety of forms' (Habermas, 2010) but no longer acts as the dominant or defining narrative. Christendom may indeed be dead, but is it any more dead than its secular counterpart? In its stead sits a realm of potential opportunity – to make the most of this, however, the Church may have to have sufficient humility to learn to "regard secular wisdom as more than its degenerate Other" (Graham, 2013, p. 224).

Whilst social attitudes have shifted, and the power of the Christian Church as a social driving force has waned, there is still a significant 'Christendom' legacy: Seats for Church of England Bishops in the House of Lords; regular broadcasts of religious services and inspirational messages on the BBC; the British monarch as national defender of The Faith (and the concomitant pledge of allegiance by Anglican priests); and ongoing disputes over issues such as same sex marriage, abortion, and Sunday trading being current examples of the complex intertwining nature of the British association with the Christian religion. Simultaneously the Church continues to act as a primary non-governmental provider of social care and support to poor, disadvantaged and marginalised people, with church run food banks networked together by organisations such as the Trussell Trust, religious charities such as Christians Against Poverty and others providing ongoing, values based third sector social support to various constituencies.

When I began this project it was with the encouragement of my then employer, the charity Oasis UK. The charity is in itself an example of precisely this: a faith based charitable enterprise which, on a non-profit basis and through a subsidiary charity, runs a large network of 'Academy' schools across England. Oasis UK also provides various forms of community support in a network of neighbourhoods, from parenting classes and food banks to fitness groups and mentoring projects, all situated in communities which have data that show them to be socially and economically deprived to a significant degree (Oasis Charitable Trust, 2018). Other examples of the same sort of endeavour include the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), the oldest and biggest youth charity in the world, which includes a number of autonomous charities that have as their foundation the so called 'Paris Basis' of 1855 (World Council of YMCAs, 2018) which mandates their work in religious terms. While the independent and autonomous nature of the YMCA network means that each charity operates differently, a number of them within the UK have a religious emphasis (in other

countries this is even more the case, with YMCAs effectively operating as churches).
This means that their work with the homeless, the young and the vulnerable is founded
upon, and driven by the religious commitment or motivation of the Trustees or Charity
leaders, and enshrined in their articles of association. Work on understanding the nature
of the motivation and resources that individuals and groups draw upon to develop and
provide services of this sort, has been informed by ideas of capital and have included
the development of an idea of a 'spiritual' capital, a concept which bears comparison
with ideas of human capital and social capital, a subset of which is the closely linked
idea of religious capital. The principal strength (and simultaneously the key weakness)
of the term spiritual capital is that it blurs the usual boundaries or distinctions between
religious and secular, (already somewhat hazy by having to exist in a post secular space)
and is thereby sufficiently fluid to be applied to a range of religious expressions –
traditional and novel. The strength of this is due to the sense of 'spirituality' which
remains socially palatable in a climate where 'religion' has become increasingly
problematized in popular imagination, and, particularly in the case of dogmatic
conservativism, in parts of academia too. It is this same elasticity and resistance to
clarity of definition which is self-evidently problematic in academic terms, however –
not least the lack of clear division between spiritual capital and religious capital. In the
following section I will outline some of the relevant literature available on the subject of
spiritual capital.

SPIRITUAL CAPITAL

Academic literature considering the subject of spiritual capital is wide ranging,
and there are a number of approaches (direct and specific, or oblique but applicable) to
the idea. These come from different fields of study, principally: economics; sociology;
social policy; and theology. Within each group are subgroups that further develop,
define and refine ideas of spiritual capital. While the overall approach of this project is
theological, it is important to acknowledge and address these various approaches in the
development of a theological response to the subject. While theological ideas may fall
outside of the scope of economic and sociological theories, the converse is not
necessarily true, and theologians may presume to have the breadth of remit to engage
with ideas from a range of disciplines.

ECONOMICS

The concept of capital is a familiar one to economists, and there is a rich seam of work on the subject of human capital, spiritual capital, religious capital, and spiritual human capital available to scholars. This body of work might be said to originate with Adam Smith's 'Wealth of the Nations' (1775) which outlines the means by which differentiated wages may be arrived at, according to the capacities of individuals, leading to the development of an economic theory of human capital. A conventional antagonist for Smith could be Marx, whose understanding of capital (Marx, 2013) informs the approach of some of the sociologists in the following sections. That these thinkers are both men from before the 20th century is notable. Perhaps particularly so as material of specific relevance to this aspect of the project doesn't really begin to appear until the 20th century, with the development of theories concerning religious capital. It is also notable that throughout the literature, the terms 'religious capital' and 'spiritual capital' are often used almost interchangeably, such that they may seem synonymous: this is a problematic area of the scholarship which will be briefly addressed in this study. Nevertheless, a number of economists have based their work on the sense that spirituality and religion are the same thing (Verter, 2003) and the lack of clear definition of spiritual capital is a notable critique of the literature which has not gone altogether unremarked (Iannaccone & Klick, 2003). Nonetheless, at this stage, the scholarship remains in a position where spiritual capital is not well defined, or rather is variously defined, such that literature searches produce results from a wide range of disciplines on a number of different topics.

An interesting perspective which can be bracketed, however loosely, as economics, is to be found in the work of Danah Zohar (Zohar, 2004) where we find new definitions of spiritual capital which are substantially differentiated from religious capital. For Zohar, who writes for a lay audience, spiritual capital is the wealth, power, and influence that one gains by acting from a deep sense of meaning, our deepest values, and a sense of higher purpose. This is not dependent upon engagement with a particular, or indeed any, religious tradition. Rather Zohar develops what she considers as an 'areligious' idea of 'spiritual intelligence' as the route by which spiritual capital is built. In developing spiritual intelligence, according to Zohar, we seek meaning and engage with our deepest held personal values. Contemporaneous with Zohar were a number of other writers, including Berger and Hefner (2003) who defined spiritual capital as a sub-set of social capital, developed by means of participation in religious

acts. Key to the particularity and therefore relevance of Zohar's work, though, was both her insistence that spiritual capital needs to be considered in a multi-disciplinary way, rather than through a 'pure' economic lens, and the recognition of the way in which spiritual capital can be developed beyond a purely religious paradigm.

Zohar, however insightful, remains vulnerable to a number of critiques, firstly the questionable concept of the 'areligious' nature of their work, which might rather be seen as either 'novelly religious', or 'secularly religious'. Her bracketing off of 'religious' is altogether too small. More fundamentally though, her work is open to the critique of many economic theorists of human phenomena, which concerns their reduction of the 'value' of human interaction to a form of economic 'worth'.

Economics and politics are profoundly intertwined – not only in the practical sense of Bill Clinton's 1990's campaign team reminder: "It's the economy stupid!" But also in a theological sense, opening up a political, as well as theological critique of the kind of thinking that Zohar engenders. The process theologian John Cobb sets this out clearly:

> "Christians are committed to the worth of individual persons. This worth is not located in possessions or outward accomplishments. It cannot be measured by the strength or beauty of the body. It does not consist in the usefulness of the individual person to society. It is located in the soul, not as a special substance which merely inhabits a body, but as the locus of the distinctively personal experience of the whole psychosomatic organism. Metz sees that this requires of the church that it should always defend the individual 'from being considered exclusively as matter and means for the building of a completely rationalised technological future'." (Cobb, 2016, p. 91)

Through this lens, approaches such as that of Zohar may be vulnerable to the accusation of being too wedded to a reductive sense of the essentially material value of spiritual capital as a means of increasing productivity or economic wealth. The perceived value in increasing spiritual capital in the workplace, in this paradigm, is found in developing positive character traits such as responsibility; personal fulfilment; honesty; and creativity, with a view to the beneficial impact these have in economic or 'business' terms. Results such as increased economic activity, added economic value and an inflated 'bottom line' due to the nurturing of these elements of spiritual capital are key to their project. Problems with this sort of approach will form part of the analysis in Chapter 3, which will consider some problematic aspects of capitalism. Zohar does however point to the necessity to understand spiritual capital in order for an enterprise to flourish, and this is a point of view which might be shared more

broadly, in the sense of human flourishing occurring when higher order spiritual needs are attended to. Other writers such as Rima (2013) develop ideas of spiritual capital as a means by which humans can gain a form of advantage or power, and businesses may develop profits and create wealth. Yet others also define spiritual capital in similarly functional terms. Berger and Hefner describe spiritual capital thus:

> "[a] sub-species of social capital, referring to the power, influence, knowledge, and dispositions created by participation in a particular religious tradition." (Berger & Hefner, 2003)

In a later work, Berger and Redding then go on to develop their definition, describing spiritual capital as

> "[a] set of resources stemming from religion and available for use [or influence] in economic and political development." (Berger & Redding, 2011)

In both instances, the writers remain open to critique concerning their apparent failure to distinguish between the religious and the spiritual, just as they do to a critique concerning the nature of human worth. An aggregated 'economic' view of spiritual capital in this sense may effectively be understood as 'the development of measurable or quantifiable influence due to the inherent or embedded beliefs that an individual has, and their association with a group of others who share those same beliefs': an approach which is subject to the forms of (theological) critique already outlined.

An alternative economic outlook is proposed by the ecological economist Prof Tim Jackson in his works 'Prosperity without growth' (2017) and 'Post Growth' (2021) in which he develops a vision for an alternative economic system which recognises the destructive potential (and reality) of unchecked growth and eschews this approach. Jackson's thinking will form a key part of Chapter 3.

SOCIOLOGY

There are, effectively, two kinds of sociological approach apparent in this field of work, the first, and underlying sense, is what I will address as 'Sociology' while the second I shall address instead as 'Social policy'. Some scholars write across both areas, but the areas of study are suitably distinct to make a separation worthwhile. *Ab initio* – we must acknowledge the debt that is owed, in any discussion of spiritual capital in Sociology, to the work of Pierre Bourdieu in which he develops a fundamentally Marxist idea of capital to engage with the idea of 'cultural capitals' (Bourdieu, 1986). (We will engage more directly with Bourdieu's work in the already much trailed Chapter

3). The innovation comes with Bourdieu's sense that cultural capitals are as much the result of labour as are material capitals. Effectively the point of divergence for Bourdieu from Marx's capital theory is that for Bourdieu the meta-economy is one of power, which means that capital is about more than money or property. Social assets, like material assets, are therefore the result of labour, and are subject to the same transactional or accumulative laws or ideas (Verter, 2003).

Verter, whose own work is helpful in opening up Bourdieu's, notes that Bourdieu conceives of capital in three states: embodied, objectified and institutionalised. Of particular interest to this project is the embodied state, of which Verter remarks:

> "In the embodied state, spiritual capital is a measure of not only position, but also disposition; it is the knowledge, abilities, tastes, and credentials an individual has amassed in the field of religion, and is the outcome of explicit education or unconscious processes of socialization. Its efficacy resides in the fact that it is not recognized as capital - that is, as the product of a primitive accumulation within a struggle to impose an arbitrary symbolic hierarchy but rather is mistaken for competence within a naturalized social order. Like cultural capital, spiritual capital is embodied in the habitus, the socially structured mode of apprehending and acting in the world." (Verter, 2003, p. 159)

Verter notes the importance of symbolism, and this is a key part of the discussion in terms of a post secular context. Contemporary societal shifts have seen the symbolic value of religious adherence decline: at one time religious adherence, like the consumption of fine wine, or owning a collection of fine art, served as a marker of social respectability. Bourdieu developed the idea that it is disposition rather than acquisition which was the important factor – having the ability to make a learned appreciation of art was as important as, or more important than, the acquisition of it.

> "…abstract tastes and competencies are precious assets in a symbolic economy characterized by the struggle for domination…. According to Bourdieu, aesthetic dispositions are both products and instruments of social reproduction within a system of class relations. Scholars, critics, and others who produce, distribute, and mediate cultural products struggle for the power to define tastes as a strategy of maintaining or modifying their social position." (Verter, 2003, p. 159)

Within this symbolic economy the value aligned to belonging to a religious community or taking part in corporate religious rituals has dropped, although the value of personal piety,

integrity, and spirituality has remained high. Hence the movement towards an embodied form of spiritual capital. It is in making the move from religious to spiritual capital that Verter leads the adaptation of Bourdieu's model into direct relevance to this project. However, just as Bourdieu arguably fails to capture what is specifically religious or spiritual in the resources associated with 'capital', so does Verter, for both engage in this theorising from perspectives of economy and market (Bourdieu), and economy and culture (Verter) (Hämmerli, 2011). Various other writers expand upon Bourdieu's underlying work, sharing the difficulty in differentiating spirituality and religion. For example Laurence Iannaccone noted that religious practices can also be viewed as 'productive service' (Iannaccone, 1990, p. 299) and extended his argument to include the idea that religious service in the form of charitable acts bring about the betterment of the participant as well as those whom they serve, developing a form of religious capital. This kind of religious capital would be understood as being developed within the structures of a religious institution, but of course charitable acts may be (and in some senses always are) conducted individually, muddying the distinction between the religious and the spiritual sense of the kind of capital which is being developed.

It remains true that communities and people of 'faith' or 'religious motivation' are very often involved in the delivery of charitable works. This is evident in news reports of Christians opening food banks, Sikhs feeding the homeless, Muslims supporting refugee families, and is even built into the British landscape with the model towns of Quaker philanthropists. 'Social justice', so called, is of particular importance to elements of the Abrahamic religions, whether it's acts of corporal mercy in the Catholic church, enacted liberation theology, relocation of middle-class families to developing world slums, or the redistribution of 'food waste', people with a faith or religious motivation can be found around the world, working for the common good. In a 2013 conference paper, Wong and Palmer attempted to clarify 'spiritual capital' in terms of the values which motivate and support these actions. Their ultimate definition is that spiritual capital is as follows:

> "…the individual and collective capacities generated through affirming and nurturing the intrinsic spiritual value of every human being." (Wong & Palmer, 2013)

They go on to distinguish that their concept of spiritual capital is an autonomous form of value, rather than a subset of another form of capital, that spiritual capital is based on an intrinsic sense of human value, (which critiques the instrumentalist ideas of

economic theorists), and crucially that spiritual capital 'generates and transforms social and material relations.' They thereby account for the capacity of those with a 'stock' of spiritual capital, particularly when connected to some organisational culture, to effectively pursue goals that serve the common good. In sociological terms I can find little to critique in this definition, given that it distinguishes spiritual from religious, and moves away from the economic transaction model of other theorists. From a theological perspective, however, there remain open questions concerning the nature or origin of spiritual capital. Where, for instance, can this capital be said to be developed? In what sense might spiritual capital be said to be 'human', and in what sense 'God given'?

An important figure in the discussion of capitals is Putnam, whose popular work sets up social capital as the inter-personal connectedness that produces social cohesion. Among the most useful innovations in his work is in the distinction between 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital. Bonding social capital is developed by inward looking social relationships, and is good for developing group identities while bridging social capital is outward looking, and generates broader identities in society. (Putnam, 1995) Of the two it is bridging social capital which may have the most direct relevance to the project, given its emphasis on outward facing action for the common good.

The cross over point with what I describe loosely as 'social policy' comes over strongly in the prolific work of Chris Baker, who has written on this topic with a variety of authors: (Baker, C., & Skinner, 2006) (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008) (Baker, C., & Miles-Watson, 2010) (Baker & Smith, 2010) (Baker, C., & Beaumont (eds), 2011) and on his own: (2009) (2012) (2013) (2014). To be a little crude in characterisation: Baker's key underlying interest is arguably an instrumentalist one – although one that is certainly less wedded to the problematic economic ideas of Zohar et al. Baker recognises the value to common humanity of the work which is done by those who draw upon a resource of spiritual capital. Part of his work is a survey of projects which demonstrate this in action so the development of this is in understanding spiritual capital, and how its development may be encouraged and then harnessed for the common good.

SOCIAL POLICY

I will not dwell too heavily on social policy here, as Baker has done extensive work on this, and the policy recommendations in this project will refer more to the Church than other elements of civil society. Rather I shall just highlight some areas of interest here.

Notably, Baker proposes yet another definition of spiritual capital, conceiving of it thus:

> "Spiritual capital refers to the values, ethics, beliefs and vision which faith communities bring to civil society at the global and local level. It also refers to the holistic vision for change held within an individual person's set of beliefs. Spiritual capital in this form can be described as more liquid than solid because it relates to intangibles such as ideas and visions and is not exclusively claimed by a specific religious tradition" (Baker, C., & Skinner, 2006).

We might note that in his description of an 'holistic vision for change' Baker strays close to the line, if one exists, between this work and theology. We may see echoes of this later in the project. That point notwithstanding: he went on to develop his theory of spiritual capital to include a secular variation, further defining the term to include:

> "…the set of individual and corporate/community values and action produced by the dynamic interaction between spiritual and social capital within secular fields of activity" (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008).

Baker proposes that religious capital is made up of the resources that religious or faith communities have at their disposal, while spiritual capital is the motivation in terms of values, and beliefs which might exist in any individual, effectively separating the material and the ideal. Crucially then, according to Baker, this spiritual capital may be accumulated by those within or indeed beyond the reach of what he suggests are religious institutions. It might for instance be accumulated by participating in rituals, meeting with those who share beliefs, or engaging with resources which bolster or develop a particular view. Baker notes the importance of religious capital in public policy terms, as those who form part of a religious structure are enabled to use their underlying motivation to effect social change (Baker, C., & Skinner, 2006).

The reason this can be considered work concerning social policy, is that Baker's concern across the body of his work may be broadly summarised and represented as follows:

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a) Spiritual capital is a fundamental social good as it provides the motivation for people to engage in activities which serve the common good (the motivation).

b) Society at large is in need of more well motivated people who are willing to serve the common good (the resource).

c) Policy makers therefore need to develop channels by which the motivation may be developed, in order to provide more of the resource.

It should be noted that this fundamental approach is one this project may be said to share to a certain extent. Baker's approach may be understood, perhaps, as a communitarian version of Zohar's. It is sociologically clean of any sense of teleology, and not theological in a strict sense (notwithstanding that in some sense, all work is theological), and it is fundamentally instrumentalist. From the perspective of this project (which takes a largely uncritical, or positive view of activity which seeks to serve the common good), that is the first point of critique: that there is no substantial engagement with what the theo-philosophical underpinning or 'nature' of spiritual capital 'is'. A further critique concerns whether individualised engagement with rituals, community or other traditionally 'religious' resources can genuinely be understood as standing outside of a category of religion. Ultimately too, there is a question over the sense in which the common good may be being idolised or idealised, and whether this in itself becomes a theological argument: specifically, what is the ultimate concern at play in this scenario? Aspects of this are taken up by Greg Smith, a collaborator of Baker's, in the text of a talk delivered in 2015 concerning civic rituals, which concludes:

> "Ultimately the Church and the state may need to accept that what true religion (defined by the apostle James thus: to reach out to the homeless and loveless in their plight, and guard against corruption from the godless world) brings is not a binding together in easy social cohesion, but a breaking of the body politic, followed by a gathering up of the fragments in the struggle for justice." (Smith, 2015)

Smith's work is insightful, while being both provocatively political, and representative of his Methodist/non-conformist or Protestant theological stance, but sets something of the tone for what may lie behind some of Baker's work, and certainly reflects their shared idea of the prophetic role of religion 'in the public square'. They both seek to influence public policy with a view to the furtherance of the common good, but with a

politically theological sense of what the common good is. I would repeat that this approach has been influential on the direction of this project.

THEOLOGY

Having outlined some of the literature that develops the theme of spiritual capital, the next section of this chapter will focus on exploring the theological underpinnings of this project. 'Spiritual capital' is a subject that has been left alone by the majority of theologians, perhaps because the word capital seems to locate it squarely in the realm of economics, sociology or social history. Sociologists of religion such as Woodhead and Ecklund may indeed 'illuminate lived theology' (Ecklund, 2021) but they sometimes stop short of engaging in theological reflection as such, indeed their discipline, strictly speaking, does not possess the requisite tools to do so. Key to this project though is a theological lens, specifically process and open/relational theology. I shall later clarify 'process' as a somewhat diverse theological movement. Within the wider 'open/relational' bracket there is latitude to include the work of a range of theologians and theological philosophers who are not avowedly process, but who inhabit a similarly progressive approach to (particularly but not uniquely Christian) theology, and who crucially share an underlying metaphysic or at least a rejection of the Thomist metaphysics that characterise much of mainstream Christianity. We shall now conduct a brief survey of relevant philosophical and theological scholars and writers who may help us find a route into this topic, this will culminate in a greater development of the central ideas of process theology and their relevance.

The philosopher John Caputo is a relevant, although deconstructive, philosopher whose ideas cross over with those put forward by constructive theologians from the process 'school'. We may begin with him, because his 2001 work 'On Religion' astutely identifies the issue at hand in this project, that it remains true even in these post secular times that "God's people" are often to be found at work where they are most needed, which is to say working in solidarity with and on the behalf of the excluded and marginalised:

> "Religious people, the "people of God," the people of the impossible, impassioned by a love that leaves them restless and unhinged, panting like the deer for running streams, as the psalmist says (Ps. 42:1), are impossible people. In every sense of the word. If, on any given day, you go into the worst neighborhoods of

the inner cities of most large urban centers, the people you will find there serving the poor and needy, expending their lives and considerable talents attending to the least among us, will almost certainly be religious people — evangelicals and Pentecostalists, social workers with deeply held religious convictions, Christian, Jewish, and Islamic, men and women, priests and nuns, black and white." (Caputo, 2001)

Caputo rehearses this theme again in conversation with the process theologian Catherine Keller, where he reflects upon the paradoxical uptake of elements of the social gospel phraseology by the militant religious right in the form of the phrase 'What would Jesus do?' Suggesting that rather than indulge in political gamesmanship:

"Jesus would be found in the worst neighbors [sic] in the poorest cities serving the wretched of the earth." (Caputo & Keller, 2007, p. 107)

Notable here is Caputo's repeated (positive) return to the language of illogicality, words like 'impossible', 'unhinged', and 'madness' populate his writing about the way in which people of God choose to prioritise ideas such as forgiveness and love over routes to personal gain. He uses though, words such as 'expend' linguistically denoting that he views these activities as some sort of exchange, moving him, however reluctantly into the realm of capital vocabulary. For Caputo the stuff that motivates, inspires and enables these acts (which we might choose to term spiritual capital) is scarcely the kind of capital which gains one advantages in life, rather it is kenotic, self-sacrificing, or self-abasing. This rather negative view of spiritual capital is radically different to the much more positive one of the likes of Zohar, and reflects the way in which Caputo considers God to be active in the world (Caputo, 2006). As we will explore in Chapter 2, in contrast with the prevailing view of Christian orthodoxy, for both process and other relational theologians, including open theists (process theology's evangelical counterparts), God's power to 'act' is therefore limited in the sense that God has the power to 'lure' or persuade, but not the power to effect unilateral change. God's action is by means of persuasion, whether that is of human or non-human actors. (This view certainly poses theological challenges, but it also offers solutions posed by questions of theodicy, to which we will return). Even this is more 'powerful', one might argue, than Caputo's view of God's weakness. Both process and open theologians make a distinction between their view of God, and the God of 'classical theism', a synthesis of Hellenic notions of perfection (immutable, absolute, timeless), and Abrahamic monotheist ideas of deity, arguing that classical theism is problematically prevalent in

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contemporary Christian thinking. The classical theist's God must be unmoved and unchanging, as Aristotle argues in his metaphysical work, and which is sometimes characterised as the idea of an 'unmoved mover' (Aristotle, 2004, p. 368), whereas the process and relational theist's understanding of God is better understood in Rabbi Herschel's phrase: "the most moved mover" (Levenson, 2006, p. 215) which is repeated by Pinnock (2001) and extended by Hartshorne to become "the most [and best] moved mover" (Hartshorne, 1998, p. 6). Herschel's thinking was, we may note, influenced by, and a response to, the reality of experiential suffering, something which will become increasingly important for this project.

Process thinkers, then, reject 'classical theism' and deny the validity of its conceptualisation of the divine. This rejection is a key theo-philosophical underpinning of this study, and it brings it into intersection with theologians of different emphases, including process, open and negative theologians, as well as others who also posit alternative understandings of the nature of God and the substance of Christianity. These writers include Bonhoeffer, who Cobb considers with and against both Whitehead and Altizer in their various rejections of classical theism.

> "Against these traditional aspects of Christian theology Bonhoeffer appeals to the New Testament, Whitehead to the Gallilean origin of Christianity. Neither opposes Christ to God as does Altizer, but both demand a revolutionary shift in the understanding of God in the name of what is distinctively Christian." (Cobb, 1965, p. 40)

Critiques of open and process theism abound, and indeed they exist within the small number we have already considered. Caputo, for instance, has described process theology's panentheist metaphysic as 'unscholastic' (Caputo, 2018) (this may be a back handed compliment). We will later note that Whitehead was a keen advocate for others so charged. Harsher critiques of process, open and negative theologies are forthcoming from more conservative elements of the academy, which disavow the insubstantial, fluid and pluralistic approach sometimes preferred by these progressive theologians and demand a return to a more 'solid' metaphysical emphasis on being, rather than becoming.

The process theologian most in dialogue with Caputo is Catherine Keller, and her own constructive process theology also doesn't address spiritual capital by name, although in common with other theologians Keller does reflect on the sense in which

God may be seen or understood to act in the world. The process sense of God's lure and humanity's response looms more than large in her work, part of which is directed squarely against the idea of *creatio ex nihilo* (she prefers the biblical sense of *creatio ex profundis*), and speaks of the sense of God calling us in to what we are already supposed to be. Our work, our gift, is to be the living embodiment of God's earthly activity: 'It is up to us to do God'. So, it's the relationality of Keller's theology which speaks most specifically to the topic at hand, she, like other apophatic and relational theologians rejects the sense of separation, or of external relationships, in favour of a Whiteheadian idea that "every actual entity is present in every other actual entity" (Whitehead, 1978, p. 50). On this basis, our action is God's action, thus our internal resource of 'spiritual capital' may be said to be God's indwelling. This idea will be key to informing our sense of how we interpret this idea more broadly.

Continuing our exploration of underlying theology by way of non-theologians, we may take a turn toward the sociological again, and reflect that the question of the nature of God's indwelling brings the project into connection with the idea of 'gift'. In her consideration of gift as it relates to what she terms 'religion and spirituality' Maria Hämmerli, while not a theologian, begins to tip into theological territory in a helpful way. In doing this she develops on the work of Caillé, Godbout and fundamentally, of course, Marcel Mauss (Hämmerli, 2011, p. 198). As a sociologist, Hämmerli is more at home with the idea of spiritual capital and helps to turn the troublesome terminology in a helpful direction.

> "Capital can be a pertinent category to describe the outcome of religious activity if it is undressed of its purely economic vestment, i.e., of the idea of goal-directed, rationally calculated human action, while maintaining the idea of gain and benefit." (Hämmerli, 2011, p. 206)

Hämmerli contends that we must consider any resources derived from involvement in religion and spirituality as 'by-products' of this involvement, rather than 'purposes that precede religious interest and involvement.' But while Hämmerli is insightful in her treatment of the subject, we may posit that she remains subject to two particular critiques – the first that as a non-theologian she uses terminology concerning religion and spirituality a bit too loosely, and the second that as a sociologist she views spiritual capital, fundamentally, as a subset of social capital, an idea which may be adequate sociologically, but needs to be expanded upon in theological terms.

No perspective may be considered entirely 'pure' and so prior to turning more squarely to the sort of theology which determines the direction of this project, we may take one more small diversion to note that some other philosophical undercurrents have helped form some of the underlying thinking, particularly in helping to form a critical perspective on process thought. Here we should also acknowledge the contributions of writers who are loosely gathered under the banner of '*la nouvelle théologie*' – Pierre Teilhard de Chardin for instance and Hans Urs Von Balthasar have both provided source material for more clearly process oriented scholars such as Sallie McFague and Catherine Keller. Similarly, Jurgen Moltmann, whose work will be touched on later in the project, speaks the same kind of theological language and may be thought of as a key influence.

PROCESS PHILOSOPHY

In this section of the chapter, having finally reached a point of engagement with process thought, we shall consider what it is we are talking about when we seek to speak of 'process' thought. In the first instance we will begin here by making some note of the work of Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947). Rather than simply give a straightforward review of Whitehead's written work, I will instead offer something of a combination of a literature review and an abbreviated biography. The reason I would seek to give for this is twofold: in the first place it is helpful to understand Whitehead's work in some sort of context; secondly I will seek to demonstrate that although often understood as and considered to be an iconoclast, Whitehead himself is an example of, rather than an exception to the principles which this project will seek to develop.

Alfred North Whitehead is often understood as the embodied point of origin of what we now consider to be process philosophy – alternatively in his own words the 'philosophy of organism'. Of course, it is too simplistic to ever cite an individual as the single point of origin for a complex system of ideas. A brief survey of his writing demonstrates Whitehead's acknowledgement of his debt to previous philosophers, the extent to which this influence is material has been subject to debate (Lowe, 1949), indeed Whitehead's writing is so widely referential that it appears clear that he was indeed influenced by 'decades of miscellaneous reading and reflection' (Ibid, p. 296) (one may sympathise). Nevertheless, it may remain helpful to recognise that there are some apparently obvious forbears and near contemporaries among his many influences.

Besides such household names as Kant, Locke and Hume, among the most obvious forebears is the radical empiricist William James (1842-1910), slightly less famous than these others, whose influence might be considered to be most evident throughout Whitehead's philosophy, and whose revision of the concept of experience is therefore important for this project too. James made good and repeated use of the term 'organism' in his writing, which Whitehead would take on into his own philosophy of organism. James may also be said to give us a clue, in his personal philosophy, as to where we might look for signs of spiritual capital in action. In one of his plentiful and idiosyncratic letters he remarks:

> "I am against bigness and greatness in all their forms, and with the invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual, stealing in through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, and yet rending the hardest monuments of man's pride, if you give them time. The bigger the unit you deal with, the hollower, the more brutal, the more mendacious is the life displayed. So I am against all big organizations as such, national ones first and foremost; against all big successes and big results; and in favor of the eternal forces of truth which always work in the individual and immediately unsuccessful way, under-dogs always, till history comes, after they are long dead, and puts them on the top." (James, 2011)

We shall return to James' evocative idea of the importance of 'invisible molecular moral forces' at a later point.

Besides the influence of James, Whitehead also makes other explicit acknowledgements; in the preface to 'Science and The Modern World' (1938) he first notes the influence of (he calls it indebtedness to) his contemporary Samuel Alexander. Amongst other similarities, Alexander (who also drew upon James) was another neologist - coining words like 'compresence' just as Whitehead would later offer terms such as 'concrescence' and 'prehension'. More importantly though, Alexander also saw 'process' as key to understanding deity, just as he did 'experience' (a natural theological approach which Whitehead would go on to develop) noting, for instance:

> "Nor can we even prove the existence of a being called God, whether worshipful or not, except on the basis of experience." (Alexander, 1920, p. 344)

Another key figure among the various apparent influences was the highly popular French philosopher Henri Bergson. An association with Bergson's work was

surely encouraged and perhaps even engendered by means of Whitehead's friendship with Herbert Wildon Carr, a Professor of Philosophy and a disciple of Bergson. Carr published 'The Philosophy of Change', a short book which serves as an introduction to Bergsonian thought, in 1911. In the book Carr claimed that his purpose was to give his readers 'not a complete epitome of the philosophy so much as a general survey of its scope and method.' He went on to extol the Bergsonian message that change is the primary reality: "the reality of the universe is incessant creation." (Carr, 1911, p. 58). The sense that the universe itself is constantly in the process of becoming, as also found in the work of Alexander and others, is central to process philosophy. Whitehead acknowledges his debt to Bergson, as well as William James and the pragmatist John Dewey in the preface to process and Reality, where he notes that one of his preoccupations has been 'to rescue their type of thought from the charge of anti-intellectualism' (Whitehead, 1978, p. xii). Indeed, of Dewey he would go on to note that "there is no one from whom one more dislikes to differ", before, of course, going on to differ from him (Whitehead, 1948).

By way of a slight biographical digression, we might consider the timing of his association with Bergsonian thought (by way of Carr) to be important: this was the time when Whitehead had resigned his chair at Cambridge, partly due to a dispute over the sacking of a friend. Upon leaving Cambridge he moved to London where he was initially without a job. One might reasonably assume that this upheaval was at the very least 'challenging' – perhaps even a personal crisis of a sort. The potential for personal crises to have major impacts on ways of seeing the world is an idea to which we will return in later chapters. Whether or not this link is indeed causal or merely correlative or coincidental, we can see in this selection of antecedents that Whitehead is fully committed to the idea of the reality of process, his cosmology therefore would have to do justice to this, in order to be considered adequate.

Besides these important figures, we must also recognise the influence of Spinoza throughout Whitehead's work, and while we have already noted the importance Hellenistic influence on Christian theology, it remains necessary to recognise the way in which Whitehead draws deep from the well of Plato – particularly Timaeus. Indeed, in one of the more famous (and straightforward) passages of Process and Reality Whitehead suggests:

> "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. I do not mean the systematic scheme of thought which scholars have doubtfully extracted from his writings. I allude to the wealth of general ideas scattered through them." (Whitehead, 1978)

The way that Whitehead refers to Plato here bears a remarkable similarity to the way that his work too has been treated. We will consider Whitehead as a neo-Platonist in the following chapter. Although Whitehead's main 'corpus' is well established, we must also recognise that previously unpublished lectures are even now finding their way into print by way of initiatives such as the Whitehead Research Project (2021), so any survey of his output remains at present a necessarily provisional account of Whitehead's work. Whitehead left no instructions to destroy his *nachlass,* and in any case this obviously wouldn't have extended to the various students who took notes during his lectures, as a result we have yet to see the last of it. What we can say for certain though is that Whitehead was first a Cambridge scholar, taking a Mathematics fellowship at Trinity in 1884, and upon leaving Cambridge in 1910, due to the circumstances to which I previously referred, he moved to London. He took a post at University College between 1911 and 1914 and then a chair of Mathematics at Imperial College from 1914 to 1924. It is perhaps notable then that Whitehead moved to London just as Carr, who was also based in London, was leading up to publishing his book on Bergson. It is speculative, certainly, to suggest that this fortunate coincidence shaped his direction, but it was during this time that he began to shift his focus to metaphysics rather than Mathematics, publishing philosophical papers in the years 1915-17 and then 'An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge' in 1919. If this first crisis weren't enough, this was also the period of World War One and this new era of mechanised killing led to one of the greatest tragedies that can befall anyone, when his youngest son Eric Alfred Whitehead, aged just 19, was killed in action (Clipping, 1918). Archived letters between the two demonstrate the close and loving relationship Eric had with his father, calling him 'darling daddy'. Whitehead made public reference to this bereavement in the dedication to 'An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge' (1919) saying his son was: "Killed in action over the Foret de Gobain giving himself that the city of his vision may not perish. The music of his life was without discord, perfect in its beauty." The First World War was also a point of departure for Whitehead in terms of his great friendship with his former pupil and co-author Bertrand Russell, who as a pacifist spoke publicly against the conflict. Whitehead

on the other hand believed it to be the best way of achieving peace. Russell's public dislike of Bergson's philosophy may also have been a point of departure.

In the space of a few years, then, we see Whitehead dislocated, bereaved and with a significant rift in a key friendship. As we will note and reflect upon later in this project, such 'events' or 'spatio-temporal happenings' to use a Whiteheadian idea, are often crucial in developmental terms. Perhaps it is an overreach to suggest that any of these 'events' individually sharpened his focus and moved it toward an analysis of what life and death really are, but if they didn't, then the timing remains an important coincidence, enough perhaps to move him from one stage of maturity to another. This theme seemed to remain with him, in the final chapter of 'Adventures of Ideas' he turns his thoughts to peace, and reflecting on the meaning of youth poignantly opines that:

> "The deepest definition of youth is: Life as yet untouched by tragedy."
> (Whitehead, 1967, p. 287)

In 1924, as he was faced with mandatory retirement from Imperial, Whitehead and his family made the move to America, Whitehead resigning his chair in order to take up a professorship in Philosophy at Harvard, a position which he maintained until the end of his career in 1937. This period of time was when he fully transitioned from being a Mathematician and Physicist to being first and foremost a Philosopher. It was during this time that he gave the Gifford Lectures which were then published as 'Process and Reality', thereafter considered his philosophical master work. In 1932, at a symposium given in honour of his seventieth birthday, he said:

> "The world is always becoming, and as it becomes it passes away and perishes…
>
> Almost all of Process and Reality can be read as an attempt to analyse perishing on the same level as Aristotle's notion of becoming. The notion of the prehension of the past means that the past is an element which perishes and thereby remains an element in the state beyond, and thus is objectified. That is the whole notion. If you get a general notion of what is meant by perishing, you will have accomplished an apprehension of what you mean by memory and causality, what you mean when you feel that what we are is of infinite importance, because as we perish we are immortal. That is the one key thought around which the whole development of Process and Reality is woven." (Whitehead, 1932, pp. 26-27)

Here then he summarises his focus in this latter part of his life and career, the analysis of not just becoming, but also perishing – these two constituting the "creative advance"

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of the world. Note the reference to immortality: a not unnatural preoccupation for anyone familiar with the trauma of bereavement or the reality of aging. It is conventional to conceive of these three career stages as key phases in Whitehead's life, certainly it is not difficult to perceive them as marking a radical shift in emphases through this passage of time.

Ultimately this project is a work of theology which draws on a range of other disciplines; it is also a work which seeks to apply apparently abstracted theory to a very practical question without seeking to provide an ultimately definitive answer. This, it seems, is very much a (small scale) 'Whiteheadian' approach. Whitehead himself was a celebrated mathematician who devoted the later years of his life to Philosophy, applying the rational reasoning used to great effect in earlier publications, such as the three volume 'Principia Mathematica' which he co-authored with Bertrand Russell, to questions of metaphysics. In this project we will also take a Whiteheadian approach in the belief "that we fail to find in experience any elements intrinsically incapable of exhibition as examples of general theory" (Whitehead, 1978, p. 42). This idea shapes the research which is to come.

Crucially, Whitehead was not a theologian, at least not in the strictest sense of that term. He made no attempt at developing a Christology or soteriology for instance – rather his somewhat fragmentary remarks about the divine are all couched in the wider framework of his thoughts about the nature of reality. That he grew up and worked within a context of Christianity is notable of course, his father was a clergyman and Whitehead is recorded as having been a regular church goer for much of his life – moving between high church Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism. He also expressed admiration, or at least sympathy, for the post Reformation traditions of Unitarianism and Congregationalism (the latter a precursor of my own tradition), casually opining that these denominations had best "found a way to adapt the Christian ideas to the world we live in. now…" (Price, 1954, p. 353).

Ultimately Whitehead was also a rationalist and made clear his various criticisms of religion, his way of thinking about God was framed by a logical and scientific analysis of his observation of the world around him. In this way we might think (idealistically and perhaps naïvely) of Whitehead as being ahead of his time as a proto-post-secularist in the modern era, or perhaps he was simply representative of the philosophical ferment of his time. In any case, he had not fully eschewed religious

thinking, but thought little of adapting it according to his understanding of the world. Of his body of philosophical work 'Process and Reality' (1978), an edited transcription of his Gifford Lectures is the best known and most influential, this along with 'Adventures of Ideas' (1967) is what he is most famous for in the world of Philosophy – each a reasonably large text full of language so complex and precise in places that companion volumes were being published as early as the 1960s in order to help academic readers make sense of them. As well as these works, though, there are some other smaller but still important books: 'Science and the Modern World' (1938) and 'Religion in the Making' (1960), both precursors of 'Process and Reality', are two of these. They are essentially books of collected lectures, and each text is helpful in leading to an understanding of the breadth of Whitehead's thinking. Out of his broad offering it is these four foregoing texts which are most relied upon in this project; although that is not to ignore his other work. One must acknowledge that Whitehead's incisive and expansive thinking is also expressed in other texts such as 'Modes of Thought' and 'The Aims of Education' as well as collections of his essays and lectures, some of which have also formed part of the background of this project. Besides these original works we should also note Lucien Price's 'Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead' (Price, 1954) an idiosyncratic and narrative (often verbatim) account of various informal conversations held between Whitehead and numerous of his friends and acquaintances over a period of numerous years. The limitations of a text of this sort are obvious, leaving aside questions of accuracy, we do not find Whitehead at his considered and analytical best, rather we find 'off the cuff' remarks and asides which he may have wished to revise given the chance. Nonetheless, this text too serves to tell the reader quite a bit about the sort of man he was, and the way in which he thought. Before considering the ways in which secondary material has fed off Whitehead's original work, mention should finally be made of the very brief but nonetheless charming and illuminating biography of Whitehead by Norman Pittenger published as part of the 'Makers of Modern Theology' series (1969). Apart from its refreshing brevity what sets it apart from other biographical works is that Pittenger himself was a process theologian, and some of his insights into Whitehead are useful to reflect upon.

Among the most pre-eminent early Whitehead scholars was Charles Hartshorne (1897-2000), a student of Whitehead's from his time in Harvard. Hartshorne, like Whitehead, was an interdisciplinarian – a philosopher of religion and a noted ornithologist who published acclaimed texts in both fields, another man whose

attention to detail and eye for interconnectedness helped form the underpinnings of what would become something more than 'only' philosophy. In this project attention is given specifically to the way in which Hartshorne's work intersects with Whitehead's – these include more or less popular pieces of work such as 'Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes' (1984) and more academic texts such as 'Anselm's Discovery' (1965) and 'The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God' (2009). Although these are, in a sense, secondary texts to Whitehead's primary sources, Hartshorne as a metaphysician can nevertheless be credited with effectively building on or reforming Whitehead's work to develop the basis of process theology that went on to be influential on both his contemporaries, the likes of Schubert Ogden, Daniel Day Williams and the fore mentioned Norman Pittenger, and the marginally younger generation.

Most notable among these next generation scholars is John Cobb Jr. (1925 -), who continued in the Whitehead lineage by being a student of Hartshorne. In 2014 Cobb became the first theologian to be elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; now in his ninth decade and still publishing, he has gone on to become probably the most prolific and certainly the best-known process theologian of the contemporary era. Other scholars have made notable contributions too though, David Ray Griffin and Robert Mesle for instance have both produced numerous works, some of which serve as excellent entry points to the discipline. Also of interest to this project, though, are scholars who have sought to take process theology and its metaphysics in new and intriguing directions both philosophical and practical: in books written for the popular market, such as 'God Can't' (2019) Thomas Jay Oord has endeavoured to apply his open-relational theology, heavily influenced by process thought, to issues of practical pastoral concern. The feminist theologian Marjorie Suchocki has taken process thinking into the devotional arena with titles such as 'In God's Presence' (1996), alongside her more scholarly work such as 'The End of Evil' (2005); Monica Coleman has added a womanist dimension in 'Making a Way Out of No Way' (2008); and Catherine Keller, (who continues the Whitehead teaching lineage by having been a student of Cobb) has proven to be a superlative interpreter with a theopoetic approach in a range of books and essays including 'On the Mystery' (2008), 'Cloud Of The Impossible' (2015) and most recently 'Facing Apocalypse' (2021). All of these writers have influenced the shape and direction of this project. Final mention, in this section, must be made of the enduringly popular Tripp Fuller a well-known public speaker, film

maker, writer and podcaster who in his book 'Divine Self Investment' (2020) offers a scholarly process vision of the person of Christ, but who, through his various publishing and podcasting ventures has done more than almost anyone to popularise and distribute thinking about process theology beyond the walls of the academy, while also pursuing an academic track as a scholar of science and religion.

CONCLUSION

While there is a clear field of work that seeks to define spiritual capital in an economic/sociological sense, there is no corresponding field in theology or philosophy, which leads this project into new theoretical ground. Moreover, the field of definitions at play in the social sciences contain a range of perspectives, each of which are subject to critique from a number of approaches. The particular theological approach on which this project relies (process) has had nothing particular to say about what spiritual capital may be, or what may differentiate it from religious capital, as it is not a term that occurs within the literature. It has a considerable amount to say, however, about the nature of God, the means by which God may be said to enact God's will, and the sense in which human engagement is necessary for the purposes of God to be fulfilled. Aspects of the underlying philosophy which informs some of the theologians engaged in this field, has less to say directly about the nature of God as such, but a good deal to say about the nature of life, an idea which feeds back into the dialogue between philosophers and theologians actively developing theology or 'theopoetics' which draw upon Whiteheadian process thought and a broader relational theology.

In this context the project needs first to develop a hypothetical definition of spiritual capital which will travel through the work, and against which the research can be set. This definition needs to recognise points of departure from specifically 'religious capital' and take into account the critiques of other approaches to defining both ideas. For these purposes to be fulfilled, there needs to be some new engagement with the term, that doesn't already appear in the literature. On that basis it may be appropriate to attempt to define the term in two ways:

1) Spiritual capital is the internal resource developed by an individual, either through interaction with a religious community, rituals, or artefacts, or in isolation from any form of religious entity as commonly understood, which

motivates, inspires and equips them to engage in activity which serves the common good; in the hope that this activity has a purpose that goes beyond a materialistic understanding of what it is to be human.

2) Spiritual capital is a term which may be used synonymously with a traditional Christian sense of the indwelling of 'the spirit of God' – specifically it is the resource an individual draws upon when they develop and exhibit virtues which are biblically set out as 'the fruit of the spirit' (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control).

This two-piece definition may help us by serving a number of initial purposes. It is indicative, firstly, of the tension between propositional and analogical language that is present in so much Christian theology, it is hard to speak of God meaningfully without resort to either analogy or metaphor. Where I may appear, in the text, to speak of the divine in propositional terms, this should be understood as analogy. Further, it begins to satisfy the need within process thought to recognise the dual polarity of all reality, it will become increasingly important in this project to acknowledge the import of perspective – this will be explored in Chapter 4. Thirdly, as we proceed further into the project, it also serves a practical purpose: to acknowledge, and defy, the conventional boundaries between social science and theology. Throughout the project there is a (somewhat resolute) ambition to retain a 'foot in each camp'. In developing a dual definition of this nature we may both respect the insight of Bourdieu's capitals theory and recognise that from a theological perspective there is another dimension of reality to be perceived. This issue of definition will be revisited in Chapter 8.

The next chapter will develop on this initial examination of the theories that lie beneath the project, by considering some of the ideas of process theology, and their antecedents, in more depth. These two chapters taken together will then form the necessary theoretical background for the work of Chapter 3 where the work of engaging Bourdieu and Whitehead will be done most clearly.

Chapter 2: Spiritual Capital and the lure of God

"We must never forget that Christianity is much more than the intellectual acceptance of a religious message by a blind and submissive faith which never understands what the message means except in terms of authoritative interpretation handed down externally by experts in the name of the Church. On the contrary, faith is the door to the full inner life of the Church, a life which includes not only access to an authoritative teaching but above all to the deep personal experience which is at once unique and yet shared by the whole body of Christ, in the Spirit of Christ."

(Merton, 1968, p. 56)

"The most basic expression of God's love is that God acts as the ground of creaturely freedom."

(Mesle, 1993, p. 59)

Having, in the previous chapter, attempted to outline some of the theoretical basis for this project, I will now seek to develop on the means by which, in this work, process theology will intersect with spiritual capital theory. In order to do this I shall first develop the antecedents of process thought, by way of Greek philosophy and then on into natural theology. I will then seek to characterise the kind of theology brought to bear by means of a number of categories, each of which has the potential to open up a new perspective on the matter at hand. Here we are asking not so much what spiritual capital is, nor are we asking the practical questions that associate themselves with that idea, rather we are asking what, precisely, distinguishes 'process' thought from other theological schools, in the hope that this will allow us to evaluate its suitability for the analysis of spiritual capital. In doing this it will be necessary to draw more directly on the work of some of those writers mentioned in Chapter 1.

We must begin by recognising that there is not simply one 'process theology', but many theologies which are informed by process thought, particularly with regard to having a shared metaphysic: there are, effectively, many 'process theologies'. In much the same way, though, as other broad categories have taken on the appearance of singular cohesion, so it has become normal to simply talk of 'process theology' just as one might speak of 'reformed theology', 'radical theology' or any one of a number of large categories. These are catch all terms, they should not be read or understood as being defined by, or entirely representative of, any single position. We shall continue, in this project, to speak in general terms of process theology, but there must be an underlying recognition that when we use that phrase we are referring to the way in which ideas from process philosophy are advanced or represented by theologians from a few different perspectives. Specifically in this project we will draw most often from the branch of process theology that was developed first in Hartshorne's neoclassical theism approach, and then in Cobb's more overtly confessional Christian (specifically Wesleyan) lead and Keller's subsequent theopoetics. These thinkers attempt, one might suggest, to reconcile Whitehead and Christianity to some degree, and in so doing seek to revise Whitehead's thinking.

While process theologians have engaged with many aspects of the common good (both in theory and in practice), most notably Cobb's championing of environmental concerns, there has been no specific engagement by these various writers with the terminology or concept of spiritual capital (perhaps it has hitherto been seen as a substance rather than process category), and this immediately takes the project in to new territory. We may note at this point that while process or related thinkers are to be found in a wide range of faith traditions, and in a spectrum of denominational traditions within Christianity, the literature is somewhat dominated by Protestant theologians from the liberal or progressive wing of the church who are concerned with relational theology. We may note too, that evangelicalism as a movement within the church has developed a parallel relational theology known as 'open theism' which has some similarities to process theology, but creates a space for those evangelicals (and others) who seek to take a view of God as relational (moved by the experiences of 'creation') but nevertheless able to intervene unilaterally. One might argue that this is an untenable theological position as regards theodicy – as it proposes God to be fully aware of the suffering of the world, and moved by it, but choosing not to act to prevent

evil. I shall return to this rather contentious question in the section on neo-classical theology.

FOOTNOTES TO HERACLITUS

It is helpful, firstly, to address the starting point for this school of thought, and in doing so we might recall that Whitehead famously quipped that all philosophy is merely a set of 'footnotes to Plato' (1978, p. 39). Plato himself, however, owed quite the debt to the pre-Socratics, notably to Parmenides and Heraclitus, to whom I shall now make brief reference. Parmenides and Heraclitus were roughly contemporaneous but quite geographically removed. Unlike the more famous later Greek philosophers, these men were not wandering the streets of Athens, rather each lived in an area far from the centre of Greece, which meant that they would have been exposed to some diverse cultural ideas and schools of thought. As such, despite their contemporaneity, they developed quite different ideas about the nature of the world. From Parmenides, who lived in *Magna Graecia*, the reader hears of a universe of unchanging reality – that that which is, is. Key to the Parmenidean sense of reality is a somewhat monist sense of everything as one. Parmenides is, we might say, a philosopher of 'being'. Plato draws heavily on Parmenidean ideas when he develops his theory of forms, as is evident in The Republic (Plato, 1987). The Parmenidean argument prevails today – including in process thought where the di-polar nature of God recognises the sense in which, not only is God eternal and unchanging in the primordial sense, but also in the profoundly Parmenidean idea that 'nothing comes from nothing'.

Parmenides' contemporary Heraclitus, meanwhile, is perhaps best known for his famous aphorism "everything is in flux, and nothing is at rest" or that "you can't step in to the same river twice" (Waterfield, 2000) (Barnes, 1987). Like his contemporaries his thinking appears monistic, but the shift of focus is toward the radically observational, this we might say makes Heraclitus the 'philosopher of becoming'. Heraclitus combines this notion of becoming with the sense that underlying it is the logos, although unlike the understanding of that word in parts of the Church, this is not anthropomorphic. Regrettably Heraclitus' writing is only available in fragmentary form, but as the point of origin for this element of process thinking, it remains nonetheless evidently influential. His ideas provide the ground for iterations of process thinking. When, in 'Timaeus', Plato takes up the baton, he introduces it by "distinguishing between that which always

is and never becomes from that which is always becoming but never is." (Plato, 1983). Plato uses this distinction to explore further his realm of forms, and later to develop his cosmology in the sense of 'the receptacle of becoming' to which we will return in Chapter 3. In 'The Republic' (1987) Plato effectively synthesises Parmenides and Heraclitus, creating the ground for a di-polar view of reality, with an eternally fixed point (primordial/logos/Parmenidean) and an ongoing state of change or flux (consequent/observable reality/Heraclitean). The dynamic sense of becoming is further developed by Aristotle (2004) who also refers back to Heraclitus and whom Whitehead (who considered himself something of an Aristotelian) would later praise, albeit somewhat faintly, while turning back to look again through a Platonic lens.

> "Aristotle has some very relevant suggestions on the analysis of becoming and process. I feel that there is a gap in his [thought] though, that just as much as becoming wants analysing so does perishing. Philosophers have taken too easily the notion of perishing. There is a trinity of three notions: being, becoming and perishing, Plato states the question (Plato raises all fundamental questions without answering them) by introducing the notion of that which is always becoming and never real. The world is always becoming, and as it becomes, it passes away and perishes… Almost all of Process and Reality can be read as an attempt to analyse perishing on the same level as Aristotle's analysis of becoming." (Whitehead, 1948, p. 91)

This apparent Aristotelian omission, the analysis of perishing, will become a vital idea for this project, such that we shall need to continue to return to it throughout the project. In the first place, however, I shall make a few comments about it by way of introduction.

The vexed question of perishing, particularly in the form of theodicy and apologetic, is one that bedevils Christian theology and practise. Put crudely: how can a good God allow the senseless pain, suffering and death of countless millions of people (and other life forms)? What can such perishing, whether that is of life or of 'wellbeing', be said to 'mean'? This is the question addressed in the book of Job, of course, in which God 'allows' Job to suffer multiple degradations in the story of a form of court challenge to divine authority. A literal approach to this story has led some to understand God to be the commissioner of such wrongs, and to ask of inexplicable death and misfortune: "Why should the becoming of life be cut short, and why in such an apparently needlessly painful way?" The Whiteheadian approach taken by process

theologians is to say that God is firstly not able to stop the perishing. Just as becoming is an ongoing and inalienable reality, so is perishing, indeed perishing is a necessary part of becoming – as the old perishes so the new becomes, this is the process of evolution, of change and of growth. The God of process theology is not standing idly by, but is an integral part of that process. The question for confessional theologians then, is whether such a God, as opposed to one who rules by power and unchallengeable fiat, is worshipful in any meaningful sense.

In a critical response to the work of process metaphysician Charles Hartshorne, the philosopher Merold Westphal posed the question: "Would democracy be preferable to the rule of an infinitely wise benevolent tyrant?" In a lengthy response to this, and other aspects of the Westphal's critique, Hartshorne responded in characteristic style, with an emphatic 'yes': for such monopolisation of decision making, he considered, is always bad, never mind how benign the intent (Hartshorne, 1967, p. 281). This is key to the understanding of God from this perspective, for Whiteheadians God is ultimately, primordially, good, and this goodness has necessary limitations. It is the process of decision making, rather than the outcome, that is of particular import; it is the process, the making of a choice, rather than its outcome, which bestows human agency and freedom. Despite the strength of Hartshorne's response this remains both a nuanced, and a polarising argument. This same question, variously phrased, continues to be posed both in and out of the academy, reminiscent of ages old arguments about the value of the 'benign' dictatorship of Plato's 'Philosopher Kings'. The question is of particular interest, and is therefore widely posed, within the Christian Church, where divisive arguments over the nature of God, and the consequent ability of humans to exercise free will (and therefore the nature of that free will), often centre upon this very theological issue, to whit: 'to what extent are we genuinely free, and what does our freedom entail?' This is fundamentally a question of theodicy, which also has a particular relevance for the understanding of spiritual capital, what it may be, and what nature of value it may be said to have.

NATURAL THEOLOGY

In order to access an appropriate process theology perspective on freedom, and to assess its applicability to theories of spiritual capital, it is first necessary to further develop our understanding or appreciation of the basis of process theology itself. In

order to do so, we must say that it is a primarily natural theology, based as it is on human observation and experience, and the development of subsequent reasoning, rather than on divine 'revelation'. This departure point is where process theology is first at odds with a classical, revealed, or Thomist theology, which rather than looking first for reasoned argument, intends to look by means of faith, into matters of faith. There is a Thomist natural theology, which allows that reason can reveal aspects of God's character which God has allowed to be revealed, but for Thomists, the full nature of God can only be arrived at by means of revelation, to consider that reason alone can hope to contemplate the fullness of God is hopelessly reductive. In reality, or practise, most confessing Christians seem to dwell in a cloud of combination, where they seek the reassurance of reason, but are anchored to the bedrock of revelation, particularly as found in scripture and tradition. The contrast with revealed theology is key in terms of location, as it speaks to the difference within Protestantism between some core Christian constituencies (broadly speaking, the conservative – liberal split).

Perhaps the most famous text on the subject of natural theology is the 19th century work by Paley (2006) whose famous allegory of the watchmaker is still regarded as relevant, partly because of the way that some maintain a reliance on the idea of irreducible complexity as evidence of the existence of God. The so called 'Intelligent Design' movement (a creationist movement which argues that the variety of life on earth is irrefutable evidence of a prime mover intelligence which they call God) posits such irreducible complexity as evidence of their theory as an alternative to a Darwinian sense of life evolving by means of selection and adaptation. Although both Paley and successive process theorists may claim to be natural theologians, they do not arrive at the same conclusions or even travel by the same path other than to extol the value of observation and experience. For Paley, the divine is an almighty, omnipotent being who not only cares about, but crucially also operates on, the minutest detail.

> "Under this stupendous Being we live. Our happiness, our existence, is in his hands. All we expect must come from him. Nor ought we to feel our situation insecure. In every nature, and in every perfection of nature, which we can descry, we find attention bestowed upon even the minutest parts. The hinges of an earwig, and the joints of its antennae, are as highly wrought, as if the Creator had nothing else to finish." (Paley, 2006, p. 280)

At first glance this extremely 'involved' sense of interventionist deity is of a different order of natural theology to that offered by process thinkers who instead turn to Whitehead's minutely observed philosophy of organism. All the same we may find room for manoeuvre if we propose divine action in the world to be a process of persuasion that acts on the sub-atomic level, practically demonstrated by way of the process of evolution. If we view Paley's deity through that lens we might accept his sort of natural theology more readily. A brief diversion: we might pause to note an apparent contradiction in categories here, as, unlike some of his successors, Whitehead is never referred to as a theologian (indeed the sense in which we can call him Christian is complex too). Nevertheless his most influential work (Process and Reality) was delivered as a series of Gifford Lectures, which is a natural theology lectureship as Cobb (2007, p. 92) is keen to remind us.

All natural theologies concern themselves not with the ordering of religious life, but with the underlying questions concerning the nature and existence of God. We may say, therefore that natural theologies are philosophical theologies. Process theology is certainly philosophical, but not so much so that it remains at a remove from other forms of the discipline. Boundaries between it and practical and political theologies have been tested and indeed overcome, not least by Cobb whose own work has intersected with sympathetic or 'adjacent' thinkers such as Sölle, and Moltmann for example (Cobb, 1982). Cobb has demonstrated his personal commitment by spending a large part of his career pursuing interfaith dialogue and understanding, as well as working for environmental justice, partly through the Claremont Institute for Process Studies (recently renamed the Cobb Institute). Critics of philosophical theologies cite a tendency to count angels on the heads of pins, and it is hard not to sympathise with those practical theologians who find this frustrating as they seek to put theology to work in the service of a suffering world. Whether this particular criticism can reasonably be levelled at process theology is presently moot, and varies somewhat from theologian to theologian. Certainly Cobb himself has pioneered work in such areas as the previously mentioned interreligious dialogue, and eco-spirituality, which are very much in the realm of the contemporary practical theologian. It is hoped that this project will be able to be a further bridge between the resolutely philosophical and the determinedly practical.

One of the advantageous aspects of a natural theology over and against a revealed theology, is that it allows for more fluidity and dynamism than might otherwise be the case, responding to new and emerging perspectives as they are brought forward. It may be said to be more democratic too, founded in reflection on the personal subjective experience, rather than the elevated priestly analysis or historical dogma. However, at times the convoluted language of process theology makes the relevant popular reflection on the subject less than readily accessible, and of course any new tradition has the tendency to create its own dogma. The linguistic difficulty has firstly to do with the origins of process theology, as fundamentally, process theology is founded upon the work of Whitehead, whose challenging body of work we briefly summarised in Chapter 1. In his philosophical works Whitehead expresses a profound admiration for a very 'primal' or 'primary' version of Christianity, which he refers to as "Galilean" (Whitehead, 1978). In his work, particularly Religion In the Making, he refers to Buddhism and Christianity as the 'Catholic religions of civilisation' (1960, p. 43) betraying perhaps the attitudes and biases of his time. In any case, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that in the broad sweep of his work, his sympathy seems to fall towards Buddhism (or perhaps most accurately a Charles Peirce style 'Buddhisto-Christianity'). Nevertheless, he remains extremely clear in his respect for Jesus, and his way of sacrificial love and he compares Christianity favourably with Buddhism on a number of occasions (most notably in 'Religion In the Making'), noting that the genius of Christianity is its ability to make doctrinal shifts while maintaining a focus on the way to live. We might like to think of this as an ongoing process of religious becoming.

One of Whitehead's problems with much Christian and Islamic thinking is that both of these traditions have fallen into the traps of modelling a sense of God quite different to that which might be discerned through the person of Jesus. Whitehead's process thought then, was profoundly theological, although he himself was not exactly a theologian in the generally understood sense. Of course there is a sense in which anyone who takes an approach which relies on some sort of reflection through a lens of Christian or religious thought (confessional, secular, or otherwise) is 'doing' theology. There remains, however, an understanding that within the academy there are those who identify as theologians, and those who do not.

Whitehead is also deeply technical, with a unique, occasionally somewhat pompous, and at times neologistic vocabulary which must be accessed by anyone

seeking to engage with his work. The use of complex and very sophisticated terminology does serve, at times, to make Whitehead a challenging author to read, although not always. He combines weighty ruminations with witty remarks, and many of his collected lectures and essays are very accessible, his disciples and secondary sources are often highly engaging. As I have already made clear, the discipled academic theologians who are most widely seen as responsible for taking forward Whitehead's ideas and frameworks into a more obviously or classically theological 'space', are numerous. Among the most prominent of them remains that 'elder statesman', the nonagenarian John Cobb Jr. who continues to publish and lecture. As previously noted, Cobb sits in the Whitehead tutorial lineage by way of Charles Hartshorne. Besides Hartshorne and Pittenger, Cobb is often credited with the initial transmutation of Whiteheadian philosophical thought into the world of liberal or progressive Christian theology, a baton then passed to writers such as Keller, Coleman and others, thinkers who together bring womanist, feminist, Queer and African American perspectives to bear on the subject. There is a constant reference back, though, to Whiteheadian thought, and it is to Whitehead, or commentary upon Whitehead, that we will most regularly refer in the development of this project.

NEOCLASSICAL THEOLOGY

In the preceding chapter, I proposed two working definitions of spiritual capital, which will travel and develop through this work. In both of these definitions, the emphasis is on a dynamic sense of 'becoming'; an advance into novelty; a process of ongoing development. In seeking to interrogate this notion from the perspective of process theology, we come around again to the question of human agency, which is to say the question of the nature of God, and the question of whether the popular understanding of God as omnipotent – possessing characteristics such as 'all powerful', 'all knowing', 'ever present', and 'unchanging' – is valid.

From a process perspective the idea of God as omnipotent is deeply problematic. Process theologians have attributed blame for the problematic ideas variously: Hartshorne (1984, p. 11) makes a somewhat sweeping charge against 'theologians' and "the founders of the theological tradition" by which he evidently means scholastics in general and Aquinas in particular (perhaps this is what Caputo meant in his 'unscholastic' jibe); Cobb, meanwhile, takes aim at the role of St Jerome

who, he argues, blundered when undertaking the mammoth task of translating the Hebrew texts into Latin.

According to Cobb (2003), Jerome sought a means of dealing with the problematic issue of varied nomenclature for God in the Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament. Cobb asserts that Jerome settled upon the formula of using 'The Lord' (*Dominus*) for the name 'Yahweh' and that rather than confuse matters by using 'The Lord' again for the Hebrew name 'El Shaddai' rendered it instead as 'God Almighty' (*Deus omnipotens*). Ultimately this resolves to be a somewhat partisan or at least questionable claim by Cobb. Although it is right to say that there is significant debate over the meaning and etymology of El Shaddai, particularly over the sense in which it may be understood to have a feminine meaning (e.g. from the root *shadah* 'God of the breast', or *shadu* 'God of the mountain' (Biale, 1982)) the situation is significantly more complex than Cobb makes it appear. It is true to say that the Septuagint has a broader and arguably more subtle range of translations for the same term and that scholars still debate the meaning of the term, but it is not altogether reasonable to assert that Jerome had no grounds other than editorialising to use the word Almighty, nor is it true to say he never translates the name as 'Lord' (see Job 5:17). Although there is a strong argument to be made that the phrase represents a feminine 'person' or perhaps 'attribute' of God (Lutzky, 1998), other translators have taken different approaches. It's possible (probable perhaps) that an inherent sexism led them to steer away from assigning a 'feminine' characteristic to God, but it is reasonable to say that one possible root of the Hebrew word s*haddai*, (*shadad*) has to do with strength, power, violence and sufficiency, which can lead to a sense of 'Almighty' (Brown, 1996, pp. 994-995). Whatever the motive of the translators, however, this translation has arguably had the (perhaps unintended) consequence of leading a vast number of western Bible readers to understand the God of the Bible as omnipotent, a concept which (aside from this issue of naming) Cobb would have more reasonable grounds to assert does not necessarily stem from the Bible itself (Cobb develops this thought in more depth elsewhere (2015) as does Hartshorne (1984)). Rather, this sense of the omnipotent God swaps the involved, intimate, familial God of the Hebrew Bible for the more distant, transcendent sense of God that derives from Hellenistic thought. (E.g. Genesis 17:1 which translates El Shaddai as *ego eimi ho theos sou*/ 'your God' in the Septuagint but *Deus omnipotens*/ 'God almighty' in the Vulgate.) This way of understanding, or approaching the idea of, God, some process scholars contend, characterises 'classical theism', to which they

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oppose themselves, presenting instead a rival 'neoclassical theism' which they contend, develops from Christianity's Galilean roots (Cobb, 1965, p. 40).

"…do we worship God, or do we worship certain philosophical abstractions inherited from the Greeks, e.g., immutability, independence or absoluteness, infinity, simplicity, and the rest? The point is not – far from it – that these abstractions have no application to God. But to grant this applicability is one thing, and to suppose that divinity just is absoluteness, infinity, immutability, so that the contrary terms, relative, finite, mutable, in no way apply – that is quite another." (Hartshorne, 1967, p. 279)

"There is however, in the Galilean origin of Christianity yet another suggestion which does not fit very well with any of the three main strands of thought. It does not emphasize the ruling Caesar, or the ruthless moralist, or the unmoved mover. It dwells upon the tender elements in the world, which slowly and in quietness operate by love; and it finds purpose in the present immediacy of a kingdom not of this world. Love neither rules, nor is it unmoved; also it is a little oblivious as to morals. It does not look to the future; for it finds its own reward in the immediate present." (Whitehead, 1978, p. 343)

Hartshorne used the term 'process theology' more or less interchangeably with his own term: 'neoclassical theism' (Hartshorne, 1984) reflecting the transition he was making between Whitehead's more generalised philosophy of organism and Christian theology. He understood its antagonist, termed 'classical theism', to have developed into Christian orthodoxy because of the way in which medieval Christian scholars, many of whom were working from Jerome's Vulgate translation, were far better versed in Greek philosophy, than other philosophies, leading them to a fixation with a remote, immutable, Hellenic view of the divine. This in turn led to the oxymoronic popular view of a loving God's tyranny and/or neglect. (The God of classical theism is sometimes characterised as either tyrannically deterministic: "The Church gave unto God the attributes which belonged exclusively to Caesar" (Whitehead, 1978, p. 342) whereby God specifically causes the bad things which happen in the world; or alternatively as a 'deadbeat dad' in that 'he' seems so wilfully neglectful of 'his' creation, that he willingly allows catastrophes to take place. As Woody Allen would have it: "If it turns out that there is a God...the worst that you can say about him is that basically he's an underachiever" (Love and Death, 1975). The 'deadbeat dad' metaphor is sometimes replaced with the idea of the 'babysitter paradox' –producing an argument along the

lines of: 'I would expect a teenage babysitter to intervene in certain situations, where evidently God does not, so is a babysitter therefore more worthy of my trust than God?'

A brief note about the idea of 'classical theism': we should not altogether gloss over the use of this term by process and other relational theologians, because as is already evident, the term is frequently used to present an antithesis to the relational, co-suffering, God of neo-classical theology. Although we need not interrogate this too much as such discussion falls outside of the parameters of the project, we should acknowledge that there are problems with this idea – in the first place one doesn't tend to find individuals who self-describe as 'classical theists'. In the second place there is a continual danger that in creating this category one can simply apply it swingingly and thereby group together a raft of theologians who might not share much other than a fundamental metaphysic, and even then there may be subtleties at play which go unacknowledged. Perhaps more important is the fact that although this is a term which is used to reach back into antiquity, the notion of theism which undergirds the dialectic is fundamentally modern, stemming from an epistemology that draws from the thinking of Descartes, Locke and others. I don't seek to dwell on this but simply to note that although I use them, terms of this sort aren't without critique, and that this should not go unacknowledged.

Process theologians didn't simply abandon Platonic insights altogether, rather they expanded upon them – hence Hartshorne's preference for the term neoclassical, incorporating immutability, along with mutability into a di-polar, neoclassical, or panentheistic (simultaneously immanent and transcendent) sense of divine ontology. This, of course, is of direct relevance to our question concerning the nature of God, and the consequent question of human agency. Drawing from classical theism, a simplified Thomist approach would have it that God determines our choices and outcomes (not as outline, but as actuality), but also determines our freedom to make those choices even at a cellular level, this effectively sets up a paradox at the heart of classical theism which is not well understood popularly and leads to considerable confusion, particularly when related to the perennial question of human or creaturely suffering. A process understanding of divine power could propose the contrary notion that Whitehead offers in 'Science and the Modern World' namely that "The power of God is the worship he inspires." (1938, p. 223)

While the proposed definitions of spiritual capital do not specifically reference either suffering or theodicy directly, in citing their opposites, they do so by implication. Either the notion of the common good, or the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit can from one perspective be understood as opposite to suffering, for what is work for the common good setting out to achieve, if not the alleviation of globalised suffering? And what are the fruits of the Spirit if not the antonyms of the various aspects of suffering (and signifiers of an alternative economy)? The hated or neglected are loved, the disturbed or war-ravaged are at peace, just as the humble inherit and the hungry are satisfied (Matthew 5: 5-9). The concepts of suffering and spiritual capital are directly linked, as are the concepts of freedom and spiritual capital. For spiritual capital to have a sense of fullness of value, it relies upon or presupposes a genuine human capacity to make decisions, that we are 'condemned' to freedom, to paraphrase Sartre's hyperbole. For this freedom to be real, in an ontological sense of reality at least, process theology must make some assertions concerning the nature of God, effectively it must tackle Cusanus' conundrum of bringing together *Posse Esse* (being itself), and *Posse Ipsum* (possibility itself).

DI-POLAR THEOLOGY

> "The action of God is its *relation* - by *feeling and so being felt*, the divine invites the *becoming* of the other; by feeling the becoming of the other, the *divine itself becomes*. The terminological demands of Whitehead's "primordial and consequent natures" aside, might we affirm an *oscillation between divine attraction and divine reception, invitation and sabbath?*
>
> Between the divine "poles", or limit-metaphors, would take place the self-organizing response of the universe: the creature responds to the lure of the creator; the creator responds to the action of the creature. To respond is to become. Without such a reciprocity of genesis, there can be no serious theology of becoming. The "lure for feeling" would be felt as "repetition" of the Other in the self; as the echo of God's desired creature." (Keller, 2002, p. 198)

That the divine should be both mutable and immutable (and these simultaneously) requires that God has more than one nature, and in Process and Reality (1978), Whitehead proposes this in terms of a 'primordial nature' and a 'consequent nature'. This sense of God having two natures, is termed 'di-polar': the primordial or

transcendent nature, refers to divine timelessness, eternality, or infinite perfection of character, which can be felt, responded to, and/or prehended by created beings. The alternative consequent or immanent nature expresses the way in which the divine is able to respond to, and/or prehend creation. In making this move, Whitehead (and then Hartshorne) essentially accords to the divine things which were previously said not to be of God, as well as infinitude, for example, there is now finitude.

For Whitehead, like Heidegger, God must be an actual entity, which puts him somewhat at odds with Tillich's Thomist approach, for instance (for Whitehead, however, creativity is an ultimate, which (to grossly simplify) in Tillichian terms renders God, in one sense, the ground of possibility or the ground of hope). But where Heidegger speaks of Being-itself (effectively value-free) this is not enough for Whitehead and those who follow him who see God as personal and therefore deeply value-laden, after all Whitehead's God is the God of the Bible (although not necessarily the God of the Biblicist) in the sense that God has characteristics such as goodness and love. These characteristics are fixed, they do not change, and so they are expressed in what Whitehead characterises as God's primordial nature. This is the eternal, transcendent, abstract and immutable God characterised like Plato's forms, distinct from our reality, or any reality other than God's own. The problem with this, however, is that this distinction means that God in this form is not readily or practically able to interact with or respond to the world, as God is ontologically separate from it. This is simply not tenable for a relational theologian, who must also recognise the need for the divine to be dynamically (inter)active, responsive, and able to experience the world. This underlying panentheistic metaphysic recognises that this aspect, or nature, of God, is both immanent and mutable: God isn't just aware of our suffering, but experiences it too, and is impacted, effected and changed by it. What Whitehead characterises as primordial and consequent, Hartshorne identifies as abstract and concrete, noting as he does, a trap in to which classical theism is prone to fall:

> "The traditional absolute of classical theism was said to be God, and it is a main charge against that view that this does make God a mere abstract principle or idea, since only the non-particular and nonconcrete can be absolute" (Hartshorne, 1967, p. 287).

It is in the dynamic sense of God's dipolar nature that we can begin to assert a process theology of spiritual capital: as this gives ground for a response to God, and the

development of 'something' by means of that response – as Keller puts it, 'to respond is to become' (Keller, 2002) which situates humanity and the divine in a dynamically creative relationship that she terms 'a reciprocity of genesis'. In process theology, the 'becoming' is all important, mutability is as much an aspect of God's character as immutability, the response as important as the call. My dual definition of spiritual capital makes some reference to this, in terms that would within the Church characteristically be described as Trinitarian: "the resource an individual draws upon when they develop and exhibit virtues which are biblically set out as 'the fruit of the spirit'". We should note that process theologians have differing approaches to the question of the Trinity, and there is no single line taken, as it relates somewhat to the background or tradition of the theologian. Accusations that process theologians are automatically or uniformly Unitarian (Beck, 1989), however, are certainly not well founded. While some are Unitarian, others align themselves more closely with an Eastern Orthodox Trinitarianism, while others are closer to the Augustinian sense of 'one person, three persona' – I too would align myself more readily with this position, emphasising the oneness of God expressed through the personae of the Trinity, the key is though that process would allow for a multiplicity of valid approaches to the issue, rather than insisting on a radical acceptance of or devotion to an orthodoxy. This will be explored further in Chapter 3.

The development of spiritual capital, then, comes from a response to God, and can be expressed by a dynamic Trinitarian sense of God at work within us. Crucially this would not preclude anyone from the development of spiritual capital as a resource - for God does not respond only to those few who have embraced the relevant orthodox belief system. Rather, God is becoming throughout the world, and the spirit of God is active in all of 'creation'. In this way, process theology is a pluralist theology.

> "…apart from the intervention of God, there could be nothing new in the world, and no order in the world. The course of creation would be a dead level of ineffectiveness, with all balance and intensity progressively excluded by the cross currents of incompatibility" (Whitehead, 1978, p. 247)

This plurality has clear implications for any consideration of the locus of spiritual capital, which cannot be restricted to the Church. While the Church may have made particular strides toward identifying with God, and in particular made its mission the outworking of God's creative drive, any net which seeks to encompass the wider drive

of response to the divine impulse must be cast wide (perhaps even on the other side of the boat). A key to this is to identify what we might say are the priorities expressed in the brief flourishing of the Galilean Christianity, which is to say the priorities set out by Jesus, and self-evidently this work cannot be entirely removed from the question of human suffering.

CO-SUFFERING THEOLOGY

While classical theism may permit that God feels compassion towards those who suffer, and even wills that their suffering should end, a wholly transcendent God cannot go beyond that level of engagement with suffering (human or otherwise), nor does the ability of God to affect unilateral change alter this. A sense that God can smite an evil-doer, or heal an illness at whim is not sufficient for the natural theologian who recognises that this defies the human experience of God and of suffering, nor for the relational theologian for whom the ability to be affected is key to divine personhood. From this natural and relational stance then, a panentheistic neoclassical, or process relational view differs markedly from the classical, as God is neither willing or able to sit by and wish that things were better, instead God is actively affected and affecting. This in turn reveals the necessity of the co-suffering of God, and it is this which finally provides a rationale for the freedom of humans to develop 'genuine' spiritual capital, which in that sense truly becomes the gift of God.

> "The notion of God as the 'unmoved mover' is derived from Aristotle, at least as far as Western thought is concerned. The notion of God as 'eminently real' is a favourite doctrine of Christian theology. The combination of the two into the doctrine of an aboriginal, eminently real, transcendent creator, at whose fiat the world came into being, and whose imposed will it obeys, is the fallacy which has infused tragedy into the histories of Christianity and of [Islam]." (Whitehead, 1978, p. 342)

Whitehead, whose writing can in places become obscure, is markedly clear about his opposition to the Christian doctrine of a King-like deity. Reflecting numerous times on the way in which the Caesar type model of God's character has been adopted and promoted by Christianity and Islam, he called instead for a way of looking at God which was quite different. That is not to say the clarity of his remarks elevate them beyond his less straightforward technical concepts, but it is to reflect the fact that they

are boldly and plainly expressed. This question becomes, once again, a question of theodicy, for Christian concepts of the power of God must deal with the question of evil and suffering. As Keller puts it: "Is there now any way – at least for citizens of the current empire – to claim the "power of God" without gutting the gospel?" (2008, p.82) For if we do not accept the neoclassical, process, relational view of an involved active divine agent, then we maintain a version of the classic logical problem of theodicy: If God is morally good, and all powerful in the sense of all controlling, and yet there is evil or suffering in the world, then surely the logic of the natural theologian must determine that God does not exist. If we abstract from this idea, the sense of divine moral goodness, or contextually determine the sense of morality to preclude certain peoples, then the narrative becomes coherent again, but it is forever skewed into a 'them and us' dualism. This is arguably the case for a large chunk of the contemporary Christian church (certainly as characterised or caricatured by parts of the religious right), just as it marked Christendom. Another large proportion of theists simply dwell in the grey of the contradiction, believing that God is all-powerful, but somehow constrained, self-limiting or otherwise held back from exercising full control.

Over and against this, Whitehead proposes that the offer is not the top down control of a monarch, but a great empathetic, insistent, unremitting love, not that of the unaffected transcendent being, but that of the fellow sufferer.

> "What is done in the world is transformed into a reality in heaven, and the reality in heaven passes back into the world. By reason of this reciprocal relation, the love in the world passes into the love in heaven, and floods back again into the world. In the sense, God is the great companion – the fellow-sufferer who understands." (Whitehead, 1978, p. 351)

As opposed to the morally unimpeachable King making individual unilateral judgements about where and when to wield power, in this way, for Whitehead, divine power cannot be extricated from God's love for the world, rather it is absolutely enmeshed with it. Divinity reaches out from a place of absolute empathy, and by means of the same. This of course refers directly back to the question with which Hartshorne was faced earlier in this chapter, concerning the Philosopher King model of God: Would such a model not be better than the democratic freedom he proposed? Here too, in line with Hartshorne, Whitehead, Keller and other process theologians say 'no', as for a relational God genuine human freedom is an indispensable fundamental, and

only when there is no divine power able to unilaterally affect the individual, can humans be said to be free.

How this relates to spiritual capital is key to the successful development of this project, so where I define spiritual capital as "the internal resource developed by an individual… which motivates, inspires and equips them to engage in activity which serves the common good; in the hope that this activity has a purpose that goes beyond a materialistic understanding of what it is to be human." We must understand this as a process which is freely entered into by an individual (with no sense of determination or coercion), which is simultaneously entered into by the divine, such that the development of the resulting resource is 'more than' simply human. That is on the basis that the human actor in the scenario is engaging, not wholly (for humans are perhaps never entirely pure of motive) but at least partially, with the will or desire of God, that will or desire being for love, peace, justice or so on. In this scenario the divine becomes not just co-sufferer with us, but we become co-creator, co-hoper, with God. While God whose nature is love, enters into our suffering as we experience it, we too can enter into God's creative nature of love, and the enjoining with us in this, is God's gift.

ALLURING THEOLOGY

> "Such love is no passive sentiment; it is a strong desire, an active agent, and a dynamic force. Hence to say that God is Love is to say that God is the living, active, dynamic, ceaselessly desiring reality who will not let go until he has won the free response of his creation – and won this response, not by the employment of methods other than love, but by the indefatigable quality of his loving." (Pittenger, 1970, p. 21)

> "The primary element in the 'lure for feeling' is the subject's prehension of the primordial nature of God. Conceptual feelings are generated, and by integration with physical feelings a subsequent phase of propositional feelings supervenes." (Whitehead, 1978, p. 189)

It is, as far as we know, peculiar to human nature, or the nature of human consciousness, that we are able to encounter, respond to, and engage with the loving nature of the divine in a state of conscious awareness, or as Whitehead would have it 'prehend the primordial nature of God'. This means that spiritual capital as defined for this project may be said to be a peculiarly human attribute. This doesn't mean that

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animals show no signs of responding to, or giving love. Quite the contrary, the natural world is replete with examples of non-human actors who appear to demonstrate loving care, kindness and even compassion. It may be our notable human arrogance that suggests we alone out of all living beings are sentient enough to engage with matters of a higher order. However, the human capacity to consciously reflect, and that corporately, on experience does suggest that we are functionally in a different (not necessarily 'higher') category or group when it comes to interaction with the divine. Humans as a species alone appear to be able (sometimes) to consciously abstract ourselves from our more base instincts and mechanistic responses to stimuli, in a way that is apparently not the case for other animals. But while this means that our response to God may be different in nature, it doesn't mean that God's communication with us is of an entirely different order to that of God's communication with other creatures.

Keller notes that the creature responds to the lure of its creator (2002) and this doesn't single out consciousness as a predicate for such response. Jesus' provocative response to the Pharisees that the rocks would cry out were humans prevented from doing so (Luke 19:40) echoes Isaiah's poetic proposals of a natural response to God 'the trees of the field will clap their hands' or 'the wolf shall live with the lamb' (Isaiah 55:40 &11:6) – while these are metaphors, a process approach to proposals or experiential reports of unexplained or miraculous events or physical healings, does not preclude the possibility that a response to God can even occur at a cellular level – if the rocks could respond to God, why not the mitochondria? Although it doesn't form part of this project, we may note that panpsychism is an obvious extension of this approach.

Process theologians characterise the way in which we, and all of the natural world are invited to respond to God as an aspect of God's character, namely the 'lure for feeling'. This lure is simultaneously God's character, and God's communication: almost echoing McLuhan's famous dictum. God's means of engaging and inviting a response is propositional, or to perhaps use an alternative idea – solicitous. Love is proposed, offered, in Jesus it is modelled and demonstrated. It is never (it cannot be) imposed, dictated or demanded (this is the well-rehearsed error of classical theism). In proposing love, the lure is thus extended, and remains, irrevocably and consistently offered. Whitehead's proposal is that this lure is of the primordial nature of God, and it is received by our consequent natures, at which point we are free to engage with it, or not.

Spiritual capital is developed by the response to the lure, and God's response to our response. The whole may be considered significantly greater than the sum of its parts, for in the development of spiritual capital comes the potentiality of effecting change which far surpasses that which may be expected of a single human action. An act of loving kindness toward an individual, the development of a mechanism by which humans can more readily express their willingness to care for others, a small act of solidarity with the oppressed or suffering, these things become magnified in the lives of those they impact.

Part of the subversive nature of this kind of capital is the way in which it contradicts the normal models of capitalist economics: this is the upside-down economy of the beatitudes – the biggest stocks of spiritual capital sometimes seem to be held by people who are not so preoccupied with the distractions of their own social status or financial wealth, they are among those who might respond most readily to the lure. We might reflect that this issue is addressed in the so called 'evangelical counsels' of poverty, chastity and obedience which are intended to help certain people adopt precisely this approach. This is not just an upside-down economy, but an upside-down society, it subverts not just acquisitive economics, but the way in which value is attributed to members of society. The joy of a small child, the generosity of those with few available resources, the strength of the infirm: Spiritual capital appears to develop most readily by being given away, an idea which is multiply attested in the Bible. Love does not diminish by being given, rather it develops (the same is not so true for the energy which the practical act of loving others takes, this does diminish and if not replenished can lead to physical or emotional problems which in turn impact on the ability to distribute spiritual capital.)

God's lure is always towards love, towards the active and dynamic divine self, and the primordial nature to which our consequent natures are drawn to respond. While churches have long been promoted as the breeding grounds for the response, post-secular society is changing that. A good thing then that experience of the divine is not limited to the church, nor even to Christians, nor even to humans.

> "We human beings, naked apes, featherless bipeds, who enjoy the privileges of conscious thought, must also bear its burdens. The other animals may in their way be closer to sublime wisdom than we sometimes are. They live their roles in the

divinely-inspired, partly self-realized Scheme; we may, much of the time, be living in some little scheme of our own imagining." (Hartshorne, 1984, p.91)

CREATIVE THEOLOGY

In process theology, there are two forms, or aspects, of divine activity which we can experience. The first is the 'creative' love of God, which Keller calls 'desire' or 'passion' (2008, p.98), and Whitehead called 'the Eros of the Universe' (1967, p. 11). The second form is 'the responsive love of God.' It is the first of these two which is felt in humans, as the 'lure', or as Keller characterises it: "a call to actualize the possibilities for greater beauty and intensity in our lives" (2008, p.98). The responsive love, in contrast, Whitehead nominates as Agape. This sense of divine interaction with humanity is in clear contrast to the classical – certainly classical Calvinist – sense of God's compulsion: namely that we humans do nothing outside of the will of God, even if we behave in a way entirely contradictorily to the 'way' of God, we remain in a universe that is governed by God's will. Thus all things are controlled, ordered, divinely determined. Process theologians deny this – leaning back into the sense in which compulsion is replaced by persuasion. Where process theologians and Calvinists can perhaps agree is in the sense of divine involvement – that God is not removed from what happens on earth. For both, God is intimately involved. But for the stricter of Calvin's disciples this involvement means control, whereas for process theologians the involvement is insistent in its persuasion, but utterly without control. This lack of control and the possibilities and risks it presents are what would characterise process and some other relational theologies as 'open theologies'. We should recall that not all relational theologies and theologians are also 'open' – the black liberationist theologian James H Cone (2013), for instance, was relational in the sense of representing a co-suffering God, but didn't indicate that he believed the future to be open.

Where the uncontrolling nature of God is made most abundantly clear is in the drama of the cross. This is the moment where Jesus demonstrates exactly what love looks like, and notably in this case, love looks a lot like suffering. In reflecting on this we might perhaps draw from the thinking of Hans Urs Von Balthasar, who, while not a process theologian, shares a number of theological characteristics with members of that school. Balthasar does not, for instance, continue the classical tradition of declaring the omnipotence of God, rather he emphasises instead the suffering of the divine. He

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doesn't separate the concepts of love and suffering, rather he recognises their interdependence. Balthasar takes the approach of a relational theologian, then, and as such love takes on a different hue, and is given and felt in and through suffering.

> "The mystery is that love itself, to those who truly understand it in the light of the cross, turns out to be something darker and more painful than is usually supposed. The fundamental mystery is not the co-existence of love and suffering, but their mutual inherence, perhaps even their ultimate identity." (Kilby, 2018, p. 309)

Where Balthasar helps in a practical sense is in his return to theodicy, his sense of divine involvement in the suffering of the world, or the co-suffering God speaks to the heart of the pain which sits in the midst of human experience.

> "Balthasar's approach allows him perhaps to come closer to making sense of the darkness of our world, but the cost is high: if suffering is integrated right into the heart of love, it seems hard to see how the good news of the Gospel can remain good." (Kilby, 2018, p. 311)

How indeed can the gospel remain good news if suffering and love are in such a Gordian knot? (How too, to address the issue of recognising suffering arising from the twin sources of natural and moral evils?) We might begin to answer this original question by reflecting on the way in which times of suffering seem to become hot-beds of socio-spiritual development, that is to say it is notable that times of suffering seem to be particularly fruitful with regard to development of spiritual responses to human pain. This will be considered in the research.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

It is in the nature of this project to consider the narrative of experience to be important, and we may make a brief narrative excursion here by drawing out some biographical highlights of individuals who might be agreed to have demonstrated a remarkable supply of embodied spiritual capital. A primary example of this sort is one of the towering figures of 20th century Protestant Christianity: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a minister in the Confessing Church from 1933 to 1945. Unlike his contemporaries, Tillich and Barth, who managed to abstract themselves from experiencing the full horror of the war in their native Germany (by means of removal to America and Switzerland respectively) much of Bonhoeffer's most potent theological work was

developed while he remained in Germany, actively working against the Nazi regime, in the 1930s and the early 1940s (Bonhoeffer, 1953) (2012) (2015), and in particular during his period of incarceration. His identification with the suffering of the German people (German Jews in particular and those who refused to submit to Nazi authority in general) already meant that he had a clear sense of co-suffering. His personal suffering intensified during the timeframe in question as he went from having his books banned and his right to speak publicly removed, to being incarcerated and eventually executed. He had already recognised the call to surrender to this ultimate cost, noting the necessity of perishing in somewhat blunt terms in 'The Cost of Discipleship' by saying that Christ bids us to 'come and die'.

> "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow him, or it may be a death like Luther's, who had to leave the monastery and go out in to the world. But it is the same death every time – death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call… Every day [the Christian] must suffer anew for Jesus Christ's sake." (Bonhoeffer, 2015, p. 44)

> "Suffering, then is the badge of true discipleship. The disciple is not above his master. Following Christ means *passio passiva*, suffering because we have to suffer. That is why Luther reckoned suffering among the marks of the true Church, and one of the memoranda drawn up in preparation for the Augsburg Confession similarly defines the Church as the community of those 'who are persecuted and martyred for the gospel's sake'. If we refuse to take up our cross and submit to suffering and rejection at the hands of men, we forfeit our fellowship with Christ and have ceased to follow him." (Ibid, p.45)

Bonhoeffer may be one of the twentieth century's most obvious examples of embodied spiritual capital, someone who exemplifies the principal of an upside down spiritual economy, but many other examples can be found – both within Christian traditions and beyond Christianity altogether. The American Catholic pacifist activist Dorothy Day who, in 1933, co-founded the Catholic Worker Movement with Peter Maurin (during the time of the great depression) is another. Her distributivist politics puts her in a somewhat different category to Bonhoeffer, but her commitment to sacrifice on the behalf of others makes her directly analogous. Her multiple arrests for civil disobedience demonstrate the way she was willing to suffer for and with those around her. Similarly George MacLeod, the founder of the Iona community, gave his

time and energies to the materially and politically disenfranchised workers of the Glasgow docklands, while Ray Davey, who founded Northern Ireland's Corrymeela community in the 1960s found his vocation (responded to the lure of God) after a spell as a prisoner in heavily bombed Dresden. He developed his ministry of reconciliation out of a response to the suffering – particularly as it was felt in the troubles.

As a representative of my own tradition, one might point to Bruce Kenrick, the URC and Church of Scotland minister who founded the housing organisation Shelter. His compassionate response to the need for emergency housing for the homeless was profoundly influenced by his experience of suffering in the war, and then of ministering among those afflicted by severe poverty in the East Harlem Protestant Parish in the 1950s. He details this in his book 'Come Out The Wilderness'. Looking more broadly at the Christian church in the last couple of centuries, one might identify larger movements, such as the Liberation Gospel movement as larger scale examples of embodied spiritual capital, people banding together to respond to the experience of suffering in terms of material poverty and oppression. Other links to people who have supported me in the development of this project include organisations I've previously mentioned: George Williams founded the YMCA as a direct response to the suffering of impoverished Londoners in the aftermath of the industrial revolution and my former employer, the charity Oasis, which was founded in the early 1980s as social institutions came under attack from right wing political forces, by a young Anglo Indian of humble means from South London.

Besides these Christian examples one might as easily recognise various individuals and groups in and beyond other religious traditions. It's impossible to be exhaustive in listing people and groups who exemplify embodied spiritual capital . Rather than try to rehearse these, however, we might make very brief mention of some other more recent and intriguingly novel socio-spiritual responses to suffering. The Trans Universal Zombie Church of the Blissful Ringing, for instance, is a Slovenian political protest movement which developed during the Occupy protests, themselves a series of responses to global financial crisis and economic meltdown. The Zombie Church founders deny, in fact, that it is a political protest movement – claiming repeatedly, in correspondence with me, that it is a religion. Similarly the Sisters of Valley, an American neo religious movement which exists to distribute medicinal marijuana, another group which developed from the Occupy movement. The latter

example is reminiscent too of the so called 'acid cult' The Brotherhood of Eternal Love. The Brotherhood, which campaigned for spiritual renewal by means of universal access to LSD, was founded out of the 1960s counterculture - while the American war in Vietnam raged. (The 1960s was another time of great social change and of various individual and organised responses to suffering, notably including the development of 'Engaged Buddhism' by the Vietnamese monk and Nobel peace prize nominee Thich Nat Hanh).

Notwithstanding that these examples are 'cherry picked', we could hypothesise that in some way suffering brings about the development of a spiritual capital, in a way that has been hitherto unrecognised. This idea will be explored further in this project as we continue to consider how God's love, and suffering are absolutely intertwined.

WHITEHEAD AND SUFFERING

Having already noted that Whitehead's own life was not free from experiences of suffering, it is interesting to note that critics have been keen to claim inconsistencies or weaknesses in his view of God in relation to theodicy. In a conference paper, the philosopher Laurence Rohrer contends that Whitehead fails to address the 'trilemma' of theodicy, which he sets out thus:

> "P1 If evil occurs, then either God is not omnibenevolent or not omnipotent (the traditional dilemma).
> P2 If God is omnibenevolent and evil occurs, then either God is not omnipotent, or evil is only apparent (genuine evil does not really exist).
> P3 If God is omnipotent and evil occurs, then either evil is merely apparent, or God is not omnibenevolent." (Rohrer, 2008, p. 79)

Rohrer goes on to argue that Whitehead's conception of God, as both primordial and consequent, means that nothing falls outside of God's prehension, and that if God's prehension is to be understood to be omnibenevolent, then this poses a problem for any sense in which God is to be considered omnipotent. He also raises the issue of God's omniscience, arguing that Whitehead's sense of God means that foreknowledge of all evils that will ever occur means that God at least affirms the joy a perpetrator experiences in the commission of a moral evil. Rohrer, however, is too concerned with reconciling Whitehead's view with a traditional or classical theist's sense of God's power. In the kind of process relational theology we have already discussed, God's

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power is distinctly different to the way in which it appears in classical theology, and the sense that God has power to unilaterally end suffering, or to prevent evil, is not present. The sense of process, or becoming, applies to the divine as it applies to the rest of us, not as the exception to, but as the exemplification of, the rule. God is not yet complete, and God's weakness means that that completion cannot be compelled.

Other critics of Whitehead's theodicy claim that for Whitehead, evils are not actual, but apparent. Thereby leaving open to critique the sense in which Whitehead addresses, or in this case fails to address, issues of genuine human suffering. If evils are only apparent, then we should turn our gaze toward the positive to be found in any occasion, but to do so is to effectively deny the genuine horror of the holocaust, for instance, or of the act of an abuser. But this and related critiques seem to undervalue or underestimate the sense in which Whitehead considers evil to be 'real' or genuine. The process scholar Barineu contends that this is to impose on Whitehead theological baggage which he doesn't deserve, and is at pains at times to refute (1990) (1991). Again it seems that critics have difficulty accepting that Whitehead's sense of God (and that of associated thinkers) does not altogether accord with the way in which classical ideas of God conceive of the power or nature of God.

CONCLUSION

Spiritual capital as a metaphor, is a substantial term for something which is without physical substance; it gives a name to that which defies conventional categorisation, and a sense of quantity to that which cannot be measured using any known metrics – it is a term which reflects the way in which humans may be understood to respond to that which might be characterised as the primordial nature of the divine. Alternatively expressed, spiritual capital is that which has to do with the outward human manifestation of the key aspects of "God's character": characteristics such as love, peace, grace, and joy. It is precisely in the manifestation of these characteristics, that humans find the space and agency to live in the way of God – by which we may understand it to mean lives marked by virtues such as charity. This is a narrative form of theology, a theology which is both lived and told, both received and interpreted. We might also think of it as both medium, and message. It is fully experienced in the present moment, while it is also reflected upon in the mind of the reader. It is demonstrated or experimented and thus developed in the lives of

communities and groups who have prioritised the pursuit of these characteristics as their charism, and who understand themselves through the lens of that which they inhabit.

The freedom of a community or an individual to respond to the allurement of God is fundamental to the veracity of this theological expression, as it forms a key part of the development of a narrative identity or the construction of the self. Were humans only responding to God in the sense that they are or were coerced, manipulated or otherwise pre-determined by some divine power, then arguably these virtues would not, in fact, be virtues at all. Rather they would be pre-programmed responses, their outcomes already, effectively, determined beyond and outside of their own existence. Such a view would not be expressed to absolutely devalue their worth, but rather to change their specific nature. A gift may be received with a gratitude conscious of something of its worth by a child who has been instructed how to receive a present graciously (whether wanted or unwanted), just as it may be received with spontaneous delight by an infant or a lover who recognises in the gift an act of love which is worth considerably more than the gift itself.

When process and other relational theologians say that God cannot overrule our freedom in any sense, they include an inability to 'know' what we will do in response to anything, in process thinking God cannot be said to be 'omniscient' in the classical sense of the word, for while God can experience everything as it happens, and may be able to therefore foresee all eventualities, it is not true to say that 'God knows what will happen next.' Instead the process of creativity continues its advance into novelty, a process which even the infinity of divine power can neither slow nor prevent.

So for process thinkers, God does not stand to one side while we suffer, but instead suffers with us. The narrative of our lives is concurrently the narrative of the divine: the *Divina Comedia* of a human journey toward the heart of the divine, is a mirror image of the journey of the divine into the heart of humanity. The direction of the journey doesn't even have Ariadne's thread to rely upon, rather it has the powerful weakness of the divine lure. This indeed is the power of God in process thought, the power to call, the power to persuade, it's a weak power, but gathers its peculiar strength precisely from its weakness. It's the antithesis of the coercive sovereign power of classical theism, and arguably all the more compelling for that (Cobb & Griffin, 1976, p. 96).

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In his primary development of process philosophy, Alfred North Whitehead returned to the brief Galilean model of Christianity (1978, p.343). This, he considered to be the functional epitome of Christianity. His critique of Christianity continues to find its target.

> "He also believed that much Christian thought, especially as it has been embodied in great theological systems, has been guilty of a dreadful defection, of a terrible disloyalty. It has failed to lay full stress on the brief Galilean vision which is both its origin and its *raison d'être*." (Pittenger, 1970, p. 152)

His repudiation of the alternative models of God, including the imperial ruler, the unmoved mover, and the ruthless moralist was entirely made in the favour of what others would later come to describe as the 'most moved mover'. For relational theologians, God's co-suffering is crucial to understanding God's character. For the purposes of this project, it is the way in which God, as fellow sufferer, fellow traveller, and fellow storyteller, interacts and engages with humans that is so crucial. God as revealed in the person of Jesus is a 'com-panion': someone who shares bread. The divine as intimate, and familial. This is best expressed in an understanding of God's nature, which is again to say, the lure of God, as something which is not inert, but active. It invites, it proposes, it suggests an alternative way of life. When an individual makes the free choice to co-participate in the loving nature of God, they develop a revolutionary, upside down and subversive form of capital, one which cannot be banked or accumulated in a store house, but one which in order to develop must be spread about, and in being so spread increases rather than diminishes. The Lucan account of the 'Rich Fool' (Luke 12: 13-21) narrates a similar idea, that it is in giving away that riches are gained, while storing up has nothing more than a limited temporal value. (A reading of the parable of the Talents (Luke 19: 12-27), meanwhile, expresses the worldly alternative: a powerful rich man who wants only to develop more riches, holds the power of life and death over the poor (Jesus' followers) who seek to live by an alternative economy. While a capitalist reading of this story often casts the rich man in the role of the virtuous one, a theology based upon the narrative of the oppressed turns it on its head to provide a reading more in keeping with its revolutionary roots (Herzog, 1994, p. 150).) Other Biblical similes for this same kind of process are that of yeast which must be lost in the dough in order to increase (Matthew 13:33), and the seed that has to die in order to live (John 12:24). This idea will become a recurring reference in this project.

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This alternative, spiritual form of capital is by no means the sole preserve of Christians, nor indeed is it the sole preserve of those who consider themselves religious. Rather it is open to those who would seek to avail themselves of it – that is, to those who would make themselves available to others in the spirit of solidarity and loving kindness. It is notable that expressions of religious community have at times found themselves particularly well placed to develop and incubate spiritual capital, as is evidenced by the variety of 'good works' emanating from such communities – this is after all the primary role of religion: a communal way of reimagining the self and society, in this way it is a value creating activity. It speaks of a why and a what. A 'how' to live, and its reason. Additionally, religious capital in the shape of the social networks of a religious community, along with repeated returns to founding principles realised through sacrament and ritual (in themselves effectively rites of resistance to an empire-bound state of mind) have enabled a multitude of expressions of charity to arise. In contemporary culture, this however must be seen in the context of a growing contemporary post secularism. The post secular or, to borrow a term from Bonhoeffer, 'religionless' Christian may now need to seek a means to develop these characteristics outside of the womb of the institutional church. Indeed to continue to draw upon Bonhoeffer, the new arena for the development of a spiritual capital may like his vision of a new monasticism, have "nothing in common with the old but a complete lack of compromise in a life lived in accordance with the Sermon on the Mount…" (Kelly & Burton Nelson, 1995, p. 424).

Having addressed the theoretical underpinnings of this project from a number of directions, the next chapter will conclude the introductory triad by attempting the hitherto impossible, conceiving of a fruitful dialogue between the realist philosophy of Whitehead, and the quasi materialism of Bourdieu. This task is at the root of the theory which underpins this project, and when accomplished will allow us to move toward an investigation of what we may carefully understand as 'experience' – this investigation will form the second, interpretative, triad of chapters.

Chapter 3: Spiritual Capital in practice

"A clash of doctrines is not a disaster – it is an opportunity." (Whitehead, 1938)

"*Media vita in morte sumus*" ("In the midst of life we are in death") (Gregorian chant attributed to Notker the Stammerer, ca 900 CE)

This chapter, the third of the introductory triad of chapters which focus on the theories that underlie this project, will endeavour to re-address some of the more plainly sociological ideas in question. Specifically, we will return to Bourdieu's theory of practice from which his ideas of capital are drawn. Although it is the shortest of the three introductory chapters, it is perhaps also the least accessible. It remains useful, nevertheless, to develop our understanding of the reasons for a tension between a Whiteheadian or process approach and that of Bourdieu (and the way in which this may be reconceived), as this will help us later in the project and because we will revisit some of these ideas in Chapter 8

In this chapter, then, besides thinking again about capital we will also address two of its associated concepts, *habitus* and field. Bourdieu's formula for the development of practice involves all three of these terms:

"[(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101)

Bourdieu uses various other influential and helpful ideas too in his work, such as *doxa* and *nomos* for example, but for the purposes of this project we will confine our attention to the three terms which make up the fundamental theory of practice. I am going to characterise Bourdieu as a 'quasi materialist' thinker, by this I don't mean to say that Bourdieu has no interest in the world of ideas, but rather that his work is situated more squarely in critical relationship with Marxist dialectical materialism (Bidet, 2007). I have already noted that Whitehead is most properly aligned with a realist school of thought. We may note that a fulsome exploration of how and where that which I have characterised as the quasi materialism of Bourdieu's work might intersect

with the realism of Whiteheadian process philosophy is beyond the scope of this project.

A key concern of this project is with the end product of Bourdieu's formula: practice. As such it must also be necessarily concerned with the element of capital as key to its production. As an enquiry into the means by which practice is elicited, though, we must also take seriously the other elements of Bourdieu's formula. In this chapter we will reconsider these key terms while also keeping in view the philosophy of organism, elements of which were set out in the previous chapters, and the contemporary context of post secularism.

The body of this chapter will now split into three analytical sections. In the first we will seek to consider the argument that Bourdieu's concepts of capital, *habitus* and field are not necessarily in opposition to Whitehead, and indeed that there may be ways to reconcile the approaches of these two very different scholars. The discussion will take in some rather diverse perspectives to consider potential similarities and some ways in which contrapuntal readings of these two thinkers might help to throw new light on each. In the second section we will consider the idea that our post secular *habitus* is deeply shaped by notions of economic capital which need to be carefully appraised due to the problems caused in popular discourse. In the third section we will briefly explore the ways in which spiritual capital as a resource or form of power enables struggling agents to make three conceptual 'movements' within a spiritual field. Summarily these comprise: a movement from a mindset of scarcity to one of creative abundance; a practical movement from being as an individual to becoming as society; and a conceptual movement from private to universal. These three movements will be revisited in Chapter 8.

PART ONE: DIFFERENCES & RECONCILIATIONS

In order to begin this analysis, some attention must first be paid to the clearest disparity between these two schools of thought, one to which we have already made reference: Whitehead's realism draws from the well of idealism (it is certainly not hard to find remarks such as "this world is a world of ideas" (1970, p. 158) in his work) in fact Hartshorne reckons Whitehead's realism to be "a thoroughgoing "idealism""" (1950, p. 29); while Bourdieu, with his Marxist heritage and focus on praxis, is arguably

more concerned with the material. Although one may argue that any materialism necessarily implies a corresponding idealism, and vice versa, nevertheless this difference sets up an apparent clash of approaches. Looking back to the epigraph we might consider this 'clash' as an 'opportunity' to envisage a pluralistic path by which the insights of one approach may be taken together with the insights of the other: to employ some deliberately substance based language, our concern is not with the *res vera* as such, but with the *rēs verae.*

In this instance it is possible that the connection we seek may come most readily through an engagement with the world of ideas, calling to mind Whitehead's (off the cuff) response to a question posed by the mathematician and physicist Stanislaw Ulam: "What's more important, Mr. Whitehead, ideas or things?" Whitehead replied, "Why, I should imagine ideas about things." (Gardner, 1976)

BEGINNING TO READ BOURDIEU WITH WHITEHEAD'S GHOST

A starting place for a consideration of the areas where readings of Bourdieu and Whitehead may be seen as complementary is with the concept of society. For both this term is subject to various structures, and for both an understanding of these structures may be perceived to derive from the way that physical forces apply and interact. For Whitehead "societies are the [enduring] entities which enjoy adventures of change throughout time and space" (1978, p. 35). In this idea we see Whitehead in typical form, perceiving the constancy of becoming by means of 'adventure'. This approach has clear antecedents in the physical sciences, atoms for instance, are societies upon, and within, which various forces are exerted. These atomic societies then play further parts within other larger societies. In Bourdieu's work the concept of field also stems from disciplines like physics where ideas such as 'electromagnetic field' are well established. For Bourdieu 'field' is used to describe a particular arena and its associated hierarchies structures and activities. Consequently we can all be understood to operate in fields and have to a greater or lesser extent learned to take on their *habitus* and to develop their capitals, this may be perceived as analogous to Whitehead's idea of a society. To illustrate his theory Bourdieu helpfully uses, as an example of a field, the Church. To describe it, he says, he would not say that 'the Church' is the bishops, clergy, laity or etc. Rather:

> "…the Church is the sum of the objective relations between all these people…The relations are such that Church-space is formed, and the position in the space held by Mr So-and-So includes a lot of information on his strategies, positions and stances." (Bourdieu, 2020, p. 19)

Fields, then, are the arenas in which we operate, they are the structured spaces in which people would seek to accrue and utilise capitals. Within a field (or society) there is motion: movement which is governed or directed by the forces of the field. An example of this could be an electromagnetic field, in which elements are subject to the force of magnetism. Other fields are subject to their own forces too.

The apparently deterministic way that Bourdieu describes this bears some similarity to process thought. In both cases forces applied to an object act together as modifiers such that together they help create change. In process thinking this might be characterised as moments of perishing and becoming. We might therefore, by moving to a different plane of observation describe this same process of interaction by saying that as the past perishes, it informs the becoming of the present, thereby advancing toward novelty. Bourdieu's take on this is, we may continue to observe, deterministic. The social world is, he says, "a universe where you cannot do just whatever you fancy." (Ibid, p. 20) Instead one is ever modified, which is another word for changed – change being, according to process, the only true constant.

So far then Whitehead and Bourdieu may be seen to broadly agree that change or modification is constant and ongoing within a structured or structuring society. Further we may say that per Bourdieu the forces applied in a field require us to take action, but counter to the threat of determinism that action doesn't need to be compliance.

> "…a field is a field of forces within which the agents occupy positions…these position-takings being aimed either at conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field…" (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 39)

According to Bourdieu we might choose not to comply but instead resist the forces or to rebel against them in order to transform the way that the field is structured. That is to say that we may choose a course of action based upon a somewhat deviant conceptual 'movement' (an idea to which we shall return later) and that this becomes our practice. Moving from the physical plane to a 'plane of representations' (2020, p. 225) the field is thus an arena of struggle.

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We may begin to develop a further sense of conceptual overlap here: change and struggle are bound up together. An array of forces drive the one and cause the other. Another area of intersection is in the use of the term 'interdependence': Bourdieu and Whitehead both see societies as sites of interdependence. In this instance, though, the word needs to be understood as intersubjective. As previously noted, while a conventional or 'classical' understanding may be that it is made up of substances which are to some extent independent, Whitehead proposes instead that the world is composed of interdependent events. For Whitehead, then, a society is what he considers to be a form of nexus of these events – in 'Process and Reality' he defines a society as "a nexus with a social order," adding that "an enduring object… is a society whose social order has taken the special form of 'personal order'" (1978, p. 34). In order to grasp Whitehead's way of thinking we must continue to remind ourselves that accordingly this way of understanding the world emphasises the 'reality' of Heraclitean becoming over and against that of Parmenidean being, albeit not in a strictly serial or linear sense.

Where Bourdieu may be seen to use the concept of interdependence somewhat differently is in making the move from the physicalist plane to the plane of representations. As mentioned previously, the plane of representations is where struggle takes place, and as such it is the plane in which capitals are developed and utilised. For Bourdieu this would be where a spiritual capital would exist, because the nature of the field determines the nature of the capital. He explains:

> "…we have to move on to the plane of the field of struggles and introduce the notions of *habitus* and belief, and so on, especially for fields of symbolic production. On this plane I should say that there are as many different kinds of capital as there are fields: there is interdependence between the definition of the field and the definition of the capital involved." (Bourdieu, 2020, p. 226)

Thus, in a field of spiritual struggle where a resource were needed in order to help against a force, a spiritual capital would be employed to assist the struggling agent. This is just the sort of spiritual capital which social scientists like Baker, whose work we noted in Chapter 1, speak of. Crucially, for Bourdieu the sort of power or resource we rely upon is in a relationship of interdependence with our sense of society, our field of existence. It is entirely 'relational' (also a key process concept) in that it relates specifically to the nature of the struggle in which we are engaged. For both Bourdieu

and Whitehead 'interdependence' is important in gaining an understanding of what society is. We may further note that there is also a further perspective, on the way in which the concept of interdependence relates to society, from a process theological position.

SOCIAL INTERDEPENDENCE IN PROCESS TRINITARIANISM

We have already established that for process thinkers an emphasis on stasis rather than change (advance to novelty) is a fundamental error. Whether that is in terms of talk about divine or human society, in experiential terms what we can continually observe in the world around us is continuous change: Heraclitean flux. For the purpose of clarity we should note that Bourdieu doesn't necessarily accept this. For Heraclitus, and those who follow him, the river flows and is forever made new. In other words we fool ourselves if or when we think that we see static objects, that which we actually observe, no matter how static in appearance, is actually a flow of interdependent and interlinked events or occasions. Perhaps we might dare to hope that Bourdieu would have less of an issue with this idea, at least in so far as it is used to refer to society which remains an arena of struggle, change and interaction. So at some points of interdependence, we may call these interactions 'society'. For a third and now squarely theological view of what this means we can turn to the 'social' nature of the trinity, as developed by the Jesuit theologian Joseph Bracken.

In considering Bracken's process trinitarianism, we should understand that it is advanced in relation to the thinking of another relational theologian (and Gifford lecturer), the Reformed theologian Jürgen Moltmann. In works such as 'The Crucified God' (2001), Moltmann advances a trinitarian view of God which is at odds with the Aristotelian/Thomist theological view. For Moltmann this view of God is not only idolatrous, just as it is for Whitehead, (1978, p. 342) but also alienates humans from their humanity.

> "A God who is conceived of in his omnipotence, perfection and infinity at man's expense cannot be the God who is love in the cross of Jesus…" (Moltmann, 2001, p. 259)

Moltmann's view of the divine is a 'relational' one which sees God experiencing both suffering and grief in the crucifixion of Christ. The Father's grief is as important, or as

significant, as the Son's suffering. We might think of this as a 'process adjacent' relational perspective on the trinity, seeing it in social terms as persons relating to, or experiencing, one another. In considering this, however, Bracken offered this insight:

> "What seems to be lacking in [Moltmann's] exposition is an explicit equation between process in God and community, such that the community life of the three divine persons is understood to be a process, partly identical with the process of human history but also partly distinct from it." (Bracken, 1978, p. 218)

For Bracken, Motlmann's relational trinitarianism is 'hesitant' and 'guarded' (Ibid). Bracken's point really is that Moltmann doesn't go quite far enough down the process route to be, in his view, fully coherent. Not content with a swipe at Moltmann, Bracken also enters into a critique of process thinking, noting that a traditionally understood trinity, when viewed through a Whiteheadian lens, inevitably becomes a situation of tri-theism. Where Father, Son and Holy Spirit (or other names) are 'actual entities' in their own right, they are necessarily distinct from one another. Each is 'a God' in their own right. Instead Bracken proposes that the triune Godhead may be considered a 'community' or a 'structured society' which has agency of its own, rather than (effectively) a team, with the combined agency of three individuals. To do this he turns to Josiah Royce, a pre-Whiteheadian process thinker to extrapolate the idea that the trinitarian God is found, or made real, in a wholly social sense.

> "…one could say that the three divine persons are one God by reason of their common participation in an ongoing process of interpretation which is their life in community. That is they are constantly engaged in a shared interpretation of their past, present and future." (Bracken, 1978, p. 225)

Ultimately then, for Bracken, 'to be a person is to be a member of a community and vice versa' (Bracken, 1980), just as for Bourdieu to be an agent is to exist in a field.

Khôra

An area of interesting possibility for comparison between the philosophical systems of Whitehead and Bourdieu is to be found in the concept of space. For Bourdieu capital is developed in a field, but where is it to be seen? Economic capital is (at least so we are encouraged to suppose) realisable in bars of gold or plots of land, cultural capital meanwhile is embodied and to some degree externalised, but what about

spiritual capital? Embodiment presupposes a sense of locus and we may perhaps suppose that, being spiritual, this may have something to do with the interiority of the spirit or 'soul'. It is common in confessional circles to hear dualistic talk of the soul and the body as ontologically separate. This, however is a position which Whitehead's idealistic realism does not accept.

> "…it is important to remember that whereas in Plato and Descartes the soul is metaphysically different from the body, for Whitehead it is not. The body is composed of occasions of experience, the soul or living person is also composed of occasions of experience. There are distinctions, but there is certainly no dualism." (Cobb, 2008, p. 45)

The two definitions of spiritual capital I have so far proposed for this work both contain within them ideas of embodiment, we must continue to ask, however, if this concept is sufficient to the task it seeks to achieve. In the first definition spiritual capital is described as an 'internal resource', this idea requires or implies an acceptance of the idea of a differentiated individual identity within which a person has the essence of their being – this is a place in both physical and metaphysical terms. In the second definition it is referred to as being synonymous with a Christian idea of the indwelling 'spirit of God' – again there seems to be an implicit binary which makes reference to place – in rather than out. However, this does not seem to accord well enough with Whitehead's refusal to accept conventional philosophical binaries. Panentheism, which underlies a process theological approach also transcends crude binaries, these things therefore indicate that this dyadic sense of place may not be adequate – meaning that we need to carefully (re)consider what sense of 'place' could meet our needs.

If we were to stick rigidly with Bourdieu we would need to turn again to the subject of field, instead we will take a turn to a Platonic term which I propose to consider as having the capacity to dialogue with both Bourdieu and Whitehead. In this instance though it is a term considerably more familiar to philosophers than to sociologists. In Plato's 'Timaeus' we get the term '*khôra*' (Χὼρα) which is important not just to Whitehead but to various other philosophers too. 'Timaeus', Whitehead says, forms one of "the two statements of cosmological theory which have had the chief influence on Western thought" (Whitehead, 1978, p. 93).

> "To the modern reader the *Timaeus*, considered as a statement of scientific details, is in comparison with [Newton's] *Scholium* simply foolish. But what it lacks in

superficial detail, it makes up for by its philosophic depth. If it can be read as an allegory it conveys profound truth…" (Ibid)

As we have already established, according to Whiteheadian thought, there is no permanence – that is to say that everything is in a state of flux or change. In Timaeus Plato draws this idea out by talking about fire, water and air, these are generally understood as substances, he notes, but in fact they are not substances, but qualities.

> "Whenever we see anything in process of change, for example fire, we should speak of it not as *being a thing*, but as *having a quality*." (1983, p. 68)

The constancy of change requires us to re-evaluate what we think we know about that which is common to us. In this instance we are required to consider 'where' this change takes place. This is where Plato speaks of *khôra*, to do so he uses metaphors such as 'receptacle' but the word could also be understood more simply as 'space' where the ongoing process of constant change takes place.

Perhaps we might dare to say that, like Bourdieu's 'field', *khôra* is, in reductive terms, effectively a placeless place. For Whitehead, we might venture to say that *khôra* is effectively the '*de profundis*' of locus, in that it has neither the characteristic of place or time.

> "…in Whitehead, khôra is the most profound "characteristic" of multiplicity, namely, that it has no characteristic—neither temporal nor extensional—except this mutuality of immanence." (Faber, 2009)

While Faber is clear that for Whitehead *khôra* has no other characteristic, it cannot be located temporally or spatially, he is less clear concerning what constitutes the Whiteheadian idea of a 'mutuality of immanence.' In 'Adventures of Ideas' Whitehead says that 'mutual immanence' is "the function of belonging to a common Receptacle" (1967, p. 201). Surely here we find something of an echo of a field as a 'field of forces', in which the arena is defined simply by what is in it?

In theological terms we might say that *khôra* has no characteristic other than a constant, mutual, divine in-dwelling. This does not make it directly analogous to God, as we might suppose, because God does have other attributes, for example God 'gives' whereas *khôra,* like field, can give nothing except, perhaps, space. For substance philosophers this 'space' means *khôra* can be the place where 'being' happens, but for those of the process school and perhaps too for Bourdieu it is rather the locus of

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'becoming', the place where change takes places. "In general terms, it is the receptacle and, as it were, the nurse of all becoming and change" (Plato, 1983, p. 67). In this way it represents a kind of third space, (in Plato's terms, it is more precisely a third reality) neither here nor not here, neither there nor not there. Plato himself recognises the difficulty of grasping this idea, but notes:

> "…we shall not be wrong if we describe it as invisible and formless, all-embracing, possessed in a most puzzling way of intelligibility, yet very hard to grasp." (Plato, 1983, p. 70)

Khôra, similarly to 'field' is the placeless place wherein becoming takes place. *Khôra* is at least analogous to a field in one sense, which is that it remains the locus of our stocks of spiritual capital. While it cannot be located, it can be experienced and in theological terms this space of becoming must be experienced in the immanence of God, the place where with Bracken we can find the 'persons' of God as "constantly engaged in a shared interpretation of their past, present and future." In the last of his words recorded by Lucien Price, on Armistice day in 1947, Whitehead himself situated this work of God in the world:

> "God is in the world, or nowhere, creating continually in us and around us. This creative principle is everywhere, in animate and so-called inanimate matter, in the ether, water, earth, human hearts. But this creation is a continuing process, and 'the process is itself the actuality', since no sooner do you arrive than you start on a fresh journey. In so far as man partakes of this creative process does he partake of the divine, of God, and that participation is his immortality, reducing the question of whether his individuality survives death of the body to an estate of irrelevancy. His true destiny as co-creator in the universe is his dignity and his grandeur." (Price, 1954, p. 366)

If our experience accords with Whitehead's remarks then we will find that we experience this space, the receptacle of becoming, in the world around us. We might then say that to be realised it must be embodied in each of us – we are the site of our experience, *khôra* is therefore within us as much as it is anywhere. Embodiment is the profound 'reality' of *khôra* and the process of becoming, and this leads us neatly to *habitus*.

PART TWO: THE SOCIAL EMBODIED

Returning to the theory of practice, we have already noted that some see the genesis of the idea of 'spiritual capital' as a subdivision of social capital, one of the three main types of capital that Bourdieu identifies in his work (2020, p. 228). It remains necessary to recognise though that in and of itself 'capital' remains an intersubjective term; many meanings are ascribed to 'capital' according to circumstance and personal philosophy, this is partly due to our *habitus*. As such we might say that an exploration of popular ideas of capital is necessary to understand our *habitus* (social embodied) which will enable us to move toward an understanding of what the embodiment of spiritual capital really means. As we have previously noted, besides the idea of capitals, Bourdieu also used the idea of *habitus* (literally: disposition), to encapsulate the idea of cultural norms so deeply embedded that they form our way of thinking and behaving, they are our 'social embodied'.

> "Habitus being the social embodied, it is "at home" in the field it inhabits, it perceives it immediately as endowed with meaning and interest." (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 128)

The *habitus*, for Bourdieu, effectively governs the way we see the world. He argues that the 'efficiency' of the habitus is our inextricability from it.

> "One important thing that helps explain the specific efficiency of the habitus is the fact that people carry their habitus around with them; they are so tied up with it that they cannot shake it off – which gives is a mysterious quality… the habitus is that part of capital that is incorporated." (2020, p. 340)

Here Bourdieu uses 'incorporated' synonymously with 'embodied' and argues that cultural and other symbolic capitals are effectively 'grafted on' to the person. Elsewhere Bourdieu talks about *habitus* in terms such as 'structured structures' and 'structuring structures' (Bourdieu, 2013) explaining the way that this grafted, incorporated or embodied element of capital theory functions in what we might cautiously call the 'real world'.

It has been our habit already in this chapter to attempt theoretical connections, so it seems modest to suggest that *habitus* may become both the cause and the result of the mode of our collective social interaction because it conditions the way we perceive what is happening and makes meaning or perpetuates behaviour as a result. In extremis it may be said to effectively create Maslow's hammer, or perhaps in less extreme terms

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the lens through which all things are perceived and understood. This takes place by means of both formal and informal social processes, or 'cultural products' (Bourdieu, 1984), (social controls could also be an analogous term) such as education systems, which lead to the development of an implicit understanding of one's role or 'place' in society.

Accordingly, we might say that our *habitus* is embodied in such a way as to make it practically inescapable, and as such it continuously both shapes our understanding of capital and is simultaneously shaped by it. It develops with, and as part of, our embodied experience of or interaction with the world, or field, in which we exist. Our experience of life, in that case, is key to understanding what spiritual capital is – we might even venture that our experiences of life make up our spiritual capital. An alternative and simplified way of stating this would be to say that life experience is spiritual capital. This may be too simplistic and we would need to attempt to identify what specific parts of life experience might be said to constitute spiritual capital, rather than making a blanket claim. On a more straightforward plane though, this idea may be of help to us in practical terms. It offers an explanation of why spiritual capital is generally understood as being formed in spiritual or religious communities (types of cultural product) where ideas such as openness to the leading of the divine, or practical ideas such as 'sacrifice on the behalf of others' might be customarily shared, repeated and ritualised. These forms of interaction, shared life experience, may be perceived as part of the process of communal enculturation. The loss or diminishing of these communities might, therefore, be seen as a threat to the way that spiritual capital is enculturated on an ongoing basis. Before we begin to explore the idea of spiritual capital as experience, or what alternative routes to enculturation there might be, though, we must briefly consider the roots of our current ideas of capital.

CAPITAL

In the context of contemporary post secular culture in the UK we might say, with the likes of Sombart, that we live in late-stage capitalism: it may be late, but it is still capitalism. As such we have a generalised *habitus* of the sort that a capitalist economy 'usually produces' as Bourdieu would have it (2020, p. 93). An impact of this may be seen in the way that the language of capital is used, ideas of value, worth, and profit for instance are all parts of the common lexicon and continually used to refer

back to capitalist economics. We might say of this capitalism that it was founded on the inspiration of a number of influential individuals, among them of course is the profoundly important, previously mentioned, enlightenment philosopher Adam Smith whose work helped to lay the theoretical foundations for generations of free market idealogues in years to come. From The Wealth of Nations comes this idea, the fundamentals of which remain part of commonplace economic discourse:

> "It is the maxim of every prudent master of a family, never to attempt to make at home what it will cost him more to make than to buy. The tailor does not attempt to make his own shoes, but buys them of the shoemaker. The shoemaker does not attempt to make his own clothes, but employs a tailor. The farmer attempts to make neither the one nor the other, but employs those different artificers. All of them find it for their interest to employ their whole industry in a way in which they have some advantage over their neighbours, and to purchase with a part of its produce, or what is the same thing, with the price of a part of it, whatever else they have occasion for.
>
> What is prudence in the conduct of every private family, can scarce be folly in that of a great kingdom." (Smith, 2007, p. 350)

This is a straightforward enough idea - according to a *prima facie* acceptance of Smith's idea of household prudence, one simply does not make at home that which it is cheaper to buy elsewhere. To do otherwise is foolish – he proposes. On this concept many a business empire has been built. However, just as it is deeply influential, so is it routinely flouted because it reflects only part of what capital is. Indeed, whole industries are based on the knowledge that we do not, collectively, submit to Smith's doctrine. Rather, the reality is that many of us, individually or collectively, regularly choose to make or produce, sometimes even at significant personal cost, items as diverse as food, clothing, ornaments or even buildings that might be more cheaply purchased rather than made. The economy is openly complicit in its own self sabotage.

Those who choose to go against this doctrine of Smith's perceive by virtue of their *habitus* that there is, in fact, some kind of excess or alternative value to be found in the process of making, creating, sharing and of course giving (we've considered gift before, it is a recurring theme). A homemade cake, or a birthday card made by a child, they recognise, has in a particular context a different form of value to one which is produced in a factory; in the same way a house that one has built is valuable in a

different way to one which one has purchased from a builder or a previous occupant. In certain fields, the process of making something is, in itself, of value to the maker because it demonstrates and enhances their capital. We may extend this further in recognising, and this is at the heart of this project, that some individuals make even greater sacrificial choices to work on the behalf of others, at significant personal cost – even in some cases suffering to the point of death. Their view of personal prudence is not in accordance with Smith's, in this regard at least, although to say that Smith makes no allowance for this kind of thinking is to mischaracterise the fullness of his philosophy, he does, for instance, recognise the way that symbolic value is at times more important than purely economic value when nations choose to accept the 'sacrificial' cost of maintaining a colony (2007, p. 478) which enhances their prestige and therefore their power. Capital and *habitus* again combining in a field to produce practice.

Some of those confessing Christians who follow a Pauline model and consider themselves 'fools for Christ' (1 Corinthians 4:10) may even recognise an echo or reversal of Smith's thinking as they choose to give up, renounce or reduce financial resources or privileges in order to live a life dedicated to prayer or the service of others. Their capital is thus enhanced or developed by the reduction of their economic or social capital. Of course, the reverse can be true too, giving up doing things for others can enhance one's stock of economic capital. But this cuts into the question of field again, because the idea of giving up resource for the benefit of others is not limited to the religious, on the contrary many who work tirelessly and selflessly in solidarity with, or for the good of, others are religiously unaffiliated. This is a spiritual struggle – the field is spiritual, not religious.

Crucially we can say that although our *habitus* is deeply informed by capitalism, our lives are not all governed by this form of economics, no matter how mean or, indeed, how generous. In late capitalism our individual and collective calculations are often more than a balance of financial payments and receipts. We do not always adhere to the idea that financial prudence is paramount at all times, instead we sometimes choose to labour, to work, in ways that may in fact prove to be physically, emotionally or financially costly but from which we gain rewards of other sorts. (A brief note: this foregoing statement is not meant to ignore either the ongoing reality of the exploitation of labour, both illegal and legal, in a capitalist society, nor the privilege of being able to

make financially costly lifestyle choices. Rather it is a recognition that value may not simply be ascertained by the use of a calculator.)

LABOUR EXCHANGE

In 'Post Growth, Life after Capitalism' the ecological economist Tim Jackson (2021) analyses the contemporary fascination with growth at any cost and notes the heavy price we pay for this. We have already sought to link the idea of spiritual capital with the 'fruits of the spirit' and Jackson's work has a contrasting echo of this idea, whereby he warns of the consequences of an unrelenting focus on capitalist competitiveness in the face of the apparent scarcity of resource.

> "Addiction, despair, suicide and violence: these are the fruits of our insistence that selfish competition is the only feasible response to struggle." (2021, p.100)

Economic capitalism, with its focus on accrual, Jackson says, is both a response to suffering, and a cause of further suffering. He compares this to other responses to the same stimuli, with particular reference to Buddhism, and notes the enormous differences in the approaches taken to alleviate suffering. For Buddhism suffering is caused and enhanced by the very thing that capitalism promotes as the remedy – namely craving. It is this marriage of labour and craving which Jackson seeks to critique, while recognising that labour is, in his words, "a design characteristic of the human species" (Jackson, 2021, p. 112).

Here, then, labour which might be understood as either practice or capital is of itself is not just a good, but it is essential to life, without labour we die – the vital creative responses of the human body are forms of labour in this way of thinking, but not forms of work. For Hannah Arendt too, this distinction was important. Labour in her view is an intrinsic part of the human experience which must be experienced in the right way, she expresses this view here with customary poetic fluidity.

> "There is no lasting happiness outside the prescribed cycle of painful exhaustion and pleasurable regeneration, and whatever throws this cycle out of balance – poverty and misery where exhaustion is followed by wretchedness instead of regeneration, or great riches and an entirely effortless life where boredom takes the place of exhaustion and where the mills of necessity, of consumption and

digestion, grind an impotent human body mercilessly and barrenly to death – ruins the elemental happiness that comes from being alive." (Arendt, 2018, p. 108)

Jackson agrees with this analysis, and so we may say that for these two, in contrast to the sort of late capitalist economic thinking which helps form our *habitus*, the suffering of 'painful exhaustion' can effectively become a social good, after all this is precisely the sort of creative labour-suffering that brings forth life. This introduces the intriguing prospect of embodied suffering as a form of spiritual capital.

I have previously attempted to define spiritual capital as being something which 'motivates, inspires and equips' people to 'engage in activity which serves the common good' and said that it is 'the resource an individual draws upon' when they develop and exhibit virtues known as the 'fruits of the spirit' (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control). We may note that although this list of spiritual fruits uses the translation 'patience' for the Greek word *makrothumia* (μακροθυμία), this is also sometimes translated as 'long-suffering'. This idea of a kind of capital which inspires labour-suffering on the behalf of others is antithetical to the basis of capitalist economics, which on the contrary aims to leverage capital in order to *avoid* labour-suffering by instead making use of the willingness of others to engage in labour-suffering for advantage – usually in the shape of material gain. Here advantage of a different sort is gained and not by having the wherewithal to avoid painful exhaustion, but rather by willingly undergoing it. This is an important idea for spiritual capital, for if it is to be differentiated from capital that is understood through a conventional economic lens, then it should have a differentiated means of accrual and dispersal. Those with a store of spiritual capital will, according to this way of thinking, willingly undergo suffering for the advantage of others, rather than attempt to gain advantage by means of exploiting the labour-suffering of others.

THE POWER/VALUE OF WORK

Reflecting upon the way in which capitalism changed the thinking of landowners and those who had the facility to sell their labour, Max Weber observed the following socio-economic shift:

"The old economic order asked: How can I give, on this piece of land, work and sustenance to the greatest possible number of men? Capitalism asks: From this

given piece of land how can I produce as many crops as possible for the market with as few men as possible?" (Weber, 1974 a, p. 367)

For Weber, the question of why Christian Europe and some of its colonies developed a dynamic capitalism in a way that the rest of the world didn't was a key preoccupation. Part of his assessment was that the Church effectively trampled the path that capitalism would later take. The rule of law, bureaucracy, these and other facets of Church life were necessities for capitalism as it strove to dominate economic thinking.

It is not my intention here, to present myself as uncritical of Weber whose work, as Kostko (2018, p. 129) points out, might well also be considered as 'foundational' political theology and toward whom a variety of critiques may be levelled, but neither do I intend to engage in lengthy critical analysis of Weber's thinking. Nevertheless it may be considered an oversight to refuse to mention his thinking and to suggest that we may at least agree with him in a limited way (just as I have previously agreed with him in Chapter 1) in as much as to say that Christianity and Christian thinking has been deeply enmeshed in the development of contemporary European capitalism and as such has left a deep imprint on our *habitus*.

Unlike some others (e.g. Sombart who points a finger at Aquinas) Weber focusses on Protestantism as the root from which capitalism grows. Certainly, one finds in the Reformed traditions, from Luther onwards, an attitude towards the value of work which fits well with capitalism's needs. There is not, however, so much of an explicit emphasis on the aggregation of wealth as there is to be found in capitalist economics. Rather this actually goes against protestant Christian tradition which (speaking somewhat broadly and setting aside popular contemporary 'prosperity gospel' movements such as that highlighted and critiqued in 'Preachers N Sneakers' (Kirby, 2021) entirely) instead, at least publicly, teaches the value of simplicity, and of giving away wealth. Famous Biblical passages such as the story of the rich young ruler, the metaphor of the camel and the 'eye of the needle' and figures from Church tradition such as St Francis of Assisi and the mendicant traditions he continues to inspire are frequently cited in support of this. Even in the decalogue we find relevant warnings, as so accurately satirised by the poet Hugh Arthur Clough in 1862: "Thou shalt not covet; but tradition, Approves all forms of competition."

Tradition is one of the key aspects of the habitus as the social embodied, and assuredly Clough is correct to recognise that Christian traditions of many sorts have in

various ways and at various times ignored or subverted this teaching of economic simplicity and grown vastly wealthy. In turn this tendency has inspired a host of reform movements such as those I wrote about in my own brief survey of British new monasticism (Cross, 2010). Nevertheless, I would contend that this remains outside of mainstream orthodoxy at least in terms of teaching. The same cannot be said, however, for work.

Is it work, then, rather than the pursuit of wealth that provides the most fruitful meeting place for capitalism and Christianity? We have already referred in this chapter to Arendt's work, and it is not difficult to discern the influence therein of an Aristotelian view of work (by way, one might suggest, of her friend, lover and teacher the ubiquitous Heidegger). Aristotle's thought on work, particularly the distinction between *praxis* and *poiesis* (roughly: action and production) as based upon their respective telos and as dwelled upon in the Nichomachean Ethics (2009) has been profoundly influential.

Crucially for some Christians (including process theologians) *poiesis* has become interwoven with the idea of what it is to take part in the *Missio Dei* (Mission of God) – becoming co-creators with the divine. There is, therefore, a dignity and a purpose in labour and productivity making it difficult to differentiate the logic of capitalist economics from that of Christianity. However, this is not the end of the idea, as it goes on to become for some a question of soteriology. This develops by way of understanding that Christians can join in the salvific work of Christ, thus giving *poiesis* a soteriological role. *Praxis* too has a similar theological option. Christianity may indeed be founded upon a doctrine of grace rather than works, but works (*praxis*) remain important, nevertheless. I betray my authorial stance once more by noting that within the Reformed tradition it would be customary at this point to draw upon a number of Biblical passages to demonstrate this, such as when talking of the (economic) distribution or redistribution of resources, the writer of 'Matthew' has Jesus saying: "Whatever you did for the least of these you did for me." Similarly, the author of 'James' employs even more explicitly economic language, asking what 'profit' one might gain with faith but without works, he concludes that "faith without works is dead," and adds that we are "justified by works, and not by faith only." In the Hebrew tradition the prophet Micah pronounces that what God requires is partly about right economic action, we should: "do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God." (Matthew

25:40) (James 2: 14 – 26) (Micah 6:8). We could also draw upon a range of writings from across the Christian traditions to further demonstrate the point that action, specifically 'right' action, as well as creation is regarded as highly important.

Whether we agree on the 'salvific' nature of work, and we should recognise that Christians have certainly not been able to agree on this, we can at least say with some certainty that it remains extremely important in Christian doctrine. There's a somewhat obvious irony implicit in this linking of Christian thinking about work to capitalism, which is to say that where Christian 'good works' are supposed to support and uphold the downtrodden and 'the least of these' or to ensure God's 'preferential option for the poor' (Francis, 2013) which is to say the poorest or most disadvantaged members of any society. It is therefore the poietic sense of work which gains the most importance, what does 'work' or 'action' create? Here we find our way back to the conceptual world of process theology once more, for thinking with Whitehead leads us to a return to the sense that everything is in the process of becoming, as such the role of those who would 'work with' God are co-creators or alternatively: co-movers.

PART THREE: CONCEPTUAL MANOEUVRES IN THE DARK

The first focus of this chapter was on a brief attempt to find commonality in the theory of practice put forward by Bourdieu, and the philosophy of organism developed by Whitehead. As such we have already acknowledged the necessity to move from a focus on stasis to a focus on becoming, and in so doing to recognise too that perishing – which is a threat to stasis – is part of an ongoing, interlinked, process of becoming (the past must perish for the present to become). We can see too that this process may form part of the struggle that Bourdieu conceives of as taking place in a given field in which change takes place.

In making this move we can also struggle against the philosophic and economic pressures of that field. So where from a perspective of stasis, constantly under threat from perishing, capital may be considered scarce, we may make a move towards becoming. When we do so, instead of seeing what little there is available as being under constant threat, necessitating competition in order to accrue as much as possible of this scarce resource, we see it instead as constantly renewed and therefore abundant. In the former way of seeing things, it is logical to seek to exploit the labour of others to

aggregate scarce wealth/power, from a perspective of becoming, of which perishing is an ongoing part, on the other hand, resources are abundant and there is no such need. Rather perishing leads only to the advance of novelty and it is sensible instead to cooperate with others in order to (re)distribute this resource to whoever may experience temporary scarcity (which could be any of us according to circumstance).

While some approaches to the accumulation of capital broadly assume that one works to achieve advantage and then uses it to obtain the service of those who don't in order to avoid personal suffering, a process theology informed sense of spiritual capital reverses the paradigm. Those with spiritual capital will use it to help them to undergo suffering on the behalf of others - this is their practice. Those who have it expend it or give it up in order to serve others.

We may further note that rather than get consumed, or used up, in the process of being spent or given up, spiritual capital may instead be further accrued in the process. One may 'get by giving'. On that basis, what Adam Smith considers to be 'imprudent folly' in the field of monetary economics is shown to be reversed in a spiritual economy. From this perspective, spiritual capital belongs to an upside-down economic model of the sort that might belong to an 'anti-kingdom' (Rieger & Kwok, 2012). It is the resource which enables one to willingly suffer for no obvious personal advantage, or, rather, to willingly suffer for the advantage of others knowing that the advantage of others is actually our advantage too.

As we have previously identified, that approach which we have termed classical theism presupposes that God is not a participant in the process of human suffering, but process and other relational theologies subvert this notion too. Instead, relational approaches recognise the divine as co-sufferer, co-labourer, co-creator, co-mover and co-originator. In the person of Jesus we see the model of willingness to abandon any sense of personal advantage for the sake of the whole, to give without expectation of personal profit. This is the outworking of extrapolating Bracken's point about the Trinitarian society – we are persons in community: together we become. In the sacrifice of Jesus then we are given, too, a scaled-up example of the way in which Whitehead's focus on 'perishing' has a part to play in this process. It is in suffering to the point of death (physical perishing) that Christ demonstrates genuine love for the whole world making way for it to become anew. In this moment of perishing we find the process of a new spiritual becoming in the subsequent re-birth (advance to novelty).

In Christian tradition this is poetically symbolised in the idea of the empty tomb/womb and the announcement (by Mary – of course) that Jesus is alive. This is the enacting of Jesus' teaching that each must be 'born again'.

For this to make sense in terms of Bourdieu's theory of practice we might say that this kind of spiritual capitalism is one which is entirely antithetical to the sort which prioritises ideas of growth of advantage by means of the competitive exploitation of others – it is found in a different field and it therefore creates a different kind of *habitus* (albeit one which is in places informed by ideas from other fields). Although the conventional economic capitalist paradigm has some roots in Christian thinking or the culture of Christianised Europe, the practise which it creates is quite contrary to the primal Galilean Christianity to which Whitehead refers. As we have considered, we can differentiate this move to process oriented spiritual capitalism from conventional economic capitalism in at least three ways, each of may be simplified so that they may be termed a 'movement':

1) It operates in a mindset of creative abundance rather than one of scarcity, as a result the need to compete for resources is removed. *Movement from scarcity to creative abundance.*

2) Instead of the conventional idea of personal capital gain and retention for the sake of avoidance of suffering, we have a model that chooses to suffer, and lose, even to the point of perishing so that others may gain advantage. *Movement from being as an individual to becoming as society.*

3) Rather than a system which emphasises the development of individual wealth, we find a disavowal of the sense of 'individual private property' which is then replaced by a focus on 'the common' or alternatively in the sense of the commonwealth/kingdom of God, the universal. *Movement from private to universal.*

These three movements may serve as conceptual markers, denoting the development of spiritual capital, and a shift from the field and therefore the *habitus* of capitalist economics to a new field altogether. We shall return to these ideas in the project when we review the way in which spiritual capital has been evidenced in the lives of real people.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

A reference back to the lives of real people is important, of course, for this project. In the same way it is important to ask the practical question: "how might this be applied to a 'real-world' post secular context?" We could begin by saying that in the first place we may need to readdress how we recognise the value and place of perishing in a social context. This means we must question, in practical terms, our concern about the physical and cultural artefacts (churches, traditions) which appear to be perishing, and recognise that this kind of change is part of the natural process of becoming. To dwell too much on preserving the stasis or 'being' of these things is to live in a substance rather than a process mindset and in an economy of scarcity rather than one of abundance. Rather we should concern ourselves more with the way that the rebirth of the values which these artefacts have sought to preserve is taking place, and their novel embodiment. That is to say that we should concentrate less on the empty womb/tomb and more on the living embodiment of that which it once contained. Our work, then, is poietic, which is to say that of co-creativity, co-movement or co-originality with the divine and the ongoing advance to novelty.

How then can we say that the three movements, described previously, are made? In what way does our *habitus* contain the sort of disposition for deviance that lets us move form a fundamental mindset of scarcity to one of creative abundance? From a mindset of being as an individual to becoming as society? How do we make the conceptual move from private to universal? In traditionally understood models of spiritual and religious capital this group of questions is answered by the influence of religious communities. Teachings in, or adjacent to, Church, Mosque or Gurdwara for instance might be understood as instrumental in helping us to make the conceptual move from 'point a' to 'point b' (this might be conceived of as *metanoia*) but as the power and stature of these institutions begin to perish, the opportunities for these teachings to take effect are also, theoretically, lessened. In what way, then, is our *habitus* changed in a post secular context?

Just as for Bourdieu the 'feel for the game' of *habitus* is socially constructed, so we may consider that there is a social aspect to the development of spiritual capital. We know though that the development, the becoming, of this revolutionary resource takes place in a place that is characterised by nothing except the mutuality of immanence. In that sense we cannot exclude the co-suffering divine actor from this equation, rather we

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must allow that the lure of God may find fertile ground in which seeds may spring up. In practical terms though we might ask if there are particular ways in which the social environment encourages this development. If a religious institution like the Church is indeed the best 'tiller of the ground' then what are the most effective ways in which it does that job? Might people instead derive inspiration from groups beyond the North American and Western European Church, which as we have previously noted is, collectively, in consistent numerical decline? Might they turn to special individuals of one sort or another? Might they get the inspiration they need from books or broadcasts? These are some of the lines of enquiry which will form the basis of the empirical research which forms the next part of this project. In order to lead us into this research, Chapter 4 will first outline the research methodology employed in the project.

Chapter 4: Methodological considerations

> "Persons are composed of a whole society of actual occasions continuously coming into being and perishing. The soul is envisioned by Whitehead as that stream of occasions, formed primarily by the mental pole, which provides the organizing center of this particular bodily society and hence the creation of personality." (Suchocki, 2005, p. 107)

> "The co-creativity to which we are together lured produces more than togetherness: it effects the structures of justice that will support the creativity of an ever-diversifying togetherness." (Keller, 2008, pp.124-125)

Talking about her husband with their friend Lucien Price, Evelyn Whitehead explained that she felt Alfred's thoughts were so complex that they were like a prism. Looking at them from one direction could only ever give a partial view of 'the truth'. "There are no whole truths," demurred the philosopher. "All truths are half-truths. It is trying to treat them as whole truths that plays the devil." (Price, 1954). The same claim of impenetrability might be made for the task of engaging with this topic. Any single approach to the topic of spiritual capital will result in, at best, a half-truth. It is only by peering through the prism of spiritual capital from various angles that a fuller picture begins to take form, even then it remains distorted and partially obscure. To get as clear a view as possible is the task of this project. We must ask, though, whether truth is the objectively important goal in this quest and if so, of what nature that truth is. Is it indeed truth which we seek, or is there another, higher, quest? For Whitehead himself truth was deeply complex and something of which there are 'a variety of degrees and modes' and it is 'an erroneous moral platitude that it is necessarily good to know the truth' (1967, p.243). Whitehead's overall approach seems to prefer categories such as 'interesting' to 'truthful', although there's a clear sense that the truthful is often also interesting. Perhaps the categories of truthful and interesting are somehow synonymous anyway, inasmuch as the interesting is necessarily capable of imparting a variety of truth in the mind of the reader or hearer. There is truth in the perception, just as there is in the transmission.

The prismatic gaze leads some to recognise truth as a nexus of co-existent realities, and it is this philosophical approach that informs the practical methodology of this project. That there must be some form of practical methodology is, of course, a given. We must have a means of gathering data, and that must be in some way systematic. We must note though that the adoption of one means is also the necessary exclusion of another. It is not possible therefore to peer through the prism from every angle, and certainly not in one project. A decision to include, here, is also a decision to accept, and therefore speak about, a partial truth. There is a sense of luxury in this though, in the idea that we can ignore practical concerns which require some sense of settled truth. When dealing with the pressing realities of individual lives, human suffering and consequential action, there is some need to move beyond the vagaries of perception and partial truths and deal with down to earth realities. The niceties of philosophical abstraction aren't always well situated to help those most at need of practical support.

This project seeks to find a balance between practicalities and speculation, and it seeks this balance in the stories, the 'experience', of people. A vain hope, perhaps, for such stories have many complex layers of truth both in the transmission and the perception. Maybe we should seek some comfort in believing Whitehead's mathematical observation that: "It is no paradox to say that in our most theoretical moods we may be nearest to our most practical applications." (Whitehead, N.d. ca 1911, p. 71). This is the bridge we seek to identify and cross, and in this chapter I shall endeavour to develop and convey the underpinnings and practicalities of the research methodology which will form a key part of this project. In keeping with the character of the overall project I shall aim to set out the thinking behind this with reference to the philosophical and theological epistemology which forms the superstructure of the overall project. A key aspect of process thought is to recognise the interconnectedness of all things, so it would be quite wrong to attempt to abstract discussion of research methodology from the arc of overall thinking. Theologically we have situated the 'action' of humans and of the divine as co-mingled, inextricable, as the ultimate form of interconnection.

As previously acknowledged, this project sits between (at least) two methodological approaches. Although it sets out to be a work of practical theology, it has, in places the feel of an applied theology. With that in mind it may be helpful to

note that the interconnectivity just acknowledged is also present in the process of authorship: the collection of empirical data is not done in a vacuum, but rather alongside or even within the reflexivity of carefully considered personal experience. That same personal experience, which is to say the moment-by-moment development of reality, is a key driver in engaging with speculative philosophy. To simplify we might simply say that the drive towards questioning arises from personal experience. This was true of Whitehead, and it is true for this project too. Philosophical speculation, personal reflexivity and data gathering are not separate processes, rather they coexist and inform each other. In simple terms we may say that a set of surveys were circulated, data gathered from those surveys were then used to develop a second tier of data gathering – this time in the shape of semi-structured interviews. Throughout, however, an ongoing process of reflection necessarily, and perhaps unconsciously, informed the data gathering exercise.

It is part of the human experience, we might observe, to specialise. Like other animals we abstract from the great mass of experiences which impact each moment of our lives and determine that some of these are sensations that we can use forms of words to describe: sounds heard; sights seen; flavours tasted, etc. This specialisation is another attempt at peering through the prism, again we see through each face only a partial truth. Only by taking together a range of data gathered by all the sensa and allowing that there are other things which we cannot name, can we begin to approach a whole truth. Someone like Hartshorne would doubtless remind us that indeed it is not possible for a human to bend themselves around the prism, if it might be gained at all then such a view point, or perspective, is divine. In this project then we shall make a small attempt to engage the range of senses, and to discern among all the words, those things which remain un-said: What is being communicated? This form of truth may not precisely correspond to the way it appears. Swinton and Mowat ably summarise the task:

> "A key question asked by the practical theologian is this: is what *appears* to be
> going on within this situation what is *actually* going on?" (Swinton & Mowat, 2016)

While Swinton and Mowat indicate an absolutist approach not adopted here, they also demonstrate the reality of the need to discern that which is less obvious among the clamour of noise – they call us to listen for the 'still small voice' of old, amid the cacophony of events surrounding it. We must recognise though that this is, in one

sense at least, a mission bound for failure. "It takes an extraordinary intelligence to contemplate the obvious," contends Whitehead (1938) and regrettably I can make no pretence of, or claim to, such extraordinary abilities. If I may not hope to contemplate the obvious, however, I shall at least hope to begin to state it.

A FIRST FACET

Although I write as a practitioner, I must first note that this is not a participatory study, per se. It is not ethnography, and it is not participative as such as the researcher stands outside of the immediate context of the research – there is no immersion. Here however, we once again find ourselves in the realm of (at best) partial truths. Swinton and Mowat issue some important reminders:

> "…all research is, to an extent, autobiography."

And:

> "…objectivity is in fact a myth and… researchers are participants and actors within the research process, whether this is acknowledged or otherwise." (2016, p. 57)

This knowledge requires that the researcher engage in a process of epistemological reflexivity, leading to an identification and acknowledgment of such issues as how a research question is formed, how it becomes defined, and what limits that then imposes upon the scope of its findings. Some would have it that qualitative research 'inquires into, documents and interprets the meaning making process,' (Patton, 2015) but that can only be a partial description of a much wider and more complex process. It can surely not be possible to altogether extract oneself from the making of meaning in the way that this would seem to indicate; it must in some way be meaningful to make the inquiry in the first place. At the least we may say that when undertaking theological research there are other aspects of meaning making to consider, the conscious inclusion of a 'divine actor' in the process serves as both a helpful hermeneutic and a warning, reminding us that no matter how open we might attempt to be, or to become, a theological research project focussing upon experience is always home to projection of ideas, concepts and categories concerning questions of the ultimate or of what, in itself, meaning truly is.

In Carr's primer on Bergson's philosophy he notes:

"Great scientific discoveries are often so simple in their origin that the greatest wonder about them is that humanity has had to wait so long for them. They seem to lie in the sudden consciousness of the significance of some familiar fact, a significance never suspected because the fact is so familiar…The same thing is no less remarkable in philosophy; the discoveries that have determined its direction have been most often due to attention to facts so simple, so common and of such everyday occurrence, that their very simplicity and familiarity has screened them from observation." (Carr, 1911, p. 12)

Paying attention to the simple is worthwhile, for it is in the unexamined, quotidian, experience that theological and philosophical novelty lurks, hidden in plain sight. Here we must look for the deeper voice which whispers the words that will allow us to do that which other disciplines are unable: to '*com-prehend*' (to turn the Whiteheadian sense of 'prehend' into something which we can undergo together (*com*)) the series of experiences that comprise that which we call life. Methodologically this focus on the simple is to practically recognise a fundamental underpinning of this project, that reality consists of ever developing creativity.

The first facet of this research methodology, then, is to be open to the apparently simple, the reported experience of people who evidence that which we can describe as spiritual capital. This leaves us with the methodological questions of 'who' these people (the population) are, and 'how' we identify them. The beginnings of a response to the first question can lead into a solution for the second. We have spoken of spiritual capital as a resource that enables people to undertake work for the common good, or to expend themselves on the behalf of others, a practically limiting issue with this idea is that it gives no sense of proportion or scale to the question of population size – the potential population is enormous, therefore any sample of a scale suitable to this form of project would necessarily be a non-probability sample. We shall reconsider this subject in the limitations section of this chapter.

Returning to the idea of spiritual capital in action we can say that this kind of activity has, in contemporary British society, been sometimes categorised in a recognisable set of groupings. The first and perhaps most obvious in the context of this study is the Church. There are those within the Church, and other religious or spiritual communities, whose understanding of God's nature is such that they believe they should work for the betterment of all. As a result of that belief, they do precisely that – setting up and resourcing projects such as food banks, homeless shelters, youth clubs

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and a myriad of other initiatives which provide a platform for interaction with and support for those who are struggling in some way. In places this is highly systematised, and in others it is far looser and less formal. For the purpose of this project there is no value distinction between these two broad approaches, it is all evidenced intention to work on the behalf of others. In that sense we would not need to prefer one approach to another in this context. That is not to say that we don't acknowledge the beliefs of some of those who are engaged in this work that their approach is better than that of others, for those engaged in highly systematised work the lack of accountability and paucity of structural boundaries gives a sense of fragility to the work of those who choose to 'go it alone'. On the other hand, some share an inherent suspicion of the ability of regulated organisations to respond to urgent needs, and point to institutional failings as evidence of the rottenness of such an approach. Both of these critiques, and a number of others on either side have validity as they speak to personal experience, but it remains true to say that people who seek to help others may find themselves working in either way, or even in both, either simultaneously or serially. Involvement in either signifies an individual's concern for the hurt and needs of others, and an enacted desire to do something about it. This is an outworking, or use, of spiritual capital.

As well as religious and spiritual communities, such as churches, there are the very many organisational responses to a range of needs presented in society. Broadly we might begin to categorise these into two main areas: practical charitable support (works of corporal mercy) and campaigning. The latter may be part of the activity of a charitable organisation and either may be part of the work of a religious community but not necessarily. Someone who actively campaigns on climate change, for instance, out of concern for the people and other lives on this planet, may not have any direct connection with a charity or other community and may have little concern with the plight of the homeless. It would be unhelpful to ignore that individual on such a basis. It is also true to say, though, that very often an individual who is 'switched on' to one form of concern towards the common good may be inclined to be concerned about other things, and to involve themselves with others of like mind in some way. In this way the works of God and humanity (if indeed these two can be separated) are intermixed with an extraordinary complexity. What does this mean in practical terms? It means that in answer to the question of 'who?' we may say 'anyone involved in work for the common good'. This remains loosely defined: it may include activities such as volunteering; it may involve professional work; it may involve working with or

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alongside a charity; it may entail working on one's own. Work for the common good may be campaigning, or it might be helping out on a practical project, it could also take on a variety of forms which are not restricted to those named above – crucially it should include those who feel that the work they do is of this nature. We should listen for (and crucially to) the voices of anyone for whom this forms part of their understanding of their own experience.

With this 'who' there is something of a guide to the 'how', which is to say that data should be gathered in a way that includes and allows people to 'opt in' to the data gathering process. The data gathering should be structured in a way that it can capture 'description' – or as we will later describe it 'scription' – the writing down or speaking out (turning into words) of recalled experience. It should also allow for a recognition that different individuals would be able to contribute more significant amounts of data than others. Someone who has been involved in volunteering for a lifetime, for instance may have a richer experience to share than someone who has been employed by a charity for a month. This is not to say that the latter has nothing of value to offer, but it is to say that we might seek to extract information at a greater depth from the former. The chosen methodology therefore needed to be able to accommodate this – to allow for multitudinous access, and for in depth data capture where appropriate. As a result, the format of a two stage research project was devised – the first stage was an open invitation for participation in a short online questionnaire/survey. The second stage was the selection of some participants from this survey to take part in an unstructured interview. One of the potential advantages of this approach is that it offers a variety of data, and, subsequently, of ways to interpret the data gathered. Of course this has its own hazards too – which we shall briefly address later in the chapter.

SURVEY STAGE

Because of the relatively open and flexible time frame allowed for in the context of a part time PhD a questionnaire/survey posed a viable option for the gathering of data. Advantages included the scalability of this sort of data, it would work even if a surprisingly large number of people took part. Among the disadvantages were the fact that there was a set of implicit assumptions concerning the nature of people who would take part. These assumptions were already there in part however, respondents would have to be people who were in some way inclined to be self-reflexive and, if they were

to answer a questionnaire they would have to be able to read and write English. Good question design without too much conceptual complexity or technical language would mean that sophisticated understanding would not be required, however a basic level of English comprehension and of cognitive capacity would be necessary. There is of course no bar on who may have a stock of spiritual capital, but within the parameters of this research (primarily concerned with the UK and focussed upon the analysis of experience), these restrictions were capable to being borne within the project. There are, of course, an array of positives and negatives associated with any means of collecting data, and this is true of survey data just as it is of any other kind of data. In general terms, a key critique of this format is that it is hard, probably impossible, for the researcher to ascertain the truthfulness of the answers (Denscombe, 2017). We have already touched on this idea of 'truth', though, and it is part of the contention of this project that truth is not necessarily always directly communicated anyway, which is to say that while we accept the data as it is given, we do not simply receive it uncritically. Whitehead, ever the sceptic of anything which appears too close to definitive, has, as usual, a pithy phrase suited to this occasion, advising the researcher to always: "Seek simplicity and distrust it" (Whitehead, 2006).

The challenges of surveying include the question of questionnaire design, and the problem of circulation: to caricature the challenge of the process we may say it revolves around 'what do you ask, and how do you ask it?' This necessarily implies a further question though: how do you reach the people from whom you would seek to invite a response? The second of these two is the easier to address. An online survey has the advantage of being able to circulate easily, participants can be reached by a variety of means, including social media 'shares' and inclusion on mass mailings. One might hope then to achieve a snowball effect with people passing the survey link on to friends and colleagues, or sharing it in online forums where other socially engaged or like-minded people may also see it. The conversion rate from seeing the survey link to filling in the survey is a challenge, particularly if the scale is intended to be large. For this reason, some seek to incentivise participation in their survey, something that was not suited to the nature and scale (or budget) of this project. Likewise, others employ a third party to gather survey data for them, which again was not a tactic one would seek to pursue in this instance as it was not vital to the project to capture very large amounts of data.

In the design of the research it was necessary, of course, to assure the University ethics committee that relevant consideration had been made of matters such as data sensitivity, anonymity, and data storage – a secure survey site was stipulated and used, with a data retention policy clearly stated. In order to allow for the second stage (interviews) there was the opportunity for some respondents to leave a contact email address, but this was not made necessary, nor was it strongly trailed or advertised within the text of the survey until the end where it was made clear that further participation was entirely voluntary. In constructing the question wording consideration was given to a number of factors. In the first-place simplicity was considered important; it was necessary for the respondents to be able to read and understand the questions quickly and easily. As previously acknowledged, sophisticated conceptual language and technical jargon were to be avoided to enhance accessibility and to encourage respondents to complete the exercise. Of course, the challenge of misunderstanding is an ever present challenge in this kind of situation, due to cultural and other factors, a word like 'inspiration' may have different perceived meanings across the cohort of participants – this is accepted in this project. Insights come from a variety of angles; it was more important to (gently) provoke creative reflection than to be definitive about meanings. Besides encouraging rumination, questions needed to strike a balance where respondents felt that they knew what was being asked of them, but also felt that they had space to describe their experience – open ended but relatively concise. Due to the necessity of having to only gather relevant data, questions were relatively direct but at the same time invited the participants to think about their responses, and to reflect creatively. Examples of this include question four: "Please tell me about any people who have encouraged you to get involved in this work, and/or anyone who has inspired you." And question eight: "Do you have any mottos or phrases that you try to live by? If so, please can you tell me what they are?" In both of these questions participants were invited to reflect; perhaps to think about issues of which they had not been entirely conscious previously. The resulting answers were illuminating in part precisely because of the space for creative expression within the limited boundaries of the question.

INTERVIEW STAGE

The data gathering process was designed to have two stages, after the circulation of the survey questionnaire and on the receipt of a suitable number of responses, the project was to move to a dyadic interview stage. At this stage the sample was to narrow further into a purposive set: within the survey stage individuals were asked if they had been involved in the initiation of any projects. Question nine asked: "Have you initiated or started (or been involved in the initiation or starting of) a new charity, project or group that is engaged in work related to the causes you care about? Please briefly outline what this charity, project or group is." The purpose of this question was to identify those of whom we might hope to say: "they appear to have a notable stock of spiritual capital," on the basis that it takes a certain level of mobilizable resource to be able to initiate or be involved in the initiation of, a project that seeks the common good. This demonstrates a significant amount of personal dedication, as well as access to physical, emotional and other resources which might be part of spiritual capital. Initiating a project, notably, is liable to mean a level of personal suffering or sacrifice and someone who enters into this would have to be willing to accept this. The purpose of this sample was to identify some of these individuals and to explore their stories and their motivations, as well as their engagement (or lack of engagement) with spiritual or religious communities. For this purpose individuals were chosen, each had indicated that they had initiated a project (or projects) and were willing to discuss this with me. This purposive sample was not intended to represent maximum variation, rather it should be something closer to a typical example (Rosario, et al., 2021) of the wider research population.

The choice to make the interviews unstructured was informed by the primary focus on the experience of the individual. I wanted to know what they wanted to tell me about their story, and to hear, in their words, about the projects in which they had been involved. My goal as an interviewer was to intrude as little as possible – in order to try and achieve this I began, in each case, with the data from the survey stage. Using my own fairly significant experience as an interviewer and some coaching techniques which invite reflection by means of reading or repeating the participants own words back to them, I adopted a reasonably neutral persona and an interested but empowering stance. I agree with Swinton and Mowat (2016, p. 63) that an entirely 'cold and detached' approach is not necessarily required in order to maintain objectivity. I do not go so far as Rosario et al, however, who say that for practical theologians detachment would

"deny the nature of our vocation" (2021, p. 153) – this reflects a theological (and sociological) position that I do not altogether share. Practically then I did not seek to entirely distance myself from the interviewees, rather I sought to gently encourage the participants to open up about their experiences without expressing surprise or shock, or expressing judgement on them or their circumstances. Likewise, I remained conscious of the need to avoid falling into a 'pastoral' or 'supervisory' role in the discussions. My posture was deliberately low key in order to ensure that the participants felt they had as much agency as possible within the constraints of the exercise. The use of prompts arising from the surveys gave the interviews, at times, the feeling of something of a combination of semi structured and unstructured interview, but crucially the participants were given absolute freedom to talk, at as much length as they wished to, about their experiences, with their own phrases being, at times, reflected back to them so that they could develop further on their words. I was mindful of Converse and Schuman's helpful observation that "there is no single interview style that fits every occasion or all respondents" (1974, p. 53), and allowed some flexibility in the interview structure in order to provide space for interviewees to 'speak their truth'.

The interviews were due to be carried out as a series of face-to-face exercises, but this aspect of the project was severely impacted by the arrival of the Corona Virus and the subsequent restrictions on travel and movement and for a period of time the research process was in hiatus. (The outbreak entailed more necessary focus on hands on community work for me and there was a period of waiting to see whether travel and face to face meetings would resume at any time.) Ultimately the research was able to resume by means of online meeting software (Zoom), which, although considerably less convivial in atmosphere than an 'in person' meeting might have been, at least made the data gathering process practical again. It was considered 'the next best thing' (Archibald, et al., 2019) to a face to face meeting as interviews could be carried out in nearly the same way as they would have been in person, and in fact the restrictions made it easier for the participants to find a suitable slot in their day to talk about their experiences. Indeed, Oliffe et al (2021) found that the 'convenience and comfort' of Zoom calls actually enabled some participants to be more open than they would have been in person.

The number of participants for this stage was not stipulated, and interviews continued until there was a point when a 'saturation point' was perceived to have been

reached – in other words a point when there was a suitable amount of data available and new interviewees were likely only to give variations on established themes. Of course, there is an evident implicit critique here: in reality every individual has their own story to tell, and each story has points of uniqueness. On that basis there is a constant temptation to continue interviewing *ad nauseum*, however that is neither practical nor well suited to the successful completion of a project of this sort. There are insights to be gained from the telling (and hearing) of as many stories as possible – but there are practical concerns here too. A line must be drawn somewhere if the project is ever to be completed. On that basis it was decided that when a point of saturation was perceived the interviews would stop and analysis would begin, in this case the point came at interview nine.

DATA ANALYSIS

While the data collection methodology in this project has been relatively orthodox, the presentation and analysis of data is less so. Because this is a project which seeks to apply a speculative theological, and to some extent philosophical, lens to the subject matter, I seek to address the collected data in that way. In a triad of analytical or interpretative chapters I will take three separate approaches: Firstly, I will consider the survey data, with the limited help of some quantitative analysis, asking what insights it may have to share concerning the development of spiritual capital. What topics emerge from the data as worthy of further investigation? I shall then engage in some discussion of these topics and related issues. Secondly, I will begin to address the interview data in order to ask the data to speak for itself, giving space for the voices of the participants to emerge from the transcriptions. In this context I will seek to 'de-scribe' experience, an alternative analytical process on which I shall develop further in that chapter. This de-scription will be further supplemented by reflection informed by the theoretical content covered in the first triad of chapters. In the final of this second triad of chapters I will reconsider that interview data, this time seeking to explore it through some key lenses, or interpretative centres, which derive particularly from the discussion of process theology in Chapter 2. In that chapter I shall also seek to address the question of whether process provides us with an adequate lexicon and conceptual framework for the task at hand – do the categories help us to understand what is being communicated in the data? I shall further seek to recognise whether any unforeseen issues arise from

the data, surprises, anomalies or hitherto unconsidered insights. This triad of analytical chapters may, at times, locate somewhere between a discussion of findings and an analysis – this is intentional. Data here is to be allowed to breath and to be treated as an organism, which is to say it is alive. It moves and changes according to who looks at it and how; this is no positivist study – it is a corporate act of creative re-membering.

In order to analyse the data, themes were identified within the data by means of manual text (interview transcript) analysis. The process began with an open coding approach, allowing the data to speak for itself. Where themes emerged by observed repetition these were labelled until key thematic codes began to emerge. Where relationships between individual codes were observed to grow stronger axial codes were identified and other codes were then merged to allow focus on these key ideas. Ultimately a selective coding approach allowed the major themes to be identified. Besides the patterns which emerged from the data, singularity was also considered important: where an individual made a point or remark which 'stood out' due to a form of conceptual importance or striking use of language; or where multiple interviewees gave versions of the same unusual idea, these singular themes were considered as potentially worthy of investigation by means of comparison or contrast with other coded pieces of data. In particular where repeated or singular themes resonated specifically with ideas already identified as important in background literature, these were investigated.

LIMITATIONS

In a research project of this size and type there is always a danger of convenience sampling: engaging only with those who are easy to access or respond readily. To some extent one might argue that this critique is legitimate in very many cases, the difficulty is in finding a suitable balance between legitimate aims and practicalities. Would a more representative sample have been obtained by employing an external agency to engage a greater range of respondents? Perhaps so. Perhaps too a greater number of interviews would have provided an even clearer picture of the issues at hand. Identifying the point of saturation is highly subjective and guidelines for identifying this point are difficult to identify (Guest, et al., 2006), in response to this and any other critiques of non-probability sampling though I would say that the study does not aim to be definitive: I've previously briefly mentioned the idea of prioritising the quality of 'interesting' over that of 'truthful' – there's a danger here of creating a false

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binary of course, one may dare to hope that a piece of work can be both interesting and truthful. But the pursuit of some sort of absolute truth is anathema to this project which instead hopes to speculate and in speculation to provide suggestions of practical routes forward into and through our post secular landscape.

Conducting interviews online rather than in person almost certainly changed the nature of the information elicited, although it's difficult to be clear about exactly to what extent or in precisely what way. The exponential growth in familiarity with conversations and meetings mediated by online conferencing technology due to the Corona Virus pandemic has meant that many people are now better able to communicate online than they were – experiencing less discomfort with the technology (practicalities such as connection issues notwithstanding). Likewise, there is the benefit that interviews could be organised and carried out at a time well suited to the respondent, rather than having to go to great lengths to find space for travel time. In these interviews there was certainly a sense of 'being there differently' (Oliffe, et al., 2021, p. 4) which all participants were able to accept given the circumstances, and it was certainly preferable to other potential solutions such as email interviews. As Howlett notes: the use of a 'real time' discussion at least means that participants are less likely to 'overthink' their answers and to make 'socially acceptable' responses (2021, p. 4).

Because of the scale, or scope, of the sample, there is a danger that data may be biased towards particular types of respondents due to snowballing or simply to sharing around a particular group of people. It is quite possible, for instance, that a substantial number of people from one organisation or group could have encouraged one another take part in the survey, and that as a result their responses could have skewed the results of the survey. This is something that, as a researcher, I am aware of. Although I cannot be certain that this form of data contamination was entirely avoided, there are no obvious indications of it beyond, firstly, a slight skew towards people being involved in one area of work rather than another, and secondly something of a political bias in the references made by participants. This data will be included in the analysis, on the understanding that it may be due to bias. As the project's conclusions are not dependent upon great variety in this area, this is not considered to be a hugely problematic issue. It will be made note of in the findings/analysis chapters however, and it is appropriate that it is acknowledged here.

I have already noted the danger that some of the data may be open to contamination by way of deliberate misrepresentation, this is true of both the survey/questionnaire data and indeed the interview data. Likewise in both cases people may have forgotten relevant details, creating a new narrative that represents a constructed or imagined reality rather than an objective recall of past events. This is to be welcomed though, memory after all is an act or event of the present, not the past; it 're-presents' that which we've taken on as part of our self-creation. Although memory seems to present the old, it does not really do so, instead it 're-presents' that which has formed the present moment. Memory in this sense is a creative process, and contained in this idea is a very Whiteheadian sense of moment-by-moment prehension and a demonstration of the constant cycle of decay and creation (perishing and becoming). In thinking about what has gone past we are not so much recalling as actively 're-membering' which is to say the opposite of 'dis-membering', we put together rather than pull apart – it is a creative activity. Of course, within this there is the ever present practical risk, or issue, of projection of preferred outcomes or ideas – just as there's a danger of the respondent succumbing to a power dynamic which leaves them feeling that they 'ought' to answer in one particular way. It is not possible to entirely guard against this, however a conscious effort was made to impress on the interviewees that they were being asked to communicate 'their story' and as such it is reasonable that this should take whatever form it may. It is their truth to share rather than ours to demand. Something which has been mentioned a few times in the project is the issue of language, here we must recognise the possibility that idioms or other pieces of language may have been employed by respondents which have then been interpreted, during the analysis, in a way that was not 'meant'. Truth we must remember, is a prism – there are many faces to peer through, many ways of looking at it, each of which provide an alternative perspective. They may all have validity, even if some are more distorted than others. None of them, however, give the full picture, they can't:

> "A philosophy of process denies that there is any totality of reality to which nothing can ever be added…What we have to do with is always *our* universe…" (Hartshorne, 1978)

> "We have had pious pretensions, I think, that whereas other modes of thought -- physics, sociology, psychology – certainly reflected limitations of viewpoint, somehow theology, incorporating divine revelation, escaped relativity of perspective." (Suchocki, 1985)

This emphasis on the prismatic view and the provisionality of any theory brings the chapter almost to an end. Because of the nature of the project it is necessary to couch such discussion in an overarching epistemological framework, even if that too must be understood as partial and provisional. By way of a final comment, we should recall the remarks made in the introduction to this project, and again in this chapter which move towards a recognition of the tension between theological methodologies. In constructing the project in this way (developing theory, then method, then research), have the boundaries between practical and applied theologies been transgressed? The answer must be a cautious 'yes'. This, however, may be considered alongside the other boundary crossing elements of the project and recognised for what it is: intrinsic to the somewhat transgressive nature of the project. Just as the metaphysics defy easy categorisation and classical convention, so too does the methodology. Indeed we might further question whether the concept of a methodologically 'pure' project of this sort is ever possible – here, surely, the answer might be a cautious 'no'.

The task of introducing and explaining the methodology of this project now accomplished, or at least attempted, we may now commence the second triad – this time of 'interpretative' chapters, which look, individually and collectively, at the experiences of research participants. It is from the analysis of these experiences that final observations will ultimately be made in Chapter 8, and upon these observations a further set of recommendations will be developed.

Chapter 5: Are you experienced?

"…perishing is the initiation of becoming. How the past perishes is how the future becomes."   (Whitehead, 1967, p.238)

"When we survey the whole field of religion, we find a great variety in the thoughts that have prevailed there; but the feelings on the one hand and the conduct on the other are almost always the same, for Stoic, Christian, and Buddhist saints are practically indistinguishable in their lives. The theories which Religion generates, being thus variable, are secondary; and if you wish to grasp her essence, you must look to the feelings and the conduct as being the more constant elements." (James, 2014, p. 495)

This chapter forms the first part of the triad of chapters which engages with the project's research data. In this chapter we will consider some of the responses to a survey which was published between July and December 2019. As discussed in Chapter 4, the survey invited anyone who was engaged in some way with work 'for the common good' whether that be paid, unpaid, regular or occasional, to answer seven questions concerning the nature of their work, and their motivation to engage in it. The survey was publicised on the internet, including via social media channels. Links were sent to prominent campaigning organisations and shared on mailing lists. The survey was further shared by some respondents, creating a minor snowballing effect. In total it received 85 fully completed individual responses. In order to conduct an initial thematic analysis, the responses were placed in categories, the aim being to identify core themes running through the words and phrases used by the respondents. Moving on from there the task became one of bringing together or reconciling (or not) these responses with the theological ideas formulated and set out earlier in this work in order to begin to test them against expressions of what we may call lived or embodied experience.

This engagement with 'experience' is fundamental to any genuinely process oriented piece of work, as for Whitehead the world (or 'reality') is made up of what he terms 'actual occasions'. Actual occasions are, effectively, momentary events or occurrences, of which any individual human experience is one such example. Rather

than the matter which is generally supposed to be the building block of reality, Whiteheadian thinking has it that these actual occasions may be considered to be the atoms, or building blocks of our experience of reality. This is the metaphysical move from substance to process. Of course, this idea becomes necessarily and famously complex, we have already touched on some important characteristics of it in the previous chapters and I do not intend to develop too much on those ideas in this chapter, we may briefly reflect though that for Whitehead and subsequent scholars who follow his lead, each actual occasion prehends its past, just as it also prehends the divine. As such the divine is actively involved at this most fundamental, base, level of reality: each actual occasion is "conditioned, though not determined, by an initial subjective aim supplied by the ground of all order and originality" (Whitehead, 1978, p. 108). We may say therefore that a consideration of what is, or is not, fully 'actual' is an important point of reflection for those engaged with this work, and while I do not intend to delve too deeply into the technicalities of process thought again in this chapter, this primacy of experience must nevertheless be reiterated as we begin to examine how respondents describe it.

Whitehead shares with William James this sense that experience is primary, meaning that other things, such as the expression of religion, are necessarily secondary. Process thinking therefore helps distance the process theologian from the wider discipline's obsession with the primary import of first cause. Rather what we can perceive here is that, as William James might have put it, the divine meets the individual on the basis of their moment-by-moment personal concern. On that basis we may say that the divine shares with the individual their lived experience in all its forms, and further say that this is an underlying assumption of primary importance in this work.

A brief explanatory note concerning structure: this chapter has two sections. In the first I begin to address some of the themes that arise within the survey data and to use something of a quantitative approach towards them. The majority of this project uses a qualitative approach, so we may perceive this to be something of an anomaly, it is useful, however, to consider whether quantitative analysis of the data can alert us to any ideas, themes or trends which qualitative methods do not. The second section of the chapter returns to a more assuredly qualitative approach, while I reflect on some of the themes identified in its predecessor. In the second section of this chapter I will begin to address the issue of 'experience' which in process theology and philosophy is a

profoundly important technical term. An exploration and conceptual 'de-scription' of perceived experience will then go on to be the defining characteristic of Chapter 6. The second section of this chapter considers the data through the categorical lenses of 'becoming', 'suffering' and 'the lure' – familiar ideas from the process lexicon which are then further developed in subsequent chapters.

PART ONE

The online survey invited anyone who was engaged in some way with work 'for the common good' whether that be paid, unpaid, regular or occasional, to answer seven questions concerning the nature of their work, and their motivation to engage in it. The results of the survey would then be analysed, and a selection of respondents would be invited to take part in an interview. In order to identify core themes running through the words and phrases used by the respondents, individual responses were categorised thematically (per question).

In this section we turn to the questions asked in the survey, and seek to elicit further thematic variations and instances which might help to inform further investigation of the topic in hand. Survey respondents were asked eight open questions, and were given space to write in their own answers without prompts. In approaching the first stage data collection in this way it was hoped that it would operate in a similar way to a simple structured interview, this would then be developed upon in the second stage of unstructured interviews. Open questioning also allowed for a range of descriptions and language, specifically it sought not to restrict the respondents to any particular understanding of "work" for the common good beyond the umbrella terms of 'charitable work' and 'social activism'.

QUESTION ONE

In the first question respondents were asked to give details of the type of work or activism they are, or have previously been, engaged in "in recent years". This relative time frame was addressed elastically, and respondents were able to detail a broad range of activities which they felt fit into the foregoing categories. The first thematic analysis of 'question one' therefore was to assign 13 theme codes which represented common responses: Arts; Asylum seekers; Refugees & trafficking;

Campaigning & politics; Charity volunteer; Charity worker; Education; Environment; Faith/religion; Health welfare & community work; Homelessness; Poverty; Strategic leadership; Young people. These themes were then broken in to two thematic sub-categories: 'Occupational involvement' describes the means by which the respondent describes their relationship with the charity or other cause with which they are involved. The data shows a simple majority (52%) of the respondents chose to identify themselves as having been employed in some way by their charity or organisation as compared while only 20% describe themselves as volunteers. These terms are potentially significant: For individuals to have committed so much of their time, both in paid employ and 'free time' to work for the common good, suggests something about their stock of spiritual capital. It may indicate that they draw upon spiritual capital in order to undertake this work, it may also indicate that they develop spiritual capital by taking part in one or both forms of the work – an upside-down economic approach in which one 'gets by giving' is familiar to us from Chapter 3. In practical terms it is also interesting to see that there are instances of people who have begun as volunteers and then become an employee which indicates a common pathway, the key question of motivation begins to be explored in later questioning. The other theme label in the 'occupational involvement' sub-category is 'strategic leadership' which again has a number of 'cross over' individuals within it, trusteeship for instance being a key voluntary leadership role in this sector is a recurring word. What motivates and enables people to become personally and sometimes even financially liable for the work of a charity is of interest here.

The second thematic subcategory in responses to question one is 'Area of work' (See Figure 1) and in this category respondents are coded according to the nature of the work in which they say that they are engaged. It is important to note again that respondents may be engaged in more than one category of work. The five largest areas in this category are: 'Poverty' (28% of respondents say they are engaged in work addressing this, n=24). 'Health, welfare, community development & family support' (29% of respondents are engaged in this work n=25), 'Education' (31% of respondents are engaged in this kind of work n=26), Campaigning and Politics (35% of respondents say they are engaged in this sort of work n=30), and 'Homelessness' (47% of respondents say that they are engaged in work addressing this issue n=40).

Figure 1: Areas of work
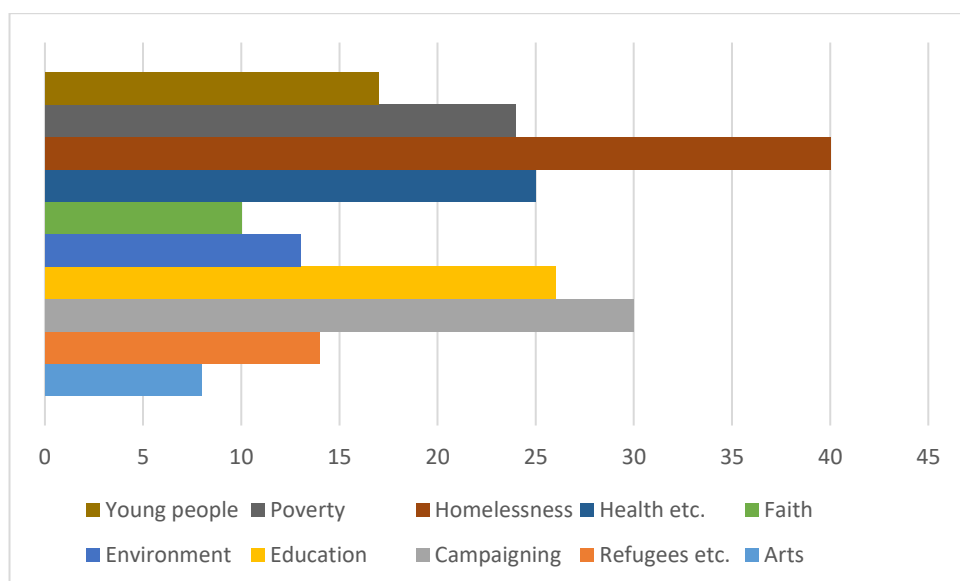
With specific regard to the figure of those working with the homeless, there appears to be some suggestion of potential for bias here, as due to the sample size a relatively small number of colleagues from a homelessness project or charity can skew the result. We noted the potential for this sort of bias in Chapter 4. It is also true, however, that the nature of work engaged with the issue of homelessness is such that it generates a considerable amount of paid employment and volunteering opportunities, it also is a notable cross over point with other categories, many different projects may find people intersecting with homelessness. Although we cannot entirely rule out bias here, we may note that the number of respondents who reported working as an employee while also reporting that they are engaged in work with concerning homelessness was only 8 (9.4% of total responses) this is almost the same number as people who reported being employed and working with children and young people, which is also (traditionally) a sector which provides employment opportunities (n=7). The total number of people in the survey reporting as being employed by a charity or cause is 44, which means that in the case of work with the homeless 18% of those who are paid for their work are engaged in some sort of work with the homeless. In some cases, the respondents are paid for other work and work voluntarily in this sector. The two highest scoring categories when combined with 'professional' were the large category 'health, wellbeing, community development & family support' (12) and the similarly catch all 'poverty' (10). Neither of these categories are so much larger than the others to immediately appear worthy of further investigation, but if this were to become a concern then a helpful guide for further research would be to be more

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exacting in individual response analysis to determine precisely which areas the respondents are working in.

QUESTION TWO

In the second question respondents were asked to talk more specifically about the way in which they engage in the work. Using language that consciously evokes traditional notions of capital, they were asked "how much time do you *spend* on it?" and "does it *cost* you anything?" (Emphases added here). There were four broad categories of response elicited, which are laid out simply below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Costs

Paid	*39*
Personal cost – financial	*71*
Personal cost – non financial	*25*
Volunteer	*15*

There are some interesting things to note concerning the answers to this question: Out of Volunteer and Paid, Paid was the largest category – this is not surprising given that the largest group in the first question said they were employed. However, the numbers are not identical, while 44 individuals reported being 'employees' in Q1, only 39 respondents reported being 'paid' in Q2. There may be a simple explanation for this, as in some instances people who identify themselves as 'full time volunteers' consider themselves 'employed' despite receiving no financial remuneration for their work, there may be other more complex answers too, these will not be developed here however as the scale is still very small and what we are seeking – in its inconstancy and imperfection – is the re-membering of personal experience, rather than numerical exactitude, but they would make for an interesting further study.

Of the 85 respondents, 84% (n=71) reported that they feel there are financial costs to them due to the work in which they are engaged. This is a substantial proportion of the responses, and what this may mean will be explored with some respondents at the interview stage. An initial examination shows that this 'personal cost' varies from bus fares and basic petrol money to provision of materials for events, and in some cases material hand-outs to those in need (direct or personal acts of charity).

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The question of the conflation of terms such as 'cost', 'sacrifice', and 'suffering' will be further considered in the second part of this chapter. It is useful to note though the substantially lower number of respondents who say that there are non-financial costs to them because of the work in which they are engaged (29% n=25). Part of this nature of this project is an investigation of the nature of spiritual capital, the complexifying character of respondents who say that their work has 'costs' to them both in non-financial and financial terms is something to which we will need to consider in choosing a form of words that describe what this form of capital really 'is'. Some of the more interesting responses here include phrases such as 'emotional toll' and 'cost me peace of mind'. The most recurring theme here, though, is 'time' as a cost. In some cases it's the cost to time with family which appears to be notable, but in a number of cases it is referred to as 'only time' or 'just time'. This apparent willingness to part with time makes it appear that many respondents do not see their time as a scarce resource, and feel that they are able to give of it relatively freely. This is interesting given that time, reconfigured, can be re-conceived as meaning 'life'. Our lives are measured out in metrics that we designate as moments in time, seconds, minutes, etc. To give someone 'time' is to give someone a piece of your (limited) life, this is by no means a small thing, nor is it even something which is evenly distributed. It is true that all will eventually die, but it is not true that all have an equal opportunity to live a long life. Time is not 'rare', it is actually hugely abundant in one sense, but when considered individually it does have a scarcity value. This is a point which needs to be addressed theologically as it indicates an apparent willingness to move away from the economics of scarcity and toward an economy of abundance.

QUESTION THREE

The third question asked respondents about any individuals who had contributed to their motivation for engagement in this work. In this question two words were deliberately used: 'encouraged' and 'inspired'. While these words are common to the cultural lexicon, they are also directly indicative of embodied experience, the first word is a concept to which we will return later in this triad of interpretative chapters, and the second is also a key theological term which relates directly to the sense in which the divine might be understood to engage with a human. From the narrative responses to this question recurrent themes were identified and

coded as follows: Colleague; Family member; Friend; Public figure; Religious leader/community; Self and personal experience; Teachers and youth workers; Writers, media, or social media. (See fig 3.)

In keeping with a traditional understanding of how spiritual capital is developed, the largest number of responses indicated the ongoing importance of a religious leader or community (n=34). However, in contrast to the received wisdom this is not even half of the total. It's notable instead that the second largest number was for 'colleagues' (n=31) and then 'friend' (n=27) indicating that close relationships are a key factor here. Where this crosses over with the foregoing and indicates direct applicability to traditional notions of spiritual capital is in the remarks of the three respondents who said: "close friends in the church", and "friends from church" (x2). This is suggestive of direct relevance for the contextual situation of the study. It suggests that the post secular decline in the influence or prominence of religious and spiritual communities, such as the church and its leaders, does not necessarily mean a reduction in the number of people who are able to positively inspire and encourage others to engage in works to benefit others.

Figure 3: Inspiration & encouragement
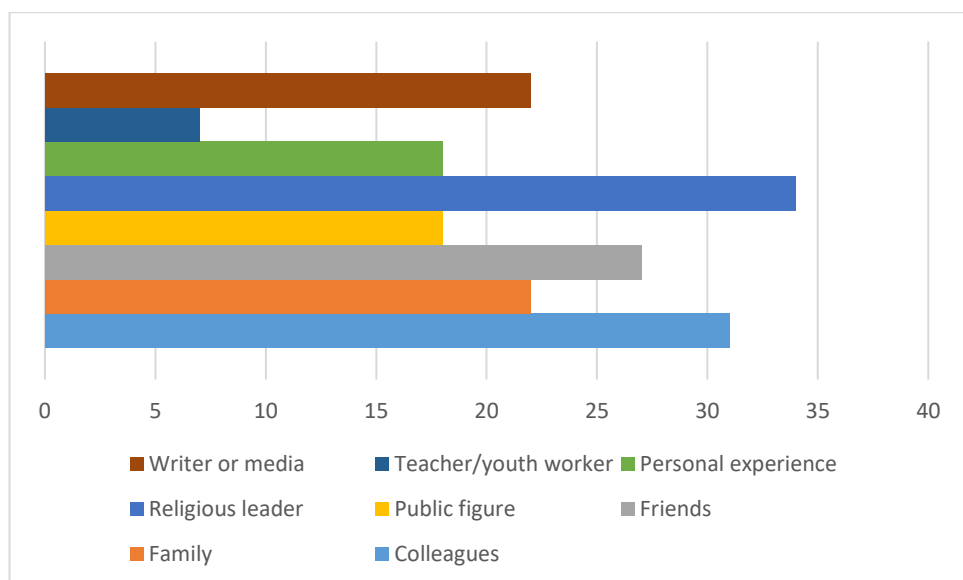
Returning to the number of respondents who picked out key 'public figures' who they found inspiring, both from the past and from the present day – it's notable that these did include various specifically religious figures (e.g. Jesus, Thich Nat Hanh, Rene Padilla) besides more general public figures like politicians such as the Green Party MP Caroline Lucas. That Lucas should be singled out in this context is

interesting. She has in some ways exemplified a contemporary post secular or postmodern approach to spirituality and religion. When an interviewer asked her if Green politics have 'spiritual roots' she responded:

> "If you define 'spiritual' in pretty broad terms, then yes, I think it does – both my politics and green politics generally, I think most people would say. But then they'd probably have a big row about exactly what they mean by 'spiritual'."

In the same interview she was asked if she, herself, is religious:

> "Am I religious…? The spiritual dimension of life is very important, but it doesn't necessarily mean… I like to take bits out of different religions, so I can't say I am just one religion. I value very much many things from many different religions. I believe in some divine organisation which I couldn't give very much more flesh to, and I think that those aspects of life that can't be explained but are to do with a spiritual dimension are incredibly important." (Spanner, 2005)

A politician's answer, perhaps, but this does indicate that 'unaligned' or 'spiritual but not religious' activists such as Lucas can help to shape an inspirational culture which engages the imagination of the religious and non-religious alike. This should not be considered terribly surprising. Also, as one might predict, a number of respondents noted high profile authors and journalists as having been a motivating factor. Perhaps more interesting than these notable individuals though are the lower key figures, who we might consider to be influential on a 'micro' or even 'nano' level. One respondent notes that "the old ladies from church" were a key influence for instance. Here we touch on what will continue to be a recurring theme in this project, namely the way that normative or traditional thoughts and narratives concerning power are subverted within process and broader open and relational theologies. 'Old ladies', like small children, are usually considered to be people of little power, because they lack the ability to coerce. However here we see that they have do have power but it is the power to influence, or perhaps to persuade, rather than to force. 'Hyper-local' leaders, such as, in one case, 'the person who leads the local cycling group', are key too – again because of the way that they model something persuasively 'inspirational' rather than because of their ability to leverage change by means of anything other than persuasion.

QUESTION FOUR

In the fourth question respondents were asked about 'specific experiences' which had been motivational for them, and were encouraged to think back as far as they could in order to answer this. In the responses to this question some key points of divergence or departure emerged. In particular it became clear that some individuals chose to highlight negative experiences, while others chose to pinpoint positive experiences that had proven to be highly motivating. The second bifurcation arose around whether the experiences were had in adulthood or childhood. Mapping these two types of code across one another produces a simple matrix of Adult-positive; Adult-negative; Childhood-positive; Childhood-negative.

Figure 4: Positive & Negative matrix

Adult positive	*20.29%*
Adult negative	*37.68%*
Childhood positive	*26.09%*
Childhood negative	*15.94%*

The obvious 'big figure' here is the number of negative adult experiences (n=26) this is in relatively stark comparison with positive adult experiences (n=14). With the responses that relate to childhood experiences the difference wasn't nearly as stark, but there were still a majority in the opposite direction (negative n=11: positive n=18). From this data we might begin to hypothesise that negative experiences in adulthood are somehow important in terms of motivating or equipping people to engage in work for the common good, we might further hypothesise that the same is not true of childhood experiences, where it would appear that the opposite is true: that positive experiences in childhood may be helpful factors. We will return to this idea later in this chapter. There are of course multiple complicating factors in this question – for instance the way in which childhood trauma may have influenced the 'life direction' of an individual. There are other avenues to explore also, around the way that negative experiences might be 'redeemed' to employ a term more at home in confessional theology. Due to the size of the sample, it is not be possible to adequately address the above hypothesis in this study, but it opens up an avenue for potential further research with potentially profound practical implications for the charitable and third sector.

Further it opens up avenues for theological exploration around ideas of gift and becoming, to which we shall continue to return.

QUESTION FIVE

The fifth question was posed in two parts: in the first part respondents were asked to say how long they "have been engaged in this sort of work or activity" and in the second they were prompted to reflect upon what may have first motivated them to get involved in this work or activity. The deliberate intent of this question was to develop on the previous question, with a further enquiry concerning anything that might be considered a 'first motivation' or a primary incident. (Theologians after all, remain obsessed with primary cause.) The thematic analysis of this question immediately identified that the largest set of responses is grouped under the theme 'perceived need', with the second largest being 'religious motivation'. There is a significant differential between these two, however, with n=61 respondents speaking of a perceived need, while only n=28 spoke of a specifically religious motivation. That is not to rule out, of course, any underlying religious motivation, rather it is to pull out the themes arising from the text. We have previously addressed the sense in which religious motivations become 'part of the culture' in meaningful ways which make them difficult to abstract.

Figure 5: Motivation

Key to themes:

ACC – Accident

CON – Desire for connection

FAM – Family

NAT – Felt natural

LOV – Love

PEN – Perceived need

PEX – Personal experience

REL – Religious motivation
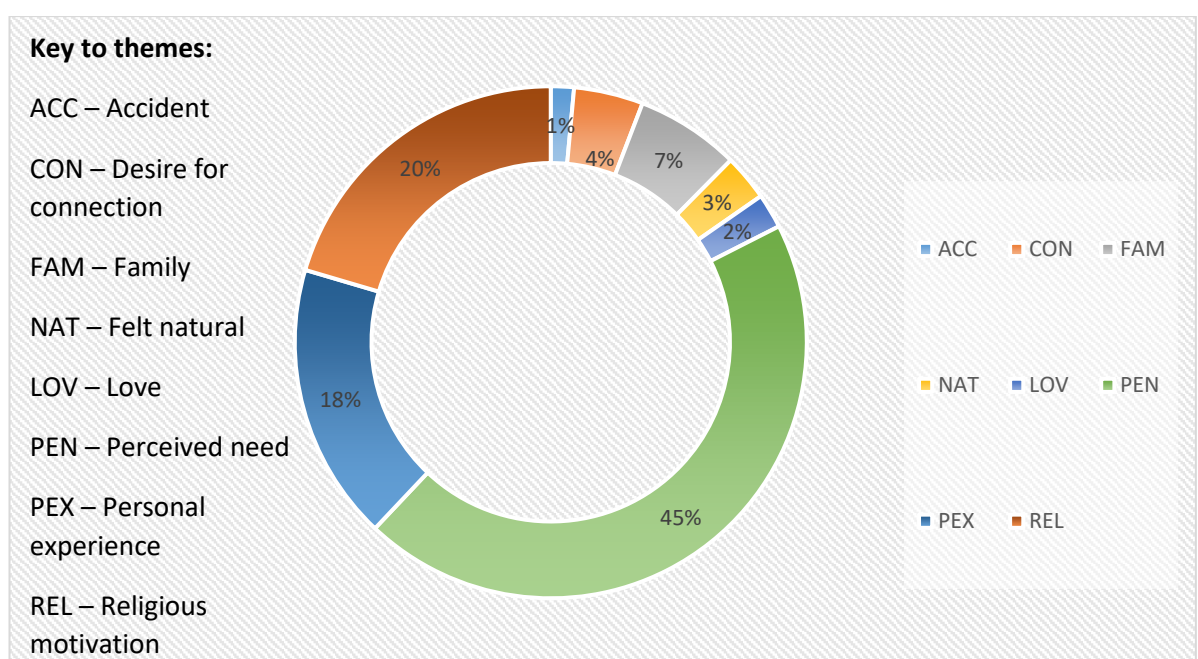
It falls outside of the remit of this project, but it would be interesting to consider whether it may be true to say that a religious motivation/faith provides resources relating to spiritual capital that enable either a longevity of service or a greater sense of resilience in the face of adversity. In this study, of the people who said they had been active in working for the common good for more than 20 years (n=43), 20 of them (47%) directly cited a religious or faith motivation which would appear to indicate a potential link. There is of course, significant opportunity for this sample to be biased, given that although it was publicised widely and through a number of different means, it was certainly possible that many of the people who engaged with the survey found it because of their links with a religious or faith community. Although 'Personal experience' is separated from 'Perceived need' here, we should recognise that a perception of need is also a personal experience of a sort, being affected by someone else's plight is still 'experience' albeit of a different order.

QUESTION SIX

In question six respondents were asked if they would identify as being a member of any faith group or religion and if so whether they could put a name to the particular faith group or tradition with which they most readily identify. They were further prompted to discuss the length and nature of their involvement or belonging. (Due to the potential for bias, it was not evidentially significant to find that people who self-identify as 'Christian' of one sort or another make up the majority (70%; n=61) of respondents in the survey, despite the fact that these people make up a relatively small percentage of the population at large. A much larger sample size would need to be employed to gain an accurate measure of the religiosity of people working and volunteering in this sector.) Meanwhile, people who identify themselves as atheist, agnostic or otherwise 'non religious' make up just 24% (n=21) of respondents and those who describe themselves with reference to other religions or traditions just 5% (n=4). As I have attempted to make clear, this sample is not representative of society at large, nor yet of the charitable sector, and never was it ever intended to be. Nevertheless, it does yield some interesting results: only one person labelled themselves as Catholic, for instance, which is the same number as labelled themselves as belonging to a pagan or earth tradition. The largest group of people chose not to describe themselves as anything other than 'Christian' – this might be taken to mean that they

are Protestant by default, but that is hard to evidence. There is also no way to differentiate between those who might be considered 'culturally' Christian, and those who would consider themselves Christian in a confessional sense. However, further data then splits the respondents into evangelicals, liberals, Anglicans and so on. Only one respondent didn't choose to answer this question, while a large number of respondents used religious language in their answers throughout the survey, indicating a relatively high level of religiosity among this particular sample. We may note that the activist nature of contemporary British evangelicalism and of the Reformed traditions (Protestantism) in general, which is widely encouraged by campaigning groups such as Christian Aid and Oasis (some employees of both of these charities took part in the survey).

QUESTION SEVEN

In the last of the seven questions, respondents were asked to identify any mottos or phrases that they "try to live by". Again, this is conscious use of normative 'secular' language that draws heavily on language of a religious sort. In the coding of the answers to this question various interesting themes emerged, in particular the use of religious language (39% of respondents), often including verses from religious texts, or maxims emanating from religious figures which we considered earlier in this chapter. Given the nature of the sample, as previously stated, this may not be particularly surprising. Of interest though were the recurring themes of mortality, and shared humanity, the latter of which scored higher than obviously religious themes such as the golden rule, or the idea of 'love'. These two very existential or humanist ideas were present in 8 and 19 of the responses respectively. This is intriguing, and presents itself as a topic worthy of further research, as it postulates that the idea that the promotion of a vision of shared humanity is likely to be highly motivating for potential recruits to a cause or charitable concern. The practical implications are obvious with regard to recruitment and ongoing motivation of recruits to any given cause or concern.

There were a number of anomalous results in this question, which have been set aside for consideration, they include:

> "Ha ha, yes, but it's quite rude and probably unhelpful. I've been played, manipulated and abused quite a lot and so now I have a motto – 'And you can fuck off' whenever I think someone is at me."

> "Not really, although I do try to look for the hope/possibility when things are tricky."

Responses like these indicate previous negative adult experiences, which have already been proposed as potentially key motivating factors rather than being 'off putting' or even 'de-motivating' as one might perhaps expect. Of the religious language used, a key recurring theme is the ubiquitous 'golden rule' which crops up or is hinted at here in various forms, just as it appears in various forms and guises throughout the religious traditions. Other recurring themes include the line from Micah 6:8 ("What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God") which is specifically expressed by four participants. That this line is associated strongly with activist strains of Christianity is notable, but it's also relevant that this is something which people who choose to leave church sometimes refer to when claiming that the church has the 'wrong priorities'. The exodus of people from established or 'traditional' church and other religious institutions has already featured in this work, and forms a key part of the ongoing analysis.

QUESTION EIGHT

The final question is a practical one which seeks information about the participants and then deals with potential recruitment to the second (interview) stage of the research. Of the 85 respondents, 40 individuals expressed their willingness to be interviewed, indicating that of the people who took part in the survey, very many have particularly high levels of motivation, such that they have actively initiated or been involved in the initiation of a project. From these participants a further selection was made in order to draw out some of the key lines of enquiry that this initial research has proposed.

PART TWO

In this section of the chapter we will move away from the more quantitative focus on the survey data, and look instead at some of the words that are used by respondents. This begins to foreshadow the way in which, in the next two chapters, we will look at the interview data using categories derived from the foregoing discussion of process theology, in this case I have identified three important ideas which are both

recurring themes in the literature, and are highlighted in the text of the responses. In each case I shall highlight some interesting responses in the survey data, these categories will be further developed in the subsequent chapters.

BECOMING

In order to engage meaningfully with the ideas of spiritual capital in terms of the lived experience of people who are engaging in work 'for the common good', through the lens of process theology, one must first consider in what ways they might be considered to represent a sense of 'becoming'. Remember here Keller's idea:

> "…the divine invites the becoming of the other; by feeling the becoming of the other, the divine itself becomes." (Keller, 2002)

This idea is fundamental to the first definition I proposed for spiritual capital – which speaks of it as a resource which is 'developed.' Just as long as the word is not understood to indicate a finality or ultimate point, in the sense of a 'developed photograph' nor even necessarily a finite teleology which sets out an ultimate goal to be reached. Rather it should represent an ongoing and dynamic process, such that the word is to be read in the present-continuous tense.

Among the various responses to the survey came a number of answers which indicate just such a sense of development, which has either been seen to have taken place, or is perceived to be taking place currently.

> "My mum kicked me out when I was 14/15 and luckily a friend's family took me in long-term after I had bounced around different friends. This experience is probably the first thing that influenced my decision to work in this field. But also everywhere I look I see low income, poor living conditions, people without homes. There's a crisis and it needs to be tackled."

Here the respondent movingly recognises, and clearly sets out, not only a key catalyst point – a negative or adverse adolescent experience, as well as a positive one, but also the ongoing nature of something which is still 'developing' or 'becoming' within them: "everywhere I look I see… there's a crisis and it needs to be tackled." Whatever it is that is becoming is clearly a resource in the sense that it is motivating them, the adverse experience may have provided the spark, but the ongoing experience is oxygen for the fire in their belly. Similarly, another respondent notes, this time in distinctly religious

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language a primary 'spark' experience, and then the fuel of ongoing experiences of interaction with those 'in need'.

> "I was born and brought up in Pakistan, so have a heart for the poor and marginalised around the world. Also my Christian faith motivates me to be involved in supporting projects that benefit the wider community. I had the opportunity to visit the DRC through my role with the charity and that continues to inspire me to stay involved and committed."

In this case the theorised notion of spiritual capital having to do with interaction with a religious community appears to have some validity: the respondent recognises the influence of their upbringing and the values instilled in them in childhood on their ongoing adult participation in work for the common good. Beyond this too it seems that the respondent's formative experiences of living among or experiencing the reality of poverty and marginalisation in Pakistan have given them an initial motivation, but the rest of their language is present continuous tense:

> "…motivates me to be involved…"

> "…continues to inspire me to stay involved…"

It seems again evident that something is 'becoming' in the respondent, about which they choose to use words like 'motivation' and 'inspiration'. Both of these words feature in my first definition of spiritual capital, and the second also resonates with the second definition – that of the Christian idea of the indwelling spirit of God. That these things lead to the respondent being what they describe as "committed" further resonates with ideas about the 'fruit of the spirit'.

Another respondent spoke of the way in which positive experiences helped them to 'become' a new or renewed person, moving them from a place of despair and poor mental health, and into a new realm of hopefulness and activism.

> "An old friend changed my outlook on life at 21 - she didn't put up with things and did things about them, which was a revelation to me. I discovered I preferred feeling empowered to feeling resigned/hopeful/hopeless and I enjoyed working together with people to achieve something. I was quite depressed when I met her and soon wasn't. Another friend, who later went on to disable fighter jets and won a court case over preventing a greater harm, half-bullied me into helping out a struggling local youth project with their accounts - my first real voluntary job. I found I enjoyed it - something easy for me actually made a huge difference. The

project went from strength to strength afterwards and is still running now, over 20 years later. I had an inspirational manager while working in a paid job for a grass-roots charitable organisation. I've met a lot of the best people in my life from doing positive things together."

In this narrative we get a glimpse of a number of 'becoming' factors, or events, intersecting. In the first place there is an initiating or inciting incident (event), in this case a positive adult one, and then an ongoing fuelling of activism by interaction with inspiring people and the feeling of 'usefulness' or purpose. The fascinating word 'empowered' is used, indicating that the respondent perceives some kind of power or agency developing within them. To some degree the respondent seems to have been motivated by the success of their work, but it seems the respondent chooses (consciously or otherwise) to remember or focus upon the things that have gone well, and the relationships which were positive, while overlooking, forgetting or choosing not to focus upon any experiences which were less positive or demotivating. They are drawing specifically on this as a resource when they set about their work: in their mind this is their spiritual capital, and it literally brings them joy ("I enjoyed it…") and they speak of having met "a lot of the best people in my life" indicating feelings of love. They have already spoken of coming out of a place of depression – a process we might characterise as an ongoing movement into a place of peace.

Although this narrative doesn't entirely correspond to the matrix of positive and negative experiences set out in Fig 4., in a different response, another individual reflecting on the question of 'inspiration' does go on to recognise the value of negative experience in the development of their motivation to be engaged in work for the common good, they too give a sense of continuousness in their response.

"It's grown on me, steadily, as far as I can tell. Actually periods of both physical illness and grief/isolation/poverty have had as much effect as anything really."

This is another intriguing response, because here we get a hint of one of the key ideas previously discussed – that work for the common good is work which sets out to alleviate suffering, more, that the/a process idea of God is one of God as co-sufferer, and that human motivation to end the suffering of others is a response to the lure of the divine who is also the co-sufferer. The idea of suffering more broadly is a theme which is extremely common in the responses, and it is represented in at least two ways

– firstly the desire to alleviate the suffering of others, and secondly the underlying need to address one's own suffering. This could be mental illness:

> "I discovered I preferred feeling empowered to feeling resigned/hopeful/hopeless…*"*

Or it could be dealing with the trauma of past experience:

> "My mum kicked me out when I was 14/15…"

Indeed, the theme of formative adverse experiences is very common in the responses, with 38% of respondents citing a negative experience in adulthood as a key or inciting incident and a further 16% of respondents talking about a negative experience in childhood or adolescence. It remains interesting to note that a larger number of people who talked about childhood experiences cited positive or nurturing experiences with family and others as a resource (26%).

SUFFERING

While either of these forms of suffering certainly appear to be a part of the catalyst that 'inspires' activity for the common good, there is also a strong indication that suffering of a different order is seen by a large number of the respondents as a key part of the ongoing work in which they are engaged. Thematic coding of responses to the question 'does it cost you anything?' noted that for 71 of the respondents there is, or was, a personal financial cost to them of taking part in their work. Many of these responses indicate that people are paying relatively small amounts of money which they perceive as a kind of minor financial support of something they are passionate about.

> "Only costs me a little bit of travel money now and then."

> "Christian Aid work sometimes cost me a small amount for resources, which I would never reclaim."

> "Sometimes I absorb small costs personally (stationery, travel, etc.)"

Other respondents however relate more significant financial costs to them – albeit that these costs are not necessarily 'up front'.

> "There are few direct costs, although indirectly I would argue that my salary is lower from pursuing this career than it might otherwise be. I recently moved into

a similar role but working for a business organisation rather than an environmental charity, at a much greater salary. But for many years I accepted the relatively low pay as a trade-off for doing "good work" that I was passionate about."

Other non-financial costs are cited by 25 respondents, and these are often mentioned fleetingly – 'only time' for instance. In some cases though it is clear that respondents have carefully considered or 'weighed up' serious costs to them of taking part in this sort of work.

"I am paid part-time, but the nature of the work is more about investing with our whole lives in a marginalised area. So the costs include time, career progression, isolation, emotional toll."

"I [am] about to take a proper salary for the first time in 4 years. I work 4 days a week and have done at least this for three years on a voluntary basis with periods of ad hoc minimal remuneration."

"It didn't cost me anything in a financial sense, but at times it certainly cost me peace of mind."

"In theory it shouldn't cost anything however I have taken annual leave and unpaid leave to be able to fit things in and I donate more than I did before I was on the committee."

These costs are considerable and worth pausing to take in: 'our whole lives'; 'peace of mind'; 'unpaid'; and 'minimal remuneration' – these are not sacrifices to be quickly skated over. Responses of this sort would appear to indicate two things, firstly that the idea of divine co-engagement with suffering is a reality in the lives of some of these respondents. If our premise remains that the divine nature is that of love, and that this love enters into our suffering as we experience it enjoining with us in it, then this evidence indicates that the 'inspiration' enjoyed by the respondents is a form of engagement with this sense of love. There is also something here about the way that value is perceived in the other, and such talk soon strays into the realms of religious language.

"Christians are committed to the worth of individual persons. This worth is not located in possessions or outward accomplishments. It cannot be measured by the strength or beauty of the body. It does not consist in the usefulness of the individual person to society. It is located in the soul, not as a special substance

which merely inhabits a body, but as the locus of the distinctively personal experience of the whole psychosomatic organism."

(Cobb, 1982, p. 92)

Cobb's idea, which he borrows here from Metz, about the worth of the individual appears, however, to extend beyond the realms of the Church, such that it is not only the respondents who identify as Christian who seem to recognise this kind of intrinsic value or worth. This resonates with the 'post secular' context of this project, and it is an idea which is also deeply Whiteheadian. Cobb goes on to note that for Whitehead "To be an occasion of experience is to have value. The human soul is the flow of personal human experience." (Cobb, 1982, p. 93) This is of course a reversal of the instrumental sense of the human body as a fuel for capitalism's fire – or as 'bio power' as Foucault would have it. Here is the intrinsic value of those entities in which experience takes place, or is embodied, whereas the institutions which would normally be understood as being of particular value to society find themselves returned to a place of instrumental value.

This is developed a little in two of the other questions asked: "Are you a member of any faith group or religious tradition?" And: "Please tell me about any people who have encouraged you to get involved in this work, and/or anyone who has inspired you." In this latter a wide variety of responses threw up various new categories, respondents cited the inspiration of family members, friends, colleagues, public figures and religious leaders or communities as well as teachers and youth workers, and people whose written work they had encountered via books or the internet. Some respondents specifically mentioned the figure of Christ as an inspiration, sometimes in combination with other notable religious figures, and at other times in relative isolation, e.g.

> "Inspired by my own observation of injustice in the world, and by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ."

But the larger group of people (n=34) speak of the inspiration they gained from a religious leader or community. These variously include 'youth groups', 'friends in /from the church', and 'church fellowships'. Of those who cited religious figures outside of their local fellowships, there were consistent mentions of activist figures from within the church, liberation theologians for instance; Wilberforce and Shaftesbury; and less prominent pioneering activist theologians such as John Vincent (Vincent, 2009). Even

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the Buddhist teacher that gets a mention, Thich Nat Hanh, (noted earlier) is known for his 'engaged' and 'compassionate' form of Zen Buddhism, rather than the removed and contemplative life prioritised in some other traditions. This is obviously a skewed sample, because this is a survey which was directed squarely at those who operate as 'activists' of one sort or another, they are perhaps bound, therefore, to have an interest in thinkers and writers who model these qualities. Drawing back upon our previously given definitions, we must recognise that many of the 'fruits of the spirit' are not those which would automatically lead people into activism, rather they provide the resource or wherewithal to allow those individuals to persist at a hard task, in other words to support their struggle in the field.

One interesting response from within the wider dataset is from a respondent who describes herself as floating in and out of religious traditions, unwilling to align herself to any one in particular. She says:

> "… I am totally pissed off with all the major religions and their jam tomorrow bullshit and their general honouring of elites and power. I am returning to the earth, the cycles of nature and a more pantheistic way of being."

Tracking this individual's responses demonstrates that she feels that her suffering, as well as the suffering of those around her have been formative in the development of her work.

> "The election in 2010, austerity, the consolidation of the right in 2015 and in the appalling 2016 referendum. Living in a shockingly poor community [location redacted], seeing deprivation and suffering at street level daily. I always cared but now I'm furious and I want to change things and redistribute resources, knowledge and power. You could say I've been radicalised!"

This vehemency of tone certainly contrasts with some of the more measured responses offered up in the study, but it is indicative perhaps of the depth of feeling measured in the respondent's experience. Here too we see that while the religious outlook or alignment defies clear structural identification, the outworking of belief is strikingly similar to that of those whose language is more knowingly religious. Strikingly, despite their rejection of religion, again the respondent turns for inspiration to a religious figure (in this case the Christian socialist philosopher of education Paulo Freire whose work underlies that of many liberation theologians) as well as her partner and the people she works with and amongst. It is their thinking, their love, and their shared experiences

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from which she draws when she says she wants to 'change things'. It may be a distraction, but there's something in this response which is reminiscent of the first of the three modes of determination in the Vedantic tradition as set out in the Bhagavad Gita chapter 18: *sattvic dhirti* (determination in the mode of goodness) is there understood to be 'the steadfast will', or the determination to keep going (in the right direction), which is developed through the disciplining of the mind by following the right teachings (*Yog*). This is clearly something that resembles the idea of spiritual capital, the resource which allows this respondent to keep going in the face of adversity, but in this case it's not something we can ascribe to following the 'right' teachings. Rather, it's apparently despite the rejection of most religious teachings, or at least their structures, and by means of a 'return to the earth' and with the encouragement of friends and loved ones. Spiritual capital gained in a context quite different to that which one might, traditionally, expect.

THE LURE

I have previously suggested that spiritual capital is by nature subversive, in the sense that as a resource it flies in the face of conventional capitalist economics. I have described it therefore as an 'upside down' model of economics, and noted that it might be 'banked' by those with little concern for their own power or advantage. Perhaps people with restricted access to economic resources, or those with physical or mental infirmities. I've noted too that it seems to grow by being given, and therefore diminish when stored up, stifled, or not used. I have linked this with the idea of the 'lure' of God, a Whiteheadian notion of the way in which the divine seeks to draw human actors into ways of being which prioritise love. I have suggested that it is the following of this lure which leads people into activity for the common good. An issue within the Christian church is that it is notoriously sectarian, with individual parts of the church seeing themselves as separate and somehow 'better' than others. This comes, partly, from doctrinal differentials, and perhaps too from plain old human tribalism – the setting up of an 'us against them' dialectic. Inferred from this is the idea that some traditions or ways are more in line with this lure than others. This view is put forward to an extent in some readings of process theology, and is advanced in the way that Whitehead himself prioritises what he describes as a 'Galilean' form of Christianity, by which he means an early or primal form which developed before it became adulterated

by empire sensibilities, tamed by classical thinking, or marketed by capitalism. While one might instinctively empathise with this, we must also acknowledge that the same reforming motivation existed in the founding of very many of the other Christian sects that have developed in the last 2000 years.

Whitehead's radical tendencies and the subversive nature of process theology lead us, necessarily, to the conclusion of this chapter, and as such to the end of the analysis of the survey data. In the following two chapters we will turn squarely to the data garnered by means of interview. The interviewees were drawn from the pool of survey participants, and the interviews themselves were given a loose structure by means of the answers given in the surveys. Where the data gathered in the surveys and the interviews may correspond, this will be reflected upon in Chapter 8.

Chapter 6: (De)scribing experience

"My mum told me to read The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists when I was like 16, you know, I was like, this is... Geez. Yeah, kind of socialist…" (Interviewee 5)

"[I] didn't really notice other folk until I became a Christian, and then without any particular conscious efforts, I started to notice people more and found that I've got compassion. And I suppose particularly compassion for the marginalised. I mean, that may… it may be linked with my kind of hippyish background, really, that. It was like a part of society I could relate to a bit." (Interviewee 2)

"The search after wisdom has its origin in generalizations from experience." (Whitehead, 1960, p. 52)

In this chapter we begin to engage with the data gathered from the series of nine interviews conducted with a sample of the people who had taken part in the survey described in the previous chapter. Here, rather than setting out a conventional findings chapter, I will begin to engage in some (de)scription of the experiences related in those interviews and as I do so, seek to make or establish a clear link between the narrative accounts of the interviewees, and the metaphysical framework of process theology.

I use the term (de)scription to denote the way in which the scription (literally the writing down or putting into words) of the narrative is subject to critical analysis. I make this distinction because in process theology 'experience' has a precise technical meaning, which must be addressed as we consider the stories of the interviewees. In acknowledging this important technical distinction, we must also recognise that, as a noun, 'experience' has at least two intersubjective meanings: 'experience' may be used to refer to an event or a period of time which was in some way remarkable or notable; 'experience' may also relate to the recollection of and learning from facts and details pertaining to a subject or event. Both of these usages are relevant to the way in which people commonly talk about the way that they understand the world and form part of the vocabulary of people who were interviewed for this project. As these 'experiences'

are put into words and written down (scribed), however, they become subject to an analysis which seeks to deconstruct that scription.

This chapter will necessarily contain some further references to technical aspects of process theology/philosophy, some which we have considered already and others that develop on ideas that have already been introduced in previous chapters. I will touch on a few key aspects of Whiteheadian thinking, including ideas of becoming; creativity; experience; organism; and prehension. Further reference will be made to the ways in which the sort of theology that stems from Whiteheadian thought is differentiated from classical theism. As we know, contemporary classical theism is an approach that we might loosely define as broadly Thomistic in nature and stemming from a substance metaphysic. We should recall then that for Hartshorne, at least, process theology is a *neoclassical* theology – relational in nature and therefore characterised by a much more plural outlook that recognises the dynamic present-continuous 'becoming' rather than the static 'being' of God. This relational sense of God is one which sees the divine as a fellow sufferer with all those who suffer pain, hardship or distress. In the 'Aeneid' Virgil has his titular protagonist declare: "*sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangent*" (there are tears for things and mortal things touch the mind). While in classical theism God is immune from suffering, the neoclassical, relational, sense of God has the divine as the most moved; changed by every momentary occasion including that of suffering through the prehension of these occasions. We will consider this idea in more depth later in the chapter. In (de)scribing the experience of some of the interviewees in this project therefore, experiences which led them to engage in "God's work", we effectively ask the question of whether they reflect a sense of an unmoved, or most moved, divinity in action.

On a methodological note: these interviews follow on from the surveys which were filled in by people who are engaged, or have been engaged in work for the common good. Specifically, the interviews, which were unstructured in form, were carried out with people who had instigated or initiated a new project, these are people about whom we might venture to say 'they have some measure of spiritual capital' as they put their advantage to work for the good of others and the world around them. This project has a practical, as well as a philosophical outlook, this means that we can recognise that the rationale for this entire study is to enquire into the nature of spiritual capital and consider its definition as well as to consider its development. Crudely we are

partly asking: "what precisely is it, and how then do we get it?" In doing so we also seek to understand whether process theology does in fact give us a conceptual framework and lexicon suitable to the task. These interviewees may be understood as vital repositories of data in relation to both of these strands of enquiry. Harking back to previous attempts to conceptualise this idea in Chapter 1, we may recognise that what we are considering here, as per Verter (2003) and rendered variously in Bourdieu, is spiritual capital as *embodied* in an individual. In so doing, and with a practical outcome in mind, we may further recognise that this at last gives us a way to ask how this resource may be *enculturated*. In these interviews, then, I am really asking how spiritual capital may be said to be made manifest in the life of an individual; from where and by what route has it been obtained; and what conclusions we might begin to draw by engaging in (de)scription of the narrative answers.

We have already noted that the context of this project is one of post secular society and as such that this reflects the experiential and embodied reality that sacred-secular boundaries are distinctly problematised in a contemporary cultural landscape where bricolage has become a normative approach to spirituality and religious identity (Chapter 1). The interviewees in this project are, therefore, a people of plural identities. Some interviewees currently identify themselves as Christians, and some do not. Even where the nexus label 'Christian' is clearly applied, though, this denotes a range of understandings of that term. What linguistic and cultural barriers exist between these two ideas of religious or spiritual identity (Christian and non-Christian) are at the very least porous and permeable and there is a sense of dynamism where sometimes labels seem to imply stasis.

GENESIS, GIFT & INSPIRATION

Drawing on the threads of enquiry from my initial survey data, the question of formative childhood experiences (specifically: the importance of positive experiences in childhood and adolescence) became an obvious primary line of enquiry to pursue, or place to start, with interviewees. The format of the interviewing was designed to facilitate the interviewees to tell 'their story' without an external narrative too heavily superimposed by the researcher, (so far as possible). Initial questions and prompts were, therefore, drawn from answers the interviewees had previously given in the

survey. In each case survey respondents had written about the way in which they had been 'inspired' and this provided an entry point for discussion.

What began to become apparent was that something the interviewees had in common was that they were drawing from what we might consider to be a deep 'well' of resource. There was in some cases an explicit sense that they had been 'given' something by people around them during their formative years. In the case of Interviewee 1 this led to a very conscious sense of 'giving back', a narrative that he would later go on to extend to others around him.

> "When I was a young lad growing up, we got the support we got as a family, you know, as individuals, as young people, I never forgot it, I never forgot it… It's really, ultimately, I think, shaped my life." (Interviewee 1)

For this interviewee, who has gone on to devote a significant proportion of his adult life to charitable and voluntary work, there is a very strong sense that he had been *given* something as a child – this sense of receiving was expressed in terms of both tangible and intangible gifts. For instance, he spoke of having been 'given hope'. Thinking back to a specific inspirational teacher he noted:

> "…he was one of the people that despite the harshness and the difficulties of the area, and the children in the school, always gave you hope… it sounds strange, but he gave, he gave you that sort of belief in yourself? [The way] some young people were given hope inside that school. Yeah… that was amazing." (Interviewee 1)

This repeated reference to gift makes it almost impossible not to refer back to Hämmerli's reflection (2011) on Mauss' 'Gift theory', as developed on in Chapter 1, and the idea that the receipt of a gift leads to a sense of obligation to give. But it is also a (de)scription of moments of formative 'experience' – for Whiteheadian thinkers a moment of experience may be considered as a transition, a movement between the world of the immediate past and that of the immediate future. It is, one might say, the formation of a 'necessary precondition' for future experience – an idea to which we shall return later in this chapter.

While Interviewee 1 spoke of having been 'given hope' without any apparent awareness of the potential theological connotations of this idea, Interviewee 9 spoke in similar terms but with more of a sense of what this might mean in a religious or

theological sense. Recounting a period of hardship in his life he explained the sense in which he felt the support of others left him with an obligation.

> "We've been through in our, you know, married life together, we've been through times of quite desperate poverty. And we've relied on the generosity of other people around us, some Christians, some not. You know I can remember times when people would leave shopping on the doorstep, you know, that we didn't know who it was. And we always said, you know you can't… you can't pay this back. What you need to do is pay it forward." (Interviewee 9)

Here we immediately see the use of both economic language finding its way into the recounting of experience, 'pay it back', 'pay it forward', and the language of duty, or obligation. For this interviewee the sense that this is all part of a larger economic model based on the rebalancing of abundance and scarcity is very apparent.

Returning to Interviewee 1, he went on to say that he felt it was 'fair' to give back to those less fortunate than himself. Later in the interview he would go on to say that some of his direct involvement in volunteering was initiated by both this sense of reciprocal obligation ('giving back') and by having experienced personal grief, unknowingly echoing the Hebrew prophet Jeremiah: "Truly this is *my* grief, and I must bear it." (Jeremiah 10:19) Here then we find an expression of a sense of shared humanity – what he is representing is that 'humans' have a familial obligation to one another. Notably he relates that close family ties are particularly important to him: commenting that it was the deaths of two of his adult siblings that led him to involve himself in causes that were important to them, or to bodies which had actively supported them during their lives. Immediately the parallels in the survey data are apparent – the interviewee draws on that which was 'given' to him as a child, (perhaps a *Donum Dei* by another name) when his path intersects with negative experiences in adulthood. This common theme was notable in the survey results and goes on to be echoed in this and other interviews.

POLITICAL & PERSONAL

I have previously mentioned the possibility of bias in this area of the data, but regardless we cannot ignore the fact that in a number of interviews with subjects there was talk of political motivation. This was certainly significantly present in the first interview where the interviewee explained that his membership of the Labour Party had

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been instrumental in his understanding of and ability to access 'good causes' local to him. It recurred in other interviews too, though, in more or less explicit forms. The relationship between some forms of social action and political adherence is therefore of interest to this project, as is the similarity of church and political gatherings. Each has traditionally had a part to play in the development of human capitals, each has its associated rituals, hierarchies (in some cases), and even songs. That in some cases religious identities have political signifiers is potentially significant. While continuing to recognise and acknowledge the clear limitations in terms of scope of this particular sample, it is striking to note that in each of the instances where political motivation was made explicit this was of a 'leftist' nature (Labour party/Unions/Socialism) – while I will go on to consider this at some level, we should also note that this would make an interesting topic for further and more extensive research. It is a recurring theme, and provides some interesting context for consideration of the close association of certain Christian traditions, such as nonconformism and elements of Catholicism, and ideas such as 'the social conscience', 'social justice', 'social teaching' or 'the social gospel': these are after all areas in which the explicitly assigned labels of 'political' and 'religious' may be seen to collide or align.

It may perhaps be supposed that this conjunction of politics and spirituality represents a crossing point between Luther's kingdom of man, and his kingdom of Grace, or maybe an important reminder that for some Christians such as William Temple: "Socialism…is the economic realization of the Christian Gospel" (Aptheker, 1968, p. 203); or that for Tillich: "Jesus was the first socialist." (Tillich, 1971, p. 40) A brief diversion: although he notes this claim, ultimately Tillich goes on to disagree – at least in part – and some process theologians are similarly unconvinced by the idea of such a direct relationship between Christianity and socialism. For Cobb:

> "Both liberal capitalism and Marxist socialism are committed ultimately to the improvement of the quality of individual experience. Nevertheless, in actual practise both are largely governed by their economic expressions and these involve both theory and practice that are in marked tension with the Christian understanding." (Cobb, 1982, p. 93)

However, Cobb's attempts to differentiate Christianity from a specific political inclination notwithstanding, it remains relevant to recollect that process theology itself was formed in a culture which was greatly influenced by what became known as 'the

social gospel', a non-partisan but nonetheless politicised movement that formed amid the problems of rapid industrialisation in early twentieth century America and which found itself most famously systematised in Walter Rauschenbusch's famous book of 1917 'A Theology for the Social Gospel' (Rauschenbusch, 2011). This didn't appear from nowhere: political engagement over issues such as exploitation, enslavement and immigration is a coherent theme in various streams of Christianity in the centuries predating the social gospel movement. These religio-political responses to issues of social justice would go on to interweave religion and politics to such an extent that they are in many cases hard to disconnect. Figures cited as 'inspirational', in the survey part of this project, such as the previously mentioned Martin Luther King Jr and Thich Nat Hanh, for instance, are arguably as recognisably political as they are religious even if they defy usual binary categorisations, indeed it is a binary which has been repeatedly challenged by theorists too, for instance by Schmitt who famously noted that all 'significant concepts' of the 'modern theory of the state' (for which we might feasibly substitute 'contemporary political thinking') are what he described as "secularized theological concepts" (Schmitt, 2005). Despite Schmitt's lack of precision when it comes to definition of terms here, the point is clear enough, politics and theology are deeply entwined and difficult to differentiate or distinguish between.

The intermingling of political and religious identity appears not only in leftist politics, of course. Of particular recent note is the way that the politics of right-wing nationalism and conservative social attitudes have become inextricable from the political identities of some contemporary expressions of Christianity. As if to demonstrate the futility of attempting to impose binaries on these identities some groups clearly combine aspects of both left and right-wing political identities, espousing conservative social attitudes towards gender, sexuality and reproduction for instance, while also promoting politically progressive ideas such as international debt cancellation or wealth redistribution. Examples of these mixed approaches can be found in movements as disparate as the British evangelical church in the early years of the 21st century, and the Friars of the Franciscan Renewal.

In the case of Interviewee 5 an immersion in the left-leaning mainstream of Methodism was formative as a child, as were her parents who, she explained, "aren't activists" but encouraged her, as a young person, to think about the world through a lens which combined left wing politics and Christian spirituality.

"My parents are not particularly active, you know they're not activists or they would never classify themselves as doing like social action or anything, but they've very much brought us up to, to think that serving others is what we should be doing… that money is not important, but how we treat other people and how we make life fair. My mum told me to read The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists when I was like 16, you know, I was like, this is... Geez. Yeah, kind of socialist. This is that kind of thing, you know, socialism. So that from my parents combined with the Methodist ethos and, and just seeing it in action and being involved in that, in action, just kind of set me up really." (Interviewee 5)

For Interviewee 8 on the other hand, politicisation came later in life. He had been brought up in a household which was loving but neither religiously nor politically engaged. He found a supportive Church community to which he was introduced by friends as a young teenager, and went on to be politicised by further encounters with Christians at university.

"I noticed some people who are a bit more left wing, Christian, and managed to kind of start to explore quite quickly. I think I sort of concluded that kind of the socialist agenda and how I saw the Christian agenda were much more compatible than the Christian agenda was with a lot of other political movements. From that point on I would have identified as kind of broadly speaking, left wing. Although I'm still not, you know, particularly a Labour supporter. Yeah, it probably wasn't until my late 20s that that became a much more conscious part of who I was." (Interviewee 8)

This form of political becoming is echoed in the (de)scriptions of the experiences of other interviewees. Interviewee 7, for example, who describes herself as not belonging to any religious grouping, was 'turned on' to left wing politics during her A Levels.

"[I went to] college to do government and politics, history and English. Every teacher that taught me was a Marxist, and they didn't care that you knew they were, they laid it out and it exploded, absolutely exploded, just my eyes being opened and reading The Guardian for the first time and having conversations with these lecturers on first name terms as the miners' strike was happening... And there was this shift to the right happening in higher education and some of them were being suspended, some of these teachers, for their politics." (Interviewee 7)

In the heat of the radically shifting political landscape of the 1980s Interviewee 7 found that leftist political ideas had answers to the difficulties she saw around her, in a way

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that other ways of thinking and acting did not. Today she does not identify with any political party (or religious group), choosing to associate herself with a broadly defined 'old school left wing' type of working-class politics and to work with outwardly focussed community groups from a range of backgrounds. In a striking piece of language, she describes this formative time in her life as having 'radicalised' her, and says that this began to manifest in outwardly focussed acts that she perceived as being for the common good.

> "I suddenly found myself going to demonstrations, going on demos for the miners, nicking food out of my mum's cupboard at the back and putting it in the boxes and taking it to a drop off point for the miners from Doncaster; becoming president of the Student Union… I was radicalised, I know that's a difficult word, but I suddenly… It was like a bomb going off and it was wonderful, and all these ideas and all of these things were catalysing. I hadn't quite got to feminism but I also had a gay friend, which was unheard of where I came from." (Interviewee 7)

The way in which Interviewee 7 describes her 'radicalisation' is analogous to some Christian accounts of 'conversion' or even of 'being born again', a pivotal moment of perishing and becoming. She remembers it as 'wonderful' and life changing, she considers her Marxist teachers to have been 'inspirational', and the outworking of this 'inspiration'? Acts of corporal mercy; feeding the hungry; campaigning against injustice. This has continued to characterise her throughout her adult life.

THE BECOMING OF NORMS

Something which has the potential to be crucial for Interviewee 5, whose faith has remained important into adulthood, is that she grew up in a church context which didn't differentiate between 'ministry' among young people and older people. She wasn't part of a differentiated 'children's church' or 'Sunday school' instead she was immersed in the life of her church congregation from a very young age, engaging with other youth organisations most notably the Girl Guides movement (to which we shall return), outside of church, but remaining a part of her Sunday morning services throughout childhood and adolescence and into adulthood. This meant that her religious expression was repeatedly modelled by adults she came to know well. This is another area which warrants further sustained investigation beyond this project: specifically the question of whether the provision of 'children's work' and the removal

of young people from the company of adults during services of worship may actually be counterproductive in the sense of alienating children from the lived faith and religious experience of the adults around them and possibly stifling the becoming of new things. Certainly, for Interviewee 5 there was no sense that she felt 'out of place' among the adults in her congregation by the time she had reached an age where she could have legitimately walked away from the congregation. This may or may not be anomalous in mainstream church practise, but it indicates that where this can be achieved it can be a rich and rewarding experience for the child in question.

> "I think I was told that I could stop going [to church] when I got to whatever age. And I just… I've never stopped really. I think I just forgot or something! [Laughs] I guess it had shaped me to who I was by that point." (Interviewee 5)

Of course, we can't discount in this the impact of informal social control by means of internalised social norms, but we might seek to question how, in process terms, these might be understood as the flow of 'personal human experience' which form, as Cobb (per Whitehead) postulates, the human soul.

This sort of 'churched' upbringing is in contrast to some of the other interviewees, including Interviewee 2 who instead recounts a formational 'conversion', or prehension-becoming, experience, this time into an evangelical form of Christianity as a teenager in the 1970s. His description of this has hints of a somewhat low key and rather drawn-out Pauline 'road to Damascus' event in his life, when as a self-described "hippyish" and disillusioned 17-year-old on a summer holiday road trip he met some Christians who talked to him about Jesus in a way that appealed to his counter culture mindset, and encouraged him to 'give his life to Jesus' and become part of the church.

> "…when these people kind of showed me, as they told me about the New Testament, what Jesus was like, he was more radical than what I see [sic] down the local Anglican Church. And that he was quite… quite a revolutionary. So that kind of appealed to me. And also he'd a kind of itinerant lifestyle too, and I liked that too… so I kind of handed my life over to Jesus would probably be the best way of putting it really because I was pretty cheesed off with life by the time I was 17, and I was very disillusioned with what Britain seemed to offer, and what the establishment as I called it seemed to offer. I thought that there must be more to life than just this materialism and all that stuff." (Interviewee 2)

In this, along with previous examples, we have a kind of experiential application, one might suggest, of the creation or development of spiritual capital from its earliest visible stages. We can see the way in which that which was to become, began to become. Process theologian Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki (1996) suggests that a way of understanding the divine ability to 'work' or effect change is that 'God works with the world as it is to bring it to where it can be.' While this is a neatly expressed idea, there is perhaps a danger in taking those words too literally as they may lead to the imagining that this takes us from one place of stasis to another place of stasis: from the bottom of a set of stairs to the top. This is not what Suchocki intends and does not represent process thinking in terms of the way in which the process of perishing and becoming is, and remains, both present and continuous.

ORGANISMS ARISING

In form here Whitehead's process thinking as set out in 'Process and Reality', 'Adventures of Ideas', and, to a lesser extent, 'Science and the Modern World' as his philosophy of organism appears notably more similar to streams of Buddhist philosophy than mainstream Christian thinking. It is this refusal to adhere to established orthodoxy that led William Temple, in one of his Gifford lectures, to lament that Whitehead's thinking was only 'very near to the Christian Gospel':

> "…if only Professor Whitehead would for creativity say Father, for "primordial nature of God" say Eternal Word, and for "consequent nature of God" say Holy Spirit, he would perhaps be able to show ground for his gratifying conclusions. But he cannot use those terms, precisely because each of them imports the notion of Personality as distinct from Organism. The very reason which gives to the Christian scheme its philosophic superiority is that which precludes Professor Whitehead from adopting it." (Temple, 1933)

It remains true that the philosophy of organism poses significant linguistic and metaphysical problems for some Christians, while at the same time it has similarities to aspects of cyclical Buddhist thinking. This is perhaps most evident in a brief consideration of the idea of *pratītyasamutpāda* sometimes translated as 'dependent co-arising' but notably also described as 'interdependent co-arising' in which each part or stage of life is presaged by an earlier stage or necessary condition, we might think of this as causal efficacy. S*ankhara* (mental formation) for instance is the prerequisite for

vinnana (consciousness), while *jara-marana* (aging and death) are the necessary conditions for *avija* (ignorance) which in turn is the stage before *sankhara*. A further and closer examination of the way that this philosophy corresponds with the philosophy of organism would be of interest. Mainstream Christian thinking, to which even relatively enlightened thinkers such as Temple may be said to adhere, is perhaps too wedded to substance metaphysics to readily or willingly accept this.

In Whitehead's thought creativity has various meanings, one of which is the sense in which it is "the ultimate metaphysical ground" (which sounds almost Tillichian). In Process and Reality, he expresses this idea as follows:

> "God is the infinite ground of all mentality, the unity of vision seeking physical multiplicity. The World is the multiplicity of finites, actualities seeking a perfected unity. Neither God, nor the World, reaches static completion. Both are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty. Either of them, God and the World, is the instrument of novelty for the other." (Whitehead, 1978, p. 348)

God is, then, not creativity in its totality, but remains the primordial form of creativity, creativity is ultimate reality, while God is 'ultimate actuality' because, despite Temple's concerns, Whitehead's God *is* possible to be related to on a personal level.

> "It is as true to say God creates the world, as it is true to say that the world creates God." (Ibid)

This sense or concept of ongoing development is fruitfully developed in contemporary Christian process theology by Keller, who took it upon herself to develop on the problematic notion of '*creatio ex nihilo'*. Exegeting the Genesis creation narrative through a (neo)Whiteheadian lens, Keller turns instead to the idea of '*creatio ex profundis'* – creation from the depths. In our experiential application of this in accounts like those of Interviewee 2 or Interviewee 7, we can see the way in which spiritual capital begins to 'become', in a moment of apparently chaotic conception, thanks to the conditions developed by a combination of disillusionment (perishing) of one sort and newly found 'illusionment' (becoming) of another. The disillusionment was a necessary pre-condition of the newly found awareness. It is reminiscent of Keller's sense of biblical creation and the way that in her exegesis 'the deep' (*tehom*) is a fertile and creative place:

> "…the chaos – the turbulence, the uncertainty, the storms, and the depths of our actual life-process – is all signified by the watery deep, the *tehom*, of Genesis." (Keller, 2008, p.47)

Other ideas suggest themselves too – and we shall consider these later in the chapter. To return first though to the issue of the 'initial' act of first cause creativity, we might perhaps consider whether some streams of 'traditional' or 'mainstream' Christian theology may have suffered from an overly literal approach to this idea of creation, which is given alternative meaning in the theo-poetic writing of the likes of Keller. While some traditionalists and non-philosophical theologians take the dust of the earth and the breath of life to be literal, Keller adopts a significantly more existential approach to the language recognising the dust as a cipher for reality, and the breath as a word that represents potential or possibility – read in this sense we see the creation story repeated and even 're-created' in a newly intelligible form in the life of individuals and communities, notably including the life of Interviewee 2. These themes of potential and creativity will become more important as we proceed through this chapter.

EXPERIENCE, OCCASION & PREHENSION

In this chapter we are using the term 'experience' as qualified previously, this requires that we must consider what 'experience' means in a technical sense for process thinkers. Whitehead being an originator of this way of thinking provides us with the primary idea of what experience is. To grasp this, we need to gain some fundamental understanding of the thrust of Whiteheadian process, which is broadly that a person's 'experience through time' comprises a series of atomic units which, taken in succession, make the 'individual occasions' of experience (Cobb, 1990). Cobb describes Whitehead's view of the development of human experience, outlining it thus:

> "Every occasion in a living person inherits from past occasions of experience of that living person; it inherits from occasions in other living persons; it inherits from the occasions constituting the body of which it is the presiding member; and it inherits from God." (Cobb, 2007, p. 151)

We note too, therefore, that Cobb, in common with other Whiteheadians, uses the word 'occasion' here in a precise and technical sense, as set out here:

"…an occasion of human experience is not to be understood as a person experiencing. There is no person beneath or behind the experiencing. The act of taking the **past** into account and constituting itself with a view to the **future** *is* the actual occasion. The person is constituted as a long series of such occasions growing out of one another and out of the body." (Cobb, 2008, p. 19) (Original emphases)

While it may currently be more conventional to consider, with the Derrideans, everything as text and experience as interpretation thereof, for Whiteheadians everything is occasion and experience is 'prehension' of this. So, while a past occasion has what we might consider to be 'causal efficacy' in the present occasion, the present occasion simultaneously prehends the past one as a necessary precondition for its existence. We may consider prehension to be among the most important and most complex of Whitehead's ideas as it is the means by which a link between two actual occasions is formed and therefore it is the way in which something becomes. When we consciously observe something we prehend it visually, but we prehend it as a nexus – that is to say we don't observe the constituent elements of which it is made up, the means by which is has been caused or their constant activity.

In the act of prehending we bring something into the present, or as Cobb puts it: "Prehensions are the way that what is there becomes something here…" (2008, p. 31). A past occasion is prehended by a present occasion, the present occasion is thereby changed or perhaps formed by the past one. In practical terms we can see this taking place in the lives of the interviewees in this project, as their past occasions of experience shape and form new occasions leading them into the becoming of who they are. In the case of Interviewee 5, the extent of prehension of a series of occasions results in a compounding of experience leading in practical terms to the interviewee's newly found Christianity developing from or upon the nexus of his social concerns. We must also note that he was not culturally unfamiliar with the claims of Christianity and that he admits to having come from a "God-fearing" family. Crucially though he had never encountered a Christianity which had seemed relevant to him and his life. Here he found talk of a spirituality, and a Jesus, who seemed not just to share his concerns and characteristics but to present as a kind of Platonic 'form' of them. An occasion of experience prehended another, and so Jesus became someone to whom outsiders, outcasts and perhaps even "hippyish" teenagers like him were neither unwelcome nor unknown. The moment-by-moment prehensions leads to a realisation (in the sense of

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'making real') of this sense of Jesus in the interviewee's life, and this was apparently enough to provide a platform for the becoming of genuine compassion and the translation of that compassion into realms of action and behaviour which, although simple, were previously un-thought-of.

> "I suddenly realised I'd gone two months without having an argument with my dad. Whereas probably it was… it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say it was every other day really that I was having an argument. So various changes that were going on in me then and I find [sic] that I've got a compassion for other folk…. I remember, visiting a pair of a couple that had obviously got mental health issues, but they've [sic] got their own home, probably weren't working, weren't coping too well. And I used to visit them regularly. Have a cup of tea with them. And so that was probably the start of it, really. My sister tells me I was always bringing people home. I don't remember doing that…" (Interviewee 2)

This (de)scribed experience, which the interviewee understands and describes as a 'conversion', appears to have the character which Tillich proposes for a moment of 'revelation' in which, as he puts it, "ultimate concern grasps the human mind" (Tillich, 2001, p. 90), for Tillich this is a profoundly *creative* moment in which ideas are formed and eyes are metaphorically opened (another somewhat Pauline occasion of experience).

While this teenage conversion situation was built upon the foundations of an admittedly underdeveloped, but nevertheless still present, social conscience – other interviewees set out other routes toward consciousness of issues and the potential for them to play a part in addressing them. For Interviewee 6, who in his late teens became an evangelical Christian, mature self-reflection demonstrates that he had rather mixed motives for trying to serve others as a young man. In reflecting on who he was at the time, he now notes that many of the 'good things' he tried to do in his teens and early twenties were actually motivated by a desire to 'win' others to Christianity, rather than out of a fulsome sense that the service is a 'good' in and of itself. We might indeed join with Hume in querying the 'general foundation' of morality here, and ask whether it comes from 'reason or sentiment' (Hume, 2011, p. 710) – in this case there doesn't initially appear to be a genuine sense of conscience driving activity besides a fervour to 'win souls', making it appear to have almost Machiavellian overtones. Motivation, however, becomes blurry for those who, schooled in their tradition, are taught to understand conversion to the faith as being the 'greatest good' for all concerned, and

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may therefore reasonably apply the principal of the Golden Rule to the situation and conclude that they should indeed expend their energies in winning souls over and above any other goal. Reflecting back on this aspect of his youthful self's developing religious character, Interviewee 6 paused and noted in a moment of reflective understatement that he felt his attitude had been "interesting." This is a moment of prehension, a part of his process of becoming, and in his narrative he reflected on other occasions of experience which also form part of his ongoing sense of emerging selfhood. For instance, he recognised the way in which his attitude was materially altered when he began to engage in a course of study as a young adult:

> "I think the massive change to me was when I [went] to do a course in mission and leadership… [in] a Pentecostal church. The kind of narrative was all about: It was for the nations, and it was for the poor of the world. [It was all about how] we needed to die to self. People used to do end of year celebrations with coffins and things as a symbolic joke about how they died so much they could now go and serve the poor… You know, they went to extraordinary places, unreached people groups, doing amazing projects, great personal cost. And so that… that did have an effect on me. At that time we started going into prisons and we would do lots of schools work, and there was always that kind of social justice, 'the world could be a better place' narrative, really. I think that was that was a very key time for me." (Interviewee 6)

Having been brought up in what he describes as a religious atmosphere of 'committed nominalism' Interviewee 6 described having first rejecting his nominal childhood faith, before developing a renewed interest and 'deeper' commitment to evangelical Christianity in his late teens leading to his taking part in the course at a formative time in his personal and spiritual development. While this was pivotal for him personally, it still took him decades to connect this developing faith with a more explicitly political outlook. In common with other interviewees though, Interviewee 6 did eventually make a direct link between his political outlook and engagement in work for the common good, noting wryly:

> "I'd managed to, you know, live 50 years of my life without really seeing that virtually every statement Jesus makes, particularly in Mark's gospel, is political." (Interviewee 6)

In mid-life Interviewee 6 reached a moment in time when his way of understanding the world changed, his experiences in life so far now led him to recognise Jesus' teaching as

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political rather than 'merely' spiritual or at least 'apolitical'. It was the prehension of various momentary occasions of experience that brought him to this point of further becoming, but it is not just that he became 'enlightened', rather that the text he had been reading for many decades had also become something new. This is important not just for the individual but for this project as a whole, as here for the first time an interviewee describes Jesus' teaching as "political" – setting the whole of 'Christianity' in a distinctly theopolitical light.

A PROCESS THEOPOLITICS OF PERSUASION

Although this particular instance of politicised commentary is an isolated reference in one sense, it also fits directly into the stream of thought, as previously mentioned, that comes from so many of the interviewees, which is to say that politics (exclusively, in this group of interviewees, of a leftist sort) has been a key motivating factor. For Interviewee 1 he was enabled by his membership of the Labour party and associated Trade Unions; for Interviewee 2 there was a new found association of Jesus shaped Christianity with the plight of the downtrodden; for Interviewee 5 there was the intersection of Church based social action and a sort of hand-me-down (causal efficacy) socialism from her parents; and in the case of Interviewee 7 there was a kind of radicalisation at the hands of Marxist further education lecturers; for Interviewee 8 there was an engagement with politically engaged Christian students at University; and in the case of Interviewee 9 there was formative experience of communitarian politics in a relatively economically deprived community. In each of these cases the political drive shaped an attitude of love towards, and service of, others, even to the point of personal sacrifice and cost. Although the oversimplification of political positioning and inherent compromise of values can make alignment difficult for a theologian, some process thinkers still take clear stances which may be seen as positioning them on the 'left' of a potential spectrum. The African American Womanist theologian Monica Coleman for instance politicises the concept of 'salvation' thus:

> "Salvation is the insurrectionary and revolutionary process of challenging the status quo and demanding equality and inclusion." (Coleman, 2008)

Equality and inclusion may not be the sole preserve of the left, but when combined with ideas of insurrection and overthrow of conservative positions, they are hard to differentiate from a leftist stance. By contemporary standards Whitehead and

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Hartshorne would probably be considered Liberals, perhaps of a libertarian bent; in Adventures of Ideas Whitehead aligns himself with Plato in preferring 'persuasion' to 'force' in the changing of minds and social behaviours, assigning what he terms 'governmental compulsion' to the realm of force, along with war and slavery. (Whitehead, 1967, p. 83) This is a theopolitical point – for as the exemplification of perfect leadership, God too seeks to persuade rather than enforce. It is interesting to note that Pope Francis appears to have a similarly relational theology, in a tweet he said: "God saves with love, not force, offering Himself, not imposing Himself" (Francis, 2021) – perhaps demonstrating that relational theologies and theopolitical stances are not always so far removed from the mainstream as they sometimes appear.

In the case of Interviewee 6, then, this emerging political perspective was further developed when they experienced a negative adult experience (another recuring motif identified at the survey stage of this project). In this case the experience involved a bout of serious ill health which had the effect of making him reconsider his life's priorities. It was after this experience of the fragility of his own mortality that he began to engage in direct acts of social activism, most notably making regular visits to the refugee camps in Calais with the dual intent of delivering aid and documenting abuses. In advance of his trips, he would seek to persuade others of the value of his cause, seeking to both publicise the issue and raise funds and collect donated items for distribution. He and his wife also began to foster children, opening themselves up to the very personal costs that such activity requires. As with other interviewees, however, he indicates that while he recognises that there is a real sense of personal cost, it is at a level which he is willing to accept. Here he notes also what he describes as his 'privilege' in being able to count these costs and to make these choices. This he describes in terms both explicitly political and spiritual, noting that observing the dedication of some refugees to their religious observances cast his own privations in a different light:

> "I've seen Muslims in October, when it's wet and cold, on a pallet, wash themselves in a standpipe and pray in the rain in the open air; and I've seen people build shrines in the woods. And I'm like going, right, so that's proper faith, their faith's not being swayed by their circumstances. They have gotten nothing but that faith, you might argue, and I found that really humbling." (Interviewee 6)

While adult politicisation of faith and episodes of personal hardship seem to have been instrumental in the catalysation of this interview subject, in others the link between activity and up-bringing is significantly more apparent. In Interviewee 3, for instance, a form of putative spiritual capital development appears courtesy of her early involvement in the Girl Guiding movement. This is worth considering in some more depth for two reasons: Firstly, Guiding exemplifies a kind of persuasion by means of informal social control through what amounts to mentoring and tuition without recourse to punishment. It is a means by which values and ideals are instilled in a positive way. Secondly Guiding is something that is common to a number of the interviewees, and where this wasn't something they were part of, in some cases other 'clubs' were important, Cubs, Scouts or Church youth groups for example.

As we have noted then, Guiding was also part of the experience of other interviewees, but for this interviewee it was immediately described as having been key to her social and spiritual development. Having expressed that one of the primary motivating factors for her continued engagement in work for the common good in economically deprived communities is her fundamental belief that 'there is always hope,' even in the most difficult situations, she began to reflect upon where this way of thinking may have originated:

> "I think probably the strongest thing came from the Guiding movement that I was brought up in. I began as a Guide and then eventually became a leader and so I got lots of opportunities there. I suppose within the Guides there is always kind of a focus on helping other people and doing stuff in the community, so that has just been so natural to me. And I've gone 'Oh, yes, that's good'. Yeah, I think Guides was probably the strongest experience, the biggest influence on me when I was young." (Interviewee 3)

Here then is another apparent example of a way in which a young person has had a positive 'experience' of, or in, childhood. Specifically, she has been encouraged, enabled and empowered to engage in serving and caring for others in and around her community by adults who have effectively operated in some sort of mentoring capacity thereby engaging in her ongoing process of becoming. For this interviewee the inspiration she gained from Guiding sat alongside a sense of religious formation which she gained from being part of a faith community throughout her life. Her language, though, is not heavily religious and at times she speaks in terms as likely to be employed by secularists as they are the faithful, note for instance her references to personal

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fulfilment in answer to a question about her career path and her choice to work in 'difficult' settings instead of opting for some less taxing option.

> "I just think, I wouldn't be fulfilled if I had followed that path. So now I am fulfilled, and the cost, well there is definitely I would say an emotional and say a mental cost... what I do is, you know, is hard… It's about managing that cost for me, because I feel I know how much I'll be fulfilled by it." (Interviewee 3)

Here the interviewee is quite clear that her belief is that fulfilment comes by choosing to follow the path she has done, despite the costs implied. She doesn't use the terminology of duty, but there's a sense in which – in common with other interviewees – she seems initially to embody a deontic ethic that to some extent overrides potential concerns about negative consequences for her personally. She behaves the way she does because it is 'the right thing to do'. This is marked too in the responses of Interviewee 4, who claims no religious adherence but maintains a sense of moral responsibility to care for others.

> "So my dad, my dad is obviously Christian, and that probably has been an influence… but most of the influence is from my mum I think. It's an empathy for other people and the situation that they're in and knowing what's right and what's wrong, and not from a religious point of view, but just from a moral point of view, it's about the human condition. It's that thing of helping other people when you can and when they need it." (Interviewee 4)

In common with other female participants Interviewee 4 also makes pointed reference to the Guiding movement, which she describes as having taught her to be considerate and conscientious – in other words as having shaped her way of understanding herself and her place in the world. These repeated references suggest an obvious line of further enquiry concerning the way in which values are cultivated and shared in the Girl Guiding movement, and perhaps also the way in which strong female leadership figures help to shape the lives of young women.

> "So right from the beginning, my mum encouraged me and my sister to be ourselves, and in Guides we were taught to be considerate, and conscientious and all that sort of stuff. Not because there's this thing about girls having to be that way, because 'that's what girls are' but just as human beings, to be considerate, and empathetic. And that it's a strength, not a weakness. A lot of people think that it is weak to be empathetic, to want to help people. But I've never felt that it's a

weakness. I think it's a strength. And I wouldn't want to change my experiences in my life, I would never change that aspect of myself." (Interviewee 4)

There is a rich seam to mine here in consideration of the way that Interviewees 3 & 4 in particular have developed a way of looking at the world and their place in it courtesy of their involvement in the Girl Guiding movement. This immediately links to ideas of 'orthopraxy', that is to say the idea that there is a 'right way to behave', as much as or more than there is a right way to think (orthodoxy), and a reflection that for process, and many other, theologians the work of the spirit is not confined to 'the church' but may be found to be active both inside and beyond ecclesial boundaries. The Dutch missiologist J.C. Hoekendijk expands on this idea in his seminal work 'The Church Inside Out' (1966) in which he is at times quite critical of the view that God's work is confined to the Church and that evangelism is about developing that. He notes:

> "To put it bluntly: the call to evangelism is often little else than a call to restore "Christendom," the *Corpus Christianum*, as a solid, well-integrated cultural complex, directed and dominated by the church." (Hoekendijk, 1966, p. 15)

THE CREATION OF SPIRITUAL CAPITAL

The sense of the way that God may be found at work in a range of people and places, shared by Hoekendijk and others, once again breaches the theoretical divide between sacred and secular. In doing so it refers us back to the second of the definitions of spiritual capital developed for this project, which suggests that spiritual capital is analogous to the 'fruits of the spirit'. In that idea we encounter the sense of creativity, creation or creative development. For Whitehead and subsequent process theologians though, while God is actual, creativity isn't, rather it forms part of the experiential process of the world discussed earlier in this chapter. These spiritual 'fruits' result from this creative process. We can note that Whitehead says in his first category of explanation:

> "That the actual world is a process, and that the process is the becoming of actual entities. Thus actual entities are creatures; they are also termed 'actual occasions'." (Whitehead, 1978, p. 22)

Whitehead's sense of an 'actual world' is that it is made up of occasions of experience; we as subjects are the locus of these experiences and all that exists, all phenomena, exist

for us to experience – or rather to be experienced. Can we then suggest that in these experiences we can identify 'God' by recognising the divine-at-work? There may be room to do so if we follow Cobb's line as follows:

> "…for Whitehead, God is fully actual, creativity in itself is not. It participates in actuality only through its embodiment in actual things. In itself it can do nothing at all. It does not even exist. It is not even a "reason" for the coming into being of actual entities. In Whitehead's terminology, only actual entities are the reasons for what happens." (Cobb, 2007, p. 118)

Here there is a clear differentiation between creativity and the fully actual God, but space for creativity as experienced and embodied to shape the way in which we as the locus of that creativity come to further experience the world. Whitehead's distinction between creativity and creatures here is arguably similar to Tillich's development of Aquinas' thinking. While Tillich represents every being as an instance of 'Being Itself' Whitehead represents every creature as an instance of creativity, a subtle but important distinction. While there may be theologians who in following Whitehead consider creativity to be God, Cobb indicates that he isn't one of them. Rather he seems to see creativity and other potentialities as being embodied within the actual entity that Whitehead calls God.

Having, then, begun to establish a process perspective on the creation of spiritual capital, we may now move to an alternative analytical stance. In the following chapter, which concludes the interpretative triad of chapters in this project, we will address again this data, but rather than seeking to (de)scribe experience, we will utilise three theoretical lenses or 'interpretative centres' developed from the theories discussed in the first chapters of the project. In doing so we will attempt to reach for something of a prismatic view, looking at the same thing from different angles in the belief that doing so will enable us to see the same thing in a different way:

Chapter 7: Experiencing multiplicity

"The many become one, and are increased by one. In their natures, entities are disjunctively 'many' in process of passage into conjunctive unity. This Category of the Ultimate replaces Aristotle's category of 'primary substance.'"

(Whitehead, 1978, p. 21)

"…today the two Catholic religions of civilisation are Christianity and Buddhism, and – if we are to judge by the comparison of their position now with what it has been – both of them are in decay. They have lost their ancient hold upon the world."

(Whitehead, 1960, p. 43)

In the previous two chapters we have examined and considered the data arising from the primary research carried out for this project. Initially I used quantitative methods to identify and consider themes arising from the survey data; I then began to take an unconventional narrative approach to 'findings' using an initial, discursive, look at the interview data in the hope of perceiving themes arising from them by means of (de)scription. This then is the third of a triad of interpretative chapters, the last two of which are perhaps both best understood as sitting somewhere between traditional findings and analysis chapters. In this chapter we will continue to look at the data from the interviews, but from a different perspective. Rather than begin with what I have hitherto somewhat cautiously termed 'experience', I shall begin with three broad lenses, categories or 'interpretative centres', derived from the discussion of process theology that took place in Chapters 1 & 2. Key to this chapter will be to ask whether the interview data corresponds to these categories, and if so how.

In attempting to address the challenges I've set out I shall seek to further address two principal foci of this project. Firstly, I will attempt to address the theoretical question of whether the lexicon and framework(s) provided by Whiteheadian and process/relational post-Whiteheadian thought are, fundamentally, suited to the task of analysing this primary research. Intertwined with this I shall also

address the question of whether these concepts enable us to understand what is taking place in the lives of people who demonstrate their development of spiritual capital in practical terms. Although I place it second here, this focus remains just as important as the first, perhaps more so, because ultimately this project seeks to deal with very practical issues – it remains appropriate to keep this in mind as it 'grounds' the ideas under discussion. I am ever mindful of the need for this thanks to a comment made by a colleague. "That's all very well…" he said, after a discussion about a speculative piece of theology, "but how does it help fix a broken toilet in a homeless shelter at two o'clock in the morning?" Theology is like electricity; it must be earthed.

LENSES

The three theoretical lenses or 'interpretative centres' which will be applied to the data in this chapter are: 'the nature of God's power'; '(infinite) interconnectedness'; and 'becoming and perishing'. These three are fundamental ideas within process theology, almost any 'elevator pitch' of process theology would need to recognise the idea of God as profoundly influential but intrinsically non-coercive (we will consider Cobb and Daly's sense of 'receptive power' as a potentially useful way of solidifying this concept later in the chapter); speak of the ongoing, dynamic, becoming (and therefore the necessary perishing) of all things by means of prehension, which is the so called 'advance into novelty'; and it would also need to represent the sense that all things are ultimately and infinitely interconnected. A reader may discern that my underlying assertion is that these three centres are intrinsic facets of the divine nature, and that in order to speak meaningfully of God in a process sense we must address these ideas. In order to justify this claim we may first return, briefly, to the discussion of Trinity.

We have previously been able to observe that process theology has room for a variety of perspectives and theological stances. In Chapter 3, I favourably appraised Bracken's process approach to Trinity as 'one God in community' (as opposed to an effective tri-theist model which one might argue arises from some other process approaches Christology or Pneumatology). I acknowledge that this appreciation betrays my own Trinitarian bias. That bias notwithstanding, here we will extend upon what we've already said about Bracken's thinking by making a brief note on the question of dynamism which forms a key aspect of our trio of theological lenses. This consideration will lead to an assertion about the nature of God which I will then seek to extend, as a

metaphor, 'downwards' from speculation about the divine to observations of human experience.

As per the previous outline of Bracken's argument we have, then, a conception of a Triune God in whom there is an innate sense of community. In order to include a sense of dynamism, we may ask if this community can also be understood in and through terms related to movement. We have made previous mention of Heraclitus and his famous belief in the constancy of change, 'everything gives way and nothing is stable' (Waterfield, 2000, p. 41), now we seek to apply this concept to God. Fortunately, this task is easy, as the work has already been done in the adoption of the conceptual terms *perichoresis* or *circumincessio*. The idea of Trinity as *perichoresis* was famously expounded by John of Damascus in the 8th century text *De Fide Orthodoxa* in which he made the point that while as human beings we can identify one another as substantially different, we cannot do the same for the three persons of the Trinity. While we may be similar to one another (resembling each other) we can, in a sense, move independently. The persons of the Trinity on the other hand, are not similar but identical, having the same 'movement'.

> "They are made one not so as to commingle, but so as to **cleave to each other**, and they have their being **in each other** [the verb here is perichoresis] without any coalescence or commingling."
>
> (Damascus, 2006, pp. 34-35) (Emphases added)

While the writer is speaking in terms of substance rather than process, it is notable that he uses terms which imply both constant movement and ongoing dynamic interconnectedness. So, although the underlying metaphysic may appear more Parmenidean in that it problematically implies stasis (John of Damascus, like other writers, also goes on to fall into the trap of attempting a good but imperfect analogy, in this case of the cleaving together of three suns, and thereby arguably rather damages his own argument) the language remains much more Heraclitean in that it is necessarily dynamic. Whether we speak of *perichoresis* or its Latin equivalent, each term gives a sense of God's self which is both dynamic rather than static in its ongoing becoming, and dynamically plural whilst, simultaneously, singularly whole. This dynamic, interconnected, Trinitarian sense of God allows for a nexus of space and place in which the aggregation of experience can take place *within* the very nature of God as community. Consequently, we are able, albeit tentatively, to continue to bring together

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a very orthodox and mainstream piece of Christian doctrine: *homoousios* (God as three persons *in and of* one substance), with the process approach, often perceived as somewhat heterodox, which asserts in diverse terms that 'divine becoming is ongoing' (God as process).

By seeking to reconcile these ideas we can begin to make some tentative observational statements about the divine which can help to guide our examination of reported 'experience'. Addressing the dynamic idea of *perichoresis* we may firstly say: *'in as much as God is of one substance, so much God is constantly becoming'*. If we can accept this step, then we find ourselves in intellectual harmony with process and other relational theologians who, as I sought to establish in Chapter 2, would follow Whitehead's lead in considering God, as an 'actual entity' to be 'dipolar'. (This means that we conceive of God as (simultaneously) having a changing 'consequent' nature which experiences and responds to experience, while also having an unchanging 'primordial' nature (love)). Accepting this first step may allow us to make a further or secondary assertion: *'in as much as God is unchanging (love), so much God is constantly becoming'*. By synthesising these two statements we are able to say: *'in as much as God is one unchanging substance (love), so much God is constantly becoming.'* Not for the first time we find ourselves facing an apparent paradox in concepts of divinity. That God should be paradoxical, though, doesn't seem so unreasonable.

The two natures of the dipolar God, primordial and consequent, rely upon one another, and so here too, then, we have a further sense of necessary unity in plurality. For Whitehead any actual entity must have two poles but neither of these poles can exist independently, each relies upon the other in the most intimate and interdependent sense for its existence. We have, therefore, a notion of dynamic multiplicity which is inherent in a conventional Trinitarian understanding of God *and* in a process cosmology. We should note too that there is an inherent fragility implied by the term 'becoming'. This is not a concept of God which emphasises ideas of power and strength, rather we have an idea which is more readily analogous to ideas of youth and creation, two very risky and potentially rather breakable ideas: God as weak child rather than God as mighty King (to use a rather Christological and theopolitical formation). Part of the object of this chapter is to ask whether this idea of divine becoming is evidenced, in the descriptions of experience shared by interviewees, and if so: how?

COMMUNITY & CAPITAL

In order to answer this primary question, we must first make some remarks about the framing ideas of community and capital. An early and enduring critique which could be levelled at some of the approaches to spiritual capital in the literature that lies beneath this project is that in places it is too focussed on the individual and their actualisation or gain. Zohar's approach (2004) perhaps typifies this, as her aim may be understood to be ultimately about self-fulfilment, albeit that this takes place in the context of social groupings. A more radical theological approach to the idea of spiritual capital rejects this sense of the individual for a focus on 'we' rather than 'me'. Returning to the process-oriented womanist theologian Monica Coleman and her thoughts on salvation, for instance, we find that she is certain that when it comes to ideas of liberative salvation we can only talk in terms of plurality.

> "Salvation does not come to an individual. We cannot wrestle with loss, evil and pain on our own. We cannot attain wholeness, health, peace and justice as individuals… Salvation is found as we participate in the teaching and healing communities that promote the social transformation of the world." (Coleman, 2008, pp. 166-167)

This sense of the individual as indivisible from the collective relates directly to Whitehead's thinking, which he neatly sums in the pithy phrase: "Religion is world loyalty." (Whitehead, 1960, p. 59), this is just one of the many categorical claims he makes about the nature of religion in the collection of essays published as 'Religion in the Making'. In this instance he means that the religious life is one which aligns itself with the needs and requirements of the wider 'objective world' which he describes in typical style thus:

> "[The objective world] is a community derivative from the interrelations of its component individuals, and also necessary for the existence of each of these individuals." (Ibid, p. 58)

One cannot exist, says Whitehead, outside of community. We could look at this, perhaps, in two ways. The first might be to take the stance of Hebrew prophets (and Judaism in general) where the emphasis is very much on the good of the community. Micah memorably insists that sacrifices for personal sins are not what is required, rather the penitent should 'do justice and love kindness' (Micah 6: 7-8) while Amos strongly advises that personal sacrifices and noisy singing should stop and that instead justice

should 'roll down like waters' (Amos 5: 21-24). Whitehead, we may consider, follows in this tradition in that he considers that the individual belongs within the wider order of meaning and value that derives from their relationships with other individuals. We might even say that he goes further, in reckoning the individual to be a social locus too, an individual is in a sense a 'society' of prehended experiences or actual occasions caught in an infinity loop of belonging. One might, therefore, seek to understand the person as a microcosm of the world, continuously being formed by the advance into novelty, while also inextricable from the wider generation of meaning that occurs in and around them. We have seen already that this thinking is mirrored in the sense of God as Trinity. That this metaphor may be extended 'upwards' and 'downwards' is key to Whitehead's thinking.

To further extend this idea, and to move onward into language that is particular to this project, we may suggest that capital not only belongs to a community, but that it also consists of a community. To paraphrase Whitehead, one could attempt a further speculative paradox in saying that spiritual capital is "the creation of [its] own creature." (Whitehead, 1978, p. 255). If we are to bring this back to practical terms, we may begin by asking if an element of spiritual capital is, in fact, the resource of people (the many), their collective motivation and enthusiasm; their skills; connections; talents and (to channel the ubiquitous Foucault) their sheer bio-power, which (the) one may access in order to affect some sort of change or improvement in circumstance. Continuing to think in practical terms we may say that necessarily this idea returns us to the initial concern of whether spiritual capital can be perpetuated in the contemporary context (post secular religious fragmentation) and if so, how? We may also ask whether, *or* how, spiritual capital can be enculturated in order to both be 'realised' and 'manifested'. Having made our way through these theoretical points, we turn again to the data.

THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS

I would first note the following: there are no examples in this dataset of anyone with embodied spiritual capital who is speaking from the context of a large and powerful church community. All the examples are of people who have come from small and rather fragile, even marginal, communities. Small groups, not enormous conglomerations. Of course, this is by no means grounds to say that large groups of people cannot generate individuals with this sort of spiritual capital, that would defy

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logic. But it is to recognise a truth or perhaps bias of this piece of research, which may perhaps indicate a wider reality of the nature of this sort of work, that becoming starts from something small, like a seed. A clear example of what I mean can be found in the interview with Interviewee 3 in which the participant narrates the genesis of a youth project.

> "I was looking to do youth work on an estate and had kind of just been doing things mainly within the church. One Christmas I had 20 young people in my lounge… I'd had this youth group for over a year and all that time it'd been like two or three, and then it just exploded, right. So, that kind of was the catalyst, and so we then… I set up the youth club and as part of that, somebody I was working alongside was doing a funding bid but also the young people were saying that they wanted to play football. So he put a bid in to say that we wanted to set up, we wanted to do football. We then got that funding bid. And then… I had to set up a football academy [laughs]. Yeah, I guess the idea would have been there, but I was anyway [laughs]. So, we employed… So we used some of that funding to employ a football coach and then I was there as another adult.

> "So I set that up, and it's still there, actually. I believe that the person they have replaced me with is pretty much a proper footballer. So it's gone from strength to strength." (Interviewee 3)

In this retelling of the story about the formation of a small youth club and football project the interviewee recalls a moment when their small, weak, fragile contribution became part of a larger whole, when the enthusiasm, energy, and ideas of a community led to the formation of a project, and when the connections they had more widely were drawn upon to provide the necessary wherewithal to develop the original idea. Here the interviewee discovers that the group, albeit small, has capital. Indeed, crucially, they discover that despite its appearance of scarcity in some upside down or perverse way it somehow *is* capital. The genesis of the project came from a small and apparently rather fragile Church youth group ("two or three…"), but this smallness and fragility was revealed to have persuasive power when suddenly the project "sort of exploded". At this point it began to move beyond the 'two or three' young people who had constituted the youth group, things began to change. This is interesting practically because it reminds us that just because church groups are diminishing in size, that doesn't mean they can no longer have any influence or purpose. Bible scholars may

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perceive it to be directly analogous to the various references to the influential and perversely powerful miniscule ('Mustard seeds', 'salt', and 'yeast') in the Gospels. For some it may call to mind Zechariah's rather poetic 'day of small things' (Zechariah 4:10). Here the small group that goes deep (the seed that takes root in fertile ground) leads to the formation of a bigger group which then becomes a larger project, taking on a life of its own (*creatio ex profundis*). Just as with the idea of a seed, some yeast, or a day, at the prehension of each actual occasion there is a perishing and a becoming: a moving on from what was, to what is, and then on into what will be. This idea is made altogether explicit in the simile of the seed of wheat in John 12:24. Another example of this perishing and becoming can be seen at the point where the interviewee leaves the project and a 'proper footballer' is appointed in their place. An instance of perishing leads to a new becoming, or multiple new 'becomings' as people make new interconnections. As we are currently living somewhat generously in my references to the Bible, we might note too that the phrase 'two or three' is deeply evocative of Jesus' words as recorded in Matthew 18:20 – "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." For spiritual capital to form, in this upside-down economy, perhaps numbers are not so important after all. In this example of the lifespan (so far) of the project and its spiritual capital formation too we see the process at work, the experiences are visible in their development and synthesis – with each prehension and perishing the subject becomes what Whitehead terms a 'superject' (an actual entity that progressively emerges through feelings and the attainment of satisfactions).

For those seeking to navigate practical routes through post secularism, to attend, as it were, to the 'broken toilets' of society, this has the potential to paint a counter-intuitively encouraging picture, and one that challenges the normative thinking of some parts of the Church (and society at large). This idea of community and of becoming, with its associated idea of perishing, gives ground for saying that decline in church attendance in itself is no barrier to the development of spiritual capital. Most challenging of all: the reverse may be true. If that's the case, of course, then it stands in direct tension with the aspect of contemporary Christian discourse which is focussed on ways to address and reverse the 'disastrous' decline of the 21st century Church in North America and Western Europe. Great amounts of resource, in terms of people and money, are directed at reversing the situation – either getting people back into church, or getting church out to people. As congregations shrink in power and

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influence, concern seems to become ever more desperate – conferences are staged and special events held, courses and initiatives are regularly rolled out in an effort to stem the tide. But the evidence here suggests that in fact some of this may be a waste of energy – power to effect change comes from the small and apparently inconsequential – the fragile and the weak. In essence it reminds us that 'things need to die': that it is necessary for perishing to happen in order for becoming to begin. Of course, this is counter to an economic mindset as discussed previously (and the machinery of much of contemporary economics and ecclesiology) which calls for constant, ongoing, growth. But such is an argument, effectively, for more yeast – or for everything to become yeast, or perhaps for everything to become salt (something which, the book of Genesis tells us, didn't work out so well for Lot's wife who was also keen to look back at bigger, better, and less socially and economically precarious times) (Genesis 19:26). Instead, perishing allows for the transformative activity of the yeast (or salt or seed), it says that small is beautiful, that two or three are enough, that this is where divine persuasive power is located: in weakness and fragility. For those living and working with the decline and even the demise of congregations and religious gatherings, this (counter intuitively perhaps) should be an encouragement, it shows that the activity which takes place in the smallest of things can be that which truly makes a change. For those in the hierarchies of those same institutions, however, it presents a very serious challenge. Where the machinery of church relies on the ability to maintain buildings and to fund complex administration, numerical decline is a grave threat. Perhaps thoughtful people must ask whether one of these two scenarios better represents the true spirit of Christianity than the other.

This observation of the potential vitality of a small, post secular church means that at last we can make a promised return to William James' thought, as touched upon in Chapter 1, where we saw him railing against 'bigness and greatness in all their forms' and preferring instead 'the invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual'. Surely this is a clear example of this way of thinking: the demise of 'bigness' in the church makes space for what William James describes so evocatively and poetically, saying that these invisible forces 'steal through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets' (James, 2011). To take James seriously on this is to seriously question the wisdom of trying to resuscitate the corpse of the church that was, learning instead to accept its perishing and learn to welcome the becoming that this leads to.

INVISIBLE MOLECULAR MORAL FORCES

In the case of Interviewee 2, the narrative of his initial conversion and the ongoing spiritual formation – which we might call the ongoing process of becoming a Christian – is full of small instances of community. He speaks of having met people who together led him to change his mind about God, he speaks of the way his faith was then formed by encountering others and the way in which combining with them has been important in the development of his person and his spirituality. His most recent work has centred around the practical support of refugees, and (bearing in mind what we've already observed about the leftist political bias inherent in this sample) this is what he said about the way in which that happened:

> "I've been quite surprised with how heartless some Christians can be, centred towards the right in politics. Yeah. So that, you know, often it comes from fear. It's a Christian charity that I've been working with, with the Syrian refugees, mainly a lot. In my secular, so called secular, work ... I was already helping with the teaching of English with Syrian refugees there. Yeah, so then there was a Christian organisation that several churches got together and formed this organisation [name removed], which welcomed one family and provided them with a home and support. And now we've got three families that they support, but two of them that are completely independent. And they've gone on to help others. And because they kind of set up the charity from scratch there's other groups… that are now coming to them. And under that umbrella there's something like 14 different projects going on in [geographical information removed]. But we kind of were taught to be kind of careful who you talk with, you know, even within Christian circles, because some Christians aren't all that keen on working in refugee groups. Perhaps because they read tabloids that talk about us being flooded with immigrants?" (Interviewee 2)

There are many interesting aspects of this piece of narration, which has been slightly edited to ensure anonymity. Similarly, to the previous excerpt we are able, here, to discern that in working together as one body, people are able to engage and mobilise spiritual capital in small but effective ways, this group of churches is only helping one family at a time, but this is multiplied – upside down spiritual capital at work. There are, however, two interesting aspects which differentiate this story from the previous one. In the first place, unlike the previous example, here we can recognise some elements of

opposition to this work, even from within the church itself. This means that the spiritual capital at play has an added dimension, not only does it need to sustain the project in a variety of ways, it also needs to sustain the individuals involved in their struggle as they face criticism for their activity, to give them courage. They require 'encouragement'. Secondly there is the explicit point that churches had to work together to build a wide-reaching project – although it is not set out in exact terms, this hints at ecumenism, which is to say the setting aside of traditional barriers for the furtherance of important work. – these two aspects both touch on the categorical question of the power of God.

There is a particular sort of courage required for many to engage in ecumenical work, but it is precisely this breaking down of institutional barriers, as referred to in Baker's work – as outlined in Chapter 1, which is required to effectively and efficiently mobilise spiritual capital in and among communities. The interviewee refers to the fact (at least as perceived) that 'some Christians' are opposed to the sort of work he is engaged in. The fear of encountering antipathy, misunderstanding, or simply having to deal with viewpoints which are counter to one's own is a key factor in preventing effective cooperation. That churches and other bodies can effectively become interconnected subversive networks of trust means that what William James referred to as the 'invisible molecular moral forces' or 'soft rootlets' can indeed work from 'individual to individual' to develop an interconnected whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. I'll briefly extend on James' vivid imagery of power and interconnection to remark that just as biologists have observed the way in which strands of mycelium develop between and within the roots of trees, linking them together in a network of co-dependency and reciprocity, so networks of trust in a community operate to connect people, sharing resources and supporting one another among the vicissitudes of the work in which they are engaged. The many become one, just as the one becomes many. The spiritual capital exists in the one, in so far as it exists in the many. Profound interconnection.

Another interesting aspect of this narrative is the way that the interviewee is reluctant to distinguish between 'sacred' and 'secular' – indicating that he has a sense of vocation which applies to his day-to-day work just as it applies to his specifically 'church' related work. Later in his interview, after talking about his experience of Christians deliberately relocating to the suburbs, he briefly (but intriguingly) reflects:

"Church can be so middle class. It has lost touch with a lot of the suffering of local people." (Interviewee 2). There is an apparent distinction that is constant in this interviewee's words between what is perceived to be the relatively small portion of the church which is engaged with the nitty gritty work of serving and caring for people (attending to broken toilets), and the majority of those for whom it is more of a culture, a club to which they belong but which demands little of them except their attendance on a Sunday. This interviewee also speaks of the suffering he has, himself, endured. He talks of struggles with frail mental health and other difficulties which have been part of his personal story. In his own suffering he identifies with those who suffer, and he reflects on an image of a vulnerable Jesus, a 'man of sorrows' who was 'acquainted with tears', as someone who also inhabited the margins of society. Prior to his conversion he says he thought Christians were people who, quite simply, weren't like him.

> "I had thought [Christianity] was something that supported the status quo, was very middle class. You know, people would have all voted Conservative, I had only kind of experienced the local Anglican Church. But I also in a strange sort of way of thought, well, that's for people that don't come from the street that I live in." (Interviewee 2)

As his experience of Christianity grew and he began to recognise the plurality of expression within the church he was able to form networks of trust which sustained him through great personal difficulty, as well as in work which was demanding in mental, physical and spiritual terms. Put simply he became part of a community, and in doing so was able to access and become part of, a resource which was much greater than he as an individual could have hoped to access. He learned to recognise the way that newness could become in the midst of decay.

BECOMING COMMUNITY

> "…each actual thing is only to be understood in terms of its becoming and perishing. There is no halt in which the actuality is just its static self…"
> (Whitehead, 1967, p. 274)

The fostering of community emerges as important in this project. We must be clear with regard to terms though, here I use the word community in a similar way to that in which Whitehead uses the word 'society' which is to say that I refer to a complex of 'enduring objects' – each of which is in reality a society of its own. Using a

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methodology of scaling up and down we might say that the universe itself is a society, or community, consisting of what Whitehead refers to as "subordinate elements" (Whitehead, 1933, p. 240) such as stars, planets and so on. Each of these subordinate elements is also then a society which consists of subordinate elements, and we can continue to scale this analogy either upwards and downwards. What we can also say, though, is that in this scaling we encounter societies at 'different levels': "For instance the army is a society at a level different from that of a regiment, and similarly for a regiment and a man." (Ibid). A household; a group of friends; a dispersed network; any of these instances of community or society might therefore be enough to provide a locus for the development of spiritual capital. We have already identified that size alone is not the key factor in this. To extend this further, however, we must ask if this can be true of an individual person. Can they as an instance of society or community, embody a form of spiritual capital in isolation? Does the idea of the one and the many apply when we consider the aggregation of experience inherent in the personhood of an individual? If we accept, with Whitehead, that indeed an individual is a form of community (the many/ "society"), does this go against the ideas expressed earlier in this chapter, that spiritual capital is in danger of being perceived too individualistically? The answer here, perhaps, is to return to the idea of levels: An individual person, as a society or community, may indeed be able to develop some form of spiritual capital, but this is of a fundamentally different level or order to that developed by a community made up of a group or network of individuals. The question then becomes whether there is an optimum level of community in which spiritual capital may be developed and engaged.

Although we do not have the data to answer this wider question of levels of community fulsomely, there is something in the experience of Interviewee 5 which at least hints at a potential answer.

> "I remember like at Brownies, you know I was a Brownie and a Guide and I always did the kind of the all the badges too, you know going and making an old lady a cup of tea and, you know, making cakes and then take them around the village and I loved it. I think part of that was loving the attention, and thinking… I would quite like more of that." (Interviewee 5)

In her case the community (a village Brownie group) was at a scale where she was known and was able to know others; her name was known; her person was known; her

gifts were received and reciprocated. She was in relationship and able to interact on a personal level, to love and to receive love in minute, personal interactions. Her individuality wasn't entirely subsumed into a corporate whole, neither was she entirely isolated; rather she was able to serve others and to know the value of that service – to be appreciated (a term with an economic *double entendre* in a sentence full of them) and to derive subjective benefit from the attention and appreciation that she received. The process theologian Schubert Ogden reminds us that this is very much part of the human experience and that in itself this demonstrates the constancy of change:

> "Whatever else the self is, it is hardly a substance which, in Descartes' phrase, "requires nothing but itself in order to exist," nor is it altogether without intrinsic temporal structure. To the contrary the very being of self is relational or social; and it is nothing if not a process of change involving the distinct modes of past present and future." (Ogden, 1967, p. 57)

Life is made up of these small, enmeshed, interactions. Of powerfully weak relationships that cause moment by moment change, infinitesimal scraps of becoming and perishing that form a present, momentary reality. Critics, religious and otherwise, may well look at such small, weak, interactions and scoff. 'This is ephemeral and haphazard,' they might say, or 'we can't base our lives on such flimsy foundations!' We may, in humility, counter that it is precisely this fragile sort of connection that Whitehead suggests forms the basis of worthwhile religion.

> "Religion is the vision of something which stands behind, and within, the passing flux of immediate things; something which is real, and yet waiting to be realised; something which is a remote possibility, and yet the greatest of present facts; something which gives meaning to all that passes and yet eludes apprehension; something which is the ultimate ideal and the hopeless quest." (Whitehead, 1938, p. 222)

He goes on to add:

> "The power of God is the worship He inspires. That religion is strong which in its ritual and its modes of thought evokes an apprehension of the commanding vision. The worship of God is not a rule of safety – it is an adventure of the spirit, a flight after the unattainable. The death of religion comes with the repression of the high hope of adventure." (Ibid, p. 223)

We might even choose to point to Jesus' rather fragile but world changing team of just twelve disciples, or the countless examples of projects which have been formed by just a few friends or colleagues. There is something in this idea, this sense of weak and fragile community which seems to echo the process conception of God's power. In a climate where the church seems at times to prefer to ape the power plays of empire, instead small acts of love, and inefficient (and often unsystematic) acts of giving, may have a powerful effect.

In looking back at the things that shaped him, Interviewee 8 recounted his formative experience of being in an ecumenical youth group, and the way that it helped to develop and strengthen an emerging social conscience. Crucially he speaks of an apparently fragile and rather informal community, without any formal power to control, but nevertheless profoundly influential.

> "It was a genuinely ecumenical group, the leadership came from four or five different churches – mainly Protestant but I think we had a Catholic church involved at one point. And there was quite a spread of personality types and to some extent theological worldviews, amongst the leadership - and everyone was volunteers. They were always activists… fairly conservative activists I suppose. I think there were people, you know, people who probably had a fairly limited, but fairly focused, kind of, cause that they supported. Like, there was one person who, again, pretty radical for the time, was quite into environmental stuff. Early to mid '80s this was, so that was there wasn't a lot of that, it was unusual. And, you know, we had this kind of, we had this orphanage that we helped help fundraise and do other things for in in Brazil. And then, it was kind of like a mix, like, of duty and obligation, and also, like some genuine awareness or consciousness of other people. Some of it might have been a bit a bit patronising in that way that sometimes charity can be kind of you know, the deserving poor, I think that crept in, but from a good place. Obviously with the benefit of 30 years reflection I can go 'oh that's interesting'…" (Interviewee 8)

An obvious observation here would be to say that power was instrumentalised by means of a series of informal social controls within the group, which one might suggest are subtly coercive. 'There were always activists' he recalls, painting a picture of a group in which such attitudes and behaviours were normalised and legitimised, where it might even have been seen as subjectively 'cool' or morally good to espouse a cause. Where to embody such characteristics might endow one with social capital. There is,

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perhaps, a fine line between influence and coercion sometimes. It becomes hard to distinguish between these two as the agency of an individual can be hampered by the forces of a culture. This question is one which Cobb addresses, and we will return to it shortly.

First though we can say, at least, that this particular group remained counter cultural on a number of levels: it was Christian, it was ecumenical, and individuals supported causes which were not fashionable at the time. Perhaps most crucially the group was free to take its own direction, rather than be directed by a more powerful entity – the spiritual capital built up by and embodied within the group was theirs to develop and expend in ways that seemed right to them.

> "That group was ran out of an Anglican church, but funded and resourced, by, say by volunteers from… from various places, and that local church, in the best possible way, never owned that group… I think there was, there was some activity which was probably quite parallel to, to the kind of scope, and probably even destinations that the youth group was pursuing, but it was separate." (Interviewee 8)

The impression here is of a rather marginal group, people on the margins who found common cause with others of similar mind, and a group that was on the margins of the church to which it 'belonged'. This is not a group which would be considered, classically, to be in a position of strength. What it does though is form, in Interviewee 8 and perhaps others, a series of experiences that help to form the person he will become.

This underlines the importance of ensuring that Christian youth groups aren't simply treated as a new base of congregants for a particular church, but are primarily places where people can be 'en-couraged' or 'en-abled' to engage with important issues of concern to them. To do otherwise would be to reflect an approach which seems motivated by the avoidance of perishing, rather than nurturing becoming. Interviewee 8's group here represents an apparently free-form, adventurous and courageous approach to the development of young Christians, one in which they were allowed to become without strict controls over what that becoming should look like. Whitehead often refers to adventure when talking about religion, one lesson we have apparently yet to learn is one to which we referred earlier, from the end of a chapter in 'Science and

The Modern World': "The death of religion comes with the repression of the high hope of adventure." (1938, p. 223)

RECEPTIVE POWER

Returning to the question of power and control, in their book 'For The Common Good' Daly and Cobb write insightfully about the distinction between persuasive and coercive power.

> "When we understand that the most important relations are internal, then we want to participate in constituting others at a deeper level than overt behavior. We want to influence them. One important way this is done is by communicating to them ideas we want them to hold. The other side of this coin, of course, is being willing to listen to the ideas they want us to hold, and being genuinely open to the persuasive power of ideas. In this way we act on the faith that it is ideas, not persons, that ultimately have persuasive power and that faith leads us to expect that the ideas that have the power to convince us will also have the power to convince others. To believe in persuasion is to believe in the existence of truth, however cloudily we may perceive it." (Cobb Jr & Daly, 1990, p. 184)

This is what Cobb and Daly term 'receptive power', a different nature of power from the coercion of unilateral intervention, a form of power where we open ourselves up to 'the other' to listen to what they have to say, and are prepared to receive their insights and even be changed by them. Receptive power is empowering of all, because it leaves space for the concerns of all to be heard, to be received. Cobb and Daly couch it in terms of genuine 'friendship' and acknowledge that in this process of mutual reciprocity 'community grows'. In the best examples of empowering communities then, there must be space for this sort of sharing, for ideas to be received thoughtfully from all and by all. In that sense a group which is necessarily plural in outlook, as an ecumenical group might be, has a head start – nobody has the authority to claim the high ground, instead a variety of views are acknowledged and sharing of divergent views and experiences can be encouraged.

Cobb and Daly go on to note that there is the danger of being naïve in this thinking: "…it is naïve to suppose that new ways of thinking of power will bring an end to the will to dominate and disempower others…" (Ibid, p.186) but they nevertheless extol the advantages of small but committed groups of people, remarking that in

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antiquity the smaller Greek armies were sometimes able to defeat much larger Persian forces because the Greeks were willing to risk their lives for something they believed in, while the Persian soldiers were unwilling conscripts. The Greeks were persuaded, they had a sense of genuine agency and self-determined belief. This, Cobb and Daly argue, is a form of power of a different order to that modelled by the economist's *homo economicus*.

It is this 'receptive power' that process theologians argue is the nature of God's power of persuasion – not the ability to coerce and control, but a, two-way, relational process of listening and influencing. In his interview, Interviewee 9 reflected on power of this sort, from both a positive and negative stance. Recalling a formative time in his youth when he became convinced of the need to engage in work for the common good (receptive power), he then reflected on the discovery that this conflicted with the teachings of his church community.

> "We'd not been married very long, and we were in a church that was quite charismatic, for a couple of years, you know, a big kind of American style place, prosperity and stuff like that, you know. Anyway, I got involved with a charity project that was at the time, and it was called Radio Cracker. They did little independent radio stations around local areas to raise money for certain projects in… I can't even remember now, specifically what the projects were to be honest. But it ran for about six weeks or something like that, it was a Christmas, New Year time. Lots of churches in our area worked together on it and we had a little caravan with a radio station set up in the caravan. But the teaching from the church that I was in was jarring, with what I was finding out about how people were living, really. How their wealth and prosperity relied on the poverty of people in other parts of the world. That started to give me some problems I suppose, you know. I had some ideas about how, actually, we have a responsibility to try and make the world a fairer and more equal place…. And that jarred with the, as I say, with the church that I was in at the time. So we had a conversation with the Minister about it, and he said, well, 'you'd probably be better off somewhere else' basically." (Interviewee 9)

The persuasive power of the ecumenical charity project led Interviewee 9 into conflict with the leadership of his church to the point where a parting of the ways became inevitable. There are various imponderables here, of course, how do individual personal relationships factor? Would things have been different if the minister in

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question had taken a different approach? Or was Interviewee 9 already moving away from that stream of Christianity? How would the leaders of the charity project have responded to questioning and critique of their own thinking? We cannot answer these questions, but we can observe the power of persuasion, we can see the way that Interviewee 9 felt empowered, he was 'en-abled', and 'en-couraged' to walk away from a community and a theology which he had at one point valued and now felt unconvinced by. In this brief vignette we can also see a clear example of becoming and perishing: as his new vision of a socially engaged, interconnected, Christianity became, so his myriad previous fleeting visions of Christianity perished. Interviewee 9 notes instances of this happening throughout his adult life, and this reflects the process sense of the present moment being made up of the prehended agglomeration of previous experiences, some foreseeable, others entirely unforeseeable. There's an inherent riskiness in this of course, what if Interviewee 9 had, for some reason, overlooked this project? What if he had not been persuaded by the stories he had heard? How might things have been different? This is a vulnerable power, not a hard, mighty, coercive power. This is an instance of William James' soft rootlets again, stealing through the crannies of the world: 'Invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual'.

INTERCONNECTION & LURE

The idea of persuasion leads us back to the idea of the lure again, and the idea that this represents the way in which the divine seeks to persuade, and to lead people towards the good, even when this goes against other, competing narratives. There's an echo of this in the Interviewee 1's story, when he talks about his work with young people. He begins by acknowledging that all the charities he has worked with are trying, albeit imperfectly, to help people, but goes on to note the importance of listening to the quiet voices that lie beneath the institutional ones.

> "…deep down, you have got to think that they [charities and organisations] have got a moral compass of trying to help. And whether they're getting it right in the way that they go about doing it is to be open to question, but what you can't question is the morals about why they're doing it… certainly, you know, two or three of the young people that we've supported [through a mental health support project], because obviously, you know, these young people were struggling, struggling, with their mental health. And so obviously, we, you know, we helped

them out, got them involved on the allotment and things, and as time went on they started helping with other things…And that was quite interesting, because at the time we got asked, why are we wasting our time, why have we spent so much time on these youngsters when they weren't our residents? Yeah, I just said I thought we were supposed to be a Christian organisation that looks after young people. The fact that they weren't our residents is neither here nor there as far as I'm concerned." (Interviewee 1)

This extract demonstrates, perhaps, why Interviewee 1 is a good example of someone who has, and makes good use of, embodied spiritual capital. His body of work speaks for itself, a veteran volunteer and community organiser, regardless of belief system or lack of religion he demonstrates a willingness and a courage to follow the lure in his life, and here he shows he will do so even when that means following a path which goes against powerful voices which complain that he is 'wasting time'. This is because he has a courage derived from the sense of doing the right thing, the common good, of which he is persuaded. In this instance persuasion is sufficiently powerful that it supersedes coercive attempts to prevent him from following this particular path. Persuasion may seem frail but is shown not to be. Notably, Interviewee 1 also speaks in terms of plurality and interconnection in his work, ('we helped' rather than 'I helped'), only switching back to the first person singular when recounting how he dealt with personal challenge. He also recounts a sense of becoming in those he was working with: 'as time went on they started helping with things' which also implies a form of perishing – in this case a perishing of a period of struggle, of disconnection and difficulty which had previously prevented them from engaging. For all concerned this experience goes to form the people they are becoming. We may also note that although Interviewee 1 is one of those in this group of interviewees who does not identify as a Christian, he still has a clear idea of what a Christian organisation should be, and from his perspective that is all to do with caring for people. In this he models a post secular willingness to work beyond ideological or religious boundaries, to rise above barriers – but note the sense he has of what Christianity should be, and how close the organisation in question comes to defying that expectation. This should be a warning to faith-based groups, 'don't betray your principles, people will notice!'

The final example we will consider in this chapter is that of Interviewee 4. The context of her first remarks here is that she joined a local 'health walks' scheme, as a

volunteer. Here she recounts how that came to be, and what she felt were the reasons for offering her services.

> "So I saw a post or an advert on Facebook. There was advertising for the local scheme, various national schemes for health around this. And at that time, I was in the middle of changing careers into sports therapy because I wanted to help people in similar situations to myself. So I guess my experience informed where I wanted to go with my career and applying that… well it just seemed like a nice thing too, particularly for the older generations. And it's a social thing too for them. And there's the physical health benefit, and it does you good to get outside to be out in the sun, get some sunshine. Just to be outside, connecting with people, even if you're not like best buds or anything like that, just to be able to walk and chat with people outside of your circle. And I just liked the idea of it."
> (Interviewee 4)

Interviewee 4 is someone for whom connection is clearly important, and something of which she is conscious. In that context it makes sense that it should have been through social media that she came upon this opportunity to volunteer to help others. She was not unconscious, clearly, of the potential for involvement in this scheme to be of relational benefit to her as well as those with whom she was working. She felt that she would get, as well as give, in these interactions. Speaking of her move into sports therapy Interviewee 4 went on to say: "I also like to make sure that both my body and my mind are active, that's why I started doing this sports therapy work really, because I was getting bored." Although she is an altruist, she recognises her own need for fulfilment too, and takes that seriously. She finds this fulfilment partly in interconnection and in helping others, and partly in the living out of her humanist philosophy.

> "My personal joy comes from the challenge and problem solving. I think in terms of social justice, because I think you should treat other people how you wish to be treated. That kind of probably does have more of a personal link for me, because I don't think you should treat people like crap. So perhaps that has an impact on the way that I think but that's a deeply, deeply complex thing I think." (Interviewee 4)

The interviewee is of course right to recognise the deep complexity inherent in the human psyche, process philosophy would have it that we are creating our present moments by the ongoing stream of experience, and therefore also by the experiences of all those with whom we interact also. We have, by turns, come back to the idea of

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community and society: complexity is assured in this. Process and relational theologians all recognise this, Sallie McFague uses the upward and downward extension methodology to say that what is true in an atom is true (with even more complexity) in a human, while Norman Pittenger employed what is now rather dated, gendered, language to say something similar in a somewhat less sophisticated manner.

> "One critical aspect of this complexification is increasing subjectivity or the ability to experience and feel. Whatever we might or might not want to say about subjectivity in atoms or rocks, it surely increases as we progress to animals and to its present culmination in human self-consciousness… for life is a type of organization, not an entity or substance." (McFague, 1993, p. 106)

> "…because each man is with his brethren, each man affects and is affected by others. Man's sociological situation is not incidental to him; it is part of his very self… Each of us is also influenced by others, now and in the past." (Pittenger, 1970, p. 52)

Can we see becoming and perishing in her story? There are certainly new steps being taken through life – the ending (perishing) of one part of her career and the start (becoming) of another; the forming of new relationships, particularly with those outside of her 'circle', are also indicators of a process of becoming. She evidences the power of persuasion too – she believes it is right to treat people a certain way, she is persuaded, so she does it. There is no extrinsic compulsion, she simply sees the opportunity and recognises that it has value, and that by adding herself to it she can increase the value. For as much as it confers value to others because of her, it also confers value to her because of them. *Habitus* and capital are developing with and in experience and as such 'the many become one, and are increased by one.' She speaks of the complexity of human experience, and demonstrates the reality of interconnection – the story is very ordinary, very relatable and low key, but that only makes it all the more resonant.

VULNERABILITY

The very prospect of perishing implies vulnerability and the apparently perverse prospect of the power of weakness. This is exemplified somewhat in the stories of all research participants who tell stories of fragile childhood experiences, or of difficulty and brokenness in adulthood, and it is an intrinsic part of the theology which underlies this whole project. That as humans are vulnerable so is the divine: that God experiences

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pain and hurt is key to a process conception of divinity. Keller writes of this in terms of "a deconstruction of the standard model of power…" (2008, p.84) citing the second letter to the Corinthians in which the author writes that "power is made perfect in weakness." Accordingly true power is to be found not in 'being powerful' but in the opposite, in 'being powerless'. This is good news for those who find themselves without any power in the first place, although that does not suggest that weakness and subjugation should themselves be fetishized as a form of holy impotence, as Keller goes on to clarify:

> "If the message of vulnerability shatters the idol of absolute and impassive control, it does not idealize weakness and passivity. To do so would merely entrap us in patterns of unjust suffering." (Keller, 2008, p.85)

Such a passivity of acceptance serves only to enable domination and abuse. Rather this is a refusal to accept the dominant narrative of top-down, enforced, power, whether it is human or divine, the latter of which Whitehead pithily refers to as 'the deeper idolatry' (1978, p. 342). What this tells us in positive terms is that spiritual capital is not simply available to the vulnerable, it is in fact particularly or peculiarly available to them. Conversely this would mean that those who are most protected from vulnerabilities are least able to access it. A nut may need frost to crack its hard shell before it's seed can germinate. In practical terms: those who never come face to face with hardship or difficulty, for instance, those who never have to deal with the challenges of poverty or homelessness, are never likely to do anything to address these problems. This refers us back to a previous idea – that spiritual capital is, effectively, the embodiment of life experience. It is in the experiencing of this embodied suffering, a process which we might reconceive as entering the field of spiritual struggle, that spiritual capital is mobilised. When Bourdieu says that there exists an "interdependence between the definition of the field and the definition of the capital involved" (2020, p. 226) perhaps this is how this is realised: it by entering into the field of spiritual struggle, by developing or more precisely 'incorporating' this experience that we are able to develop and thus mobilise a spiritual capital.

What, then, can we say that spiritual capital 'is' at this point? It is not a 'thing', which is to say 'material', because it takes no material form. No more though is it simply a disembodied 'idea', because it can be found to exist within an individual, or a body of people as having developed in and through their lived experience, it is 'real' in

that sense. So we can instead call it a reality. Embodiment, too, is crucial here – spiritual capital as developed here is an embodied asset. It is developed in and through the experiences, lives and therefore bodies of individuals and their communities and it is nurtured, transmitted and further developed as such. Where people have experienced, either first-hand or by association, suffering or difficulty, they are able to take this and begin to turn it into a resource they can use in the alleviation of the suffering of others. Once again, this is not by means of top-down power, but it comes from the margins or edges, it enters via the most vulnerable. Crucially where vulnerability is fortified against, it may be less able to penetrate. The task is, then, to accept the world for what it is, agreeing with Coleman that suffering is 'built into the structure of the world' (2008, p. 45) and with Suchocki that there is a 'fundamental ambiguity to existence, with good and evil interwoven' (2005, p. 154). By recognising and accepting this reality and then consciously making oneself open to (vulnerable to) the pain this may cause, we are enabled to engage with the pain and suffering of others.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has three interpretative centres: it advances three ideas about God, and asks whether they are evidenced in the broad sweep of the interviews granted in this project. These centres, or lenses, are enumerated thus: Firstly 'divine power' which in process theology is persuasive but never coercive. This is, in one sense, 'weak' power, it cannot effect unilateral change in the way of the classical idea of the divine as *Deus omnipotens*, but process theologians argue that it is all the more powerful for this. We see evidence of this sort of power, and its effectiveness throughout the data. Persuasion and receptivity are consistently shown to have power of a different order to compulsion and coercion: "The creation of the world… is the victory of persuasion over force" (Whitehead, 1967, p. 25). Secondly 'interconnectedness', the idea that we are deeply, inextricably and interminably interconnected is key to understanding process thinking. Our relationships are interwoven and vastly complex, our past experiences and the past experiences of others inform (and form) our present subjectivity, our reception and perception (prehension) of new experiences. This too is writ large in the data, complex interconnectedness is everywhere, spiritual capital exists in the one, in so far as it exists in the many. The third category was that intrinsically Whiteheadian sense of 'becoming and perishing'. That each instance of becoming, the prehension of each actual

experience, involves an instance of perishing, such that for something to become, something must also perish – this is where Whitehead seeks to improve upon Aristotle (and succeeds). Again, throughout the data we see instances of becoming and perishing, indeed it feels almost too obvious, but its obviousness is too infrequently taken into account. We tend to cling on, rather than accept the perishing, learning to let go and step into the new is the practical lesson here. Thich Nat Hanh has become a frequent reference in this project, we may note these words from his poem 'Oneness': "As I die each moment[…] I come back to you in every moment." (Hanh, 2001)

Taken together these three are simultaneously aspects, or facets, of the divine nature. We may assert this on the basis of an upward and downward extension methodology of the sort that has been referenced throughout this chapter: what is true of us, indeed what is true of the most base atomic element, must be able to be extended 'upwards' to describe God. We can employ the same methodology in reverse too, extending ideas about God 'downwards' through stages or levels.

The evidence presented in this chapter, drawn from the interview transcripts of research participants does demonstrate harmony with these three interpretative centres – as in turns we see examples of becoming and perishing, interconnection, and the power of persuasion. The familiar, familial, God who Jesus calls 'Abba' and whose nature, we are assured, is love, is often described in terms that defy these categories, even (particularly) by religious people who hold to a classical theist viewpoint. Similarly human behaviour is often directed towards ways of thinking and being that are very different to this apparently rather weak or frail way of doing things. Persuasion, and thus conversion, of 'hearts and minds', the only clear strategy of the relational God is often replaced by rhetoric of domination and threats of damnation, which is, of course, the ultimate expression of separation, and the antithesis of interconnection. This leads us back to a word which has so far not been used very much in this project: salvation. For Christians 'salvation' is a cornerstone concept, albeit that for liberals and progressives it is one which raises careful consideration. We have previously observed two of Coleman's thoughts on the subject, as we conclude this chapter though, we may receive this from Tripp Fuller:

> "…God's response to our predicament is a **solidarity** that runs deep into the divine life. This means not only that God too needs salvation, but that God's self-investment in Creation is such that God has refused to be God without us…

God's power for salvation is not a power wielded alone, but with the community being redeemed. This vision of divine power rejects the possibility that a potential for divine intervention could establish our eschatological hope. This power runs contrary to the nature of love and the integrity of relationships… our hope in God is established not in God's over-ruling power, but in God's fidelity, solidarity and promise." (Fuller, 2020, p. 154) (Emphasis added).

Process theology offers a subversive and upside-down vision of power. It insists that deep interconnectedness be taken very seriously, and it observes that the ongoing process of which we are part is one of infinite becoming and perishing. That these categories are demonstrable in the data here can encourage us to think that the language and ideas of process theology are indeed suited to the task at hand. It also leads us to re-examine the nature of power – recognising that it is in divine vulnerability that God's true strength exists, and correspondingly that only in human weakness are we able to develop the embodied asset which will enable us to take part in the active, loving, self-sacrifice required in the field of spiritual struggle.

With the end of this analysis we conclude the second triad of chapters in this project. In Chapter 8 we will draw together some of the threads of thinking hitherto identified to help us begin to construct a 'quilt of ideas'. Rather than offer conclusions and to imply the possibility of definitive answers, we will instead venture to make some observations, and from those observations draw out some recommendations. As we have established, this project relies upon an understanding of all things as interconnected, and leans heavily on the idea of iterative becoming. As such it is important to recognise that new experiences will help to develop new ideas, as such we must retain a sense of provisionality in any attempts to conclude our thinking.

Chapter 8: The quilt of ideas

"Our situation calls for a different way of conducting ourselves as theologians... We need to work in a collegial fashion, realizing that we contribute only a tiny fragment. Feminists have often suggested a "quilt" metaphor as an appropriate methodology: each of us can contribute only a small "square" to the whole. Such a view of scholarship may appear alien to an academy that rewards works "totalizing" others in the field and insisting on one view." (McFague, 1991)

"You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness. In this case, it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future." (Sankara, 2007)

One of Whitehead's principal concerns, and something to which he refers in both 'Adventures of Ideas' (1967, p. 66) and on numerous occasions too in 'Process and Reality' has to do with what he terms the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" which we might understand to be any point where we "mistake the abstract for the concrete." While Whitehead levels this charge at favoured philosophers such as Bergson, in whose work he spots the occasional error, we may too recognise its reality in any of those moments when an idea is simplified so thoroughly that its inherent complexity and nuance is diminished. In 'For The Common Good' Cobb and Daly consider the way in which wealth is measured. In doing so they observe: "The very existence of a measure *invites* the fallacy of misplaced concreteness" (1990, p. 84). Measurement, they suggest, steers us towards the idea that there is 'substance' to be found, instead they seek to draw us back to a mindset of process. The problem with any idea of capital, be it economic, social or cultural is that it does, or can do, precisely the same thing: it presents an objective idea into the midst of our deeply complex subjectivity.

In this project we have sought to develop fruitful theoretical links between the realism of Whitehead and the quasi-materialism of Bourdieu in developing an understanding of what spiritual capital is, by way of process thinking. The danger in such an endeavour is that one can, effectively, oversimplify the inherently complex by

seeking overly definitive answers. McFague's reference to the quilt methodology, in the chapter's epigraph, is helpful in reminding us of the kind of prismatic thinking required if we are to approach anything resembling a truth claim. There are many squares to be stitched together before the quilt begins to take its true, or full, form. Perhaps the number is infinite.

Another way of looking at this is to say that truth is functionally atomic, which is to say made up of many parts. The whole is made up of smaller parts, smaller truths perhaps, which are actually truthful perspectives. In a sense this accords with Whitehead's view that the "ultimate metaphysical truth is atomism," (1978, p. 35). When we speak of truth, then, we are really speaking of a nexus or society which in itself may be further analysable into various intermingled 'strands' of truth. We perceive these in the light of our experience, and as such the past events which have gone to form our experience are increasingly revealed in their *Vielseitigkeit*, to borrow a Weberian term, their multi-faceted formation.

Within this society of truths there may arise a sense of dialectical conflict, I recognise the influential limitations of my somewhat dualistic Reformed tradition here, in which truth claims concerning ultimates or finalities have indeed been ranged as adversaries. This relies upon an, at times unquestioned, epistemology which asserts that one truth which concerns itself with the question of ultimates or finalities may invalidate or rule out another. When faced with this issue we might well return to Whitehead's pithy advice to researchers once more: "Seek simplicity and distrust it" (2006). Any answers that we give can only be provisional, which is to say not 'concrete' and always subject to change.

Of course, this poses a challenge when it comes to the conclusion of a research project – particularly when it has begun with an attempt at definition. What I will attempt to do in this chapter, therefore, is make a series of seven observations that help us describe the experience(s) of spiritual capital, that have been recorded in this project. Those observations will be followed by some recommendations both for those seeking to make practical use of this research and for those seeking to reflect on it theologically. It doesn't require great perspicacity to recognise that observations are somewhat different from definitions, and this is deliberate. Observations are made in the light of experience, and on the understanding that further experience, and alternative perspectives may bring about new insights.

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OBSERVATION ONE

Spiritual capital is developed as an embodied process as we follow the lure of God to love others.

> "I suddenly realised I'd gone two months without having an argument with my dad… I find [sic] that I've got a compassion for other folk…. My sister tells me I was always bringing people home…" (Interviewee 2)

The primordial nature of God is love which, Pittenger reminds us, is 'indefatigable' (1970, p.21) and as we pursue that lure, however weakly, we, along with God, are forever experiencing and being changed by experience. For Whitehead the lure is seductive and persistent, it proposes and solicits our engagement. It does not force or command, for as Oord (2019) bluntly asserts: "God can't." Hartshorne puts forward the same view with characteristic subtlety:

> "Anything that could be actual God could divinely have, but what God actually has depends partly on creaturely decisions. This is the social structure of existence." (Hartshorne, 1984, p.45)

Hartshorne and Oord articulate what amounts to a process orthodoxy: what the divine can do is restricted according to the extent to which we, as living entities, respond to the lure of God. This lure calls us into forms of becoming which arise from the prehension of that which has been and leads us to adventure into the novel. It transcends boundaries of religion and philosophy, and is offered freely to all.

> "It's an empathy for other people and the situation that they're in and knowing what's right and what's wrong, and not from a religious point of view, but just from a moral point of view, it's about the human condition…" (Interviewee 4)

These experiences make up who we are becoming, they are embodied. As the experience alters, so too does the lure, which always draws toward the primordial nature of God, but is shaped by the consequent. Our spiritual capital is developed by our response to the lure and it helps to energise change and movement. It plays a part, along with, and entirely inseparable from, the ongoing process of experience, in enabling a shift of mindset that leads to the development of a practice of solidarity and reconnection – a move to behaviour that seeks to demonstrate the re-integrative love and compassion that the lure of the divine consistently calls us towards.

OBSERVATION TWO

Following this lure leaves us vulnerable to the pain of perishing (suffering), as we endure this we engage in the field of spiritual struggle.

> "I am paid part-time, but the nature of the work is more about investing with our whole lives in a marginalised area. So the costs include time, career progression, isolation, emotional toll." (Survey response)

Liturgia, from which we derive 'liturgy' – the pattern of Christian worship – is more accurately translated as 'the work of the people'. The Hebrew prophets suggest that, when it comes to worship, God is more interested in our work than our words.

> Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
>   with tens of thousands of rivers of oil?
> Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
>   the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?'
> He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
>   and what does the LORD require of you
> but to do justice, and to love kindness,
>   and to walk humbly with your God?
>
> (Micah 6: 7-8)

Engaging with, or following, the lure into a place of authentic, compassionate, solidarity requires some form of sacrifice and this leaves one vulnerable to the experience of suffering – which is also the pain of perishing. To paraphrase Whitehead (1932, p. 27) 'it is as we perish that we are immortal'. Perishing then is not to be feared, but to be accepted as part of the process that will lead us into the next moment, the consequent actual occasion. We must recognise that perishing is a natural part of the process of internal struggle. The development of spiritual capital is inextricable from the multitudinous momentary experiences of life, in fact it is the prehension of these momentary experiences, which inevitably involve some form of perishing, and therefore suffering, that provide us with the resources which then help us as we struggle in the spiritual field – a struggle which in itself is also a form of suffering. In other words, if we seek to avoid this struggle, then we do not build the capital required to endure it.

OBSERVATION THREE

In order to maintain the struggle, we must draw upon our spiritual capital.

> "I've seen Muslims in October, when it's wet and cold, on a pallet, wash themselves in a standpipe and pray in the rain in the open air; and I've seen people build shrines in the woods. And I'm like going, right, so that's proper faith, their faith's not being swayed by their circumstances. They have gotten nothing but that faith, you might argue, and I found that really humbling." (Interviewee 6)

To be humbled is, literally, to be brought 'down to earth' – sometimes with a bump. It is a form of suffering itself, as human pride begins to perish. Here the interviewee reflects on the way that this experience of the faith of 'others' caused the perishing of pride, and became a motivational factor in their life. This highlights the fact that the field of spiritual struggle is an internal one. Although from the perspective of a three-tiered universe the heavens have traditionally symbolised the cosmic battleground in which the forces of good wage war on the forces of evil, as philosophers like Arendt and the teachings of the Vedic and Christian mystical traditions so adeptly demonstrate, this spiritual battleground is truly internal, the struggle is embodied.

Accordingly, it is internally that we must fight against the urges toward vices such as selfishness, cowardice and malice. It is in this internal field of spiritual struggle that we need these unbounded resources of joy, peace, kindness, and long suffering which come to us by way of experience. Here too we must make decisions, again these occur moment by moment. They are instances of perishing and becoming. Decision making involves prehension and subsequent becoming – to 'de-cide (cut off) is to see the perishing of other options and eventualities. A person is informed by their experiences in that moment, and to a greater or lesser extent they are also informed by awareness of divine imminence/involvement. When that decision is taken, the person must then employ whatever stock of spiritual capital they have available to them in order to make a movement in their field which results in practise. If they have sufficient spiritual capital, then they may make a move toward orthopraxis.

OBSERVATION FOUR

Loving others requires us to undergo forms of suffering on their behalf, or in solidarity with them, this may be understood as compassion.

In various places, including his most recent book 'Pluriform Love', Thomas Jay Oord defines love as follows: "To love is to act intentionally, in relational response to God and others, to promote overall well-being" (Oord, 2022). This intentional activity leads one to suffer in solidarity with, or on the behalf of, others. This is a spiritual struggle, it is hard to give up privilege, to go without in order that another may benefit. Struggle in the spiritual field requires a spiritual capital to sustain it. We may say, then that spiritual capital enables one to undergo suffering on the behalf of another. Engaging in this form of co-work with the divine means that we experience transformation. It is this transformation that helps people to make the three movements we encountered in Chapter 3 (a move from a mindset of scarcity to one of creative abundance; from being as an individual to becoming as society; and from an outlook of 'mine' to 'ours'). These movements are exemplified in the lives of the participants who are willing to sacrifice time (literally a part of their life span), money, and even 'peace of mind' in order to engage in the divine act of co-suffering with others. We may note, too, the way that their routes into this often involve another instance, or a number of instances, of suffering.

> "My mum kicked me out when I was 14/15 and luckily a friend's family took me in long-term after I had bounced around different friends. This experience is probably the first thing that influenced my decision to work in this field. But also everywhere I look I see low income, poor living conditions, people without homes. There's a crisis and it needs to be tackled." (Survey response)

This form of capital is unlike that of conventional capitalism, which may take one in another direction altogether. Being a competitor in the field of economic competition gives us little reason, after all, for taking joy in the wellbeing of our neighbour if it comes at our expense. Why should we rejoice when others do well under this paradigm? The only way we can make this conceptual turn, and learn to delight in the happiness and health of others when it comes at a cost to us, is by rejecting the goals of social competition in favour of cooperation. Kenneth Leech, writing from a socialist perspective, seeks to make this move by means of a faith fuelled leftism. Speaking of the need to make the conceptual leap he invokes the "old socialist slogan,

'An injury to one is an injury to all'" (1997, p. 248). In this invocation he calls for a new (or perhaps renewed) sense of human solidarity and interconnection, one which reprioritises the needs of those who are most marginalised and disadvantaged. It is notable that something approaching this brand of left-wing political ideology of solidarity (with or without a faith element) is also apparent in a number of the survey participants, this is something which has previously been remarked upon. In various responses we see, for instance, references to trade unions and to socialist political ideology, including a memorable reference to 'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists' in Chapter 6.

The research clearly indicates that, for some, the spiritual capital they have developed, which is to say the kind of ongoing resource that fuels their internal struggle with an outward looking practise, has something to do with the enculturation of this ideology through family, teachers, or other influential people or groups. The research is not of sufficient scale to make totalizing claims (even if one were so inclined) but it would certainly be of interest to investigate further, and with people outside of the UK, to see how far this is the case in a range of cultures.

We made note, in Chapter 1, of Baker and Skinner's (2006) idea that spiritual capital refers to an 'holistic vision for change.' There is certainly evidence of a desire for change in the accounts of many of the participants, whether this amounts to an holistic vision is perhaps a moot point. In the same chapter we also registered Caputo's idea of 'the people of God' as 'impossible people' or 'the people of the impossible'. What Caputo means, here, to refer to the Church might be extended if we are to suggest that all those who take part in the work (*liturgia*: work of the people) are, in effect, 'God's people'. Co-workers with the divine. They are indeed people of the impossible, working at a task which can never be completed ("The poor you will always have with you," Matthew 26:11). Both of these ideas are helpful in considering the way that process thought develops the means by which the divine cooperates with us, moment by moment, constantly experiencing the pain and suffering that we experience and just as constantly working with us to transform it into compassion. This cooperation is done in some sort of recognition of the reality that all things are inter-related, and interdependent. As we engage with the experience of suffering in the world around us, and as we engage with the experience of our own suffering, we may (slowly) realise that these two are not separate, the moment-by-moment prehension of this life 'experience'

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ultimately resolves itself as the constantly evolving process of motivation and energy which leads us to follow the lure.

When we speak of spiritual capital, therefore, we speak of that which develops in us, taking the form of qualities which we have sought to name as 'compassion' and 'love' amongst other things. It can be seen in the willingness and ability of the individual to 'offer their bodies as living sacrifices,' which is to say to suffer in solidarity with, or on behalf of, others. Indeed, there is an apparent paradox to be found in that this process of purposeful suffering that (in the right circumstances at least) leads to the replication of spiritual capital. Love poured out leads to more, not less, love. Compassion expressed leads to the development of compassion. To use a well 'earthed' simile: seeds sown lead to the production of more seeds.

OBSERVATION FIVE

The process of suffering for, or in solidarity with, others is an act of communion with the divine.

In Chapter 2 we noted Bonhoeffer's contention that suffering is part of Christian discipleship: *passio passiva* – suffering because we have to suffer. Suffering has been a key thread throughout the project, and one of the most insightful comments on the topic was made by Interviewee 2 who remarked:

> "Church can be so middle class. It has lost touch with a lot of the suffering of local people." (Interviewee 2)

Choosing to leave aside complex issues concerning class and status, it is this issue of the extent to which the Church is able to identify with the suffering of what the interviewee calls 'local' people which is helpful to reflect on. For 'local' we might wish to substitute alternative terms such as 'normal' or 'everyday'. Whatever the word, though, the assertion is simple: if we're not in the field, we're not developing the capital or the habitus required to deal with its challenges. Where the Church has 'lost touch with suffering', because of its comfort, it has diminished in a number of ways, principally morally and spiritually. God, meanwhile, has not lost touch with suffering, for God experiences everything that we experience, thus God remains actively engaged with the life, and crucially the suffering, of the whole world even when the Church does not. We may add that this observation also casts a light on the most obvious decline in

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the contemporary Church in western Europe and north America: numerical decline. Removed from suffering by its accrued comfort and wealth, the church is apparently perishing. "The modern world has lost God and is seeking him," opines Whitehead in 'Religion in the Making' (1960, p. 72). 'The contemporary Church has lost touch with suffering and is dying,' we might reflect back. Summarily: God, the field of spiritual struggle, and suffering are inextricably intertwined.

Suffering for, and in solidarity with, others should therefore be recognised as an act of communion with the divine – that this is so clearly physically represented in the ritual that Protestants so often call 'Communion' should, I submit, be considered significant: shed blood and 'a broken body' are a constant symbol of how it is we commune with the divine and how we are to live. This, we remind ourselves as we take part in the ritual, is Christian orthopraxis.

In Chapter 1 we noted Iannaccone's idea of religious practice as 'productive service' (1990, p. 299), by which he means that charitable acts serve both those who engage in them, just as they do the recipients. In process thought we exist in relation to or in relationship with, others: to be is to be in community. "The first and foremost insight of process thought is that to exist is to be in relation" writes Suchocki (1985). These two ideas appear to be consistent with one another. Similarly, we also noted Wong and Palmer's (2013) idea that spiritual capital is generated through 'affirming and nurturing the intrinsic spiritual value' of any person; in process thinking every actual occasion has value – it is not conferred by status or by means of hierarchy – in recognising this we find ourselves in harmony with the lure of God.

This suggests, then, that what the sociologist may perceive as a secular concept, devoid of a sense of 'ultimate' meaning, may be re-understood by the theologian as full of ultimate meaningfulness. It further suggests that what the classical theist understands as an act, or series of acts, of God's power being worked according to 'His' will without necessary referent to another's agency is further re-understood as an entirely relational process. The divine is deeply engaged, along with us, in the process of both the aggregation and the deployment of this capital. This idea of co-creativity also shifts the idea of what capital is, moving it away from the scarce resource that the wealthy can exploit others to store up, to something which can be enjoyed by all, perhaps even particularly, or peculiarly, by those who are otherwise excluded or marginalised, which is perhaps to say those for whom suffering is not a stranger.

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OBSERVATION SIX

We may enculturate this form of capital by the modelling of purposeful, conscious, and transformative, engagement with suffering.

> "When I was a young lad growing up, we got the support we got as a family, you know, as individuals, as young people, I never forgot it, I never forgot it… It's really, ultimately, I think, shaped my life." (Interviewee 1)

The powerful recollections of Interviewee 1 demonstrate the way that he 'experienced' the spiritual capital of others at a formative stage, and the causative impact that it had on him in terms of enculturation. Note for instance the way that he unconsciously moves from the words 'as individuals' to 'as young people'. In so doing, here he actively recalls or 're-members' (a creative act of the present) the reality of community as becoming in the young mind. Although it is yet to be perceived at this early stage in his life, it would go on to shape a life heavily given to care for, service of, and solidarity with, others. This is a moment of movement across boundaries, from apart to together, which as Willie James Jennings would have it, is indicative of the presence of God.

> "[it is] precisely this prodding to be boundary-crossing and border-transgressing that marks the presence of the spirit of God." (Jennings, 2017)

From a process perspective this is the work of the 'lure' of God – the constant draw to 're-integrate', to 're-pair' or 're-connect' – all creative acts again. This is the drive to move from isolation to integration.

Similarly in the narrative of Interviewee 9, we can see enculturation taking place by means of gift.

> "You know I can remember times when people would leave shopping on the doorstep, you know, that we didn't know who it was. And we always said, you know you can't… you can't pay this back. What you need to do is pay it forward." (Interviewee 9)

We can observe how, for Interviewee 9, this capital moved them from a place of private, interpersonal, obligations, to a sense of universality: a need or a compulsion to 'pay it forward' to others who, like them, have suffered difficulties or hardship. This is a religious movement, both in the way that Cantwell Smith (1978) conceives religion,

which is to say effectively as the outward manifestation of inward belief, and the way in which Whitehead speaks of it in Science and the Modern World (as quoted more fully in the previous chapter) where he describes it as "the ultimate ideal, and the hopeless quest," (1938, p. 222). The 'ultimate ideal' is a fair summation of the challenging task facing the interviewee who conceives of it in terms more prosaic, effectively: 'we have an obligation to attempt to pay this forward, because there is no way in which we can ever pay it back.'

Suitably, for a process-based theory, enculturation is a term which implies growth and change rather than stasis. In the strict sense it is usually taken to mean the process of socialisation, but it contains within it the key concept of 'culture' which may too be understood as an organism. Enculturation is a process, indeed it is *the* process by which we together develop dispositions and understandings, themselves subject to change of course. Addressing ideas of spiritual capital through the lens of ongoing enculturation means that it too can be perceived as a living, changing organism, a process which is constantly subject to growth and therefore also to perishing. A surprising advantage of this kind of capital is that it remains impossible to measure – we have no metric that adequately assesses amounts of compassion. This is despite the fact that throughout this project reference has been made to the concept of 'stocks' of it, and the sense that it is a resource. On the one hand this remains true from one plane, or perspective. On the other we might reasonably critique it as misleading and as a mischaracterisation of what spiritual capital really is.

Instead of relying on inadequate economic language, perhaps, we should reconceive (of) spiritual capital as a symbiotic organism which lives and grows in, through and with us. Referring back to the previous attempts to describe it we may indeed, perhaps, like to say that sometimes this does indeed begin, or is initially developed, due to our interaction with "a religious community, rituals, or artefacts." Interactions with all these things are aspects of enculturation specific to a particular kind of community. It is clear, though, and has been from the outset, both that spiritual capital may in fact be enculturated without reference to these things, and that such interaction does not necessarily cause this development to take place. Rather it is 'experience' which is important, and particular experiences may lead spiritual capital to develop "in isolation from any form of religious entity as commonly understood" and still go on to "motivate, inspire and equip" people to engage in work that prioritises the

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needs of others over one's own. Spiritual capital in this sense is something much closer to a living being than an inanimate substance, indeed it becomes an element of what it is that 'animates' a person. This reversal is directly analogous to the way that Whitehead inverted the Cartesian 'substance' way of understanding the role of thought and thinker:

> "Descartes in his own philosophy conceived the thinker as creating the occasional thought. The philosophy of organism inverts the order, and conceives the thought as a constituent operation in the creation of the occasional thinker. The thinker is the final end whereby there is the thought. In this version we have the final contrast between a philosophy of substance and a philosophy of organism."
> (Whitehead, 1978, p. 151)

OBSERVATION SEVEN

Spiritual capital is evidenced in the ongoing process of developing qualities such as compassionate love, sometimes termed 'the fruits of the Spirit'.

We began this exploration by hypothesising that spiritual capital is the resource one draws upon when exhibiting what the writer to the Galatians describes as the 'fruits of the spirit', famously these include the qualities of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and so on. This remains helpful, but requires some elaboration. We may note, first, that some of these 'fruits' also form what the writer to the Romans described as "*hē basileia tou Theou*" (Romans 14: 17) – a concept which has traditionally been translated as 'the kingdom of God' but which, acknowledging the problematic classical theism heritage of the term, in this project we've sometimes described as an 'God's upside-down kingdom' and also referred to using the term employed by Rieger and Kwok (2012): 'anti kingdom'. (In an as yet un-published work, Graham Adams advances the provocative phrase 'holy anarchy' for the same idea.) In preferring these alternatives we've aligned ourselves with the, sometimes subversive, nature of process theism which – in extremis – rejects classical theism from two directions, as exemplified in Hartshorne's somewhat scathing observation:

> "Classical theology was a compromise between a not-very-well-understood Greek philosophy and a not-very-scholarly interpretation of sacred writings."
> (Hartshorne, 1984, p.43)

What these concepts (spiritual fruits and anti/upside down kingdom) share is an emphasis on recognising the imminence of the divine presence, of the 'being-here' of God, specifically opposing the sense of God's ultimate transcendence that belongs to a classical/Aristotelian approach. This imminence, which subverts the power structure inherent in the top-down order inspired by the concept of an entirely transcendent deity, is what this process informed sense of spiritual capital draws upon. It gives credence to the idea that spiritual fruits evidence the sense in which God may be said to be active in the world. This way of thinking posits that the divine is constantly seeking to be, and is, in co-operation with the rest of reality – God's action is in, through and crucially 'with' us, rather than separate and unilateral.

The idea of the 'fruits of the spirit' put forward in our original definition, although imperfect, remains helpful for a number of reasons. Firstly it is intrinsically related to the way in which we interact with the divine who, as Fuller (2021) reminds us, stands in 'solidarity' with us. Just as we may experience God when we are loved and accepted, so we also experience the same when we experience the pain of perishing which is suffering. We may experience these things either in ourselves, in others, or both. It is helpful too to understand that fruits both become and perish, this is evident and this reminds us that they must be put to use if they are not to be wasted. Further we can recognise that their purpose is to spread seed – in other words to multiply by perishing. In either case the nature of experience is that it is not static, it is a constant ongoing process of prehended experience leading to perishing and becoming. There is no option of stasis, Whitehead again reminds us of this: "Advance or decadence are the only options…" (1967, p. 274) and this too should be a helpful reminder to the Church as a whole, there is no point in trying to hold on to the past, we must embrace the process of perishing and becoming.

In a further helpful reminder we might also, reasonably, think of fruit as a process, rather than a substance. It is in constant development, just as facets of it become other facets perish, leading to the fruit, as a nexus of these individual occasions, to visibly become and then, just as visibly, perish too. This ongoing process of the development of 'fruit' is the evidential outworking of the spirit of God in our lives.

"[I] didn't really notice other folk until I became a Christian, and then without any particular conscious efforts, I started to notice people more and found that I've got compassion…" (Interviewee 2)

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of these observations about the experience(s) of spiritual capital, we can turn more squarely, once more, to questions of practicality. We may do so with a view to the potential for multi-level policy formation that could best enhance its development. The sort of bodies which may seek to make such policies are any which concern themselves with the doing of the kind of 'work' we've looked at in this study. This includes faith groups, but it may also include other bodies which have no faith designation, but are concerned with work for, or with, those who are somehow disadvantaged or otherwise in need.

RECOMMENDATION ONE

Accept that perishing is a necessary precondition for becoming.

The first recommendation comes with the reiteration of the concept which is absolutely fundamental to process theology, clearly emerges in the data, and is also a cornerstone of Christian thinking: perishing leads to becoming. The Johanine tradition sets it out thus: "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). For practical purposes we must recognise that this applies at all levels, including the institutional. There is perhaps an irony in the fact that such a fundamentally physical image has so frequently been given an almost exclusively spiritual interpretation in the Church – physical perishing, whether it is of an individual, a congregation or a tradition is looked upon with fear and a concern of finality. But all perishing, no matter for little we may desire it, is necessary. Perishing is the unavoidable precursor of becoming.

The concern of so many about the vulnerability of the Church in a post secular society is that it will perish, which is to say die out altogether. Perhaps more urgent is the concern that it will keep going but no longer fulfil its purpose. This is a concern

shared in various other traditions too. As such it was recently addressed, somewhat obliquely, by Rabbi Romain of Maidenhead Synagogue who raised a concern about the way in which religious decline might impact the values of social ethics and of community, which his ministry had sought to develop. Echoing some of the concerns we have previously considered, he noted that if religion continued to decline then there is no obvious substitute.

> "Humanism could be filling the vacuum but it lacks communal structures, as well as the rituals that many individuals find meaningful. The religious decline is not just a worry for clergy but for society as a whole if one of its binding forces disappears." (Romain, 2021)

There are two ways of approaching this concern. The first would be to make the point that on one level this is actually a question more to do with religious capital than spiritual capital, the way we have come to look at spiritual capital recognises that it exists beyond the reaches of religious structures. Secondly, though, we may state that process thinking allows for advancement or change in all things at all times. When we observe, as Romain does here, that a system or institution is perishing the answer is not to simply try and 'stop the bleeding'. A tourniquet is not what is required. Rather we must look to the becoming that will follow the perishing. If these structures are now perishing then what is coming next? How might we adventure onwards? Like the accomplished surfer we must learn to ride the wave; we must grow skilful at this. In doing so we may look to new things, even in the knowledge that these too are provisional and must eventually perish too in order to facilitate further creative 'advance into novelty'. In as much as any ideas or initiatives are new, all novelty carries with, and within, itself the antecedent ideas that have helped to form it, constantly made new by the experience of the present. To paraphrase Heraclitus, one cannot have the same idea twice: in the first place it is not truly the same idea, and in any case we are not the same people 'now' as we were 'then'.

Perishing is a necessary precondition for becoming, let's reassert this. Rather than focussing first on the fear, or prevention, of perishing, we might suggest that it would be more fruitful to actively look, instead, to adventure into the novel becoming that follows any sense of perishing, the strength that is only found in weakness and vulnerability. One might seek to develop the argument that just as when vulnerability is protected against spiritual capital cannot be successfully enculturated, so when

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perishing is artificially prevented becoming too is stifled. Ironically an institution concerned with its own survival can stop doing the very things which keep it alive, the fight against perishing risks stifling the development of the new because it actively seeks to get in the way of becoming. The stories told by research participants make this process clear, but the same story can be found readily in literature and stories from a host of sources: "My spiritual life began the day my daughter died," writes Mirabai Star who found that even after years of spiritual practise, her life was utterly transformed at the moment that she felt the immense pain of parental loss (Star, 2015). As with so many others, she found that perishing leads to becoming and that suffering was a key, transformative, resource.

When artificial turf is laid over soil, in an attempt to preserve the traditional appearance of a lawn, it serves too to stifle anything that might have 'become' from below. Vulnerability to disorder has been protected against, but now no new grass or flowers may grow because perishing has been artificially prevented. In process thinking, and in the natural world, perishing leads to becoming, perhaps it is as simple as restating Newton's third law. The practical lessons we can learn from this are firstly not to be desperate to protect ourselves against vulnerability (and consequent suffering) and secondly, to learn to accept that all things die away in their time, while trusting that this perishing of the old will indeed lead to the becoming of the new. This is perhaps the key lesson from this project: the consistent posture of vulnerability and its necessary openness to sharing with the divine in the pain of perishing is what will allow us to enculturate spiritual capital.

RECOMMENDATION TWO

Dedicate resource to ensuring positive formative experiences for young people.

If the moral case for working to ensure that young people are supported, encouraged, and have compassionate love modelled for them is not sufficient to motivate us, then the voices of research participants, particularly in Chapter 6, provide a practical one: it is this kind of intervention which encourages future work for the common good.

Interviewee 1 was particularly clear about this:

> "the support we got as a family…as young people… [has] really ultimately shaped my life." (Interviewee 1)

Others were clear too, Interviewee 5, for instance spoke of the way her parents brought her up:

> "they've very much brought us up to, to think that serving others is what we should be doing… that money is not important, but how we treat other people and how we make life fair." (Interviewee 5)

For Interviewee 7, meanwhile, it was her teachers who made sure her mind "exploded, absolutely exploded…" Elsewhere in the data there are references to church groups, youth groups and uniformed organisations – all of these things have in common, not a particular structure, but the positive impact of supportive and encouraging adults on the lives of children and young people. Into each was made, to borrow the words of Virginia Woolfe's Clarissa Dalloway, a "secret deposit of exquisite moments" from which, according to gift theory, one must eventually repay. Again, this experience can also be found to echo in the experiences of many, should we care to look for them. The billionaire John Caudwell who founded the charity Caudwell Children and who has vowed to give away more than half of his wealth through his philanthropic work told BBC Radio Four that the love he experienced from his mother left him with an enduring sense that he had a "debt" to pay, and that it is through his philanthropic work, which he sees as the paying of the debt, that he has found a sense of "spiritual satisfaction" (BBC Radio 4). (I don't seek to comment here on the convoluted motivations of billionaire philanthropists, rather I'm seeking to highlight the obvious amid the complex.)

Accordingly making these deposits in childhood should continue to be a practical priority for any institution, church, family, or other group seeking to encourage orthopraxis in adults. This is, historically, an area in which the Church could be said to have been strong – as witnessed by the development of initiatives such as the Sunday School movement, and organisations such as the Boys Brigade, Girls Brigade and so on. As culture has shifted though, some of these sorts of structures have dwindled in numerical terms as they have been found to no longer be such a 'good fit' for the needs of contemporary society, so some of this work has dropped away (perished). Rather than attempting to fight or prevent this perishing, those who are in a position to do so should now seek to develop routes by which the new may

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purposefully become (see recommendation one). To borrow a metaphor from the economists again, the deposit must be made for the interest to accrue.

Crucially, then, we should note in particular that young people can benefit from the experience of positive adult engagement at times of formation and difficulty, and so where possible churches and other interested bodies and institutions should urgently seek to develop work which maximises this – it might involve the creation of safe and encouraging spaces for young people, it may involve the development of activities that serve as templates on which the young people can model future behaviour, in any case it is the positive support and encouragement of their becoming which seems to be of paramount import.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

Churches should seek to develop means by which young people feel active and engaged as part of the whole church community, rather than as separate from it

Linked with both of the foregoing recommendations is a practical recommendation for churches in particular. This is an idea which comes across particularly clearly in the remarks of Interviewee 5: that churches should not seek to exclude the participation or agency of young people in their corporate life. A famous model of this is to be found in Lukan account of Jesus' ministry when the disciples attempt to manage the chaos and disruption caused by children, and find themselves rebuked by Jesus.

> "People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. But Jesus called for them and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it."" Luke 18: 15-17

An emphasis on creating a separate 'other' space where children can be noisy and disrupt nobody only manages to emphasise the sense that this is what 'normal' church services are not. Interviewee 5's experience would indicate that churches should carefully consider, and where possible aim to ensure there are, ways to engage young

people in, and give them ownership of, the 'mainstream' of the life of the church, rather than to effectively exclude or side-line them – here we might think of the becoming of community as being particularly important.

Perhaps churches might take the lead from the Hebrew creation myth in which God engages with the chaos and turbulence of 'the deep' and allow the chaos and turbulence of 'the kids' and, to repurpose Hartshorne a little, the "disorder inherent in [their] freedom" (1984, p.45) to take shape in their midst. Both, after all, are the point from which the future is already actively becoming. There is a direct link to the first recommendation here too, for it can serve to ensure the ongoing evolution (becoming) of new forms of life together, rather than preserve (prevent the perishing of) more traditional models which instead favour the preservation of one generation's experiences, ideas and traditions and effectively refuses room to those of a different cultural outlook (prevents perishing, and thus stifles becoming). By ensuring that all ages are engaged, and included, in primary worship settings churches may actually be better able to secure the 'hand on' of the ecclesial body from one generation to the next.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

Actively promote initiatives and ideas which aim to engage with suffering.

Just as the theme of underpinning 'positive' childhood experiences arose in the survey and interview stage data, so did the activating factor of 'negative' adult experiences. Seeds that were planted in childhood germinated in adulthood in response to these issues, once they found themselves in the field of spiritual struggle, they found they had the capital to aid them in their struggle. We might consider that they heard or felt the lure of God in this heightened state. In some cases this was in relation to something external to them, e.g., being confronted by the poverty or homelessness of others; or something internal, such as personal illness, or other difficulties. We may say that this is the response to the co-suffering of God, but we are left to ask how the Church should respond to this in a positive way.

In response we may advise that there should be an emphasis on ensuring that initiatives which seek to engage compassionately with suffering are encouraged

wherever possible, even though it is sometimes difficult (or uncomfortable) to do this programmatically – as far as possible becoming of compassion should not be stifled. An alternative answer may be found in the simple methodology of having plentiful 'things to get involved in' – churches which can provide people with routes to stand in solidarity with their local communities may find that they are more readily able to engage with those who find themselves motivated to respond to perceived need. Again, in keeping with the philosophy of organism this should not become too readily petrified, however, rather there should be a sense of dynamism: creating space for new needs to be addressed as they arise, and for people to feel empowered to work alongside others for the greater good. Crucially for churches they should perhaps seek to avoid this becoming 'separate' to their identity as a religious community. Rather this work should be at the core of their identity as gathered people, such that they can honestly say: 'loving, serving, and being solidarity with others is an integral part of who we are as people.' This kind of support and commitment can be influential for young people to experience (and have agency in) too, sowing the seeds for future iterations of service and innovation.

This is not the preserve of churches alone, it can be applied to any group of people – it is an atomic truth, from the smallest unit (family) to the largest (society). Nor does it need to be couched in the terms of, or articulated as part of, a spiritual or religious tradition – whether Christianity of any other. Interviewee 4 refers to the way in which this sort of thinking was very naturally inculcated in her as a young person when talking about the influence of her mother, who taught her to have "empathy for other people and the situation that they're in…" this is, she clarifies, "not from a religious point of view, but just from a moral point of view." It is perhaps important to note that while the interviewee makes a point that is clear to her, we need not accept it in the terms in which it is given, for morality could be said to be indivisible from a Christian religious identity. Commenting on the way that Barth makes clear his view of the interlinking of ethics and doctrine, Hauerwas points out that religion and morality are hard to separate.

> "After all, is not one of the defining marks of being Christian, particularly in
> modernity, that Christians still believe they ought to be morally good?"
> (Hauerwas, 1997, p. 21)

It may be helpful, in a post secular landscape, to consider if this identification of belief with its enaction may help to give a religious or faith community a sense of identity which those outside of the 'sector' can hope to understand, thereby building opportunity for fruitful partnership working. Notably it is the Church's manifold failures to maintain this sort of association with morality (whether that be exemplified by sexual abuse revelations and other failings to safeguard the vulnerable, or by the accumulation of wealth and privilege) that forms some of the most often vocalised criticisms of the institution.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE

There should be a move towards working in partnership with all those who seek the common good.

A straightforward critique of these four practical recommendations is that they rely upon an individual church having 'strength in numbers' – and therefore having the ability to enact these strategies by dint of power. We may refute this, though, by responding that this is a classical theism model of thinking. It stems from the idea that, like the God of classical imagination, we should be able to do things unilaterally, without recourse to cooperation with others. It suggests that we too should be 'strong' and 'powerful', an idea which is contradicted by the sense in process theology that God is in fact weak and achieves change by means of persuasion and cooperation rather than mighty power. We may remember that Elijah found that God was not in the great wind, the earthquake or the fire, but in the whisper (1 Kings 19: 11-13). In that sense it is for the Church to reconfigure its thinking, and to reflect instead the sense of consistent persuasion that God models. The Church should forever be pulling toward the good, as God does, just as it continually experiences itself and is changed by that experience. The powerful Church of Christendom which could effectively enact its will by diktat is not the Church of the poor and downtrodden, rather it is the Church of the powerful – the Church of the oppressor and not of the oppressed. This is precisely the point Whitehead makes in 'Religion in the Making' when he comments on the phrasing of Psalm 24, saying:

> "This worship of glory arising from power is not only dangerous: it arises from a barbaric conception of God. I suppose that even the world itself could not contain

the bones of those slaughtered because of men intoxicated by its attraction."
(1960, p. 54)

In this era of a smaller, perhaps more humble, British Church, we have the opportunity to move away from this mindset, so well formed around the incontrovertible power of an almighty, classical, omni-deity, to a process orientated way of thinking that leads us to recognise and value the power of weakness.

If we are to ask how best the Church, as it exists in post secular society, can follow the lure of God we can simply refer to the way in which it can model the insistent, persuasive, power-in-weakness of the divine. How might this express itself practically? We might recommend that it is best occupied in humbly partnering with others – just as God works with whoever will respond to the lure, so can the Church work with all those who (knowingly or not) are persuaded towards the divine will for peace, justice, love and harmony (Hartshorne describes this, overall, as beauty). Where organisations and bodies exist to stand in solidarity with all and any who are downtrodden or disenfranchised, the Church has the opportunity to support and enable their work. This might be by means of people or other resources. We are able to see many churches doing this already, and many charitable bodies are alive to the resources available to them in the 'faith sector' after all, as we have previously recognised, many of them have a religious heritage to draw upon. A more conscious engagement with charitable causes and simple initiatives such as inviting representatives to visit and work with congregations could serve to heighten and strengthen these links, as may a growing openness to working with charities and organisations that don't necessarily 'belong' to the same religious or spiritual tradition as them.

THEOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Having sought to make some practical recommendations, we may briefly reflect the dual role of this project and further extend to three brief theological recommendations, particularly concerning the fundamental ideas (and crucially the realities) of suffering and cost. I do not seek to dwell on these, as the subjects have mainly been well rehearsed throughout the foregoing chapters.

We should not downplay the role of suffering in the Christian life.

We have already clearly observed that for those who draw upon spiritual capital to work with or on the behalf of others, issues of suffering and cost are necessarily present. This is the pain of perishing. Responding with compassion to the suffering of others which, as we have already considered, serves to move us into the field of spiritual struggle and may then lead us to follow the divine into work to alleviate or transform that suffering. The Church must not seek to ignore or downplay these issues, after all they remain core parts of Christian doctrine and tradition. Just as the Bible records Jesus as having compassion on the suffering of others, so also the Matthean gospel account has Jesus instruct his followers that they should "deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24), a warning that to be like Christ will necessarily involve some suffering. The Lukan account expands further, warning: "Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." The writer goes on to add: "So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions" (Luke 14:27). Some form of personal perishing is necessary for further becoming to be enabled. Sacrifice and suffering are, therefore, not an optional extra according to this teaching, and this is born out in the experience of research participants, many of whom demonstrate this reality in their lives. The Church must continue to grapple with this if it is to develop and mobilise the kind of spiritual capital that is necessary to develop orthopraxis.

We should seek to store 'open access' treasures.

The writer of 'Matthew's gospel' (6:19-20) urges his readers to abandon a focus upon earthly treasures (wealth in the form of social or economic capitals) that might be hoarded in exclusive 'barns or storehouses' and choose instead to seek wealth that may be stored in *Ouranos* (οὐρανῷ: the heavens/sky). A conventional or classical reading leads some to imagine an alternative form of wealth that may be 'banked' in some divine ledger, maintaining a sense of exclusivity. However, that reading ignores an otherwise obvious alternative: The heavens – understood as the sky above us, are of course wide open, un-walled and unprotected. This is a sort of treasure which is all the more precious precisely because it is abundant and cannot be contained in a bank – it grows by being given away.

In most situations love is the result of continuously and insistently loving others, the act of love breaking down the barriers to it. The multiplication happens not by means of competition but, rather, in free cooperation. The materially disadvantaged

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may not have the monopoly on this, but they are arguably less encumbered. Witness Jesus' advice to the wealthy young man which appears in each of the synoptics, that he rids himself of his wealth and in doing so gains access to 'treasure in the heavens'. This is not simply implicit in the Christian tradition, rather it is fully explicit. Consider such cornerstone dictums as "love one another"; "love your enemies"; "forgive"; these are core Christian ideas and according to the Biblical texts they have been from the earliest times of the Jesus movement. That they run counter to the narrative of empire which Whitehead says has usurped the Christian message is no surprise. Adventuring further still, concepts such as the persistent persuasion of the divine 'lure' are much more adequate to the task (actually one of theodicy) of expressing the sense in which the weak power of God is employed to lead us towards the good, than the idea of the divine as 'deadbeat dad', 'bad babysitter' or perhaps most crushingly Woody Allen's 'underachiever', characterised by absolute power enacted in apparently arbitrary bursts.

We should seek to develop a greater awareness of interconnection.

This, ultimately, speaks of the way that there can be no fundamental removal of humanity from the imminent divine, nor vice versa.

> "God alone has enjoyed the entire past and will enjoy all the future. He-She is both physical and spiritual, and the divine body is all-surpassing and all-inclusive of the creaturely bodies which are to God as cells to a supercellular organism."
> (Hartshorne, 1984, p.44)

In this phrasing of Hartshorne's is the clear indication that process philosophy and theology lead us to think in a way that prioritises interconnection. It leads us to perceive a world which is alive, and in which the divine plays an active and inextricable part. This theological point, perhaps, is the ultimate outworking of a philosophy of organism. That *all* things are seen as processes, as living parts of a greater whole, intermingled and ultimately, utterly, inseparable.

CONCLUSIONS IN THE MAKING

Overlooking me as I write is a photograph of Alfred North Whitehead, acquired during this project. As in other photographs of him he is immaculately attired, looking into the middle distance and apparently beatifically calm almost to the point of expressionlessness. In this photograph is encapsulated somehow, both the great

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strength of process philosophy and one of its mortal weaknesses. It is, after all, more or less impossible to speak of process thinking, whether that be philosophy or theology, at any length, without some recourse to Whitehead. I acknowledge that, although it was unintended, in some ways this project has at times taken on the appearance of a paean to Whitehead or to Whiteheadian thought. This fact notwithstanding, though, one may readily observe that as well as being the hero of the process story Whitehead is also, perhaps its greatest villain. The perceived inaccessibility, the complex and widely distributed body of work, the tendency to intermingle vinegary one-liners with complex, densely argued, theoretical and mathematical behemoths – these things alone have perhaps been enough to see process thought now largely side lined in the UK.

Because of his reputation for inaccessibility, Whitehead is sometimes caricatured as an armchair philosopher, an archetypal high-brow intellectual of the 'ivory towers' variety. His shining pate, beatific countenance, stoic turn of phrase and perfectly mannered Victorian sensibilities all serve to encourage that impression, as do the genuine difficulty of some of his publications and his characteristic fondness for neologisms. The fact that scholars have felt it necessary to publish interpretative companion publications for some elements of his work helps to develop him as the epitome of inaccessible scholarly detachment.

However much truth this idea may have, though, it is not the full story. Whitehead was not as detached as it may seem, indeed he was a committed political campaigner, he stood up to authorities and argued passionately over important issues with friends, even sharing a stage with Kier Hardie and being pelted with fruit for his trouble (Whitehead, 1948). He fell out with his best friend partly over the issue of political ideology and left a beloved job and home in support of another colleague (Pittenger, 1969). His may indeed have been a privileged life (it definitely was), a son of the manse who went from public school to university and never really left, but he was not untouched by hardship or tragedy. In particular I believe that the profound suffering he experienced when he learned of the death of his son jolted him away from the world of complex number theories and into deeper questions of meaning. Like others in this project he drew on early experience to transform personal suffering into a search for the lure of God. He took an intellectual leap that others dared not, embracing the philosophy of organism and applying that same great intellect to the question of how this metaphysic could change the way we understand our relationship

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to the divine. Most importantly perhaps he was not one to accept stasis, rather he sought out adventure – he urged others to dare to think new thoughts, and to act upon them, just as he advised his friend and confidant Lucian Price:

> "…the vitality of thought is in adventure. Ideas won't keep. Something must be done about them." (Price, 1954, p.98)

As someone who is fundamentally a practitioner, I'm well aware that a frequent, and important, critique of theorising, in activist circles at least, is that it doesn't help 'get the job done'. Getting the job done is the primary concern of the majority of the people who took part in this research, many of whom are much less concerned about the why, than the how. There's some value in this way of thinking, reflecting concerns I have voiced more or less specifically in the project that it's vital to remain 'earthed'. Practical application and its associated risks, though, may certainly be understood as part of what Whitehead terms 'adventure' – which he believed to be vital to any work of theory. Effectively his concern was to ensure that ideas were progressed, that they weren't left to grow stale and hardened, the longer they are left alone the more they come to appear as fact, and the harder it becomes to challenge them. This applies to the ideas and recommendations in this project too, of course, which must be subject to iterative re-evaluation in the light of ongoing experience.

Besides the necessity for ongoing re-evaluation there are some areas which would benefit from further investigation, these have been highlighted in places throughout the project, but summarily include the potential importance of the way in which adversity in childhood or adolescence may disincline a person to engage in work for the common good. Is it true to suggest that positive experiences in childhood, followed by negative ones in adulthood are the principal path into such work, or are there other, perhaps hidden, factors at play here? There is also the philosophical question of whether an areligious, or secularly religious vision of "shared humanity" is indeed likely to motivate potential recruits to a cause or charitable concern. If that can be established to be the case, then there is an obvious practical project which might be developed to determine precisely how such values or ideas might be inculcated in the wider populous for the purposes of recruitment and encouragement.

We have made frequent reference throughout the project to the problem of becoming static – inflexible. To introduce one final thought on this we may note that the etymology of the term has an interesting perspective to share. Στάσις (*stasis*) is, in

the Greek, a standing place, or an incidence of civil strife or war. This sense of *stasis* is not a position of peace which is how it might alternatively be conceived – it is not a resting place or a place of calm. Rather it actually reflects a physical place of resistance, it is a stubborn refusal to accept the implications of the process of change, the inevitability of perishing and becoming. Physically this is ultimately a futile move, all things change eventually, sometimes it just takes longer than we might expect. Intellectually this is true too – all things change, to deny this is to take up a combative stance and to try and defend a position. Here we choose not to do this, but rather to accept the self-evident constancy of perishing and becoming, which, as much as it applies to the physical world, applies to the world of ideas too, in particular to the ideas under discussion here.

The final words of this chapter return us to familiar ideas, including the idea of 'enculturation' – a concept which has been crucial from the start. We have observed that enculturation may have to do with the modelling of purposeful, transformative, engagement with suffering. We have also said that process thinking demands that we take very seriously the idea of co-operation, literally 'working together'. In a reversal of the way things are understood in classical terms, God is able to effect change only in so far as that which is to change is ready, at some level of consciousness, to purposefully co-operate. It is the task of the Church, therefore, to actively seek so to do. Within our families, communities and gatherings we must seek to create environments that nurture this, and to raise up people who are supportively encouraged and primed to transform their suffering and mobilise spiritual capital when they encounter, or become aware of, need. We can do this by being constantly open to change and the opportune challenge of the new, for this is the fundamental nature of reality. Although this is often difficult and uncomfortable, it is powerful. It requires us to endure the discomfort of living in tents rather than castles, and to be ready to change direction in order to reject any leading toward *stasis*. This fragility of existence paradoxically makes us powerful in weakness because of the way it subverts conventional, classical, ideas of order and hierarchy. Rather than conform to the methodology of empire we must instead seek always to develop a dipolar existence, one where a culture of unconditional love and inclusivity, which refutes the authoritarianism and hierarchy of empire and concerns itself instead with the dogged pursuit of justice, peace, and joy, remains eternally consistent, but where the way that we operate beyond this is constantly informed and

changed by occasions of experience. Such a reversal of the too often accepted order of things constitutes the extraordinary, upside-down, kingdom of God.

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