

Canadian [EVIL] AMERICAN

Faith, Power, and the Courage to Love Through Fear



SCOTT ALLEN CAVE

A CENTER OF RECURSIVE INQUIRY PUBLICATION

Mastqui Territory, Abbotsford, British Columbia

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Reader edition - Working manuscript

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Where We Meet

I want to begin with something I am not willing to surrender: affection for the place I come from, and the possibility of affection between people who disagree about what their countries ought to become.

I am a Canadian by birth, of English, Irish, and Italian ancestry. I write from Matsqui territory in Abbotsford, British Columbia. The places that formed me gave me reasons for gratitude long before I could explain their histories. That gratitude remains. It is one of the reasons I want to ask more of the country I belong to.

The same invitation is extended to American readers. You do not have to cease loving your country to enter this book. You do not have to pretend that its gifts are imaginary or that the people who worked to make a life there were all mistaken about what they hoped to achieve. You do have to allow that love and judgment can occupy the same room.

The title places Canadian above American, with Evil between them. The arrangement echoes geography and names a problem we share. It does not classify two populations by moral essence. Evil is something people do, authorize, excuse, resist, and sometimes learn to stop. A nation can become entangled in it without every person within that nation having the same responsibility or the same power to change what happens.

The word is large on the cover because it deserves attention. Its ordinary forms are often smaller than the word makes us expect. Someone is excluded from a relationship in which they should have a voice. Something is taken from a person who cannot obtain a hearing.

An institution grows by transferring its costs to people whose refusal does not count. We need not begin with a theory of cosmic darkness to recognize a wrong from the receiving end.

We will have to be precise. A protective boundary is not necessarily exclusion in the harmful sense. An agreed authority is not automatically domination. A person's success is not proof that someone else has been injured. The work is to examine the relationship: what was agreed, who could refuse, who receives the benefit, who bears the cost, and what happens when the account is challenged.

Loyalty to a nation can be a commitment to values shared with other people. It can inspire service, sacrifice, and courage. The danger appears when loyalty becomes a demand that the nation's conduct be excused in advance. Then the values we meant to defend lose the ability to judge what is done in their name.

This book addresses Christians in Canada and the United States whose understanding has been shaped by Paul's letters. It begins there because the language of faith remains a place where questions of calling, law, love, and authority can be heard with particular force. Readers who do not share that faith are welcome. They should not have to borrow a conviction they do not hold in order to ask whether their neighbours will treat them justly.

I want to let Jesus speak before we enlist him. I want to read Paul sympathetically, as a person whose commitments had reasons in the world he inhabited. His reasons deserve to be understood. They do not make our circumstances identical to his. Reading responsibly means allowing the words, their purposes, and their setting to question the uses we have learned to make of them.

A reading can become litigious without ever entering a courtroom. We collect the words that establish our permission, defend our status, and show why the obligation belongs to someone else. We may become accomplished at the letter while avoiding the encounter that gives the teaching its difficulty. I want to ask whether our reading leaves us more able to love, including when another person's situation requires us to change.

The journey then reaches further back than the familiar beginning at Athens. Mycenae and Miletus disturb the idea of a civilization arriving complete, equipped with a final account of itself. They help us see inherited achievement alongside inquiry, uncertainty, dependence, and the possibility of collapse. The story goes deeper than the names we remember most readily.

Western philosophy has much to offer. Its capacity to question an answer is among its gifts. To defend that inheritance by declaring its present heirs beyond correction would be an extraordinary way to misunderstand it. We can value a tradition without asking it to contain all that human beings have learned about living together.

The American address takes up a contemporary alarm: Marco Rubio's published remarks in Athens. We will examine the positive purposes the speech offers and the danger in making the safety of a people depend on a claim to continuing primacy. The concern is about an argument and the conduct it can authorize, rather than a claim to know the speaker's private heart. The speech will be read in its own words and with its qualifications intact.

The Canadian address begins from a different encounter: *Lha yudit'ih—We Always Find a Way*, by Lorraine Weir, with Chief Roger William. The book brings particular Tšilhqot'in voices and relationships into a history too easily told from the perspective of Canadian institutions alone. It asks something of the reader who has inherited the comfort of the national account. I include my own standpoint because the Canadian doing the asking should not remain invisible.

These are different entrances to a shared problem. We can turn our gifts into entitlements. We can confuse our ability to act with our right to decide for others. We can make the instrument of a good purpose so powerful that the purpose becomes whatever the instrument is able to do.

The book does not follow an unbroken chain in which one ancient error mechanically produces every modern harm. Such a story would be too easy. It would also absolve us in a different way, making our decisions appear to be the unavoidable workings of history. We will

look instead at recurring temptations and the particular arrangements through which people accept or resist them.

My hope for America is that its creative abundance will become more widely shared through democratic renewal, lawful discourse, and a reconsideration of the purposes its economy serves. My hope for Canada is that it will learn to lead by making its own relationships more truthful, more accountable, and more capable of healing. Neither hope is a claim that one nation owns a virtue the other lacks.

There will be no demand that a person harmed forgive in order to make the argument come out well. Nor will we treat a tradition outside our own as a supply of attractive sayings. People have histories and purposes that exceed the role an author might like them to play. Listening requires that they remain able to complicate the book.

We begin, then, with what we can recognize in one another: affection for family and place, the wish to contribute, the fear of losing what makes a life intelligible, and the knowledge that our good intentions do not tell the whole story of what we do.

That is enough for a beginning. We do not need to agree on every answer before we ask what we share.

Part I

Seeking Common Understanding

Chapter 1

What We Share

Imagine that someone on your street has died. There is a family to feed, a driveway to clear, a child who needs collecting from school. Before anyone settles an argument about the proper size of government, someone puts a meal in a container and carries it to the door.

I begin with this imagined scene because I want us to recognize something before we dispute anything. Care can be practical and unannounced. It can come from someone whose politics we dislike, whose church we would never attend, whose account of the world we find deeply mistaken. The person at the door may have little to spare. They have come because something needs doing and they are able to do it.

If you recognize that impulse, we have a place to begin.

It does not settle what either of our countries should do. A meal does not establish a housing policy, and personal kindness does not make an institution just. But the impulse matters. It gives us something worth developing: the willingness to let another person's need interrupt our plans.

I want to speak to that willingness in Canadians and Americans. I want to speak especially to Christians whose understanding of faith has been shaped by Paul's letters, who have thought about sin, grace, service, and the difficulty of loving their neighbours. We will not agree about everything those words mean. I am asking for enough patience

to discover where our understanding meets, and where it needs to change.

The good we recognize

There are many ways to love a country. A person may love the place where their parents are buried, the language in which their grandmother told stories, the work that gave their family a living, or the neighbours who helped when that living disappeared. Someone else may love a country because it offered a refuge or an opportunity their family had not known before. These affections deserve to be heard in their particularity. They are too important to surrender entirely to political advertising.

When I speak of what Americans and Canadians share, I have these attachments in mind. I am thinking of the desire to make something useful, to raise children in safety, to have one's work count, to be heard without humiliation, and to leave something worth inheriting. I offer these as possible points of recognition. You may name others. You may also tell me that one of these promises has never been made credible in your life.

Our capacity to create belongs here. Consider the satisfaction of repairing a machine rather than discarding it, finding a better way to teach a difficult idea, growing food, writing a song, or organizing a service that neighbours need. Such work asks us to attend to something beyond our own self-description. The machine must run. The student must understand. Someone must be able to use what we have made.

There is a discipline in that attention. It can teach us to accept correction without treating correction as defeat. A failed repair is information. Another person's better idea can become part of the work. I want our political imagination to recover something of that freedom: the ability to revise a method because the people it is supposed to serve are telling us it does not work.

None of this belongs exclusively to our two countries, to Christianity, or to the West. We can cherish a capacity without claiming to have

invented it. Indeed, gratitude becomes more interesting when it makes us curious about what others know.

Promises we can be held to

There are public promises as well as private affections. The American Declaration of Independence locates the justification of government in the rights of people and the consent of those governed. Canada's Charter sets out a guarantee of equality before and under the law, together with equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination. These are different documents, written in different circumstances and carrying different legal force. Each gives us language in which to ask whether power is serving the people subject to it.¹

A promise is valuable partly because someone can return to it. You said that my life mattered. You said that the law would hear me. You said that governing required more than the ability to compel obedience. What happens when I ask you to act accordingly?

We should resist two easy answers. One declares the promise fulfilled because it has been written down. The other declares it worthless because it has been broken. Both can spare us the work of making it effective. A person seeking justice needs more than our pride in the wording, but may have good reason to insist upon the wording when an authority would prefer to forget it.

The contradiction can exist within the text itself. The Declaration's assertion of human equality appears in the same document as a sweeping, hostile characterization of Indigenous people in its grievances against the Crown. Reading both passages together unsettles an uncomplicated story of universal liberty.²

For a Canadian reader, this is no invitation to sit comfortably in judgment across the border. In *Lha yudit'ih We Always Find a Way*, Chief Roger William asks his listeners to consider how the interruption of language transmission can affect someone who never personally attended residential school. He connects healing with language, culture, land, and recognition of his people's self-government.

His account asks us to hear consequences within relationships across generations.³

We will return to that book in the Canadian part of this journey. Here I want to acknowledge the demand it places on a word as comfortable as *we*. An invitation to share a future must be able to hear someone describe what the national story has cost their family. It must also hear what they continue to build and protect. Otherwise, our welcome asks them to enter a room on the condition that they leave part of their knowledge outside.

Where belonging narrows

The imagined neighbour at the door gives us a further question. How far does that care reach?

Suppose the same person is asked to support help for a family they have never met. Now there are questions about cost, fairness, eligibility, and who will administer it. Some of these questions are necessary. Resources are finite; programmes can fail; public power needs scrutiny. Generosity does not exempt a proposal from careful examination.

But something else can enter the discussion. We may begin demanding evidence of worthiness from strangers that we would never demand from a friend. We know the circumstances that explain our friend's mistakes. We encounter the stranger through a category. Before long, the category seems to explain everything.

I offer this as a danger to examine in ourselves. It is possible to have legitimate concerns about a policy and still owe the people affected a better hearing. It is possible to help one person generously while supporting arrangements that make another person's life unnecessarily hard. We need a way to examine the relationship between our private kindness and our public choices.

Love of country presents a similar difficulty. Affection can give us the courage to undertake difficult work together. It can also make an unwelcome account of that work feel like an attack on everyone we

love. We begin by defending a parent, a congregation, a town. We end by defending a decision we have never examined because admitting that it caused harm feels like abandoning our people.

I know no useful inquiry that can proceed by humiliating people for loving their families. I also know that love becomes a poor guide when it requires us to disregard another family's suffering. We need the steadiness to distinguish the people we cherish from every action taken in their name.

This is where I want confession to enter our conversation. I speak from English lineage, and I have a responsibility to examine the stories through which I understand my place here. I cannot assign every historical act to myself. I can take responsibility for what I choose to defend, what I refuse to learn, and what I do once an injustice becomes visible to me. Later we will ask what inherited advantages have made possible, what we have squandered, and what repair could require.

The same examination must be available to the person making this argument. If I listen only for evidence that confirms my preferred story of Canada or America, my language of healing will become another protection against correction.

A shared problem, different responsibilities

An objection deserves a full hearing here. Does speaking of a shared problem spread responsibility so widely that nobody can be held to account? Does it invite the person who was harmed to confess alongside the person who harmed them, as though everyone merely misunderstood?

It could, if we allow it. We must not.

A general capacity for self-deception does not distribute responsibility for a particular wrong. Decisions have makers. Institutions have powers. Benefits and losses can fall on different people. Some have a duty to stop what they are doing; some owe restitution; some need protection from further harm. A person seeking to recover what was

taken does not owe the same response as the person still withholding it.

Our task is to become more exact as we proceed. Who acted? Who could have acted differently? Who benefited? Who was prevented from objecting? What continues? What would repair mean to those who must live with the consequences? A shared moral vocabulary should help us ask those questions rather than dissolve them into a vague admission that humanity is imperfect.

Nor can the border supply the answers. Canada cannot establish its goodness by identifying an American failure. America cannot answer an account of harm merely by pointing to its achievements. The scale and circumstances of each case matter. Comparison is useful when it helps us understand a mechanism or imagine a remedy. It becomes an evasion when it is used to end the inquiry.

There is another limit to our national language. Canada's Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms existing Aboriginal and treaty rights, and names distinct peoples within its provisions. Even the constitutional text requires more attention than an account of two countries containing interchangeable individuals.⁴

In this book, kinship between Americans and Canadians is an invitation to responsibility. It cannot authorize either country to speak for every people within its claimed boundaries. Common understanding will require us to learn where our categories fail the people we are trying to understand.

Enough ground to begin

For Christian readers, the difficulty may be especially close to home. We can be fluent in the language of humility while remaining certain that our community has nothing essential to learn. We can ask forgiveness in prayer and resist an account of wrongdoing when it arrives through someone we distrust. The chapters ahead will ask us to hear Jesus and Paul carefully, including where their words trouble the uses to which we put them. I will not ask you to adopt my theology

as the price of that conversation.

Neither will I ask you to stop loving your country. I hope we can develop a form of love that can bear knowledge: knowledge of courage and generosity, of cruelty and exclusion, of achievements worth preserving and arrangements that need to change. That love would give us reasons to stay with difficult work after the satisfaction of declaring our position has passed.

Return, then, to the meal at the door. Its value is real. So is the question of the household to which no one comes. We need the neighbour's attentiveness and the patience to ask why help reaches some people more readily than others. We need creativity that can make new arrangements, and enough humility to let those living within them tell us whether they help.

We have not yet agreed on a programme. We have begun to establish a practice: recognize what is good, listen when its limits are named, and remain answerable for what follows. That is enough common ground to take another step.

When we say we want our countries to do good, what are we asking them to do, and how will we know?

Chapter 2

What We Mean by Good

The meal has reached the door. Now imagine that the person who brought it stays to explain how the household ought to live. Help will continue, they say, provided certain changes are made. Perhaps the changes are sensible. Perhaps the visitor has mistaken unfamiliar habits for failures. Either way, the family discovers that receiving care may require surrendering decisions they thought were theirs to make.

Something has changed in the encounter. We can feel the difficulty before we have a definition for it. A useful act has become a claim to authority.

There are circumstances in which help properly comes with conditions. A volunteer needs to know that a delivery is safe. A shared fund needs rules that prevent it from being exhausted by one person's demands. The question is what the conditions protect, who decides them, and whether they reach beyond what the task requires. Feeding a family does not, by itself, qualify someone to govern it.

This is one reason that good intentions cannot finish our examination of goodness. We need to consider what happens to the people receiving our attention. Can they question us? Can they refuse? Do they have somewhere else to turn? Have we helped them act, or made their next decision depend on pleasing us?

A word that asks something of us

I will use *good* to ask whether an action helps people and the living world flourish, while respecting the claims and relationships that make that flourishing possible. That is a starting point for inquiry. It leaves difficult questions open. We still have to ask what flourishing means, whose claims are legitimate, what we owe other forms of life, and how to decide when goods conflict.

A definition cannot do that work for us. If I simply define goodness as whatever produces the society I already prefer, I have arranged a victory without learning anything. You should be able to ask what my preferred arrangement costs, whom it excludes, and whether its promises survive contact with experience.

Consider an imagined town deciding how to use its last available public building. Some residents want a shelter. Others want a place where young people can gather. Still others want to sell it and repair a failing water system. Each proposal can begin in a serious concern for others. Calling one group compassionate and the others selfish would tell us very little about which choice the town should make.

We would need to know more. How urgent are the needs? What alternatives exist? Who has been heard? What will happen if a decision is delayed? Could the building serve more than one purpose? The inquiry might change our initial preference. It might also reveal that an apparently generous proposal cannot do what its advocates promise.

There may be a choice that remains painful after everyone has acted honestly. Good judgment does not guarantee that nobody loses something important. It does require us to acknowledge those losses, explain our decision, and remain responsible for consequences we would rather stop discussing once the vote is over.

Love and the freedom to answer

By *love*, I mean a sustained concern for another's good that is willing to learn who that other is. Affection can begin it. Attention has to develop it. There is a difference between wanting someone near us and wanting them to become able to live well, including in ways we did not imagine for them.

This is difficult because concern and control can feel similar from the inside. We worry. We see danger. We have experience that another person may lack. Sometimes we are right. Yet being right about a risk does not settle every question about our authority to decide for someone else.

Imagine an adult child choosing work that a parent considers insecure. The parent may offer information, ask hard questions, or decline to finance the choice. Those responses deserve to be distinguished from threatening to withdraw affection until the child obeys. The subject of the disagreement matters, but so does the kind of power being used to resolve it.

The distinction becomes harder where someone cannot protect themselves or where a decision threatens other people. Care for a young child cannot depend on obtaining agreement about every danger. Public authorities sometimes need to restrain conduct. We should judge such authority by its grounds, its limits, and the means available to challenge its misuse. A duty of care cannot be made into an unlimited entitlement to command.

Freedom, as I will use it, includes room to speak, refuse, choose, and participate in decisions that shape one's life. It also asks whether those possibilities can actually be exercised. Permission to leave an abusive arrangement means little if every available exit leads to destitution. We need to examine the conditions of choice alongside the words that announce it.

Freedom does not settle which choices are wise. Nor can it mean that my preferences always prevail over your safety or your equal standing. It gives us a reason to demand that restrictions be explained

and that the person restricted still count as someone to whom an explanation is owed.

A society concerned with love and freedom must therefore be prepared for disagreement from people it has helped. Their gratitude cannot be the price of their voice.

What I mean by evil

The large word on this book's cover creates a particular obligation. It would be easy to make *evil* the name for the people whose conduct frightens or angers us. That would give the reader an enemy quickly. It would also make the inquiry dangerously easy for its author.

Evil is not a complicated word. We can recognize basic forms of it in alienation and in growth purchased at another's expense. Being shut out of a community, having our property taken, or being subjected to someone else's will without our agreement gives us an understanding from the receiving end. The person benefiting may have an elaborate justification. The person bearing the cost often has a simpler account.

By alienation, I mean being driven or held apart from relationships, participation, and belonging that matter to our lives. I am not calling chosen solitude evil, or denying someone the right to leave an unsafe relationship. I am asking us to notice the person excluded, the owner dispossessed, and the community made subject to decisions it had no meaningful part in making. These are everyday encounters with a problem that can also take institutional and national forms.

This does not make every disagreement, disappointment, or unequal outcome evil. It asks us to examine how an advantage is obtained: does someone's advancement depend on excluding, dispossessing, or dominating another? Growth can create something others welcome and benefit from. It can also consume another person's security, property, or freedom while counting only what the beneficiary has gained. The distinction matters more than the size of the achievement.

I call domination to which people have not subscribed *unsubscribed dominance*. That phrase describes the experience of having another's

will imposed without meaningful agreement or an accountable basis of authority. It does not mean that every unwelcome rule is domination. We have already encountered legitimate duties of protection and the need for bounded public authority. The question is whether power can give an account of itself to those who bear its consequences, and whether they have a meaningful way to challenge it.

This use of the word leaves room to distinguish a mistake from a knowing wrong. It also leaves room for negligence, recklessness, and the refusal to learn. Someone can intend a benefit and cause serious harm. Intention matters when we judge responsibility, but the injury does not disappear because its author had a generous explanation ready.

What happens after a warning is especially revealing. If a practice is hurting people, do those responsible investigate? Do they alter it? Or do they spend their energy discrediting the people who report the harm? A mistake can become a maintained wrong when protecting the decision becomes more important than protecting those who must live with it.

Institutions require this scrutiny as much as individuals. Imagine a rule that repeatedly denies a necessary service to people unable to complete a form. Each official may be following instructions. Yet someone must be able to ask whether the procedure serves the purpose for which the institution exists. Once the problem is known, continued obedience to the rule needs an explanation beyond the fact that it is the rule.

We should not call every inconvenience evil. The seriousness of the word requires attention to severity, knowledge, power, alternatives, and the possibility of repair. We must also be able to use it when the people involved are familiar, respectable, and convinced of their own decency. Otherwise, it becomes a word reserved for distant atrocities that never disturbs the arrangements nearest us.

When certainty becomes permission

By *hubris*, I mean an overconfidence that forgets the limits of our knowledge or authority. It appears when an achievement is taken as proof of a wider entitlement: we built this, therefore we should decide that; we helped you, therefore you should obey; our account explains much, therefore it explains everything that matters.

Confidence itself can be useful. A bridge needs someone willing to design it. A community in danger needs people willing to act before every uncertainty has been removed. Humility must not become an excuse for leaving a necessary decision to somebody else.

The question is whether our confidence can accept a boundary. Does the engineer's knowledge of a bridge also establish who should be displaced to build it? Does a nation's capacity to produce wealth establish its right to determine another people's future? Expertise in one matter may be essential to a decision without being sufficient to settle it.

This is a distinction I want to carry into our examination of Western thought. We can value its achievements and test its arguments without assuming that other traditions exist only to supply what it has temporarily overlooked. To encounter another understanding seriously, we must allow that it might change the question we thought we were answering.

There is a danger on the other side too. Acknowledging several traditions does not require us to approve every practice defended in their names. Respect cannot mean silence about cruelty. We still need to give reasons for our judgments, hear objections, and examine whether we apply the same standards when our own community is implicated.

Common understanding allows us to disagree in ways that can teach us something. It asks more of us than either automatic deference or automatic dismissal.

The loyalties we choose

Loyalty to one's nation is not evil. It is a subscription to a collective set of values: a willingness to belong, contribute, and accept obligations alongside others. The question is what those values permit us to do, especially to people who have not subscribed to them. Our loyalty cannot, by itself, authorize their subordination.

Subscription here means an allegiance we affirm, not a claim that everyone freely chose the circumstances of citizenship. We can inherit a country and come to love it. We can also ask whether the values expressed in its name deserve our continuing assent. Belonging must leave room for dissent, correction, and refusal of a particular wrong. Otherwise, loyalty becomes a demand that we surrender the judgment through which we first recognized anything worth being loyal to.

I want Canadians and Americans to carry their loyalties into this inquiry. We can ask together how our shared commitments might give others greater security and freedom. We can also ask where those commitments have been used to excuse taking what belongs to someone else. A nation able to hear that question has a better chance of deserving the love its people offer it.

Responsibility and repair

Responsibility connects our part in a situation to what we can reasonably be asked to do about it. Causing harm is one ground of responsibility. Holding authority to prevent it is another. Inheriting control over an unresolved wrong can create duties even when we did not initiate it. These distinctions need evidence in each case; they cannot be resolved by declaring a whole population guilty or innocent.

We also need to distinguish responsibility from the desire to feel responsible. A moving confession may cost the speaker very little. The person harmed may need a record corrected, property returned, a decision reopened, or a practice stopped. If we keep directing attention toward the sincerity of our feelings, we can miss the work our admission

has made necessary.

I understand *healing* as a process through which damaged lives and relationships can recover capacities for trust, agency, belonging, and continued life. It cannot always restore what existed before. Some losses are permanent. Some relationships should not be resumed. Safety may require distance, and a person may rebuild a life without forgiving the person who injured them.

For that reason, healing cannot be scheduled to suit the institution that wants a dispute concluded. Neither can it be reduced to an inward adjustment demanded of those who have been harmed. Where material conditions continue the injury, changing those conditions belongs to the work.

When I speak of healing as reciprocal, I do not mean that everyone owes the same thing. One person may need to listen while another decides whether to speak. One institution may owe restitution while a community determines how to use what is restored. The possibility of a future relationship depends on respecting those different positions, including the possibility that an offered reconciliation will be refused.

There is hope in this account, but it is a demanding hope. We can change a practice. We can learn to hear an objection without treating it as betrayal. We can place power under limits that make our intentions less important than the protections available to others. None of those changes requires us to pretend that the damage was small.

Before we claim the blessing

These meanings will need testing throughout the book. They are working commitments offered openly, so that a reader can see what I am asking and challenge where I fall short. Love must be attentive. Freedom must be usable. Responsibility must lead somewhere beyond self-description. Healing must leave those affected room to determine what a better life requires.

For the Christian audience I am addressing, another question now

comes forward. What happens when we believe that our account of the good carries divine authority? The stakes of correction become larger. A political preference can begin to feel like an obligation of faith, and an objection can sound like a refusal of God rather than a warning about our conduct.

That possibility calls for careful listening before we claim a blessing for what we already intend to do. We have spoken about care, authority, injury, and repair in ordinary situations. We now need to make room for Jesus to address the people who act in his name.

Can we hear him clearly enough to be corrected?

Chapter 3

Let Jesus Speak

Before we ask Jesus to bless our countries, we should allow him to interrupt us.

We have begun to describe evil through experiences we can recognize: exclusion, dispossession, the imposition of another's will, and advancement that makes someone else bear the loss. We have also made room for loyalty, affection, creativity, and the responsibilities of belonging. These distinctions now meet a harder test. Will we listen when a Gospel passage unsettles them, or will we make Jesus say what our argument already requires?

That question belongs to me as much as to the reader. I have chosen these passages because they bear on the inquiry before us. Selection carries responsibility. I must leave the words in their settings, acknowledge what resists my reading, and distinguish what the account says from what I think follows for Canada and America.

The Gospel accounts are not policy manuals for our two countries. Nor are they a single conversation that can be rearranged without consequence. We will attend to particular scenes in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, using the World English Bible Classic for the quotations in this chapter. You may prefer another translation. The references are provided so that you can read the passages in context and question my reading.⁵

Who became a neighbour?

In Luke, a lawyer asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus returns a question about the law. The lawyer answers with love of God and love of neighbour, and Jesus tells him to act on that answer. Then comes the question through which the lawyer seeks to justify himself: who is his neighbour?⁶

The story that follows begins with a man stripped, beaten, and left half dead beside a road. A priest passes him. A Levite passes him. A Samaritan stops, tends his wounds, transports him to an inn, and pays for his continuing care. Jesus asks which traveller became a neighbour to the injured man. The answer identifies the one who showed mercy. “Go and do likewise,” Jesus says.⁷

Notice where the question has moved. The lawyer began by seeking the boundary of an obligation. The story asks him to recognize the conduct that fulfils it. The injured person has become the point from which we judge the encounter. Who stopped? Who accepted an interruption? Who made resources available so that care could continue after he departed?

This is a demanding way to read our own generosity. We may have an account of why we are caring people. Someone beside the road may have an account of who passed. Our self-description cannot answer their need.

The story also gives care a duration. There are wounds to dress, a journey to make, an innkeeper to pay, and further expenses to meet. Compassion becomes a commitment with practical consequences. For our purposes, that matters: concern must survive the moment in which it makes us feel generous.

We should not turn the priest and Levite into representatives of Jewish moral failure, or the Samaritan into an ornamental example of how Christians ought to behave. The encounter begins with a discussion of the law, and Jesus affirms the lawyer’s answer. My application is directed at us: religious familiarity does not release us from the obligation we can recognize in another person’s action.

Perhaps love can be measured, in part, by how much we are willing to be changed by another person's situation. The Samaritan allows the injured man's need to alter his journey, his expenditure, and his responsibilities beyond that day. Another life has become consequential to his own.

That willingness need not wait for crisis or tragedy. It can grow through ordinary conversation and carefully considered mutual agreement: listening until we revise a plan, making room for another person's aspirations, or choosing together obligations neither would have undertaken alone. Each person retains a voice in what changes and why.

We might therefore ask more of love than whether we felt compassion. What did we become willing to reconsider? What did we agree to carry together?

The people nearest the teacher

Mark gives us another scene in which proximity to Jesus proves no guarantee of understanding him. James and John ask for places beside him in glory. The other ten disciples are indignant. Jesus gathers them and speaks about rulers who exercise authority over others. Then he says, "But it shall not be so among you," and describes greatness in terms of service.⁸

The instruction is addressed to his own followers. It is easy to hear it as a criticism of someone else's empire and overlook the struggle for position within the group listening to him. The desire for a privileged place has survived the journey with their teacher.

Here the previous chapter's question about unsubscribed dominance becomes uncomfortable. If we claim to serve people, what happens when they question the authority we have assumed? Do we hear them as participants in the work, or as obstacles to our calling? A Christian description of leadership should make that question more urgent.

Jesus's words do not furnish a constitution or settle every use of public force. They do put pressure on a familiar excuse: that our good

purpose entitles us to the kind of domination we condemn in others. Calling ourselves servants cannot make the exercise of power harmless. We have to ask what service requires from the position we actually occupy.

Later in the same chapter, a crowd tries to silence Bartimaeus as he calls for Jesus. Jesus stops and has him called forward. He asks what Bartimaeus wants him to do.⁹ The person treated as an interruption is given a hearing. I want that small reversal to remain with us when a nation describes those it excludes as inconvenient, disruptive, or ungrateful.

Wealth that has to answer

Earlier in Mark 10, a wealthy man approaches Jesus with another question about eternal life. Jesus recalls commandments, including prohibitions on theft and fraud. The man says he has observed them. Mark then tells us that Jesus looks at him and loves him. What follows is a demand to sell his possessions, give to the poor, and follow. The man leaves sorrowful.¹⁰

We should let both the love and the demand stand. Affection has not made the man's wealth exempt from examination. His record of respectable conduct has not concluded the conversation. Something he holds remains capable of keeping him from the life he says he seeks.

It would be convenient to locate that attachment only in the very rich. I would rather ask what I protect from moral inquiry because I have come to depend on it. A possession, an income, a position, an account of my own deserving: what becomes unthinkable to surrender, even before I have heard why surrender might be asked of me?

Luke's encounter with Zacchaeus develops a different scene. Jesus calls the wealthy chief tax collector down from a tree and announces that he will stay at his house. The onlookers complain. Zacchaeus speaks of giving half his goods to the poor and restoring fourfold anything wrongfully exacted. Jesus declares that salvation has come to the house.¹¹

We should not merge these encounters into a single financial formula. Mark's man is asked to sell what he has; Luke records Zacchaeus speaking about distribution and restitution. The particularity matters. It prevents me from announcing that one percentage would settle every Christian's obligation.

What I take from their juxtaposition is more modest and still demanding. Wealth enters the encounter as something answerable. In Luke, wrongful taking has a named remedy. Giving to the poor and restoring what was wrongly obtained are distinguishable acts. A donation cannot automatically discharge a debt to the person from whom something was taken.

That distinction will matter when we discuss national prosperity. We will need to examine how wealth was obtained, what it enables, and who retains a claim upon it. Jesus does not provide us here with a modern tax schedule. He gives us no reason to treat the existing distribution as beyond examination either.

Beyond the circle of allegiance

In Matthew, Jesus asks what is remarkable about loving those who love us or greeting only our own friends. The instruction is to love enemies and pray for persecutors. The passage points to sun and rain given to the just and unjust alike.¹²

This reaches beyond a collective subscription to shared values. A person need not first join our community or approve of us before becoming an object of concern. Loyalty can give us particular responsibilities toward our neighbours and fellow citizens. It cannot make everyone beyond that circle morally disposable.

I am not extracting a defence policy from these verses. Questions about protecting others from violence remain difficult. But a difficulty does not permit us to remove the enemy from the field of moral consideration. We must still ask what we are doing to people, including when we believe we have reasons to oppose them.

The preceding verses make the challenge harder: Jesus speaks of

turning the other cheek and going beyond what is compelled.¹³ I cannot honestly turn those words into a comfortable endorsement of our ordinary retaliations. Neither will I put them in an abuser's mouth as a demand that someone else remain available for injury. The person inflicting harm cannot establish an entitlement to another's suffering by prescribing that person's generosity. That is a boundary I bring to the application of this passage, not a claim that the difficulty has disappeared.

National allegiance raises a related question in Matthew's account of the tax paid to Caesar. Jesus's questioners seek to trap him. He asks about the image and inscription on the coin, then distinguishes what belongs to Caesar from what belongs to God.¹⁴

I read that distinction as a limit on claims of total allegiance. It does not supply a complete modern arrangement of religion and state. It does require a Christian reader to ask whether the nation is demanding what loyalty cannot rightly give it. A flag can gather affection and commitment without becoming the measure of every obligation.

The passages that resist us

If I stopped with those scenes, I could make this chapter too convenient for myself. Matthew also tells of a Canaanite woman seeking help for her daughter. Jesus initially gives no answer. The disciples want her sent away. He speaks of his mission to Israel, and then of the children's bread and the dogs. The woman persists, answering with the image of crumbs from the table. Jesus praises her faith, and her daughter is healed.¹⁵

This is a difficult encounter for an argument concerned with exclusion. We should not rush past the silence or soften the language because the conclusion brings relief. Nor should we invent an explanation of Jesus's private intention and treat it as something Matthew has told us. The account gives us the exchange; it does not explain every question the exchange raises.

What we can attend to is the woman's persistence and the fact that

her words remain part of the story. She asks, answers, and continues to seek help. A reading concerned only with the authority addressing her would miss the person refusing to let the conversation close.

There is another difficulty nearby in our reading. After Zacchaeus, Luke records a parable about a nobleman seeking kingship. His subjects reject his rule. The story ends with the ruler ordering his enemies killed. Those words belong to the ruler within the parable; they are not a direct command to Jesus's listeners to kill dissenters. Yet identifying the speaker does not resolve the parable's severity or its meaning.¹⁶

I cannot use the welcoming encounter with Zacchaeus and pretend the following story is absent. Equally, I cannot lift the ruler's order out of its narrative and hand it to a government as Christian authorization. A responsible reading must ask what the parable is doing in a passage that begins with expectations about God's kingdom. This chapter leaves that interpretive difficulty visible rather than making it bear a political conclusion it has not established.

Listening requires us to tolerate that unfinished work. A Jesus who always agrees with our first reading is too easily made into a spokesman.

The judgment comes home

Matthew's account of the judgment of the nations makes food, welcome, clothing, care, and visiting prisoners matters of extraordinary consequence. Those judged ask when they encountered the king in such need. His answer identifies himself with the recipients of their care or neglect.¹⁷

The phrase concerning the least of his brothers needs interpretation; I will not settle its scope merely by assuming it means everyone my argument needs it to mean. Nor will I remove the passage's language of punishment to leave only an agreeable appeal to kindness. The scene joins practical care to a judgment that its participants did not anticipate in those terms.

For our inquiry, it asks whether we recognize the significance of the person receiving our conduct. Neglect can carry weight even when no dramatic act of hatred has occurred. We may need to ask whom our arrangements make it easy to overlook.

But the reader of this book must not be installed in the judge's seat. Matthew 7 turns scrutiny back upon the person who notices another's fault while neglecting their own. The image is physical and almost absurd: someone attempting delicate work on another's eye while their own sight is obstructed.¹⁸

For a Canadian examining America, that is an immediate warning. For an author asking Christians to examine their loyalties, it is another. My preferred language of healing could become a means of placing myself above people whose motives I have not troubled to understand. The remedy requires examination of my conduct as well as theirs.

The same chapter warns against false prophets and directs attention to their fruits. It also denies that invoking Jesus's name is enough to establish that someone has done the Father's will.¹⁹ Those warnings should make us cautious about treating religious confidence, public success, or a claim of divine authorization as sufficient evidence of goodness.

Carrying the question onward

We have heard accounts of care crossing a boundary, followers seeking rank, possessions resisting surrender, restitution entering a household, and allegiance encountering a limit. We have also encountered words that resist an easy synthesis. The work is to remain answerable to that range of material while asking what our own conduct reveals.

I hope a Christian reader can bring love of country through this examination without having to abandon it. The love may become more demanding. It may ask a country to restore what it has taken, listen to people it has excluded, or accept limits on ambitions it once called sacred. Those possibilities are applications we must argue for, not policies we can simply place on Jesus's lips.

Our next conversation is with Paul. In the account given by Acts, it is Paul who brings the proclamation of Jesus and the resurrection to Athens, speaking in its synagogue and marketplace and before the Areopagus. Christianity enters our encounter with Athens through this Jewish messenger, addressing people who do not already share his faith.²⁰ Readers formed by his letters may ask how these Gospel encounters belong with grace, faith, the life of a community, and its relationship to authority. We should hear those questions in the letters themselves. We have no need to make Paul a convenient villain or to use his words to silence the teacher whose name the community bears.

Before we turn the page, one question remains with us: when someone experiences our power, what gives them reason to recognize the service we profess?

Chapter 4

Reading Paul Together

Before we meet Paul in Athens, we need to go further back than Paul. His story belongs within a Jewish history of covenant, conquest, displacement, and continuing life. The destruction of the First Temple is one of that history's great ruptures. It is an inheritance behind him, separated from his lifetime by centuries.

The Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple is conventionally dated to 586 BCE. The account in 2 Kings describes the burning of the Temple and the king's house, the breaking of the city's walls, the removal of its treasures, and the deportation of people, while some of the poorest remain to work the land.²¹

Read with the questions we have brought this far, the account makes dispossession concrete. Homes, places of worship, material wealth, and the freedom to remain together are exposed to another power's decisions. We should hear the particular history before making it an analogy for anyone else's. The people in that account do not exist merely to illustrate our vocabulary of evil.

Nor should we make a straight line from Babylon to Paul's birthplace. These sources do not trace his family's movements from the exile to Tarsus. An inherited history is not a documented family itinerary. We can acknowledge the depth behind his Jewish identity without pretending to know the journeys of ancestors whose names and decisions have not reached us.

A Jewish voice within a Roman world

Paul's own account in Philippians names his belonging: Israel, the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew ancestry, and a Pharisaic relationship to the law. He also names his zeal in persecuting the assembly. These are his statements about himself, made within an argument about what he has come to value in Christ.²²

Acts supplies another kind of account. It places words in Paul's public defence identifying him as a Jew born in Tarsus of Cilicia and educated in Jerusalem under Gamaliel.²³ We need to keep the distinction visible: a letter in which Paul speaks for himself and a narrative that tells his story are different witnesses. Reading them together does not require us to pretend they are the same document.

The Temple of Paul's world was not the First Temple destroyed by Babylon. Acts describes him praying in the Temple in Jerusalem long after that earlier destruction.²⁴ The remembered catastrophe therefore belongs to a history that also contains continued worship and rebuilding. We should leave room for that continuing life, rather than making Jewish identity nothing more than the survival of an ancient wound.

In the same chapter of Acts, Paul's Roman status becomes immediately consequential. A commander orders him examined by scourging. Paul asks whether it is lawful to scourge a Roman who has not been found guilty. The question reaches the commander, who says that he paid a large sum for his own citizenship. Paul answers, "But I was born a Roman." The threatened examination stops.²⁵

That is the answer the text gives to how Paul became a citizen: in Acts, he already possessed the status from birth. It was not something he acquired by becoming a follower of Jesus. The account does not tell us how his family first obtained it. A story about an ancestor's purchase, military service, reward, or release from slavery would require evidence we do not have here. We should let the absence remain an absence.

For our inquiry, the scene matters because a legal status changes

what an authority is prepared to do to a body. Paul invokes a protection within Roman power while belonging to a people whose scriptural history includes conquest and exile. These positions coexist in the account. They should make us attentive to the particular forms of protection and vulnerability a person carries, rather than assuming that one affiliation explains their whole life.

The messenger who reaches Athens

Acts brings this Paul to Athens, where he speaks with people in the synagogue and marketplace and encounters Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. His proclamation of Jesus and the resurrection brings him before the Areopagus.²⁶ The meeting is important to our journey: Athens receives a Christian proclamation from a Jewish messenger. We should not approach it as though Christianity simply emerged from Greek philosophy recognizing itself.

In the speech Acts records, Paul addresses what his listeners worship, refers to their poets, and speaks of a creator who gives life and breath. He also calls for repentance and announces judgment and resurrection. Some mock; some want to hear more; some believe.²⁷ The encounter contains an effort to find intelligible language and a disagreement that does not disappear. We can learn from both without declaring that either Athens or Paul exhausts the other's meaning.

Paul's own letter to the Galatians adds another necessary beginning. He recalls persecuting the community he would come to serve and describes his calling to proclaim Christ among the Gentiles.²⁸ Here is a writer whose account of fidelity includes a profound change in what his zeal required of him. That gives us a reason to read him carefully on love, freedom, belonging, and authority. What does he ask of a community after its members have become willing to be changed?

A table that exposes the division

In First Corinthians, Paul describes a gathering that has gone wrong. People assemble to eat, but one goes hungry while another becomes drunk. His rebuke is specific: those with insufficient means are being put to shame. The shared meal has reproduced a division that the gathering ought to confront.²⁹

Here is alienation within a community that already possesses the language of belonging. Nobody needs to announce that the hungry person is worthless. The arrangement of the meal communicates whose needs can wait. A person can be physically present and still be made to experience exclusion.

This is a useful place to begin reading Paul because it keeps us close to an ordinary test. We can say that everyone belongs and then look at who gets to eat. We can celebrate unity and then notice who must bear the embarrassment of lacking what others have. The words do not become false simply because we fail them. They become demands upon the conduct that contradicts them.

Paul's account of the body develops the question further. Its members have different functions, but the eye cannot dismiss the hand as unnecessary. The members that seem weaker are described as necessary, and honour is directed toward those treated as less honourable. Suffering and rejoicing are to be shared.³⁰

This is an image of a community in Christ. Applying it to a nation requires an argument; the nation cannot simply declare itself that body. Still, a Christian reader can bring its questions to public life. Who is treated as expendable? Whose contribution goes unrecognized? Does another person's difficulty register as something that calls for a response from us?

Love that changes the gifted

The discussion of gifts leads into Paul's account of love. Speech, knowledge, faith, even giving away possessions are examined under its

demand. A person can possess capacities that impress a community and still lack what gives their use value.³¹

That brings us back to the Samaritan and to the possibility that love is measured partly by our willingness to be changed. Paul makes the test uncomfortable for the capable person. What happens when someone else's situation interrupts the exercise of my gift? Can I be patient with a person who does not understand my explanation? Can I hear that my generosity arrived in a form that diminished them?

Paul associates love with patience and kindness, with truth, and with a refusal of boasting and self-seeking. Later he acknowledges partial knowledge.³² I read these together as a challenge to confidence that no longer listens. Possessing knowledge does not make me complete. Being needed does not make my preferred way of helping the only possible way.

The language of endurance needs care. It cannot become an instruction issued by a powerful person to make someone else tolerate mistreatment. The demand first addresses the person claiming to love: what are you doing with the patience and power available to you? If our use of the passage protects cruelty from challenge, we must examine how we have made endurance serve it.

Nor is partial knowledge a reason to stop seeking truth. It gives us a reason to welcome correction while continuing the work. We can make a responsible judgment and remain willing to revise it. A community that needs every answer to confirm its superiority will find that willingness difficult.

Freedom with obligations

In Galatians, Paul's language of freedom belongs to an argument about circumcision, law, faith, and life in Christ. We should hear that setting before borrowing the word for a modern political debate. Within it, he connects freedom with service through love and warns against a community consuming itself through mutual hostility.³³

Freedom here cannot be reduced to obtaining whatever I want.

Another person enters the account as someone toward whom I have an obligation. That does not resolve every question about what I owe them. It does prevent my liberty from becoming a sufficient justification for their injury.

The letter also speaks of Jews and Greeks, enslaved and free people, male and female, as one in Christ.³⁴ We should attend to the force of that claim without pretending that writing it abolished the social arrangements it names. An affirmation of belonging can challenge an unequal relationship while leaving difficult work to be done within it.

That distinction matters for our two nations. We can subscribe to a collective set of values and then ask whether our arrangements allow others to experience the freedom we profess. Their answer may require changes to advantages we have regarded as normal. The possibility of those changes belongs within loyalty; refusing even to consider them can make our allegiance a protection for ourselves alone.

Whose consent is heard?

The short letter to Philemon makes both the promise and the difficulty concrete. Paul appeals on behalf of Onesimus, whom he is sending back. He asks that Onesimus be received no longer as a slave but as a beloved brother. He offers to take any wrong or debt onto his own account. He also says that he did not want to act without Philemon's consent, so that the good would be voluntary.³⁵

This is a striking appeal to a changed relationship. It is also an unequal conversation. Philemon's consent is explicitly sought. Onesimus's own wishes are not recorded in the letter. That absence matters when we read the passage alongside our concern about unsubscribed dominance.

We must not fill it by inventing either a happy agreement or a reported refusal. Nor can we claim that the letter records an emancipation whose outcome it never tells us. Paul asks for something consequential, but the surviving text does not give us every participant's voice or the ending we might want.

There is pressure within the appeal as well. Paul recalls what Philemon owes him and expresses confidence in his obedience.³⁶ The language of voluntary goodness therefore deserves examination alongside the authority of the person asking for it. We encountered that difficulty at the door of the household receiving help. It remains a difficulty when the appeal is made in love.

For our purposes, the lesson is a question: when we congratulate ourselves on an agreement, whose freedom to agree have we actually considered? A negotiation among powerful people may alter the life of someone who has not been heard. The language of brotherhood should make that absence more visible to us.

Reading authority without surrendering judgment

Romans 13 cannot be omitted from this inquiry. Paul calls for subjection to governing authorities, describes authority as ordained by God, and speaks of the ruler as a servant for good who bears the sword against wrongdoing. He includes taxes, respect, and honour among what is owed.³⁷

These are strong words. It would be dishonest to turn them into a simple instruction to obey only when we already agree. It would be equally careless to detach them from Paul's description of the purpose being served, or to make them the entire account of Christian responsibility.

Read the surrounding argument. Romans 12 calls for renewed judgment, modesty about ourselves, hospitality, and care for enemies. It warns against revenge and urges the overcoming of evil with good. After the passage on authority, Romans 13 returns to love of neighbour and says that love does no harm to a neighbour.³⁸ These instructions sit together in the letter. A reading that hears the command to submit while silencing the obligation toward the neighbour has left part of the argument unread.

The difficulty becomes acute when an authority harms the person

it is supposed to protect. The passage does not give us a complete procedure for judging such a case. I cannot extract a modern doctrine of civil disobedience from it by assertion. But neither will I treat an officeholder's invocation of God as proof that a harmful act has become good.

That is an interpretive judgment I am making openly. The ruler's description as a servant for good must remain a question we can ask of the exercise of power. Otherwise, the claimed purpose ceases to do any work: the same words could bless conduct that protects a neighbour and conduct that destroys one.

Readers may disagree about the limits of obedience. We should be able to discuss those limits while describing the actual conduct at issue, the people exposed to it, and the responsibilities of those who can respond. Invoking a verse cannot relieve us of finding out what happened.

A community still learning

The letters we have read address particular communities and relationships. Our use of them in a later institution is a further act, for which that institution and its readers remain responsible. We should distinguish Paul's words, our interpretation, and the authority we claim for the resulting practice. Moving silently between those levels can make a human decision appear unavailable for examination.

This chapter has stayed with Romans, First Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, and Philemon, alongside the narrative of Acts. It has not tried to settle every question associated with the Pauline tradition. What it has asked is enough to disturb an easy contrast between a loving Jesus and a Paul interested only in obedience. We have encountered love, mutual dependence, voluntary action, and serious tensions about authority within the letters themselves.

I want our readers to carry those tensions without turning them into permission for indifference. A community can begin with the meal at which someone goes hungry. It can ask whose consent is missing.

It can examine what its leaders mean by service. It can admit that a familiar reading needs to change because it has failed to hear someone living under its consequences.

We are now ready to make that listening more deliberate. The next stage of the book will bring us into histories that cannot be reduced to the questions with which we began. Before we travel, we need to ask how we will receive what we find, especially when it changes the story we hoped to tell.

Chapter 5

How We Will Listen

A book can invite its readers to listen and still arrange matters so that nobody unfamiliar is allowed to change its conclusion. It can collect a testimony here, a verse there, a striking ruin somewhere else, and return with precisely the certainty it carried out. I want us to be alert to that possibility as we leave the first part of this inquiry.

We have begun with affections and concerns that may be recognizable across our border. We have named alienation, dispossession, and imposed dominance as forms of harm. We have asked how love might change us, and how loyalty might remain answerable to the values it affirms. Those questions will travel with us. They must also remain open to correction by the people and histories we encounter.

Where I am standing

I write from a position of English lineage. That tells you something about the standpoint from which I am asking these questions; it does not give me access to every English person's experience, still less to the experiences of those affected by English power. It gives me a particular reason to examine what I have been willing to regard as familiar, legitimate, and mine.

I am addressing Canadian and American Christians shaped by Paul's letters. I have chosen that audience because the language of

love, sin, confession, freedom, and service can carry this inquiry into difficult places. I do not require you to share all my beliefs. I ask that we give one another enough clarity to know when we are making a historical claim, offering an interpretation, or expressing a hope.

I hope America can turn its creative capacities toward a more generous distribution of wealth through law, democratic participation, and open discourse. I hope Canada can show leadership through the work of healing within, including an honest encounter with its histories. These are hopes I bring to the book. They do not establish that either country has a divine commission, or that another people must accept our account of its future.

A hope can orient a question without determining its answer. If the evidence shows that a proposal I favour would deepen an injury, I owe the reader more than a new description of the same proposal. I owe a reconsideration of it.

Listening to the person speaking

When we hear testimony, the speaker must remain more than a supplier of material for our argument. We need to attend to who is speaking, the situation being described, and the relationship between what they experienced and what they learned from others. A remembered account passed through a family and an event witnessed directly are both things we can hear carefully. They are different kinds of testimony.

In the pages of *We Always Find a Way* that we have begun to read, Chief Roger William relates the transmission of language to history and healing. His account asks a listener to consider effects beyond the people who personally attended residential school.³⁹ We should retain his name and the particular account. Replacing it with a general claim about what all Indigenous people think would lose precisely the encounter from which we might learn.

His words can prompt questions for other settings without authorizing us to treat different peoples as interchangeable. Listening to a

Tsilhqot'in speaker does not make us knowledgeable about every First Nation, or about the distinct history of the Matsqui Territory named on this book's title page. We must learn those relationships in their own terms.

Nor does hearing pain oblige us to convert every detail immediately into a courtroom finding. We can acknowledge what a person is telling us while carefully identifying which claims we can corroborate, which remain uncertain, and which questions we have not yet asked. Care and exactness belong together. Neither benefits from our pretending to know more than we do.

What a source can carry

The same discipline applies to written records. We should ask who made a document, for whom, under what circumstances, and to accomplish what. A proclamation can tell us what its author wanted publicly asserted. By itself, it cannot tell us how everyone living under that proclamation experienced it.

Imagine a file recording that an agreement was reached. Before treating the signature as the end of the inquiry, we might ask who could negotiate, what alternatives were available, whether the terms were understood, and whose interests were absent from the table. These questions do not predetermine that the agreement was invalid. They help us understand what kind of assent the record preserves.

A missing voice requires similar restraint. Its absence from the record does not prove that the person was silent, content, or without an account of their own. It also does not authorize us to write that account for them. Sometimes the responsible sentence is one that names the limit of what can be recovered.

We need to carry that restraint into our reading of Scripture. An event narrated in Acts, Paul's account of himself in a letter, a character speaking within a parable, and an instruction addressed to a community cannot be used as though they were identical forms of evidence. We have already seen how much can turn on identifying

who is speaking. The same question will matter when we encounter kings, chroniclers, philosophers, and modern politicians.

Giving disagreement room

A serious objection deserves more than a brief appearance before the author returns to his preferred conclusion. We need to be able to state it in a form its holder could recognize. What does the person fear losing? What evidence do they think we have missed? What obligation are they trying to honour?

Sometimes hearing those concerns will change a proposal. Sometimes the disagreement will remain. Mutual understanding does not guarantee assent, and there are demands we may have good reason to refuse. The task is to give an account of the refusal that addresses the actual demand and its consequences.

There is a limit to what we should ask of people in the name of dialogue. Someone describing an injury is not required to make themselves endlessly available to persuade every sceptic. A person seeking safety need not postpone it until a discussion has reached consensus. We can keep investigating a disagreement while acting on a responsibility that is already sufficiently clear.

That matters for our account of love as willingness to be changed. Such willingness must not become another claim upon the person with the least room to refuse. In a carefully considered mutual agreement, each participant needs a meaningful voice. Where power is unequal, we should examine what would make participation more than a formality.

It is possible to be patient with a person and impatient with a continuing harm. Indeed, patience with those who have difficulty understanding may require practical protections for the people who would otherwise bear the cost of that difficulty.

Comparison without conquest

We will move across considerable distances in this book. A comparison can reveal a question we had not noticed: how a claim of service becomes a claim to rule, how achievement is mistaken for comprehensive knowledge, or how a community protects its account of innocence. But resemblance does not establish descent. We must not invent an unbroken chain from an ancient practice to a modern policy because both trouble us in a similar way.

We should also resist treating every tradition as an imperfect version of our own. An unfamiliar account may organize the relationship between people, land, obligation, and knowledge differently. Before deciding that it has failed to answer our question, we need to understand what it is asking.

This does not require us to approve every practice. We can oppose cruelty while remaining exact about where we find it and why we judge it so. We can also discover something valuable in a tradition without making it timeless, unanimous, or incapable of harm. Respect should make our descriptions more attentive.

The same generosity belongs to Western thought. Recognizing it as one among many does not require us to discard its accomplishments. It asks us to release the claim that accomplishment has brought inquiry to an end. We can inherit a powerful set of questions and still need questions that came from elsewhere.

Before the walls

Our next destination is Mycenae. We will arrive with questions about power, memory, and the stories people make from what survives. We should resist naming the verdict before examining the evidence. A wall can prompt us to think about protection and exclusion, but its purpose and the lives around it require investigation. The people who lived there deserve more than a role in our metaphor.

This is how I hope we will proceed: with affections we need not

disown, judgments we are willing to explain, and an account of our knowledge that leaves room for what is missing. We can ask more of our countries because we care about what they make possible. We can ask more of ourselves because others must live with the consequences of what we choose.

The willingness to listen becomes consequential when something we hear is allowed to change the next step. Let us begin the journey before Athens with that possibility still open.

Part II

Before Our Story Began

Chapter 6

The Walls of Mycenae

A wall is evidence of an accomplishment. People have understood something about stone, weight, labour, and the ground beneath them. They have coordinated work beyond what one pair of hands could do. Whatever else we may learn, we should begin by acknowledging that achievement.

The walls of Mycenae have outlasted the political order they protected. In the northeastern Peloponnese, the surviving citadel, Lion Gate, and monumental tombs give material form to a world much earlier than classical Athens. The wider Mycenaean civilization flourished during the later Bronze Age, conventionally placed around 1600–1100 BCE. Its palatial administration left records in Linear B, an early written form of Greek.⁴⁰

Already we face a choice. We can recruit these remains into a story whose conclusion we brought with us. Or we can allow them to interrupt that story.

If we want an uncomplicated history of progress, the walls present a difficulty. Their builders were capable people, and their capabilities did not make their arrangements permanent. If we want an uncomplicated condemnation of power, the walls present another difficulty. Protection is a human need. A family facing violence does not become foolish because it wants a barrier between itself and danger.

The stone alone cannot tell us whether a particular person experi-

enced the order it enclosed as safety, burden, opportunity, or captivity. Those questions require other evidence. We should ask them without manufacturing the voices that would answer.

What the monument remembers

The surviving object invites admiration because it is there. What has disappeared has no comparable advantage. This is a difficulty in all historical remembrance: endurance can become an unearned claim to represent the whole.

A palace is easier to point to than the relationships that supplied it. A grave can preserve an object while leaving the ordinary conversations of its maker beyond recovery. We may learn a great deal from an object without recovering everything that mattered to the people who handled it. Their incomplete visibility is a limit of our knowledge, not a measure of their importance.

The distinction matters when we use the word civilization. We often introduce it through a procession of exceptional objects: a building, a weapon, a work of art, a written document. These are legitimate evidence of human ability. But they are not a census of human worth. A society includes the people who made its conspicuous achievements possible, including those whose names we cannot retrieve.

Consider, as a question rather than an invented reconstruction, the work needed to move a large stone. Who chose its destination? Who understood its properties? Who supplied the food that allowed the work to continue? Who could refuse? The stone does not answer all these questions. Asking them prevents us from confusing the command to build with the entirety of the building.

This is also a way to honour achievement more accurately. The leader whose name survives did not personally invent every skill on which the undertaking depended. Giving attention to that dependence need not diminish the result. It restores something of its human scale.

For our purposes, the important question is not whether Mycenae deserves admiration. It does. The question is what admiration licenses

us to say. We can recognize technical accomplishment without inferring that its possessors knew everything about justice. We can recognize an enduring form without assuming an enduring right to command. These are different judgments, and neither follows automatically from the other.

A world already in relationship

Mycenaean achievement was not sealed inside the walls. The Metropolitan Museum's account describes the importance of Minoan influence from Crete and the circulation of Mycenaean pottery through Mediterranean trade. It also identifies an impressive range of crafts and engineering, from metalwork and carved objects to bridges, drainage, and fortifications.⁴¹

These few facts are enough to unsettle the image of a civilization bringing itself into existence alone. They do not establish that every idea came from elsewhere. They show that innovation and relationship can belong to the same account.

We understand this readily at a smaller scale. A person can learn a craft from someone else and make something new with it. A community can receive a material, adapt a technique, solve a local difficulty, and produce an achievement that is properly its own. Receiving does not cancel creating. Creating does not cancel receiving.

Why, then, should we become anxious when a national story includes dependence? Perhaps because we have begun to ask that story to prove something it cannot prove: that our collective identity is sufficient unto itself.

An honest inheritance has room for gratitude. It can name teachers without surrendering the worth of its students. It can recognize that a route carrying goods also creates occasions for encounter, without pretending that every encounter was peaceful or equal. Exchange can include coercion, rivalry, imitation, misunderstanding, and mutual benefit. The existence of contact is the beginning of investigation, not a certificate of harmony.

Nor should we replace a proud story of solitary origins with an equally proud story in which we know precisely who borrowed everything from whom. The evidence must carry each particular claim. Where it does not, we can leave the question open.

What we can relinquish is the demand for purity. A tradition does not have to be untouched to be valuable. Indeed, if its strength includes the capacity to learn, then an account that removes its encounters removes part of the achievement we hoped to celebrate.

When a world does not continue

There is a temptation to make the end of an ancient political order explain our own anxieties. We arrange the past into a warning: they became proud, they became weak, they admitted strangers, they exhausted the land. The preferred cause depends suspiciously often on the present argument of the person telling the story.

Mycenaean decline should resist that convenience. A useful example comes from research on another Mycenaean centre, the Palace of Nestor at Pylos. A study using a local cave record found no clear chronological match between the palace's destruction and drier conditions. Its authors identified earlier and later climatic difficulties and considered how these might have affected vulnerability and recovery. They explicitly rejected a single cause for the broader breakdown.⁴²

That distinction between destruction and recovery is worth carrying with us. An institution may survive a serious shock and later fail under different conditions. The event that damages a building need not explain why the system around it cannot be restored. A loss of central authority need not mean the disappearance of everyone who lived under it.

The study also notes continuing small-scale agriculture in the region.⁴³ We should pause over that modest statement. From the perspective of a palace, a world has ended. From the perspective of someone still trying to produce food, the world demands another day's work. Our choice of subject changes what continuity we can see.

This does not make collapse harmless. It asks us to distinguish the fall of an arrangement from the extinction of human life, skill, or meaning. If we narrate only the fortunes of commanding institutions, we may overlook the people who persist after those institutions cease to command.

The same restraint should govern our moral vocabulary. We do not possess evidence that would let us diagnose an entire lost population with hubris. The ruins cannot confess on their behalf. What we can examine is our own temptation to imagine that a large accomplishment guarantees its continuation.

A wall can be effective against one danger and irrelevant to another. That is true as a matter of purpose: a structure designed to resist an attacker does not thereby answer every question about food, succession, trust, or cooperation. We need no invented account of Mycenaean failure to recognize the difference between strength in one task and sufficiency for every task.

The story reaches farther back

There is an emotional difficulty here. Many of us want an origin we can visit in imagination. Somewhere the confusion should stop. Somewhere our people should become recognizably ours, carrying forward the qualities we admire in ourselves.

Yet every point we choose already has a before. Mycenae does not supply the first human relationship, the first act of imagination, or the first attempt to live together. It supplies a particular body of evidence within a much longer human story. Moving the beginning from Athens to Mycenae should enlarge our attention, not create a new place beyond which we refuse to look.

The gaps matter. They remind us that remembered history and human history are not identical. Much of what allowed people to live was never preserved in a form we can read. We should not fill that silence with whatever ancestors our argument requires. We can admit that people existed beyond the reach of our account, with relationships

that did not depend on our remembering them.

For a reader formed by Scripture, this should not be an alien discipline. A text may give us an account of a calling without giving us a complete chronology of everyone alive around it. Attention to one people does not establish the absence of every other people. Our concern begins when a particular story is made to carry a universal exclusion it has not demonstrated.

We will encounter that concern repeatedly. A community can tell a meaningful story about what it has received and what it hopes to do. Trouble begins when it declares that those outside the story have no comparable history, no knowledge worth hearing, or no standing to refuse the role assigned to them.

An incomplete record does not require an empty judgment. We can know some things responsibly. We can admire a gate, study a tablet, compare material evidence, and revise a chronology. The alternative to omniscience is patient knowledge. It is a more demanding undertaking than either unquestioning pride or indiscriminate doubt.

What we carry beyond the gate

The strongest objection to this caution is practical. People need confidence to act. A nation cannot wait until it understands every cause, every inheritance, and every possible consequence. If we turn every achievement into an occasion for uncertainty, do we leave ourselves unable to build anything?

The answer must include an affirmation. We should build. We should preserve useful skills, protect people, and take responsibility for decisions whose outcomes we cannot fully know. The lesson of limited knowledge cannot be that someone else must always act first.

But confidence can attach to a practice rather than a claim of completeness. We can trust our willingness to inspect, repair, and learn. We can make commitments that include the possibility of correction. We can distinguish a challenge to the design from an attack on everyone who helped construct it.

That distinction becomes harder when a structure carries our identity. Then a crack can feel like an accusation. We may spend our energy defending the reputation of the wall while neglecting the work that would keep it useful.

Here Mycenae serves as a starting place for our questions, not as proof of an answer about ourselves. Its surviving achievements deserve attention in their own right. Their survival beside so much that is missing asks us to approach inheritance with both affection and proportion.

We are recipients of more than we can name. We are capable of more than repetition. Those two recognitions can live together. The first gives us reason for gratitude; the second gives us work to do.

Beyond the walls, our journey turns toward a different kind of accomplishment: the attempt to offer an explanation that another person can question. We will go to Miletus carrying an uncertainty the monuments cannot resolve. When a people has learned something valuable, what allows it to keep learning?

Chapter 7

The Questions of Miletus

An explanation changes a relationship. Someone who has been told only to accept an answer may now ask how it was reached. Once reasons are offered, another person can examine them. The conversation acquires a possibility it did not previously possess: the answer may change without the questioner having to defeat the person who gave it.

This is one of the possibilities I want us to recover in the inheritance we call Western. It is valuable enough that we should be careful with its history.

Miletus was a Greek city in Ionia, on the western coast of what is now Turkey. Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes are associated with its early inquiry into the natural world. Much of what we know about them comes through later reports and fragments rather than complete surviving works.⁴⁴ We meet them through transmission, with all the obligations that entails.

They are not waiting for us in a perfectly preserved classroom. We cannot overhear the first lesson or reconstruct every exchange. Even a familiar sequence of names can make a complicated history look tidier than the evidence permits.

What survives nevertheless gives us something to consider. A world that could be described in terms of stories about divine action could also be investigated for its underlying principles. What is it made

of? What accounts for change? What explanation can connect the apparent variety of things?

These questions did not end inquiry. They made further inquiry necessary.

An answer that could be questioned

Aristotle, looking back from a later century, reports that Thales made water the originating principle. He offers possible reasons: moisture in nourishment and the relation of moisture to life. The wording matters. Aristotle is interpreting an earlier thinker, and some of the explanation is explicitly conjectural.⁴⁵

We should not smooth that distance away. “Aristotle reports” is a more accurate beginning than “Thales demonstrated.” It tells the reader both what the evidence is and what work the evidence can do.

The proposition itself is not a conclusion we must defend today. Its importance for this inquiry lies in the invitation it creates. If water is proposed as an explanation, we can ask what it explains, what it leaves unexplained, and why we should prefer it to an alternative. The claim has become answerable to questions beyond the status of its speaker.

That is my philosophical reading of the possibility, not a claim that Thales established a modern scientific institution. We should not give him a laboratory, a peer-review system, or a modern distinction between science and religion that we have not found in the evidence. An early question deserves respect without being dressed in our clothes.

The accounts of Anaximander and Anaximenes complicate the picture further. Anaximander is associated with an indefinite originating principle; Anaximenes with air and processes of condensation and rarefaction. These reports preserve differences within early Milesian inquiry, not a single finished doctrine handed down unchanged.⁴⁶

Difference is doing important work here. We sometimes describe a tradition by listing the conclusions its great names held. Another way to describe it is to notice what happened when conclusions differed. Did

disagreement become an occasion for explanation? Could a successor inherit a question without inheriting the same answer?

A living intellectual inheritance needs that room. Otherwise fidelity becomes the preservation of conclusions against the activity that produced them.

Imagine a child learning a craft. At first, imitation may be necessary. The child does not yet understand why a joint is cut in a particular way. Later, understanding permits variation. A new material or a different load calls for a changed method. A teacher who forbids every departure may preserve the appearance of obedience while preventing the student from acquiring the judgment the craft requires.

That imagined relationship helps clarify what we can lose in civilizational pride. We praise the ancestors for asking difficult questions, then ask their descendants to demonstrate loyalty by ceasing to ask them.

No mind begins alone

The location matters too. Miletus belongs to a wider ancient world, not to the map of our present alliances. Calling its thinkers Western is a later way of organizing an inheritance. It should not make the eastern Mediterranean disappear around them.

Herodotus offers a useful witness to Greek willingness to acknowledge learning from elsewhere. In his account of Egypt, he connects Greek land measurement to Egyptian practices and identifies Babylonian sources for timekeeping devices and divisions of the day. We should retain the attribution: this is what Herodotus reports and reasons, not a complete modern history of those inventions.⁴⁷

His testimony makes a modest but important point possible. The thought that Greeks learned from other peoples is not merely a modern attempt to diminish them. An ancient Greek author could include such learning in his account of the world.

We need not replace one exclusive origin story with another. An explanation of inquiry as nothing but borrowing would miss the work

of adaptation, argument, and invention. The question is whether we can recognize originality without demanding isolation.

We do this every day when we speak. Our capacity to say something new depends on words we received. The dependence is not an embarrassment to be overcome. It is part of what makes the new sentence possible. A language belongs to its speakers through use and contribution, while remaining larger than any one of them.

Something similar can be said of a philosophical tradition. We can contribute to it, cherish it, and take responsibility for how we use it. None of those commitments requires us to imagine that everyone outside it has merely been waiting for instruction.

That last assumption damages more than our manners. It damages our ability to learn. If another people's knowledge is classified in advance as superstition, stagnation, or an incomplete version of ours, then we have decided the result before hearing the account. We may still ask questions, but only those whose acceptable answers we already control.

This is where Miletus matters to the later argument about America. A civilization that celebrates inquiry should be especially wary of a story that makes its own pre-eminence the condition of truth. The habit of asking for reasons cannot be confined to outsiders while our own claims receive an ancestral exemption.

The courage to be corrected

There is a sentimental way to tell this story. In it, reason arrives, superstition retreats, and humanity proceeds toward us. That account gives us a flattering position at the end of the procession. It also removes much of the difficulty that makes inquiry valuable.

People can reason carefully toward a mistaken conclusion. They can notice one feature of the world and neglect another. They can ask a fruitful question while retaining assumptions their successors will challenge. Their limitations do not make the asking worthless. They show why the work must continue.

Nor should we assume that early natural inquiry simply excluded the divine. Reports about Thales include a world animated in ways that do not fit a clean modern opposition between material explanation and religious meaning.⁴⁸ The history is more interesting when we allow people to think in categories that are not exactly ours.

A Christian reader need not receive this as an invitation to abandon belief. The question is what belief asks us to do when a claim encounters evidence it did not anticipate. We can distinguish confidence in God from confidence that we have perfectly understood God. We can distinguish the worth of a tradition from the completeness of our current account of it.

The distinction does not resolve every conflict. There will be disagreements about what counts as evidence, what a passage means, or which obligations are decisive. But a refusal to distinguish them makes the disagreement harder. It turns a question about interpretation into an accusation of betrayal.

We have already approached this difficulty with Paul. If we read a letter only to obtain a rule that settles our case, we may avoid the concern that made the instruction necessary. A responsible reading asks what the words were doing in their situation and whether our use preserves that purpose. It remains accountable to the words; it also remains accountable to the people affected by our application.

That is not the same as making Miletus the origin of Christian interpretation. I am identifying a question shared by our present reading practices: do we permit what we encounter to correct the explanation we brought?

We should apply it even to this book. A historical example must be able to disappoint my argument. If every source becomes further proof of the conclusion I prefer, I have organized a procession of witnesses who are never allowed to contradict me.

A good objection

A reader may object that openness has limits. Some propositions are false. Some practices injure people. We cannot suspend judgment indefinitely while someone benefits from our hesitation. A community needs decisions, standards, and a way to act together.

I agree. Inquiry is not an obligation to remain undecided. It is an obligation to make the grounds of a decision available for examination and to remain responsive when those grounds fail.

A bridge should not be opened because every account of engineering deserves equal respect. The relevant design must withstand the relevant tests. Likewise, an appeal to cultural difference does not settle a complaint about coercion. We must investigate the act, the relationship, and the injury. Being one tradition among many does not mean that every judgment is equally warranted.

What it does mean is that the identity of the speaker cannot perform all the work. A claim is not true because it is Western, nor false because it is Western. A practice is not just because our ancestors approved it, nor unjust merely because it is old. We need reasons proportionate to what we are asking others to accept.

This becomes particularly important when the claim is a claim to power. Demonstrating that a method works does not establish that its practitioners may rule everyone affected by it. Expertise can justify a responsibility within a task. It does not automatically establish ownership of the people who need the task performed.

The physician, engineer, teacher, and public official all exercise forms of judgment that others may reasonably rely on. Their value increases when they can explain their limits. A competent person need not pretend to know nothing. They need to know where their competence ends and where another person's account becomes necessary.

The same discipline can belong to a country. Confidence in its institutions can include a determination to improve them. Loyalty can give citizens a reason to insist that their country hear unwelcome

evidence. The right to question may itself be one of the values to which they have subscribed.

Before we arrive in Athens

Miletus gives us no permission to construct a new hierarchy with the questioner permanently at the top. We have not discovered a pure people who asked while everyone else merely obeyed. We have encountered a particular strand of inquiry, imperfectly preserved, whose value includes its capacity to make an answer revisable.

That is why the journey cannot begin and end with the monuments of Athens. If we arrive there carrying only a finished catalogue of Western achievements, we may mistake inheritance for possession. If we arrive having considered Miletus, we can ask how those achievements remained answerable to a world larger than themselves.

The distinction will matter when a modern speaker invokes Athens. A public address can summon courage, continuity, and responsibility. It can also use the authority of a place to make a political conclusion feel older and more inevitable than it is. We will need to hear the actual reasoning before judging which work the invocation performs.

For now, we can prepare by declining a false choice. We do not have to choose between loving an inheritance and acknowledging that it is incomplete. The willingness to learn may be among the most valuable things it has given us.

We go forward, then, with gratitude for the question. Athens will offer us extraordinary ways to ask it. Athens will also show us what can happen when people capable of argument decide that another people has too little power for its argument to matter.

Chapter 8

Athens Among Others

Athens offers more than one inheritance. We can encounter a city of argument, art, and public deliberation. We can also encounter arguments for hierarchy and the exercise of imperial power. The difficulty is not choosing which Athens was real. It is learning to read what we admire alongside what should trouble us.

A mature affection can bear that work. We do not honour a tradition by making it incapable of contradiction. We honour it by taking its questions seriously enough to ask them of the tradition itself.

There is a particular temptation when Athens appears in a political speech. The name can make several claims seem like one: that something valuable happened there, that we have inherited it, that we understand it, and that the inheritance authorizes our present policy. Each step requires an argument. The first cannot silently carry the other three.

Before we examine a modern address to the West, we should give the older voices room to disagree.

The limit within an accomplishment

In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates describes his examination of people reputed to be wise. His encounter with craftspeople is especially useful

here. He acknowledges that they possess knowledge he lacks. The problem arises when success in their craft leads them to claim wisdom in other important matters as well.⁴⁹

The distinction is generous and severe at once. Skill is real. Its extension into universal authority is not thereby justified.

We can apply that distinction without pretending to be Socrates. A country may possess outstanding scientific institutions and still misunderstand a neighbouring people. It may create wealth and distribute burdens unjustly. It may defend liberty in one relationship and constrain it in another. None of these observations requires us to deny the accomplishment that made the country confident.

Indeed, the danger may become harder to see precisely because the accomplishment is real. If confidence were always empty boasting, we could dismiss it more easily. A history of solving difficult problems can make the next problem appear to belong to the same category. The capacity to act becomes evidence that the actor has understood what ought to be done.

But the ability to build something does not settle whether those who must live with it have agreed. A successful technique cannot by itself determine the ends it should serve. The question of how is necessary; it does not exhaust the question of whether, for whom, or under whose authority.

An inheritance that includes Socrates gives us resources for examining this mistake. We need not stand outside Western thought to notice the limits of an inflated claim made in its name. The tradition contains challenges to its own self-satisfaction.

That is one reason I want to preserve affection in this inquiry. If the only available response to criticism is renunciation, readers will understandably protect what they love. We need a way to remain responsible for an inheritance without agreeing to every use made of it.

When the other side may speak but cannot matter

Thucydides presents a different encounter in his account of the Athenian confrontation with Melos. In the dialogue, the Athenians press the Melians to discuss survival and expediency within the imbalance of power. The Melians ask whether they can remain neutral. Their wish does not become the basis of the settlement. At the end of the episode, Thucydides records the killing of the adult men captured and the enslavement of women and children.⁵⁰

We should resist turning this into a verdict on every Athenian. The episode gives us a particular account to examine. Its force lies partly in the narrowing of what can count as a reasonable answer.

There is a form of discussion in which the weaker party is invited to speak only about the terms of submission. The powerful party can then describe itself as practical. It has explained the consequences. It has permitted a reply. Why will the other side not be sensible?

From the receiver's perspective, the missing question is obvious. Who established that domination was the starting condition? If the answer is simply that the stronger party can impose it, the discussion has not discovered justice. It has described leverage.

This is one of the everyday mechanisms behind the larger word evil. Alienation can occur even in a room where everyone is allowed to speak. A person's account has been excluded from the authority to shape the result. The procedure may be orderly while the relationship remains coercive.

We should also take the difficult objection seriously. A threatened community may have to choose among terrible alternatives. Refusing an ultimatum does not remove its consequences. Leaders bear responsibilities for those who will suffer if resistance fails. It would be cruel to turn their predicament into an easy lesson about courage.

Yet a hard decision under threat does not cleanse the threat. We can ask whether a response was prudent without transferring responsibility for coercion entirely to those who resisted it. Otherwise the power

to make another person's choices terrible becomes a way to escape responsibility for what follows.

The contrast with inquiry is sharp. In an inquiry, an answer can alter the questioner's understanding. Under an ultimatum, the permitted answer merely determines which consequence the stronger party will impose. Both may involve words. Their relationships to listening are very different.

Reason can defend a hierarchy

We should not imagine that careful argument guarantees humane conclusions. In the first book of the *Politics*, Aristotle develops an account of natural slavery. He also records the opposing view that slavery rests on convention and force rather than nature.⁵¹ The disagreement belongs inside the ancient evidence.

His defence is not made harmless by its place in history. Nor does rejecting it require us to pretend that nothing else in Aristotle is worth reading. The more difficult task is to understand how a powerful intelligence could reason toward a hierarchy we should refuse.

One danger is to mistake an arrangement for a fact about the nature of the people arranged. Those who are denied opportunities appear less capable within the institution that denies them. Their assigned position then becomes evidence that the assignment was appropriate. The explanation protects the structure from the experience of those beneath it.

That is an analytical danger, not a claim that every hierarchy has the same origin. Some roles require training; some responsibilities must be delegated; children need care that adults need not be subject to. The relevant questions concern the grounds, scope, and accountability of the authority. They cannot be settled by declaring all differences oppressive, any more than by declaring every existing difference natural.

The ancient disagreement helps us avoid another convenient fiction: that everyone once accepted what we now condemn. Even an author

defending a practice can preserve evidence that others questioned it. We should be cautious about the excuse that no alternative was thinkable.

We should be equally cautious about congratulating ourselves. Our ability to identify an error in an old text does not prove that our own arrangements are free of similarly protected assumptions. It gives us a question to bring home. Where have we inferred incapacity from exclusion? Where have we treated the success of those already favoured as proof that the distribution of opportunity is just?

These questions do not belong exclusively to one country. The American address ahead will require them. Canadian readers should not take the opportunity to appoint themselves the examining board.

Paul in a world of crossings

Centuries later, the Paul of Acts enters Athens as someone already formed within overlapping worlds. Acts identifies him as a Jew born in Tarsus, educated in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, and a Roman citizen by birth. These are claims made by the narrative; it does not supply a history of how his family acquired citizenship.⁵²

Tarsus gives us relevant context without giving us a complete educational biography. Strabo praises the city's enthusiasm for philosophy and education, describes schools of rhetoric, and names Stoic thinkers associated with it.⁵³ A person born there belonged to a setting in which Greek intellectual life was present. We cannot infer from a birthplace that Paul attended a particular school or studied under one of the named philosophers.

Acts itself directs our attention toward Jerusalem as a place of formation. Paul's own account in Philippians emphasizes his Israelite and Pharisaic credentials and the zeal with which he once acted.⁵⁴ His Jewish inheritance must remain substantial in our reading. We would misunderstand him if we reduced it to a preliminary stage before he discovered something supposedly more universal.

What we can see is a person whose mission requires movement

across differences. In Acts 17, he disputes with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, addresses Athenian worship, and uses the language of poets known to his hearers.⁵⁵ The narrative presents engagement with Greek thought. It does not establish a surviving course list from his youth.

To call Paul a crucible for Hebrew and Greek traditions is therefore an interpretive description of an encounter, not a claim that he invented a synthesis by completing two formal curricula. His inherited Scriptures, his proclamation of Jesus, the questions of those he addresses, and Roman power do not remain neatly separated. They meet in the work he is trying to do.

Nor do they melt into easy agreement. The Athens speech culminates in repentance, judgment, and resurrection; the audience responds in different ways. Some mock, some wish to hear more, and some join him.⁵⁶ This is not a story in which every difference disappears once the right quotation is found.

For our reading, its significance includes the effort to address people through something they can recognize. Paul does not need to regard his hearers as empty vessels in order to believe he has something vital to tell them. Contact becomes possible through attention to their existing world.

We should receive his conviction sympathetically. A person persuaded that the resurrection has changed the meaning of human history will not treat that conviction as a decorative preference. It gives urgency to argument, travel, and the formation of communities. We can understand the force of that commitment without pretending that his immediate circumstances are our own.

His reasons were lived within a world he did not choose. Ours are lived within a world we must examine for ourselves. Respecting him includes taking the trouble to notice the difference.

An inheritance that remains open

We can now see why a litigious reading would be so inadequate. If we approach these texts looking only for a clause that authorizes our position, we make their encounter with the world disappear. A philosopher becomes a badge. An apostle becomes a regulation. A city becomes a title deed.

Reading for spirit does not excuse carelessness with the letter. The words constrain us. So do their setting, their genre, and the people whose lives our interpretation affects. We have to explain why an application is faithful rather than merely convenient.

The question for our own public life is whether the inherited words still expose us to correction. Can the story we tell about freedom hear someone who says our policy has taken theirs away? Can our account of Christian duty hear a neighbour who experiences our assistance as control? Can our pride in reason tolerate evidence that our reasoning has left something out?

A person may answer those questions imperfectly and still have something valuable to give. So may a nation. What becomes dangerous is the insistence that its gifts establish a standing exemption from the questions.

Athens belongs among the places from which we can learn. That is a substantial honour. It need not be enlarged into the claim that every meaningful human relationship began there or requires its descendants' supervision. A tradition can be particular in history and widely useful in practice without becoming the owner of the world.

When we reach Rubio's words, we will need to distinguish the goods he hopes to defend from the authority he asks those goods to confer. The historical work here prepares that reading; it does not replace it. An alarming conclusion should be demonstrated through his reasoning, not supplied in advance by our dislike of the speaker.

Before that encounter, we must examine another transformation. What happens when the confidence of a community receives the name of God? When a calling becomes permission to overcome others, the

questioner may be treated as more than mistaken. They may be placed outside the moral world the calling claims to serve.

For that inquiry we move from ancient arguments to Christian ones, carrying Paul with us as a voice to be heard rather than a signature already attached to everything later done in his name.

Part III

Power in a Sacred Name

Chapter 9

The Sword and the Calling

A person can want to protect what is good and still become dangerous to the people outside that protection. That possibility is harder to face than simple malice. We know what to do with a villain who announces a desire to hurt. We have more difficulty with courage, discipline, sacrifice, and sincere conviction directed toward an unjust end.

The problem did not begin in America. We can find an especially stark Christian example in Bernard of Clairvaux's defence of the Knights Templar. We should approach it as a particular argument, written for a particular purpose, rather than as a key that supposedly unlocks every later conflict.

His *In Praise of the New Knighthood* addresses Hugh, master of the knights, and distinguishes their calling from worldly warfare driven by vanity, anger, and possession. Bernard wants armed service to answer to a higher purpose.⁵⁷

That intention deserves to be heard. The attempt to restrain predatory violence is not itself contemptible. A criticism that cannot recognize the good someone hopes to serve will have difficulty explaining how that good becomes compromised.

The question is what happens to the restraint when the warrior becomes certain that his violence is God's work.

The permission inside the calling

In chapter 3, Bernard reassures the knight who kills for Christ. He distinguishes killing an evildoer from ordinary homicide and describes the act as service to Christ. He does include a qualification: killing should not occur if another means can prevent attacks on the faithful. Yet within his argument, the justified knight's killing and his own death can both acquire sacred value.⁵⁸

The qualification matters. We should preserve it because we are reading an argument rather than assembling a prosecution. But the larger difficulty remains. Who determines that the other person is the evil whose destruction serves God? What hearing remains available to someone placed in that category?

This is where moral seriousness can become a means of avoiding moral attention. A person may scrutinize his own intention intensely while knowing very little about the person against whom he acts. Once the action has been classified as sacred duty, the receiver's situation may seem irrelevant to its goodness.

Our earlier account of evil asks us to resist that disappearance. We have named alienation, dispossession, and imposed dominance among its basic forms. Those remain recognizable from the receiving end even when the person imposing them has a language of devotion.

A sincere intention is evidence about the actor. It is not a complete account of the act. The person injured does not experience the actor's intention in place of the injury.

We should not turn that observation into a rule that all force is equivalent. Restraining someone who is attacking another person differs from attacking someone because of their membership in a distrusted group. A duty to protect can require difficult action. Precisely because force can sometimes be necessary, its justification needs limits that survive the urgency of the moment.

A claim of holy purpose can make those limits harder to maintain. Doubt begins to look like faithlessness. A request for evidence becomes reluctance to defend the good. The person urging restraint can be

accused of caring more for the enemy than for the people at risk.

That accusation can silence the very judgment protection requires. We need to know whether the danger is real, whether the person targeted is responsible, whether the action is necessary, and whether it will create another injury we have refused to count. A sacred description cannot perform those investigations for us.

When Paul is made to carry the sword

Bernard's argument invokes the ruler's sword and service against wrongdoing, language recognizable from Romans 13.⁵⁹ The point is not that a reference to Paul settles the dispute. It shows why the way we read Paul matters.

Romans also tells its hearers to resist vengeance, attend to an enemy's need, and overcome evil through good.⁶⁰ We encountered that setting earlier. It becomes consequential here because the neighbouring passages can be made to speak with very different emphases.

We would repeat the litigious mistake if we answered Bernard merely by finding a competing verse and announcing that our citation wins. The deeper work is to ask what kind of relationship our reading produces. Does it leave the exercise of power answerable to the good of the people affected? Or does it give the person exercising power a way to stop asking?

This does not make interpretation a matter of whichever consequences we prefer. A reader must explain the text, its context, and the connection between them and the proposed action. But an interpretation that cannot hear anything about its human consequences has lost a necessary source of correction.

Paul deserves better than being treated as the author of every conclusion later reached with his words. A letter addressing a community under Roman authority is not already a charter for a medieval military order. Making that application requires additional judgments about office, purpose, danger, and responsibility. Those judgments belong to the people who make them.

We should identify the step where interpretation enters. Otherwise a human decision can disappear behind divine authority, leaving nobody willing to answer for it.

For a contemporary Christian reader, this is a demanding form of respect. We cannot transfer all responsibility backward to the apostle. We have to hear him carefully and then account for what we do in our own circumstances. His seriousness should increase ours, rather than remove the need for it.

Other Christian possibilities

Christian history does not give us one unanimous answer about the sword. Long before Bernard, Tertullian's *On the Crown* challenged the compatibility of military service with allegiance to Christ. His questions include the use of violence, the obligations of military oaths, and participation in idolatrous practices.⁶¹

We need not adopt every part of Tertullian's position to recognize the evidence of disagreement. The choice was never simply between taking Christianity seriously and asking questions about violence. Christian seriousness could generate the questions.

A different medieval possibility appears in Francis of Assisi's unconfirmed Rule of 1221. Its instructions for brothers living among Muslims and other non-Christians include avoiding quarrels and living in submission while acknowledging their Christian faith. It also provides for proclamation with conversion as its purpose.⁶²

This is not our contemporary ideal of dialogue transplanted intact into the Middle Ages. Francis's brothers remain convinced Christians with a missionary purpose. The significance for our question is that conviction can be expressed through a posture other than domination.

A person can enter another community without first requiring it to become a subordinate territory of the person's own. A person can believe there is something important to say while accepting that the encounter exposes the speaker to risk and dependence. The relationship changes when arrival does not automatically confer command.

The contrast is useful without becoming a pageant of good and bad Christians. We have not established that every follower of Francis lived these instructions or that every knight embodied Bernard's confidence. We have identified different possibilities within Christian thought. Those possibilities prevent us from treating one use of sacred language as the unavoidable content of the faith.

They also return a responsibility to the present reader. We cannot say that history has left us no choice about how conviction must behave.

Protection without an unlimited mandate

The strongest defence of the sword begins with someone vulnerable. A traveller faces violence. A family is threatened. A community cannot safely gather or worship. Telling those people that all power is corrupt would offer them little protection. If our account of love cannot take danger seriously, it is incomplete.

We should therefore distinguish protection from the unlimited mandate sometimes built upon it. Protection has a subject: someone whose life or freedom is at risk. It has a purpose that can be described. It should also have conditions under which the exceptional power ends or changes.

Imagine a person invited to guard a doorway during a threat. The invitation may justify excluding an attacker. It does not necessarily authorize deciding who owns the house, what its inhabitants must believe, or whether they may ever dismiss the guard. The task can be essential while its authority remains bounded.

The example is deliberately simple. Public duties are more complicated, and consent cannot always be collected from every affected person before emergency action. That difficulty increases the importance of review, reasons, and a way to challenge the action afterward. It does not make unlimited discretion a solution.

A protector can become attached to being indispensable. The end of danger then threatens a role, a budget, a status, or an understanding

of the self. This is a possibility to investigate in particular institutions, not an accusation against everyone who serves. It helps us ask a practical question: what would count as successful completion of the duty?

If there is no imaginable answer, we should look closely at whether protection has become permanent jurisdiction.

Religious language can intensify that problem when it places the institution beyond ordinary correction. But secular language can do similar work. Civilization, progress, security, and freedom can also be used as words before which objections are expected to fall silent. The mechanism deserves attention wherever it appears.

The neighbour who interrupts the mission

Jesus' account of the Samaritan offers a different starting place. The wounded person's need interrupts a journey and rearranges what must happen next.⁶³ In our earlier reading, we asked whether love might be measured partly by how much another person's situation is allowed to change us.

That question can be asked of a mission. Does the mission permit the people it encounters to alter its understanding? Or are they allowed only to confirm the need for the mission as already conceived?

The difference need not depend on a crisis. A negotiated agreement can express the same willingness. We may arrive with a plan, hear an objection, and discover that the proposed good needs another form. Changing the plan can be evidence of fidelity to its purpose.

A claim of divine authorization becomes especially dangerous when no such change is possible. Every refusal is then interpreted as further evidence of the other person's error. The mission can enlarge itself indefinitely because nothing it encounters is permitted to count against its initial description.

We should be careful here too. Openness does not mean that an aggressor receives a veto over protection. The people who are harmed must not be required to keep explaining themselves until the person

harming them agrees. Willingness to learn belongs alongside action to stop a sufficiently understood injury.

What it excludes is the comfort of believing that a good cause makes our own conduct incapable of evil.

The Templars belong to their own history. We have not traced a secret line from them to a modern government. We have examined a form of permission: the conversion of an asserted good into a claim that those acting in its name need not fear the ordinary moral meaning of what they do.

Across the Atlantic, in another period and under different institutions, we will encounter a language of national destiny. There, too, a people can understand itself as carrying a gift. There, too, the question is what happens when those receiving the proposed gift are denied a meaningful say in whether and how it arrives.

Chapter 10

Manifest Destiny

A home can be a place of courage, sacrifice, and hope. Someone who works to build one may reasonably love what has been made. The moral question does not begin by denying that love. It begins when the story of making the home leaves out the people whose home was already there.

Manifest Destiny gives this difficulty a national scale. The phrase joins an account of expansion to an assertion that expansion fulfils a purpose greater than the preferences of those who oppose it. The destination is presented as already settled. Human choices acquire the appearance of inevitability.

In the 1845 editorial “Annexation,” conventionally attributed to John L. O’Sullivan, the continent is described as allotted by Providence for the development of a growing American population.⁶⁴ This is the language we must examine. Its confidence does not establish the divine intention it claims to know.

The good inside the promise

We should hear what could make the promise attractive. A person may want room for a family, freedom from arbitrary rule, institutions that allow public participation, and a chance to create something durable. Those are intelligible hopes. Condemning them would obscure the

question of how they are pursued.

The editorial anticipates settlement accompanied by schools, courts, representative institutions, and productive work. It presents emigrants' labour and sacrifice as grounds for political independence.⁶⁵ The claim therefore concerns more than the pleasure of possession. It offers a picture of a future that its intended readers could recognize as good.

The difficulty is the distribution of authority within that picture. Whose labour establishes a right? Whose existing relationship to the place receives comparable attention? Who is allowed to describe the change as a loss?

A school can be a good thing without making every means of acquiring its site just. A court can offer protection while standing within an order that has denied another people's authority. The existence of beneficial institutions does not settle the history of the land on which they stand.

This is where growth at another's expense becomes concrete. We should distinguish additional capacity from a transfer disguised as creation. If one person acquires a home because another has been forced out, the first person's improvement is not a complete account of what happened. Counting only the new owner's gain makes the loss disappear without repairing it.

None of this implies that movement, settlement, or social change is inherently evil. People migrate for many reasons, and societies can negotiate ways to welcome them. The moral difference lies in the relationships through which change occurs: consent, coercion, compensation, exclusion, and the distribution of the resulting benefits and burdens.

The word destiny can conceal those relationships by placing the outcome beyond choice. If the future is inevitable, the people choosing its means may cease to appear responsible for them.

A treaty from the receiving side

To hear what can disappear, we should turn to a voice that predates the editorial. In a September 1836 appeal to Congress, John Ross protested the agreement used to dispossess the Cherokee Nation. He denied that its makers had the nation's authorization and described the loss of property, freedom, and protection the agreement threatened.⁶⁶

The chronology matters. The phrase Manifest Destiny did not create every practice we now associate with westward expansion. Nor should the Cherokee experience be collapsed into the distinct conflict between the United States and Mexico. What the earlier appeal gives us is a particular challenge to the claim that a formal instrument necessarily records a people's consent.

Ross does not leave us guessing whether an objection existed. It is there in words addressed to the government expected to act. The listener's problem is therefore not simply a lack of information. The problem is what authority the objection is allowed to have.

This is a difficult passage for readers who value agreements and law, as I do. We want a signature to stabilize a relationship. We need procedures through which collective commitments can be made. But the appearance of agreement cannot remove the question of who had authority to give it.

A treaty is meaningful because parties make commitments to one another. If one party can choose the people who will purportedly consent for the other, the form can survive after the relationship has been emptied of its substance. A document may then become a tool for imposing the very result that the affected people have rejected.

Ross's appeal also prevents an easy dismissal of resistance as a failure to understand civilization. Here is an argument about representation, property, obligation, and the authority to bind a people. We do not need to invent eloquence for those threatened by dispossession. We need to read the account that survives.

For our inquiry into evil, the significance is immediate. Social exclusion is not always expressed by saying that another person does

not exist. It can be expressed by acknowledging their existence while denying their standing to decide what happens to them.

We should not make Ross represent every Indigenous person or every internal Cherokee disagreement. The source has a speaker and a political purpose. Its specificity strengthens the encounter. A particular protest can be heard without turning it into a universal voice.

Freedom with exclusions attached

The “Annexation” editorial also addresses slavery. It denies that annexation is fundamentally a proslavery measure and imagines slavery’s eventual disappearance alongside the removal of Black people from the United States.⁶⁷ Its vision of national development is therefore not equivalent to equal belonging for everyone within the developing nation.

The point is not to surprise the reader with the discovery that an old text contains racism. It is to notice how a promise can retain the word freedom while distributing its meaning unequally. One group receives room to grow. Another group’s future is imagined as departure.

A contradiction of this kind can be sustained by narrowing the collective pronoun. We speak generously about ourselves, then quietly determine who may be included. The resulting promise sounds universal until someone outside its intended circle tries to claim it.

That is why the receiver’s perspective matters. It reveals the boundary the confident speaker may not have had to notice. A principle that feels expansive to its beneficiaries may be experienced as a door closing by the people excluded from it.

Loyalty to a nation need not require loyalty to every such boundary. If national belonging is a subscription to shared values, then a citizen may challenge a policy because it contradicts those values. The challenge can be an act of participation in the national promise.

Nor is the answer to make the nation incapable of membership or distinction. Political communities require institutions, responsibilities,

and ways to make decisions. The question is whether those arrangements can justify their exclusions and bear the people they burden. A boundary should not become immune to examination merely because it has been placed on a map.

An American refusal

There were American voices that refused to treat expansion as its own justification. In the essay now commonly called *Civil Disobedience*, Henry David Thoreau challenged participation in a government sustaining slavery and waging war on Mexico. His demand was directed at people whose ordinary cooperation helped the injustice continue.⁶⁸

We need not accept every conclusion he draws about individual conscience and government. A society cannot operate as though every personal conviction automatically overrides every common obligation. That objection deserves an answer whenever resistance is proposed.

But the objection cannot become a blanket absolution for compliance. A person remains capable of asking what their cooperation enables. Institutional permission and moral responsibility are related questions; they are not identical ones.

Thoreau's presence also changes the story we tell about America. We are not looking at one continuous national voice that spoke with perfect confidence while everyone outside it objected. Disagreement belongs within the inheritance. A later American reader does not have to become an outsider to ask whether national conduct has betrayed national aspirations.

That does not make dissenters uniformly right or free of their own limitations. It establishes something more modest and more useful: alternatives were argued. We should examine them rather than treating the eventual outcome as the only thinkable path.

Historical inevitability can become a second dispossession. First people lose the power to shape an outcome; later the story denies that their objections ever had a reasonable claim on the future. Reading dissent restores the fact that choices were being made.

After the line moves

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in 1848, ended the war between the United States and Mexico. Its text established a new boundary and addressed the property and civil position of Mexicans in the transferred territory.⁶⁹

The provisions are worth noticing because a territorial transfer is not simply a change of colour on a map. People remain. Their homes, claims, and futures cannot be adequately represented by the line alone. Nor can a settlement between states be assumed to exhaust the distinct relationships and claims of Indigenous peoples in the same territory.

The treaty's existence also leaves us with a task rather than a completed moral judgment. A promise of protection must be followed into its implementation. We cannot infer from the words that everyone received what was promised, any more than we should pretend the words did not exist.

This is another place where reading only for a legal conclusion can narrow our attention. A question about formal transfer may be answered while a question about lived security remains open. Both matter. We need enough precision to avoid asking one answer to do the work of the other.

The same is true when we assess the later achievements of the country that emerged. Roads, universities, discoveries, and new forms of public life can be valuable. Their value does not retroactively obtain the consent of people whose dispossession helped make room for them.

A good created afterward may give us resources for repair. It cannot make repair unnecessary by proving that the eventual beneficiaries prospered.

What loyalty can ask

A present-day American did not personally write the editorial or sign the treaty. Responsibility cannot be distributed merely by ancestry.

Nor can it be avoided simply because the decisions preceded our birth. We inhabit arrangements that continue to confer advantages, impose constraints, and shape what choices are available.

The useful question is what we can now understand and change. Which promises remain unfulfilled? Which accounts have we failed to hear? What institutions allow those affected to seek remedy? How can benefits be shared without requiring another group to surrender its voice as the price of participation?

These are questions for public work. They belong in historical inquiry, law, negotiation, education, and democratic argument. They require more than a mood of shame, and more than a declaration that the past is finished.

The strongest objection is that criticism can become so total that no constructive allegiance remains. A citizen may fear being asked to regard every loved institution as fraudulent and every achievement as stolen. That is not the account I am offering.

We can acknowledge mixed histories without making value impossible. We can recognize courage in a family story while asking what the story has omitted. We can preserve an institution's useful work while changing the terms on which it operates. Such work may require a deeper loyalty than the defence of an unblemished image.

Hubris enters when we decide that our success has settled the question of our rightness. Destiny gives that decision a sacred or historical horizon. Together they can make another person's refusal appear to be an offence against the future itself.

The alternative is a future that remains a human responsibility. It can be pursued through agreements in which the other party matters. It can include correction without requiring national self-erasure. It can ask what America is able to create when its power is answerable to the lives it changes.

To pursue that question, we must examine how a useful instrument can become the authority over its own purpose. The problem is no longer only the land toward which a country moves. It is the relationship between the country's capacities and the good those

capacities are meant to serve.

Chapter 11

The Emissary Takes Command

The book behind the title

Before we ask how an emissary takes command, we should acknowledge where the image comes from. This chapter's title borrows its central figure from Iain McGilchrist's *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*. That subtitle matters. His subject reaches from the brain into the history of a civilization: how different ways of experiencing the world find expression in philosophy, art, literature, and shared life.⁷⁰

We need that larger frame because the preceding chapters have left us with more than a succession of questionable decisions. We have been asking how a people can become accustomed to a particular kind of justification. How does an account of inheritance become permission? How does the person who cannot be accommodated within our plan become a problem to remove? McGilchrist gives us another way to approach the habits of attention beneath such judgments.

His starting distinction concerns how the hemispheres attend, rather than a division that assigns reason to one side and feeling to the other. In his account, the left hemisphere isolates and handles particulars, while the right sustains a broader, contextual encounter. He associates

the master with the right hemisphere and the emissary with the left; both contributions are needed.⁷¹

For our purposes, the important question is what happens after we have isolated something in order to understand or use it. Does it return to a relationship with the world from which we took it? A parcel of land can be measured accurately while the measurement leaves unanswered what the place means to those who live there. The account is useful. The trouble begins when its usefulness is mistaken for completeness.

From attention into a civilization

McGilchrist's journey continues into Western cultural history. His contents move from imitation and cultural evolution through the ancient world, the Renaissance and Reformation, the Enlightenment, Romanticism and industrialization, and modernity. He examines patterns across those changes, not a simple claim that brain anatomy transformed at each historical turning. He explicitly rejects reducing the causes of cultural change to neuroscience.⁷²

In that sense, he takes his own path out of Athens. Greek thought and artistic expression become part of a longer inquiry into the Western mind, rather than a monument at which the story can safely stop. The point of returning there is to follow a development, to ask what possibilities an inheritance opened and what its later custodians came to favour.⁷³

Our earlier return to Mycenae and Miletus has prepared a related question. If we remember only the achievements that resemble our present ambitions, we may mistake a selected inheritance for the whole of what was available. The past can then seem to have been travelling toward us all along. We stop asking what we have failed to carry forward.

McGilchrist also describes a reciprocal process: minds help shape a culture, while that culture encourages certain uses of the mind. His concern is that a built and institutional world can increasingly reflect

a narrow mode of attention, then reinforce it by making that mode seem adequate to everything encountered.⁷⁴

That is the scale at which his work becomes especially useful to this book. We are asking how a habit can become an arrangement shared by people who never consciously agreed to its underlying assumptions. Consider, as our own example, an institution that recognizes success only when it can be counted. Its members learn what will be rewarded. They devote more attention to producing it. Eventually a question about an uncounted consequence may sound irrelevant even to conscientious people.

The arrangement now teaches a way of seeing. Someone entering it need not be malicious, unusually selfish, or incapable of sympathy. They may simply learn that the competent response is the one that fits the accepted account. A practice that began as assistance to judgment can become the boundary within which judgment is permitted to operate.

This helps explain why our inquiry cannot end by finding a bad person to blame. Responsibility remains, but it reaches the habits we reward, the objections we make audible, and the circumstances in which a different understanding can change a decision. A shared world can make some forms of attention easier than others. We have to ask what our own arrangements are teaching us to overlook.

The emissary's return

In McGilchrist's image, the emissary is appointed for necessary work. The failure occurs when he treats his partial understanding as sufficient and stops reporting back. The wider understanding needs his contribution; he mistakes that need for proof that he can replace it.⁷⁵

The tragedy lies in the usefulness of the capacity that goes astray. A gift can become destructive without ceasing to be a gift. The question is whether it remains answerable to purposes and relationships that its own success cannot fully describe.

The national application developed here is mine. I am carrying a

question from McGilchrist's account into our examination of institutions and political power. A country is not a hemisphere, and Canada is not the master to whom America must report. Nor does borrowing his framework make every historical or scientific claim in it settled. We owe the framework the same openness to correction that we ask of our own.

Imagine a community sending someone to negotiate access to a shared source of water. The representative needs skill, information, and room to make judgments. Without those capacities, the appointment would accomplish little.

Now imagine the representative returning with an agreement that secures the water but gives the representative permanent control over its distribution. Questions about the arrangement are answered with a reminder: without me, you would have no water.

The achievement may be real. So is the change in the relationship. A task undertaken on behalf of others has become a claim to govern them. With McGilchrist's larger inquiry in view, we can recognize both the value of the achievement and the question it has failed to answer: whom was this capacity meant to serve?

The usefulness of an instrument

The answer should begin with appreciation. Instruments matter. A budget, a chain of command, a legal procedure, a market, or a measurement can make cooperation possible at a scale that informal goodwill cannot sustain. Precision is often an act of care. A bridge needs accurate calculations; a public account needs numbers someone can check.

The danger is not that a tool is specialized. Specialization is often why it works. The danger comes when the measure selected for one purpose becomes the final measure of every purpose.

Consider a hypothetical housing programme that counts completed units. The number is useful. It tells us something about delivery. But if the homes are unsafe, unaffordable to the intended residents,

or placed where daily life becomes unworkable, completion alone has not established success. The residents' situation must be allowed to change the assessment.

An institution can resist that correction without anyone inside it consciously wishing harm. Staff may have worked hard toward the target. Careers and budgets may depend on it. An objection can feel like a refusal to recognize genuine effort. Yet the effort cannot answer a question the measure did not include.

This is why good intentions require arrangements through which inconvenient information can matter. A complaint process that records dissatisfaction without permitting change may protect the institution's appearance of listening while leaving the underlying decision untouched.

In the language we have been developing, alienation occurs when people become objects of a system's success rather than participants in defining what success should mean. They may be served on paper while losing the authority to describe their actual needs.

The remedy cannot be a promise to abolish every structure. People who depend on reliable services need functioning institutions. The task is to reconnect an institution's measures and powers to the human purposes that justify them.

An American warning about American power

In his farewell address of January 1961, Dwight Eisenhower affirmed the need for military strength while warning about the influence of the military-industrial complex. He asked citizens to keep the machinery of defence aligned with democratic processes and peaceful goals.⁷⁶

The pairing matters. He was not asking his audience to discover that protection had no value. He was asking them to notice how an establishment needed for protection could acquire influence beyond its proper purpose.

This is a warning, not proof that every later policy resulted from the influence he described. Each policy requires its own evidence. The

speech nevertheless gives us an American articulation of the problem: capacity does not supervise itself merely because it was created to meet a serious danger.

A permanent apparatus develops responsibilities, skills, and interests. Some of those interests may serve the public; some may diverge from it. We need ways to identify the difference without treating criticism as hostility to everyone who works within the institution.

A soldier can serve honourably while a policy deserves challenge. An engineer can make an extraordinary contribution while the procurement system requires reform. A citizen can value security while asking what a particular expenditure secures. Collapsing these distinctions makes democratic judgment more difficult.

The imagined emissary who cannot be questioned because he once secured water has a recognizable rhetorical defence. He converts gratitude into permanent authorization. A public institution should not need that defence. Its present use of power should be capable of a present account.

Eisenhower's address also looked beyond national advantage toward relations among nations in which weaker participants could approach the table with confidence.⁷⁷ We should read that as an expressed aspiration, not as a certificate that his administration always realized it.

The aspiration is useful because it makes strength answerable to something beyond the continuation of predominance. A strong country can help create conditions in which another country's lack of comparable force does not eliminate its standing.

That possibility will matter in our reading of Rubio. We will need to ask whether strength is being proposed as a means to protect a shared world or as the condition under which one part of that world must remain in command.

When emergency narrows the person

A more concrete injury appears in the wartime exclusion and incarceration of Japanese Americans. Executive Order 9066, issued by Franklin Roosevelt in February 1942, authorized military areas from which people could be excluded at military discretion. Its text framed the authority as protection against espionage and sabotage; the policy that followed uprooted and confined people of Japanese ancestry, including citizens.⁷⁸

We do not need to deny the existence of wartime danger to examine what the government did. The question is how danger was translated into a judgment about people. A category of ancestry could take the place of attention to an individual's conduct, loyalty, and rights.

The country being defended included those being removed. That fact should disturb any account in which their exclusion is treated simply as the cost of protecting us. The pronoun has divided the public it claims to represent.

Decades later, the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 acknowledged the injustice, offered an apology, and provided restitution to eligible survivors. The National Archives describes the law's recognition of racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and failed political leadership.⁷⁹ An official admission did not restore the years or all the losses. It did establish that the earlier exercise of authority was not beyond public reconsideration.

This is important to the book's hope. A nation can revise its account of what it has done. It can make an institutional response to an injury without declaring that its existence has no value. Confession can become public work when it changes records, remedies, and future constraints on power.

The delay matters too. The people carrying a burden cannot live on the promise that a later generation may understand. A system worthy of trust should make correction possible while those affected still have their lives before them.

We should therefore ask what emergency power does to the routes

of challenge. Can an individual contest the category assigned to them? Who must show necessity? Who reviews the decision? What ends the exceptional authority? These are questions of design as well as character.

Good people under pressure can participate in a bad arrangement. That recognition does not remove responsibility. It makes responsibility more practical by directing us toward the conditions that permit the arrangement to continue.

When winning replaces the purpose

The same reversal can occur outside emergencies. An institution begins with a human purpose, develops a measure of success, and eventually protects the measure against the purpose. The danger is particularly strong when comparison with rivals becomes the overriding test.

Imagine two communities sharing a river. Each wants reliable water and a future for its children. If their success is defined only as securing a larger share than the other, then cooperation may begin to look like defeat even when it would improve both lives. The rivalry has changed the meaning of the task.

This is a model for inquiry, not a description of a particular water dispute. It helps us separate two questions that political rhetoric can join: are people becoming more secure, and are we remaining ahead? The answers may coincide. They need not.

A country can retain a great deal of power while its citizens become less able to live well. It can also contribute to a development that strengthens others without making its own people worse off. Neither proposition should be accepted or rejected by slogan; the actual circumstances require evidence.

What we should refuse is a definition of national success that makes every other people's improvement presumptively threatening. Such a definition gives peace very little room. It turns relationship into an endless contest over who is permitted to become capable.

Here the problem returns to Miletus. If inquiry is valuable because

the world can correct us, then a political order must preserve the possibility of hearing what it does not already control. A nation cannot celebrate curiosity while treating every external judgment as an intrusion into its authority.

The return to Paul is equally important. A community becomes impoverished when the gifts of its members are treated as reasons for ranking their worth rather than contributions to shared life. Paul's image of the body insists on the need for members who may be treated as less significant.⁸⁰ Applying that image to international relations is our analogy, not a claim that Paul supplied a constitution for a modern world order.

Still, the question is fruitful. What would power look like if it understood another people's capacity as something that might enrich the relationship, rather than as an automatic challenge to the right to lead?

Returning to the purpose

The strongest objection to this argument concerns opponents who will not reciprocate. A country can limit itself while another exploits the opening. Mutual agreement requires more than one willing participant. A public official cannot protect people by assuming goodwill where evidence shows danger.

That objection must remain within our account. Defence, enforceable commitments, and proportionate responses can be necessary. The distinction is between responding to a demonstrated threat and treating the absence of our dominance as a threat in itself.

A world in which others possess agency will contain disagreement. Some governments will act unjustly. Some agreements will fail. None of that establishes that one country should be beyond accountability. It establishes the need for institutions and relationships capable of addressing conflict without turning every encounter into a demand for submission.

Nor is the master in this book's use of the metaphor a nation waiting

to take America's place. I am not assigning Canada the throne. The larger purposes are human: the conditions of life, meaningful freedom, truthful knowledge, relationships in which people can participate, and a world capable of continuing beyond our immediate advantage. No state possesses those purposes outright.

The metaphor has limits. Human beings are not components to be arranged by someone who alone sees the whole. That would reproduce the very claim we have been examining. The practical response is wider participation and accountability, not the appointment of an omniscient supervisor.

America's creative capacities are therefore reasons for hope. The ability to organize, invent, build, and reconsider can serve a future in which more people have room to act. Returning an instrument to its purpose need not mean making it weak. It may mean asking more demanding work of it.

We have now examined several ways an inheritance can become a permission: achievement enlarged into comprehensive knowledge, conviction enlarged into sacred authorization, growth described as destiny, and a useful capacity enlarged into an authority over its own ends. These are comparisons among distinct histories. They do not make the histories interchangeable.

They give us questions with which to approach the American address. We should be able to hear a desire for courage without agreeing that courage requires supremacy. We should be able to recognize a gift without granting the giver ownership of its recipients.

The next part begins with that gift. Before we examine the alarm sounded in Athens, we should give America the serious courtesy of asking what it can create, what it hopes to protect, and how much more its strength might accomplish when others are allowed to help define the future.

Part IV

To Our American Kin

Chapter 12

The Gift of Creation

The journey home

Apollo 11 had to come home. The landing on the moon was its extraordinary public image, but NASA's account of the mission identifies the objective as a crewed lunar landing and a return to Earth. The mission launched on July 16, 1969; the landing followed on July 20, and the crew returned on July 24. Arrival and return belonged to the same undertaking.⁸¹

That second requirement deserves a place in our imagination. Reaching somewhere nobody had stood before was not sufficient. The people who went there were still people for whom others were responsible. Their departure did not suspend the obligation to bring them back.

We can admire the audacity without forgetting the care. Indeed, the care makes the audacity more impressive. The challenge was to attempt something immense while attending to particulars upon which lives depended. A nation did not have to choose between ambition and responsibility in order to undertake the journey. It had to make responsibility part of the ambition.

This is one place to begin an address to American kin. Begin with something worth loving. Begin with the possibility that human beings can learn enough, organize enough, and trust one another enough to accomplish what previously lay beyond their reach. The wish to

build, discover, and make possible is not a moral embarrassment. It is among the capacities this book hopes to protect.

An account of American life that can see only appetite and conquest has already lost something essential. It cannot explain why a person might reasonably love this country, why a promise made in its name might still matter, or why its failures can hurt so deeply. Disappointment often contains an expectation that deserved better treatment. We do not need to extinguish that expectation to examine what happened to it.

My hope for America begins there. Its creative capacity can become a contribution to a world in which more people can act, belong, and flourish. That is a vocation I am proposing, not a destiny I can prove. It gives neither Americans an exclusive talent nor Canadians the authority to assign their neighbours a task. It invites us to ask what an enormous capacity might serve.

What an achievement contains

The astronaut is visible. Much of the achievement is not. Even without attempting to divide the credit for a particular mission, we can recognize what a complex undertaking requires: people who conceive, calculate, manufacture, test, maintain, communicate, and correct. The final act depends on work that cannot all occupy the photograph.

This does not diminish the person in the photograph. It changes the frame. Excellence can be personal and relational at once. An individual's courage does not become less real because others made the exercise of that courage possible. Nor does the courage of one person make the rest dispensable.

We often become confused here. To insist that achievement has conditions can sound like an accusation against the achiever. Yet no engineer needs to be insulted by the existence of mathematics, no writer by the existence of language, no business owner by the existence of customers. Dependence is not the cancellation of contribution. It

is the situation in which contribution occurs.

There is room within that situation for unequal accomplishment. Some people make discoveries others do not make. Some take risks others decline. Some sustain difficult work long after enthusiasm has faded. Fairness need not flatten those differences. It asks us to identify the contribution accurately and examine the terms on which it was made.

Consider an invented but ordinary enterprise: a workshop develops a useful tool. Its founder risks savings, its workers improve the design, a supplier accepts delayed payment, and its first customers tolerate imperfections. If the tool succeeds, it is reasonable for those contributions to receive recognition and reward. But the question of how to share the return cannot be settled simply by pointing to the name above the door.

Perhaps the founder carried an exceptional risk. Perhaps a worker's improvement made the difference between failure and success. Perhaps the public supplied training or infrastructure on which everyone relied. We need the facts. A serious account of creation investigates them instead of assuming either that the owner did everything or that ownership contributed nothing.

The distinction matters beyond the workshop. A country can take pride in what happens within it without claiming that every enabling gift originated there. American achievement does not become counterfeit when it involves learning, migration, exchange, or public institutions. Those relationships can be part of the achievement itself.

Nor does an achievement settle every question about the resources used to obtain it. Admiring Apollo does not settle the proper space budget, excuse every national decision made in its era, or prove that the next undertaking should be funded. Particular accomplishments deserve particular judgments. Gratitude becomes more trustworthy when it can survive such distinctions.

The person at the door

Another American accomplishment begins with someone insisting that the country's promises apply to her.

In August 1964, Fannie Lou Hamer testified before the Democratic National Convention's Credentials Committee. She described attempting to register to vote in Mississippi, being told to withdraw the application or leave the plantation where she lived and worked, and later suffering a brutal beating in jail. Near the end of her testimony she asked, "Is this America". Her question confronted a national audience with the distance between democratic profession and the experience of a Black citizen seeking participation.⁸²

The force of that question does not come from an absence of American values. It comes from demanding that values become available to the person standing before the institution. If the country promises participation, her exclusion is a problem for the country to answer. The promise cannot remain an ornament displayed by those who already possess its benefits.

We should be careful about how we make this a story of national achievement. The injury is not redeemed simply because resistance to it becomes admirable. Hamer did not need to be threatened or assaulted in order to acquire dignity. Nor should the nation receive easy credit for the courage required to confront its failures. That courage belonged to the people who exercised it.

What the country can receive is an opportunity: the chance to make the demand part of its public understanding, to change its institutions, and to widen the circle of those able to participate. Such a response must be measured in conduct. Celebrating a dissenter after the fact is less demanding than giving present dissent a fair hearing.

Here we encounter a kind of creation that is easily overlooked when we speak of national greatness. A new possibility of relationship has to be made. A neighbour who was expected to remain outside insists on becoming a participant. The existing arrangement is challenged to change its shape.

That challenge can feel like an attack to people who experience the arrangement as familiar and legitimate. They may hear a demand to surrender something they value. Sometimes what must be surrendered is precisely the ability to decide who else may count. The discomfort of losing that authority is not evidence that the claim for inclusion is wrong.

Love of country can therefore take the form of refusing its available excuses. The person asking for a country to become more faithful to its promises need not stand outside national loyalty. Such a person may be subscribing to the collective values more seriously than an official who recites them while preventing their use.

This does not make every accusation correct. A demand still requires examination. It means that criticism cannot be dismissed merely because it changes the story a nation prefers to tell about itself. The test is what the criticism reveals and what a responsible response would require.

Room to try

Creation needs more than admiration for the exceptional. It needs room in which people can discover what they are capable of doing.

Imagine someone with the ability to repair machines who has never had access to tools, instruction, or time to practice. The absence of a remarkable invention tells us very little about that person's potential. An environment can fail to discover a gift and then congratulate itself for rewarding only the gifts it can see.

We should care about this for reasons that reach beyond the possibility of producing another celebrated inventor. A person does not have to become exceptional to deserve an education, a secure place to live, or a meaningful voice in the circumstances of their work. These are human concerns before they become strategies for national productivity.

Nevertheless, a country that values creation has an additional reason to examine barriers. What has it failed to hear? Whose experiment

never became possible? Which difficulty is the necessary resistance of the task, and which is an avoidable consequence of exclusion? There is a difference between learning that a design does not work and never being allowed near the bench.

Competition can help reveal ability. It can also conceal an unequal starting point behind a precise finishing order. We need not abolish contests to ask how people enter them, what the contest measures, and what happens to those who do not win. A race may identify the fastest runner without providing a complete account of human worth.

The ordinary supports of life matter here. Rest, care, friendship, dependable institutions, and freedom from arbitrary humiliation are not enemies of effort. In a good arrangement they help make sustained effort possible. An economy that consumes all of a person's attention in staying afloat may be wasting capacities it claims to prize.

No programme can guarantee the discovery of every gift. Resources are limited, decisions conflict, and institutions can disappoint. But those difficulties give us work to do. They do not justify pretending that opportunity is whatever happens to survive the existing distribution of power.

A creative nation should be able to regard a proposal for wider participation as an experiment worth examining. What would it cost? Who would gain real options? How would failure be recognized? What would need correction? These are demanding questions. They are also recognizably questions of making something work.

The gift and the claim

The difficulty begins when contribution is converted into jurisdiction.

A person can do something of great value for another without acquiring the right to direct the recipient's life. A doctor who restores someone's health has made an extraordinary contribution. That contribution does not confer ownership of the recovered person. The grateful patient remains a person whose choices matter.

Relations between nations are not medical relationships, but the

distinction helps. Sharing knowledge, providing assistance, defending an ally, or building something useful can create responsibilities and legitimate agreements. None automatically establishes an unlimited claim to obedience. We need to examine the agreement, the alternatives, the scope of the obligation, and the ability to reconsider it.

The giver has agency too. A gift cannot be demanded without limit merely because the giver has resources. Reciprocity may be appropriate. Costs should be discussed honestly. We can acknowledge these things without making gratitude a permanent political debt whose terms the stronger party alone defines.

This is where the earlier distinction between mastery and service becomes practical. What does success permit the successful to decide? If the answer expands indefinitely, the original contribution becomes a reason to deny the relationship that gave it meaning. Others are expected to remain recipients, spectators, or followers because the creator has mistaken capacity for title.

America need not make that mistake in order to retain ambition. It can seek to be excellent at things worth doing, defend its people, and negotiate its interests while recognizing that other peoples are also entitled to a future they help shape. Their improvement need not become an insult to American accomplishment.

There will be genuine conflicts. Some projects cannot be reconciled, some threats require resistance, and some agreements will be refused. Mutual standing does not promise a world without difficult judgment. It asks that the judgment begin with more than the assumption that our power makes our preference sufficient.

To our American kin, then, the invitation is neither resignation nor permanent apology. Continue creating. Let the measure of creation include the people who make it possible, those who receive its benefits, and those asked to bear its costs. Preserve the freedom to correct the undertaking when those relationships reveal something its leaders have missed.

The journey home belongs to the achievement. So does the person

asking to enter the room. If we keep both in view, we can listen more carefully when a public voice calls America to recover its greatness. We can ask what deserves recovery, what needs revision, and what that greatness would require of everyone else.

Chapter 13

A Trumpet in Athens

Hearing the concern

On October 7, 2026, Marco Rubio addressed an audience at the Pnyx in Athens, with the Parthenon behind him. The published text bears the title *In Defense of Western Civilization*. The setting joins a contemporary appeal to ancient authority: an American secretary of state explaining the inheritance he believes his country must defend.⁸³

We should hear the concern before deciding what to do with it. In Rubio's account, the West has lost confidence, neglected productive and defensive capacity, and become vulnerable to rivals. He advocates renewed national strength, industrial and technological ambition, and loyalty to one's country. He also explicitly values diplomacy, cooperation among allies, and institutions that preserve national sovereignty.⁸⁴

There are serious human needs within that appeal. People want to know that their communities can provide a livelihood, that decisions affecting them remain answerable to them, and that they will not be abandoned when threatened. They want their children to inherit something more substantial than embarrassment about the place they come from. A criticism that treats all these desires as moral failure would misunderstand its audience.

We have already affirmed that national loyalty can be subscription to collective values. Responsibility for one's neighbours can require

practical capacity. An institution unable to protect anyone may offer little comfort through the purity of its intentions. Confidence, competence, and courage deserve a place in public life.

The question is what these goods authorize. There is a difference between cultivating the ability to act and establishing a permanent entitlement to lead everyone else. The speech becomes troubling where the first concern is made to depend upon the second.

The alternatives we are given

At its decisive turn, the address contrasts remaining “at the head of the world” with a future of “atrophy and servitude and decline”.⁸⁵

Notice the space between those alternatives. It contains the possibility of being strong without occupying the head, of remaining free while other peoples also become capable, of participating in a world whose direction no single civilization is entitled to determine. The speech’s framing makes that space difficult to inhabit. The listener is asked to fear that relinquishing primacy means accepting subordination.

This is the alarm I hear. It is an interpretation of the argument, not a claim to know Rubio’s private intentions. A person can sincerely seek security and nevertheless offer a conception of security that makes other people’s independence appear dangerous. The consequences need not wait for malicious intent.

The strongest reply is that leadership does not necessarily mean domination. A nation can lead through example, useful invention, reliable commitments, or persuasion. People may freely welcome its contribution. If this is what being at the head means, the relationship remains open to the judgment of those who follow. They can choose differently without thereby committing an offence against the leader.

But then leadership must be distinguished from a position that must be maintained regardless of that choice. Being followed because others find your contribution valuable is a contingent relationship. Being entitled to remain first is a claim about rank. The difference becomes visible when someone declines the invitation.

What happens then? Are their reasons heard? Can they retain a legitimate sphere of decision? Does their refusal require negotiation, or is it treated as proof that they belong among the threats? These questions allow us to test the meaning of leadership without assuming that every exercise of American influence is coercive.

Rubio's own account supplies a useful standard. His defence of cooperation among allies recognizes that distinct nations can preserve their identities and benefit together. That principle deserves to travel. Why should mutual advantage and national agency cease to matter when the other party stands outside a preferred civilizational family?

Sometimes the answer will involve a specific danger, a violated agreement, or an incompatible demand. Those answers can be examined. An answer based simply on who is entitled to stand above whom cannot do the same work. It makes identity settle a question that should require evidence about conduct.

Why we returned to Miletus

The historical journey in this book was necessary because a story of origins can quietly become a theory of authority. If a people are presented as the distinctive source of human advancement, their continued predominance can begin to look like humanity's own interest. Gratitude for what they have contributed becomes an argument for trusting whatever they decide next.

Miletus interrupts that movement. The earlier chapter followed fragmentary accounts of thinkers who proposed different explanations of the world. What survives does not give us a flawless founding school. It gives us questions, disagreements, later reports, and the difficulty of knowing exactly what the first thinkers meant.⁸⁶

That uncertainty matters. An inheritance of inquiry asks its heirs to remain corrigible. It cannot be honoured adequately by declaring that the heirs already possess the world's proper direction. The capacity to ask how things work should also reach the story we tell about ourselves.

Mycenae served a related purpose. Greek history had depth before the classical city, and its material achievements belonged to relationships extending beyond a single people. The monuments are real; our knowledge of the people around them remains incomplete.⁸⁷ A civilization cannot become the beginning of humanity simply because its remains occupy the foreground of our attention.

None of this requires denying the extraordinary importance of Greek philosophy or America's debt to it. It requires us to distinguish a valuable inheritance from an exhaustive account of how human understanding arose. There is room to admire what was made without treating every other tradition as preparation, background, or absence.

The practical difference is considerable. A government convinced that it has nothing essential to learn from people outside its preferred story may consult them only about compliance. Their account of a river, a livelihood, a border, or an obligation is heard as a local complication rather than a possible correction to the plan itself.

We need not assume that every alternative account is wise. Listening is not automatic agreement. It is the willingness to discover that another person's situation may reveal something our explanation cannot yet accommodate. The obligation applies equally when the speaker is weak, inconvenient, or unable to reward our attention.

A civilization can contribute something magnificent and still misunderstand the person before it. In fact, confidence in a magnificent contribution may make the misunderstanding harder to admit. The accomplishment becomes a shield against the very correction that further accomplishment requires.

This is why the route back to Miletus is more than a dispute over historical credit. It helps us ask whether we mean to preserve a practice of inquiry or merely the prestige associated with it. A practice remains alive by accepting questions its current custodians did not anticipate.

Who is missing from the landscape?

The speech describes the American setting as “An open and wild land” and connects its frontier to the expansion of Western civilization.⁸⁸

A landscape can look open to an arriving imagination while already containing homes, laws, obligations, and memories. The adjective does political work when it allows us to see possibility without seeing the people whose lives would be altered by its realization.

We have already encountered John Ross’s protest against Cherokee removal. His appeal was not a request that Americans stop having aspirations. It confronted a particular project with the existence and claims of a people whom that project would displace.⁸⁹

We should not turn a phrase in a contemporary speech into proof that a particular future atrocity is intended. That would substitute our own certainty for the inquiry we are demanding. We can, however, examine what disappears when a history of continental expansion becomes principally a story of ambition finding room.

From the receiving end, there may have been very little room. Someone else’s new horizon may have passed through a home. What looked like the overcoming of a limit may have involved the overriding of an agreement. The same event can be an achievement of power and an injury of relationship. Naming one does not dispose of the other.

The purpose of remembering is to improve the questions we ask now. When a new project promises greatness, who describes the territory? Who has authority to agree? Who can refuse? Which costs are counted as sacrifices, and who is expected to make them? A historical lesson becomes useful when it alters the design of the present decision.

That need not lead to paralysis. It can lead to a different agreement, a less harmful method, compensation where compensation is appropriate, or a decision that some things should not be done. Ambition becomes more discriminating. It is asked to create within relationships rather than treating relationships as obstacles to creation.

What Christians can ask of greatness

Christian readers have a further reason to question the movement from achievement to rank. In Matthew's account, Jesus addresses the desire for positions of honour by contrasting rulers who exercise dominion with greatness expressed through service. The passage culminates in the Son of Man serving and giving his life.⁹⁰

We should resist making this another clause with which to win an argument. The point is not that a verse automatically settles defence spending, alliances, or the use of force. The point is that Christians cannot simply assume that a visible position above others is the measure of successful faithfulness. Their own tradition asks what the position serves.

A willingness to sacrifice may be admirable. It does not by itself establish that the cause is just. Nor does a leader's willingness to pay a cost settle the question of costs imposed on others. Offering one's own life and assigning another person's loss are different acts, even when both are described in the language of devotion.

This distinction reaches the ordinary citizen as well as the statesman. We may admire resolve because it saves us from asking what the resolve is directed toward. We may accept the vocabulary of sacrifice while remaining comfortably distant from the people making it. Faithful attention requires us to move closer to those consequences.

Paul's image of the body also troubles a hierarchy built solely around visible distinction. In his account, members that appear weaker are necessary, and honour must reach those who lack it.⁹¹ The community cannot understand itself by celebrating only the parts most able to command attention.

We can carry that question into national life without pretending that a republic is a church. Whose work is necessary but discounted? Who experiences a policy proclaimed as success as the destruction of their options? Does a person have to display exceptional power before their situation is permitted to change the plan?

These are questions of love as we have been developing it. Love

includes willingness to be changed by another's circumstances. In public life that willingness must reach arrangements, not merely sentiments. It may mean that an admired project becomes smaller, slower, differently shared, or more accountable because someone else's life has become visible within it.

The warning and the possibility

The catastrophe I fear is a pattern of decision rather than a single inevitable event. If safety requires permanent primacy, every gain by another power can look like a loss. If civilizational inheritance guarantees superior judgment, correction can look like surrender. If greatness is measured by command, consent can become an inconvenience to be managed.

Those premises can reinforce one another. Rivalry encourages concentration of power; concentrated power narrows the hearing available to dissent; a narrower hearing makes errors harder to correct. Greater technical capacity can then enlarge the consequences of a mistaken decision. The danger is not that America can create too much. It is that its ability to act can outrun its willingness to be corrected.

This is a conditional argument. It does not establish that every American institution already behaves this way, that every ally is coerced, or that cooperation is impossible. The speech itself contains resources for a different direction: diplomacy, shared advantage, and national agency. The task is to make those principles govern the pursuit of strength rather than merely accompany it.

Ezekiel's watchman sounds a trumpet when danger approaches, making the warning available to those who must respond.⁹² I borrow the image without borrowing the prophet's authority. An alarm in a book must be tested. Its author owes readers evidence, a fair hearing of objections, and the possibility of revision.

The warning is offered because the alternatives need not be confined to supremacy and decline. America can protect its people, cultivate excellence, and remain a formidable contributor while accepting that

other peoples have standing beyond the usefulness they offer it. Such a course would require negotiation, institutional restraint, and a willingness to share the authorship of outcomes.

We should not call that a loss of imagination. It asks for more imagination than the familiar contest over who must remain first. It asks what forms of strength can make others safer without making their future ours to command.

There is an American image ready to help us continue. It stands at a harbour, facing the arrival of people whose situations may change the country that receives them. The poem associated with it begins by remembering a Greek giant—and choosing a different figure of greatness.

Chapter 14

Lady Liberty and the Golden Calf

A different colossus

Emma Lazarus begins *The New Colossus* with a refusal: “Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame, / With conquering limbs astride from land to land”. Her figure of greatness is a woman at the harbour, a “Mother of Exiles”.⁹³

The turn is striking after Athens. Ancient grandeur remains available to the poet, but she does not simply ask America to reproduce it. She imagines a different use for height and strength. The monument can make room in the mind for the person arriving in need, rather than only the conqueror surveying what has become his.

Lazarus wrote the sonnet in 1883 for a fundraiser supporting the statue’s pedestal. She was a Jewish New Yorker who had worked with Jewish immigrants at Ward’s Island. The poem was placed on a plaque in the pedestal in 1903, after her death.⁹⁴ The familiar American symbol thus carries an interpretation shaped by a particular person’s attention to displaced people.

We should not mistake the poem for a complete account of American immigration policy. A national aspiration can coexist with conduct that contradicts it. Nor can fourteen lines settle every question of

admission, public capacity, or the responsibilities of government. What the poem does is give us a person to consider when we speak of national greatness. It changes where the light falls.

The person at the harbour is not merely an occasion for the receiving nation to demonstrate generosity. A newcomer may bring judgment, skill, memory, faith, and disagreement. Receiving a person means encountering a life whose significance cannot be exhausted by our decision to admit it.

This takes us back to love. Are we willing to be changed by the circumstances of another? Not every change is a crisis, and not every encounter requires rescue. Sometimes the change is a carefully considered agreement to live and work together. The agreement is real only if the other party is allowed to remain more than a grateful beneficiary.

A country can extend this question inward as well. What does liberty mean for someone already here who cannot use its promises? What does the magnificent entrance mean if the rooms beyond it are arranged so that some people must always ask permission to stand upright?

What money can do

Money can help us keep promises. It can pay a worker, repair a roof, buy a tool, support a person through illness, or allow a family to plan beyond the end of the week. Savings can provide room to refuse an abusive arrangement. Investment can make a worthwhile undertaking possible before its returns exist.

There is nothing inherently contemptible about these uses. A moral account that treats financial competence as a stain will not help people govern a complicated economy. Credit, insurance, and investment have purposes that deserve serious examination. The question is whether their terms and consequences serve those purposes well.

Wealth also makes some things visible that would otherwise remain an intention. A promise to build a school still needs materials and

labour. Generosity without attention to resources can become a way of asking other people to perform the work we have enjoyed announcing. Good purposes require practical provision.

But provision is not the same as mastery. The danger begins when the accumulation of wealth becomes sufficient evidence of human value, or when the ability to finance an undertaking becomes permission to decide whose losses matter. Money then moves from helping people act to determining whose agency deserves recognition.

Consider a hypothetical employer who runs a profitable business and pays every legally required wage. The legal compliance matters. We should not accuse the employer of theft merely because profits exist. Yet further questions remain: can workers raise safety concerns without fear, does the business depend on costs imposed on neighbours, and can those affected obtain a hearing before a decision becomes irreversible?

Those questions are not answered by pointing to the balance sheet. They require information about relationships and effects. A profitable arrangement can be beneficial. It can also make its accounts look better by leaving someone else to carry a cost. We cannot distinguish the cases if profit has already been made the final verdict.

The same applies to loss. A worthy activity may fail financially because it is badly organized; it may also struggle because the benefits it provides are difficult to sell. Neither failure nor success tells us everything. Numbers assist judgment when we understand what they measure and what they leave outside the frame.

This is the concern behind the golden calf in this book. Wall Street names a place and, in common speech, a concentration of financial activity. I use the image to question the authority we give financial success, not to declare every participant corrupt. The danger concerns a society's allegiance. What are we willing to sacrifice in order to keep the preferred measure rising?

The thing we made

In Exodus, the people give gold, Aaron fashions a calf, and the object is credited with deliverance from Egypt. An altar and a proclamation of a feast follow.⁹⁵

The unsettling movement is from making to submission. Something produced within a community comes to stand over it as an authority. The people have supplied the material, yet the resulting object receives the significance of that which has saved them.

Our financial institutions are not ancient cult objects. The analogy becomes useful when we ask what happens to human arrangements after we forget that they are arrangements. A method of coordinating work, rewarding investment, or measuring exchange can come to seem like an independent power whose demands must be met regardless of human consequence.

Then the language changes. We say an outcome is necessary without asking which rule makes it necessary. We call a loss unavoidable before examining who had power to allocate it. We speak as though the economy were something outside society to which society must periodically offer people, places, or futures.

There are real constraints. Materials cannot be wished into existence, and work has to be done. A promise beyond the available capacity may fail painfully. But a constraint arising from the physical task is different from one arising from a rule about ownership, access, or acceptable return. The second may be revisable even when revising it is difficult.

The calf metaphor asks us to recover that distinction. What have we made, and why? Which arrangements still serve their purposes? Which have become so authoritative that asking their purpose is treated as dangerous? We cannot answer merely by denouncing greed. Institutions can direct decent people toward outcomes none of them would defend in isolation.

For Christian readers, Jesus' teaching about treasure and service brings the question closer. Matthew places the heart in relation to

treasure and presents service to God and service to Mammon as rival allegiances.⁹⁶

Allegiance is revealed when purposes conflict. A business may sincerely value its workers until protecting them would reduce a return. A public institution may sincerely value truth until disclosure would threaten its prestige. A person may sincerely value generosity until it requires changing a comfortable expectation. The conflict reveals which value actually governs the decision.

We need not pretend every conflict has an easy answer. Keeping an enterprise viable can protect livelihoods. Spending resources today can leave less for tomorrow. Those considerations deserve a hearing. What deserves resistance is the automatic assumption that people must absorb every adjustment while financial expectations remain beyond question.

The temple and the injured neighbour

Mark's account of Jesus in the temple describes the disruption of buying and selling and an appeal to the purpose of the house as a place of prayer for all nations.⁹⁷

This is an argument within Jewish religious life, drawing on Jewish prophetic language. Christian readers should not turn it into a story about a supposedly corrupt Jewish people set against a morally pure Christian successor. The challenge belongs in our own examination of what happens when an institution's practices obstruct its professed purpose.

We can ask that question of a church, a legislature, a company, or a financial system without pretending they are all the same institution. A church can make attendance easier than honesty. A legislature can make access depend on resources unavailable to many citizens. A company can reward the concealment of harms it officially forbids. The discrepancy requires attention to arrangements as well as intentions.

There is a danger in enjoying the scene of overturned tables while avoiding the quieter work of repair. A dramatic denunciation can

leave us feeling cleansed without changing anything for those who were injured. The book's concern must reach what happens after the accusation.

Luke's encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus gives us another way to think. Zacchaeus, a wealthy chief tax collector, speaks of giving to the poor and restoring fourfold where he has wrongfully taken something. Jesus receives him as belonging within the community of promise.⁹⁸

Giving and restoring are related but different. If I have wronged one person, generosity toward someone else does not by itself settle the first relationship. A donation can do real good while leaving a debt of repair unanswered. The injured neighbour has a claim that cannot be replaced by my preference for a more agreeable recipient.

That distinction matters when wealth seeks public admiration. We should welcome useful generosity and still ask how the resources were acquired, what obligations remain, and who has standing to identify the injury. The benefactor's freedom to choose a project is not an adequate substitute for every other form of accountability.

Nor should accountability become a declaration that a person can never belong again. Repair seeks a more truthful relationship. It may require restitution, changed conduct, and safeguards; it need not require treating a human being as nothing but the worst thing they have done. There is room for transformation, although the person injured is not obliged to supply forgiveness on demand.

When wealth enters the public voice

One route from financial power to political authority runs through the ability to pay for speech. The question is difficult precisely because speech and association matter. A government empowered to silence inconvenient speakers can endanger the people a reform was meant to protect.

In *Citizens United v. FEC*, decided in 2010, the Supreme Court rejected restrictions on corporate independent expenditures and elec-

tioneeering communications. The majority's reasoning emphasized protection of political speech against restrictions based on corporate identity. Reporting and disclaimer requirements survived; the decision did not remove the ban on corporate contributions to candidates.⁹⁹

That distinction should remain intact even when we disagree strongly about the judgment. Describing independent spending as though it were simply an unlimited direct donation would make the argument less trustworthy. We need to examine the actual institutional question.

Here is the democratic concern. Equal standing at the ballot does not automatically produce equal capacity to shape what reaches the ballot or what voters hear. Buying repeated access to public attention can give some participants opportunities others cannot approach. That does not prove that audiences are helpless or that an election has been purchased. It raises a question about the conditions of public deliberation.

Imagine a public meeting in which everyone may speak once, but a few participants can also finance weeks of messages defining the subject before the meeting begins. The formal right at the microphone is real. So is the unequal ability to establish the frame. A fair examination needs to consider both.

The answer cannot simply be to give an official unlimited authority to decide which opinions deserve circulation. That would recreate the problem through another instrument. We need arrangements that protect expression while improving transparency, access, and the ability to challenge powerful claims. Their details belong to democratic and constitutional argument, not to a declaration that our preferred speakers alone represent the people.

The danger becomes more serious if influence over public rules protects the concentration of resources that financed the influence. A reinforcing relationship can form: wealth enlarges political reach, political reach helps shape favourable arrangements, and the resulting advantage finances further reach. This is a mechanism to investigate, not proof that every wealthy participant or public official has acted

corruptly.

The receiving-end question remains useful. Can an ordinary person understand who is asking for a rule, discover who benefits, challenge the evidence, and participate without purchasing a comparable platform? If the answer is consistently no, we should not be satisfied merely because the exclusion has acquired a lawful form.

The liberty we can use

Lady Liberty and the golden calf are not two neatly separated populations. They represent competing possibilities within our institutions and ourselves. The same person can welcome a neighbour and defend an arrangement that keeps another neighbour powerless. The same country can create room for extraordinary freedom while tolerating avoidable dependence.

We should examine those contradictions without assuming that all dependence is domination. Children need care, people need one another, and complex work requires coordination. What matters is whether the relationship recognizes the person, limits authority, permits a hearing, and develops agency where agency can grow.

Liberty becomes tangible in such circumstances. It is the ability to decline a demand without facing an arbitrary catastrophe, to question a decision without losing one's standing, and to make agreements whose terms are intelligible. It includes the resources needed to use a right and the institutions needed to defend it.

A society cannot guarantee that nobody will encounter hardship or that every desired option will be available. It can decide whether avoidable vulnerability is treated as an opportunity for extraction or as a reason to improve the arrangement. That decision is moral even when it is implemented through technical rules.

The test of abundance, then, is not simply how much wealth appears within the national boundary. It is what that wealth enables people to do together and what power it gives some people over others. We have honoured creation. We have heard the danger in turning

its achievements into rank. We can now ask how America might distribute the fruits and the authority of its creative life more widely.

The lamp at the harbour would mean more in a country where people could carry its promise into their homes, workplaces, and public decisions. Making that possible is work for law, institutions, and democratic imagination. It is the next task of the creative nation.

Chapter 15

Abundance and the Common Good

A hope with work inside it

My hope is that America will revise capitalism through lawful public discourse and democratic principles, sharing its wealth more widely while continuing to create. That hope needs mechanisms. Otherwise it risks becoming another generous statement whose costs and difficulties have been left for somebody else to discover.

The task includes the distribution of income, but it is larger than moving money after the work is done. It concerns who owns productive assets, who participates in decisions, how people negotiate the terms of work, and what conditions allow them to undertake something new. A transfer can relieve hardship without changing the arrangement that repeatedly produces it. Both the relief and the arrangement deserve attention.

We should also distinguish wealth from income. Income arrives over a period; wealth concerns the assets and liabilities a person or household holds. Someone with a reasonable current income may have little protection against interruption. Someone with substantial assets may possess options that this year's income alone does not reveal. An argument for broader participation must attend to security and power

as well as an annual total.

This chapter offers a direction and tests for proposals, not a complete legislative programme. A defensible programme would require detailed costing, institutional design, public argument, and revision as evidence develops. The absence of that complete programme here does not prevent us from identifying what it should try to accomplish.

People should have a reliable basis for living, meaningful opportunities to contribute, and a fair share in the benefits of their contribution. They should be able to challenge decisions that shape their lives. Productive achievement should receive reward without becoming an unlimited claim over others. Those purposes can guide difficult choices without pretending the choices have disappeared.

The distribution already being made

We sometimes speak as though wealth first appears in a natural distribution and government subsequently interferes with it. But an economy already depends on decisions about what can be owned, which agreements can be enforced, how losses are assigned, and what remedies exist when obligations are broken. The question is how to govern those arrangements, not how to discover a world in which arrangements are absent.

This does not make property a meaningless fiction. Stable expectations matter. A person who saves, builds, or takes a risk needs some confidence that the terms will not be arbitrarily overturned. Rules that can change without notice at the convenience of the powerful offer little protection to anyone trying to plan.

Yet stability cannot mean that every inherited arrangement is permanently beyond examination. Democratic government needs ways to revise rules openly, explain the reasons, provide appropriate transitions, and protect people against arbitrary treatment. The existence of a legitimate interest in continuity is part of that judgment; it is not a prohibition on judgment.

A bounded historical example shows that public choices can alter the

distribution of resources. In its September 2024 report on household income in 2021, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that average income in the highest fifth of households was roughly nineteen times that in the lowest fifth before means-tested transfers and federal taxes. After those transfers and taxes, the ratio was about seven to one.¹⁰⁰

The year was unusual because of the pandemic and temporary policy responses. The comparison is an accounting result, not a controlled experiment establishing the full consequences of every policy or a forecast of what a new programme would do. It does establish that the measured distribution was substantially different once those public arrangements were included.¹⁰¹

We still have to ask whether a proposed arrangement is fair, effective, sustainable, and compatible with other purposes. A lower ratio alone cannot answer all those questions. A society could narrow an income gap by making almost everyone worse off. It could also improve lower incomes while leaving some forms of domination untouched. Measures help us see; they cannot perform the whole moral judgment.

The useful conclusion is that distribution is open to institutional action. We can debate what action, with what costs and safeguards, instead of treating the existing outcome as a verdict delivered from beyond human responsibility.

A voice at work

Begin where many people contribute most of their working hours. A wage is important, but the terms of work also include safety, time, dignity, and the ability to raise a concern. A contract signed under conditions of sharply unequal alternatives may be legally valid while leaving one party with very little practical room to negotiate.

That does not mean employment is inherently exploitation. Employers can provide opportunity, instruction, coordination, and the capital needed to make work productive. Workers can value an arrangement and freely prefer it to the available alternatives. The question is whether institutions make the agreement more genuinely negotiable

or preserve avoidable dependence as a source of advantage.

American law already contains a language for collective agency. Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act protects specified rights of covered employees to organize, bargain collectively, and engage in concerted activity, while also recognizing a right to refrain subject to the Act's qualifications. Its bargaining provisions require good-faith engagement, not agreement to a particular proposal or a compulsory concession.¹⁰²

There is a useful principle here even amid disagreement over particular labour policies. Negotiation need not mean that the stronger party writes the terms and the other party decides whether it can survive refusal. Workers can have institutions through which concerns become a subject of discussion rather than a private risk carried by the person brave enough to speak first.

Those institutions also require accountability. A union can fail its members, protect an unfair practice, or make decisions insufficiently responsive to those it represents. Its claim to speak for workers should remain answerable to workers. The remedy for concentrated authority cannot be an unexamined concentration somewhere else.

A constructive reform programme would ask where bargaining rights are ineffective, which workers lack a meaningful channel, how retaliation can be addressed, and how disputes can be resolved without pretending that either side has unlimited resources. It would also examine how changes affect small enterprises, new entrants, and people seeking their first opportunity. Serious reform follows the consequences beyond the group most visible in its own argument.

The aim is a relationship capable of agreement. Sometimes that agreement will increase pay. Sometimes it will change scheduling, training, safety procedures, or the distribution of gains from a successful innovation. Love understood as willingness to be changed by another's situation can become concrete here: each party learns something that alters what it is prepared to accept.

No affection need be required between bargaining parties. Institutions can make mutual consideration possible even where sentiment is

absent. That is one reason law matters. It can give a person a hearing without requiring that the person first become pleasing to someone powerful.

Ownership and the possibility of entry

A wider distribution of wealth can begin before taxation, through wider participation in ownership and in the creation of value. Employee ownership, cooperative enterprises, and arrangements that share returns from a successful business are possibilities worth examining. They are proposals for institutional design here, not claims that one form will work everywhere.

Ownership can give someone a share in gains and, depending on the arrangement, a voice in decisions. It can also expose that person to losses. A worker whose job and savings depend on the same enterprise may face concentrated risk. Calling an arrangement participatory does not remove the need for sound governance, intelligible accounts, and protection against losses people did not understand they were assuming.

A useful programme would therefore pay attention to the terms. How is a share acquired? Who can sell it? What information is available? Can members replace leadership? What happens when someone leaves, retires, or disagrees? The attractive name of an institution is the beginning of inquiry, not its conclusion.

Entry matters too. A person with a useful idea needs more than formal permission to compete if essential channels are closed. Competition policy can be understood as part of protecting the possibility of creation, rather than as hostility toward success.

The Justice Department's explanation of antitrust law distinguishes unlawful restraints and exclusion from ordinary competitive achievement. Large size alone is not the offence; the law addresses, among other things, arrangements that unreasonably restrain trade and monopoly power acquired or maintained through improper conduct.¹⁰³

The distinction should shape our political language. We need not

denounce a company for becoming useful to many people. We should ask whether it remains open to challenge on the merits, whether customers and workers retain meaningful alternatives, and whether the rules permit a new contributor to reach them.

Enforcement requires care. An intervention can impose costs, discourage a beneficial arrangement, or misunderstand a changing market. Inaction can also preserve a barrier behind which power grows less accountable. We need competent institutions, reasons available for challenge, and a willingness to correct both kinds of mistake.

Creation is better served by that practical inquiry than by treating every restraint as persecution or every large enterprise as inherently predatory. The person trying to make something useful needs a fair opportunity. So does the person who must live with its consequences.

A floor that permits movement

Some conditions are worth providing broadly because their absence can disable participation long before a person reaches a marketplace. Education, basic security, and access to necessary care belong in the discussion. Their provision need not promise that every life will be comfortable or every outcome equal. It can make more lives open to meaningful choice.

Imagine a worker considering a move to a new employer, or a parent considering training for different work. If a short interruption threatens the family's ability to eat or remain housed, the decision may be less a choice among opportunities than an exercise in avoiding catastrophe. A dependable floor can create room to evaluate, prepare, and move.

The proposal needs practical discipline. Cash assistance cannot by itself create a home where no home is available. A promise of care needs trained people, facilities, and workable access. An education programme needs teaching that actually helps people learn. The supply of services, not merely the announcement of an entitlement, must become part of the undertaking.

We should therefore assess public provision by what people can actually use. Does assistance arrive when it is needed? Are the rules intelligible? Does a modest increase in earnings trigger a sudden loss that makes advancement precarious? Can an incorrect decision be appealed without requiring resources the claimant lacks? Administrative design is a moral matter when it determines whether a promise reaches its recipient.

Funding also has consequences. Progressive taxation can ask those with greater capacity to contribute more, but particular taxes differ in what they reach, how easily they can be avoided, and how they affect behaviour. Rates, bases, timing, and enforcement need public examination. A claim of fairness does not excuse a badly designed instrument.

Neither does concern about incentives settle every question against redistribution. We need to specify the behaviour at issue and the evidence for the expected effect. Will a proposal discourage useful investment, reduce an incentive to extract a return without adding value, or do some of both? Who receives a new opportunity because of the resources raised? Those are investigable questions.

The same scrutiny should reach spending. A public programme should be able to explain its purpose, report its results, disclose costs, and respond when it fails. Protecting a programme's name after it has stopped serving people repeats the institutional reversal examined earlier in the book.

A reasonable floor also requires deciding which obligations belong to public institutions and which should remain with families, associations, and voluntary communities. These forms of care can complement one another. Public provision should not be designed as though relationships were unnecessary; private kindness should not be asked to substitute for every dependable right.

The direction is toward more agency: enough security to act, enough access to develop, enough protection to challenge an abuse, and enough shared capacity to undertake what individuals cannot provide alone. It is possible to debate the instruments vigorously while holding that

purpose in common.

Paul's collection and our larger task

Paul's appeal for a collection in 2 Corinthians offers a useful encounter for readers formed by his letters. He asks for giving according to means, distinguishes his appeal from a command, and describes an equality in which present abundance supplies another's lack, with reciprocity also in view. He is not asking that one community be relieved by simply burdening the other.¹⁰⁴

The passage interrupts two habits at once. It resists the claim that abundance creates no responsibility toward another's need, and it resists an account of generosity that ignores the giver's circumstances. The relationship contains both parties. Neither is reduced to a moral prop.

We should not extract a modern fiscal policy directly from that setting. A voluntary collection among believers and taxation by a plural democratic state involve different forms of authority. Contemporary public obligations need public justification, including arguments that fellow citizens who do not share Christian faith can examine.

Yet the passage can change how Christian citizens enter that discussion. It makes room to ask what abundance is for, whether another's lack concerns us, and how assistance might express mutual belonging rather than superiority. These questions reach the disposition with which a policy is debated even when they do not determine its technical details.

The litigious reading would search for a clause that releases us from the encounter. One reader might insist that voluntary giving makes every public obligation illegitimate. Another might use equality to dismiss every concern about costs or consent. Both could miss the work Paul is doing among people whose circumstances differ.

Reading with attention to purpose asks more. What would it mean to take another community's situation seriously enough to change an arrangement? How can the response avoid making dependence

permanent? How can those providing resources remain accountable for their management, and those receiving them retain standing in the relationship?

This is not an invitation to replace law with generous feelings. It is a reason to make law responsive to the human circumstances it organizes. The spirit of an obligation becomes more credible when it survives the details of implementation.

Democracy must be able to learn

Reform of this scale cannot depend on the hope that a sufficiently virtuous ruler will settle everything. Concentrated public power can become as dismissive of the person receiving its decisions as concentrated private power. The institutions making changes must remain open to correction.

That requires more than the opportunity to applaud or reject a completed package. People need to understand proposals, question assumptions, see who bears the costs, and offer alternatives while decisions can still change. Expertise is necessary; it should make public judgment more informed rather than make the public's role ceremonial.

There will be disagreement about what counts as a fair share, what the state should provide, and how much risk an individual should bear. Democratic principles do not remove that disagreement. They give it a form in which opponents can retain standing, decisions can be revised, and losing an argument does not mean losing one's membership in the country.

Some protections must survive a momentary majority. Otherwise the people least able to mobilize attention may find their agency repeatedly traded away. Due process, intelligible reasons, independent review, and rights of challenge matter precisely when a popular objective makes them inconvenient.

Lawful reform can be determined. It can change entrenched advantages, enforce obligations, and make powerful people accept limits.

Lawfulness need not mean waiting until every beneficiary of the current arrangement has become comfortable with revision. It means pursuing change through institutions whose authority and methods can be publicly defended.

The manner of reform also shapes what follows. Humiliation is a poor foundation for common work. It can close the possibility that someone with resources, knowledge, or responsibility will recognize a better arrangement and help build it. Firm accountability and an invitation to participate can coexist.

Nor should the burdens of patience fall entirely on those already carrying the injury. A deliberative process needs time, but delay is itself a decision with consequences. Public reasoning should make those consequences visible rather than allowing procedure to become an indefinite refuge from action.

This is a substantial task for a creative nation: to build institutions capable of learning from the lives they affect. The accomplishment would lie in durable changes to opportunity, security, voice, and shared prosperity. It would deserve pride without requiring anyone else to become subordinate.

The neighbour who must also answer

The American chapters have moved from admiration through alarm toward possibility. Their hope does not require America to cease being itself. It asks the country to decide which parts of its inheritance deserve continuation, which arrangements need correction, and how its gifts can become more widely usable.

From Canada, we should be careful about enjoying this invitation too comfortably. Criticizing our neighbour can become another way of avoiding our own history. The distinction between a creative American vocation and a healing Canadian vocation is an author's hope for contribution, not a certificate of innocence issued on either side of the border.

Canadians have to ask what our preferred account leaves out, which

relationships we have treated as settled without consent, and what resources or privileges we possess because other people carried costs we barely learned to name. The questions cannot be answered by observing that somebody elsewhere has acted worse.

Nor can Indigenous testimony become a convenient lesson arranged to improve a Canadian self-image. The people speaking have their own histories, claims, and purposes. Our willingness to hear them has to include the possibility that the account will change what we believe we are entitled to keep deciding alone.

That is where our next part begins: with *Lha yudit'ih We Always Find a Way: Bringing the Tsilhqot'in Title Case Home*, by Lorraine Weir, with Chief Roger William. Naming the book fully matters. We are entering a history carried in a living language, through particular people whose account deserves to be heard on its own terms.¹⁰⁵

Weir is an oral historian; William was the plaintiff in the rights and title case at the centre of the book. Their work brings his perspective together with the voices of community members and allies. The publisher describes a community oral history extending beyond the courtroom into creation stories, colonial violence, resistance, and the continuing relationship with land.¹⁰⁶ This is why it belongs at the entrance to our Canadian inquiry. Before deciding what healing should mean, we need to hear how people describe the life that has been harmed and the life they are continuing to sustain.

For readers meeting the nation's name for the first time, an approximate English pronunciation of Tsilhqot'in is *Tsill-COAT-teen*.¹⁰⁷ Taking care with a name is a small beginning in learning to listen.

The American appeal has asked what creation can serve. The Canadian appeal will ask what healing requires of those who have benefited from arrangements they did not fully understand. The book we are about to encounter gives that question people, places, and histories to answer to.

Neither task is accomplished by a flattering identity. Both require a relationship to change. We will know more about the future we can make when we become more truthful about the people with whom we

must make it.

Part V

To Our Canadian Kin

Chapter 16

We Always Find a Way

Where I am speaking from

I can speak with authority only about my own experience. Before I ask what Canada needs to hear, I want to say something about the Canadian who is asking.

I am a Canadian citizen by birth, of English, Irish, and Italian ancestry. The English influence was the most culturally imposing in our family rituals. It helped give the familiar its shape. That is part of what I bring to this inquiry, along with the places that raised me and the things I did not yet understand about them.

I was born in Whitehorse, Yukon, a Canadian territory rather than a province.¹⁰⁸ I chose neither the time nor the place of my arrival. I find myself thankful for my good fortune.

I left my birthplace before I had the opportunity to form memories of it. By the time I was two, we had moved to Victoria, British Columbia's provincial capital. By five, I was living in Prince Rupert, a small but important coastal community.

It was in Prince Rupert that I found my love for the soil of my land. I could feel that attachment long before I could explain it. The questions I now ask about belonging do not erase that love. They ask me to understand more fully the place to which I felt I belonged.

It was also in Prince Rupert that I learned about settling a score

through violence. I remember the playground as a place where we hurt one another. Looking back, I understand it within a much larger history: the pain of Canada's residential-school system did not remain with the generation compelled to attend. It reached children, grandchildren, families, and communities.¹⁰⁹ I cannot reconstruct every other child's history from a playground memory. I can remember that I was part of what happened there.

What I also remember is how quickly we could return to one another. The violence we exchanged was usually settled, as far as I could see, when the bell called us back to our rows of seats. That was how it appeared to me as a child. A bell could end a fight without ending the pain a child carried into it.

My teacher's name was Ms. Adams. I remember her as Haida, a member of one of the coastal First Nations of British Columbia. The Haida are a beautiful people with a history deserving attention in its own right. My memory of a teacher is one small encounter with that much larger history.

The voices we will spend time with in this part of the book are T̓silhqot'in. Their territory includes the Chilcotin watershed, with the Chilcotin, Chilko, and Taseko rivers.¹¹⁰ My parents were both born in Quesnel, in the wider interior region connected by the Fraser River. Quesnel itself stands on Lhtako Dene territory.¹¹¹ These connections matter to me, and so do the distinctions between the peoples whose lands my family story crosses.

By eight, I was living in Abbotsford. Today I write from Matsqui territory, in the part of the Fraser Valley I call home. The Matsqui are a Stó:lō people, with a continuing relationship to land along the Fraser and southward beyond the Canada–United States border.¹¹² Naming that relationship places my own belonging beside a history that did not begin with my arrival.

Abbotsford was Bible-belt country in my experience, with a strong Mennonite presence. That community carried its own histories of faith, persecution, displacement, and the search for a home. Mennonite families were settling in the Abbotsford area before the Second World

War; later arrivals included people displaced by the war.¹¹³

In Abbotsford, my ten-year-old sister went to a church meeting with a friend. She came home and told me she had invited God into her heart. She asked if I wanted to do that too.

It was not a difficult decision for an eight-year-old. I had no concept of theology, or even of the title Christian. I just knew you had to be honest about the bad stuff you did first. Then you could invite Him in, and He would move in.

So He did.

Our own Crown, our own responsibilities

The country I belonged to had also inherited a language about God and authority. To understand what that inheritance asks of us, we need to distinguish the country from the government of the day, and an invitation to serve from a permission to command.

Americans and Canadians both live in federations, with powers divided between a national government and states or provinces. Both elect representatives and place constitutional limits on public authority. But an American president and a Canadian prime minister occupy different kinds of office. The United States is a constitutional republic. Its president combines the roles of head of state and head of government. Congress and the presidency have separate electoral foundations; a president does not lose office simply because Congress rejects a government measure. The Constitution distributes authority among legislative, executive, and judicial branches, with checks intended to prevent any one from becoming the whole government.¹¹⁴

Canada is a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy. The prime minister leads the government; the monarch is head of state. Canadians elect members of the House of Commons, rather than directly electing a prime minister in a national ballot. The governor general appoints the person able to form a government and command the House's confidence. The government must retain that confidence to govern. Losing it ordinarily leads to resignation or a request for an

election. Parliament includes the Crown, an appointed Senate, and the elected Commons.¹¹⁵

A monarchy is a system in which a monarch occupies the office of head of state. In Canada's case, succession is hereditary. The constitutional qualification matters: the office operates within laws and conventions, rather than making the monarch's personal wishes the country's law. The governor general performs most of the monarch's federal functions, normally on the advice of Canadian ministers. Lieutenant governors represent the Crown in the provinces. The institution continues when its human occupant changes.¹¹⁶

We have our own King. Charles III is King of Canada, and the same person is King of the United Kingdom. What we sometimes call the King of England is more accurately the King of the United Kingdom; England is one part of that kingdom. Sharing a person does not merge the countries or their governments. His Canadian role is constitutionally distinct from his British role. The Canadian Crown is not an instruction from London to Ottawa.¹¹⁷ My English ancestry is part of my family history. It does not make Canada English, any more than sharing a monarch makes Canadian citizenship British.

A servant under God

There is a Christian understanding of kingship worth recovering here. In that tradition, the Sovereign is called to serve God through service to the people. The coronation gives public and sacred form to that obligation: the ruler is anointed and charged with duties that exceed personal advantage. The 2023 coronation placed service to God and the peoples of the realms at the centre of its meaning.¹¹⁸

Calling the Sovereign God's servant and representative to the nation makes sense to me as an account of that vocation: a human being charged to make justice, mercy, and service visible in public responsibility. It does not establish that a ruler knows God's mind. The claim makes the ruler answerable to a good beyond himself. If it becomes a reason to place him beyond criticism, we have reversed its

meaning.

This is a Christian interpretation of an inherited office, not a constitutional requirement that every Canadian share the King's religion or my own. The Charter protects freedom of conscience and religion.¹¹⁹ A neighbour who understands the world differently is entitled to that freedom. My childhood invitation to God cannot become another person's compulsory profession of faith.

The distinction matters throughout this book. Sacred language can remind power of its obligations. It can also be used to hide power from the people who bear its consequences. A crown does not settle which of those things we are doing. Neither does an election. We have to examine the conduct.

Two paths out of British rule

There is a familiar shorthand: America fought for independence; Canada asked nicely. It captures something about the contrast in our constitutional stories. The American colonies declared independence from Great Britain in 1776, fought a revolutionary war, and secured British recognition in the Treaty of Paris in 1783.¹²⁰ Canada's path unfolded through political negotiation and successive constitutional changes. It was not one courteous request, granted on the sole condition that we keep a British King.

Confederation in 1867 created the Dominion of Canada under Queen Victoria, while important imperial powers remained. The Statute of Westminster in 1931 recognized legislative autonomy, but Canada left a major constitutional amendment power with the British Parliament because Canadians had not agreed on their own replacement procedure. Patriation in 1982 brought that power home, under Queen Elizabeth II.¹²¹ The Crown continued through these changes. Independence developed alongside it; keeping a monarch was not the single price of a newly granted freedom.

The United States centres its constitutional order on the Constitution drafted in 1787 and its subsequent amendments. The document

establishes institutions, allocates powers, and sets out procedures for amendment; the Bill of Rights added explicit protections against government intrusion.¹²² Canada's constitutional order comprises several texts and unwritten conventions. Its major written foundations include the Constitution Acts of 1867 and 1982. The former established the federal union; the latter includes the Charter and domestic amendment procedures. Conventions help determine how powers are exercised, including the relationship between ministers and the Crown.¹²³

These are different arrangements for a common problem: how can public authority act effectively without treating the people as its possessions? Neither arrangement resolves the problem permanently. Constitutional promises still require people willing to defend them, and institutions willing to accept correction.

Canada also belongs to the Commonwealth, a voluntary association of independent and equal countries. Charles III is its Head, but that role is distinct from being King of Canada. Membership does not require a country to share our monarch: the Commonwealth includes republics. Its headship is not hereditary, and future heads are chosen by its leaders.¹²⁴ It is a commonwealth of countries, not a collection of countries owned by the King. We can value that relationship without confusing it with continued British rule.

Nor should we confuse a negotiated departure from imperial dependence with an innocent history inside our own borders. The question of when Britain stopped governing Canada is different from the question of how Canada treated the peoples already here. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms existing Aboriginal and treaty rights.¹²⁵ Those obligations belong within our account of Canada, not outside it as an inconvenience to an otherwise completed national story.

For me, the promise of service in the Crown's language makes that inquiry more pressing. If we inherit the institutions, we also inherit questions about what has been done through them. We cannot decide how well we have served by listening only to ourselves. That is where the voices in *We Always Find a Way* must be allowed to interrupt our

familiar account.

A book that brings the case home

The book is *Lha yudit'ih—We Always Find a Way: Bringing the Ṭsilhqot'in Title Case Home*, by Lorraine Weir, with Chief Roger William. Its subtitle tells us where the work wants to take us. A case can enter a national story as a date, a ruling, and a change in the law. Bringing it home means returning to people whose lives cannot be contained within that summary. Talonbooks describes the work as a community oral history, joining William's perspective with those of Xeni Gwet'in and other Ṭsilhqot'in people and allies.¹²⁶

For an English-speaking reader approaching the name for the first time, the approximate pronunciation Tsill-COAT-teen can help begin. It is an aid to asking and learning, not a replacement for hearing speakers of the language.¹²⁷ The title in that language should remind us that the conversation did not begin when we became able to understand it.

I want to begin with particular passages, rather than claim to speak on behalf of the whole book. In "How It All Started," Rita Lulua Meldrum of Xeni Gwet'in locates herself through family. She names her grandfather and her great-uncle, then recalls a story her grandmother Inez told her. She is showing the reader a path by which knowledge reached her.¹²⁸

That matters to a reader trained to hear history primarily through the voice of an institution. We are accustomed to titles that identify a judge, a department, or a commission. Here a speaker identifies the people through whom she knows. The relationship is part of the account. It gives us something to attend to and, where further historical inquiry is needed, a route to follow. It is neither a reason to dismiss the account nor a license for me to add particulars she did not supply.

Her account continues with the abduction and sexual abuse of girls by a group she identifies as the McLean crew. It contains a devastating

account of a father's killing of his daughter after her return. Meldrum connects the story passed down by her grandmother with her own experience of sexual abuse in residential school and with continuing concern for stolen women.¹²⁹

There is no need to reproduce every detail in order to hear what is being said. Nor should the shock of the account make us overlook the speaker who has chosen to tell it. A person is doing the difficult work of connecting what she received, what happened to her, and what she recognizes in the world around her. She deserves more than our horrified attention for the length of a page.

For a Canadian reader, the question changes. We are no longer asking only what officials believed they were building. We are asking what the building of that order looked like to a family trying to protect its children. We can still investigate dates, names, corroboration, and differences between accounts. Careful history requires those tasks. But the demand for precision must be applied to our comfortable national stories as well as to testimony that disturbs them.

A government record does not become impartial because its author had a desk. A family account does not become worthless because its authority passed through a grandmother. Both require responsible reading. What becomes indefensible is a method that treats the record of the powerful as history and the memory of those harmed as an emotional interruption of history.

The passage also resists an easy conclusion about forgiveness. My recollection of a playground bell cannot explain what would heal the injuries Meldrum describes. The children of my memory returned to their seats. Her account asks us to consider what continues when a school day, a school, or an official policy has ended. I must not use the apparent speed of childhood reconciliation in my own story to set the timetable for somebody else's.

Relationships that remain alive

In another supplied passage, “Feeding the Fire, Feeding the Ancestors,” Chief Roger William describes being taught to feed the Ancestors by placing food in the fire or leaving food for wildlife. He explains a relationship of care that extends beyond those presently visible, and a practice of leaving the Ancestors room to receive what is offered.¹³⁰

A Christian reader may feel recognition, uncertainty, objection, or several of those things together. I do not ask that reader to pretend agreement. I ask that we first let William finish describing his own understanding. If our first move is to rename his practice in our theology, we have replaced an encounter with a translation we control. If our first move is to dismiss it, we may never discover what responsibilities the practice makes visible to him.

What I hear is an account in which receiving carries an obligation to give, and in which the relationship is not exhausted by an individual’s immediate appetite. That is my reading of this passage. It is not a complete account of T̓silhqot’in spirituality. Nor does the existence of a point of recognition make the traditions interchangeable. We can recognize a question we also face while accepting that another person has learned to live with it differently.

There is a discipline in that restraint. We have spent much of this book examining what happens when an instrument mistakes itself for the whole. Our vocabulary can do the same thing. It can become so efficient at assigning names that we stop noticing what the names have left out. A conversation survives when the person being described can answer back.

William’s account also changes the temporal scale of care. A transaction can be complete when a payment has cleared. A relationship may include duties to those who made our lives possible and to people who will live with what we leave. That thought does not supply a ready-made answer to a logging application, a school budget, or an agreement over water. It changes the questions we bring to those decisions. Who is included in the accounting? Which obligations

disappear when we call the transaction complete?

I approach those questions as a Canadian with a Christian childhood and an English-influenced family history. I cannot make William's account a certificate that my own faith has been vindicated. I can allow it to expose the smallness of an account in which my receipt of a benefit is the end of the story.

Recognition and what precedes it

The title case provides another way into that difficulty. In 2014 the Supreme Court of Canada declared Aboriginal title over the area sought in *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*. The judgment affirmed rights to decide how title land is used and to benefit from it. It also specified a legal framework: governments must obtain consent or justify an infringement under section 35, including the Crown's fiduciary obligations. The decision did not declare an unlimited veto or dispose of every territorial question.¹³¹

That bounded legal description matters. So does the distinction between a court recognizing a relationship and a court creating the people who hold it. If I begin the story with the ruling, I can make Canadian law appear to be the generous source of everything that follows. Bringing the case home changes the direction of attention. The people did not begin at the courthouse door.

The word *recognition* should trouble a complacent reader in a productive way. Something can be present before I recognize it. My failure to see does not make its existence conditional on my eventual approval. Yet recognition can change what I am permitted to do and what I owe. It can require institutions to revise the arrangements through which my own security has been organized.

That is why this book is a place to start examining an honest path toward Canadian healing. It brings the national reader close to accounts that cannot be answered by congratulating Canada on having courts. Courts matter. So do the people who must spend their lives making institutions hear what they have been saying. We can

value a legal achievement while refusing to turn the cost of obtaining it into a reassuring tale about the system's inevitable goodness.

I also hear a danger in how an outsider might use the title *We Always Find a Way*. We could praise resilience so enthusiastically that we cease to ask why such resilience has been required. Admiration would then allow the rest of us to remain unchanged. A people's capacity to continue is not an undertaking to absorb whatever we impose next.

The title can instead invite a harder confidence: that a future need not be limited to the terms of the injury. The speakers retain lives, relationships, knowledge, and purposes that exceed what has been done to them. They have something to say about what comes next. The rest of us have to learn whether we are willing to hear it when it alters what we had already planned.

For me, that is where reading becomes responsibility. I am grateful for my place in Canada. Gratitude can withstand a fuller account of that place. Indeed, it may become more worthy of its object when it stops demanding that everything which made my comfort possible be innocent.

The next question is therefore personal and public at once. What do I do with a history I did not choose, but whose consequences I now help to carry?

Chapter 17

Reading Our History Honestly

Confession and What We Can Repair

Reading these accounts as someone of English lineage, I am reminded of the value of confessing one's sins. Before I ask what Canada might become, I must be willing to hear what was done in the making of it. I did not commit every wrong I inherit a relationship to. But how I receive this history, and what I do with that knowledge, is my responsibility.

Confession begins with telling the truth, including the truths that disturb our affection for ourselves. Its sincerity becomes visible in what we are willing to change. I bring that understanding from a tradition familiar to our Christian readers. The people whose accounts we have encountered must remain free to describe healing through their own traditions. Their testimony does not exist to complete my spiritual journey.

This brings me to a question I cannot answer by declaring myself either innocent or ashamed: what is the true nature of white privilege, and what have we already squandered of it? What can we redeem? What can we equalize?

To answer, we need to examine particular advantages. Whose

ownership was recognized? Whose language did institutions speak? Whose testimony did authorities believe? Who could expect protection from the law, and who had reason to fear it? We must ask how those arrangements affected the opportunities that reached us. Naming privilege should make that inquiry more exact. It should leave room to recognize poverty, hardship, and differences within families and communities as well.

I want us to ask what we have done with advantages we were taught to regard as entirely our own. Where have we squandered opportunities to listen, the trust of neighbours, or the chance to use security and influence generously? Where have we mistaken the comfort of being believed for proof that we understood?

What can we redeem? Our conduct is a place to begin. We can change the institutions we sustain and the purposes to which we put inherited wealth and power. We cannot recover lost lives. We cannot decide when another person should forgive us, or make that forgiveness the condition of our willingness to repair a wrong.

What can we equalize? I hope we can make effective access to justice, education, housing, political voice, and material security a shared expectation. That work must respect distinct peoples, laws, and relationships with land. It must also leave us open to an uncomfortable answer: some things we have understood as ours to distribute may first require us to recognize someone else's ownership or authority.

Confession gives this work its beginning. Restitution and institutional change give it substance. The test is whether our examination makes another person's freedom more real. If I say I have heard, what will change in the decisions I make, the claims I defend, and the future I help to build?

The history that made room for me

There is an objection worth taking seriously. A reader may say: my family was poor. My parents worked. My grandparents endured war or persecution. Nothing was handed to us. Why should an account of

privilege erase what they survived?

It should not. A truthful history has room for hard work, loss, courage, and the unfairness endured by people who also occupied an advantaged position in some other relationship. We become less accurate when we require a person to be either entirely privileged or entirely injured. An advantage in one institution does not settle every fact about a life. It does, however, remain an advantage worth examining.

Consider an imagined pair of families, equally industrious and equally devoted to their children. One can expect the school to reinforce its language and religious habits. The other must fear that schooling will sever a child's relationship to home. The first family's labour is real. So is the difference in what that labour has to overcome. To recognize the difference is not to insult the first family's affection. It is to stop treating the two situations as interchangeable.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's summary describes residential schooling within a larger policy aimed at eliminating Indigenous governments, rights, cultures, and distinct peoples through assimilation. It identifies that policy as cultural genocide.¹³² We should hear the institutional purpose, not reduce the history to a handful of people who failed to behave kindly inside an otherwise harmless project. An institution can inflict harm through the very objective its respectable members consider beneficial.

That is a difficult lesson for Christians whose own experience of faith has been loving. It is also a necessary one. My account of inviting God into my heart is true to my experience. It cannot stand in for the experience of a child compelled to enter an institution that denied the authority of family and community. The language of salvation does not make those circumstances equivalent. If anything, the invitation I remember should sharpen my attention to the difference between welcome and compulsion.

This is where a litigious reading fails us again. We begin to assemble evidence that the particular church we attended was not responsible, or that a relative meant well, or that we personally arrived too late to

be involved. Some of those distinctions may be historically important. They do not answer every question of present responsibility. We still have to decide what to support, what to oppose, and which account of our country to pass to children.

Nor does responsibility require a fabricated confession. I should not claim to have committed an act I did not commit. That would make the truth less clear. I can acknowledge what I have benefited from, where I have failed to inquire, and what authority I exercise now. Those are matters on which a living person can act without borrowing the role of either perpetrator or survivor.

More than two founding voices

The constitutional account often tempts us toward a conversation between two European inheritances. English and French become the main characters, and everyone else enters according to the needs of their disagreement. That arrangement is too small for the country it purports to explain.

Even the constitutional language we have already encountered names Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples in its recognition of Aboriginal peoples of Canada.¹³³ A list in a document is not an adequate description of their histories. It does remind us that an English–French settlement cannot simply be treated as the consent of everyone whose lives it affects.

We should also resist an opposite reduction, in which all people of European ancestry occupy the same position in every historical encounter. A French-speaking family concerned for its language, an English-speaking institution confident of its norms, and a newcomer trying to find work do not enter every dispute with identical resources. Recognizing those differences does not erase the colonial relationship. It prevents us from using the relationship as a substitute for examining who held authority in a particular place and decision.

The same care belongs within the term Indigenous. My parents' connection to Quesnel does not make me a witness to T̓silhqot'in life.

Writing from Matsqui territory does not authorize me to speak for the Matsqui. Admiration for a Haida teacher does not make every coastal and interior history a variation of the same story. Specificity is one way of refusing the old habit of making other people fit the categories most convenient to us.

It takes time to become more specific. A national story can be recited in an afternoon. Learning whose land, whose agreement, whose language, and whose record is involved may require us to accept that we are beginners. That is a reasonable cost of asking for an honest relationship. Ignorance becomes more damaging when we treat our impatience with learning as an argument against what we need to learn.

A newcomer should not have to become an expert historian before being welcomed as a neighbour. Neither should citizenship be sold as an exemption from the relationships already present. There is room for a generous beginning: here is where we live; here are some of the promises and disputes we inherit; here are the people whose own accounts can help us understand them. Belonging can grow through that learning rather than wait until it is finished.

The ledger and its limits

The language of privilege becomes useful when it makes a mechanism visible. Suppose a public body recognizes one form of evidence and excludes another. Suppose a family can obtain a loan against an asset while another family cannot secure recognition of its interest in the same land. Suppose speaking the institution's preferred language is mistaken for possessing greater intelligence. These are illustrations of questions to investigate, not a claim that every encounter has had an identical structure.

Once we identify a mechanism, we can ask what would change it. We might need a different evidentiary rule, access to independent advice, a transfer of resources, a corrected title, or authority exercised by a different body. A label alone cannot tell us which remedy fits. The

work of equalizing begins to become serious when it can distinguish these possibilities.

We should not confuse equal treatment with a refusal to notice unequal conditions. Asking two people to cross the same threshold is not fair merely because the instruction is identical, if one has been denied the means to reach it. Yet we should also explain the purpose and limits of a remedy. People asked to sustain an institution deserve reasons they can examine. Repair is weakened when its advocates regard every question about its design as proof of hostility.

There is another limit to the ledger. Some injuries cannot be compensated in kind. A childhood cannot be returned. A dead relative cannot be restored by the correct payment. Recognizing that limit should make us more attentive to what remains possible, rather than provide an excuse to do nothing. We can distinguish the irreparable loss from the ongoing deprivation we still have the power to end.

For Christians, Luke's account of Zacchaeus offers a useful disturbance. His encounter with Jesus includes a commitment to give to the poor and make restitution for wrongful taking. The story does not leave transformation entirely inside the heart. Possessions and relationships are implicated.¹³⁴ We need not turn the passage into a universal damages schedule to notice that repentance has material consequences.

A public apology can likewise be a beginning without being a settlement. The person who hears it may ask for a record, an explanation, the return of something held, a change in practice, or simply distance. None of those responses necessarily means that the apology was worthless. They may mean the speaker has finally reached the point at which the injured person can state what has not yet been answered.

What we can stop squandering

I return to the question of what we have squandered because it points toward opportunities still available. If I have the security to listen

without losing my home, I can spend some of that security on hearing what unsettles me. If an institution will receive my complaint promptly, I can ask why a neighbour's complaint has languished. If I have influence over a budget, I can make the cost of repair visible before the money is committed elsewhere.

These actions do not make me another person's saviour. They are ways of using the position I actually occupy. Their value depends in part on whether the people concerned find them useful. That requires a willingness to be told that the gesture I preferred was not the help being sought.

There is a temptation to demand a final personal verdict before acting. Am I good? Am I guilty? Have I done enough? Those questions can become another way to keep the attention on ourselves. A more useful inquiry is often smaller and more demanding: what is the next decision before me, what do I know about its consequences, and whose account have I not yet heard?

We should make room for the person who begins awkwardly. A culture of correction that humiliates every beginner will teach people to hide their uncertainty. But generosity to beginners is different from asking those harmed to absorb repeated evasion. Institutions can provide education, clear procedures, and accountable leadership so that every difficult conversation does not depend on one exhausted person explaining the same injury again.

That, too, is something we can equalize: the burden of learning. The people most affected should not always have to pay for everyone else's understanding with their own time, grief, and unpaid labour. Public knowledge deserves public support. Where someone is asked to teach or advise, the request should acknowledge the work and the person's freedom to decline it.

Honest history can therefore change the arrangement of a room as well as the content of a book. It can change who sets the agenda, who is paid to prepare, who receives the records, and who can stop a decision from being represented as unanimous. These are ordinary details. They are also places where our professions of respect either

acquire substance or disappear.

The question is no longer whether Canada can tolerate a less flattering history. It is whether the country we love can become more truthful without losing its capacity for affection. To answer that, we need to look at the stories through which we remember who we are.

Chapter 18

What We Remember

The words we put on ourselves

Je me souviens. I remember.

There is something unfinished about the sentence. It does not tell the listener what must be remembered, or what remembering will require. That openness gives it force. It can be an affirmation of continuity, a grief that will not be dismissed, an expression of gratitude, or a question handed to the next generation.

The Government of Quebec traces the motto to Eugène-Étienne Taché's design for the legislative building in 1883. Its account also acknowledges that no explanatory text from Taché establishes his intention. It interprets the phrase in relation to the historical figures and events represented on the building's façade.¹³⁵ That qualification is valuable. A familiar public phrase can gather meanings beyond what we can securely recover about its origin.

I will not choose one feeling and assign it to everyone who says those words. A French-speaking Quebecer does not need an English-speaking Canadian to explain what their memory must contain. I can, however, let the phrase question me. What do I remember when I say Canada? What was made easy for me to remember? What was left outside the frame?

The question belongs beside another familiar declaration: *I am*

Canadian. Molson's advertising made that assertion commercially prominent, including in its 2000 campaign. The company's own later account presents the advertisement as a celebration of national virtues and familiar symbols.¹³⁶ A company can sell a feeling of belonging along with a product. The fact that a feeling has been used commercially does not make every person who feels it insincere.

A declaration of belonging can be joyful. It can also close a question too quickly. If the act of saying who we are seems to prove how we behave, we stop examining the relationship between identity and conduct. We have already seen that danger in the claim to defend a civilization. It can operate in a beer advertisement, a school assembly, or a conversation at home with a much gentler voice.

The two phrases need not compete. One asks us to carry a past; the other locates us in a present. Together they invite a further question: what kind of future follows from the history we are willing to acknowledge?

Memory is a relationship

My family story contains movement. Whitehorse, Victoria, Prince Rupert, Abbotsford. Those place names help me arrange a childhood. They do not tell me everything about the places through which my family moved. They are a record of my relationship to them, and the beginning of questions about relationships I did not yet recognize.

A childhood memory has a particular authority. I can describe how something appeared to me and what I recall feeling. I cannot turn the limits of that recollection into the limits of what happened. The teacher I remember had a life beyond my classroom. The children with whom I fought had families and histories I did not know. To remember responsibly is to keep room around the part I can tell.

Public memory needs that room too. Consider an imagined local display celebrating a community's growth. It records a road, a railway, a mill, the opening of a school. The dates may all be correct. Yet the display could still leave a visitor unable to understand whose land

was involved, who worked without recognition, or why a neighbouring community experienced the same development as a loss. Accuracy in the details does not guarantee adequacy in the frame.

Changing the display need not require denying that the road was useful or that workers were brave. It may require explaining the agreement under which the road was built, identifying a dispute, adding testimony, or allowing a different body to direct part of the account. The point is to make the story more capable of answering questions. A public history that cannot tolerate additional evidence has become something other than an inquiry.

The objection comes quickly: will there ever be enough room for every perspective? No museum, classroom, or book can contain everything. Selection is unavoidable. But unavoidable selection does not justify treating the same people as incidental every time. We can ask who chooses, what criteria are used, and whether those represented can identify an error or omission that the institution is obliged to consider.

That obligation does not give every objection an automatic victory. It gives the objection a hearing and the decision a duty to provide reasons. We need a public memory that can be revised without collapsing into either endless veto or a decree from whoever holds the building's keys.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action addressed museums and archives as institutions with responsibilities in this work. They called for review of museum policies, access to records, and collaboration over the history of residential schools.¹³⁷ The recommendations matter because memory requires more than an attitude. Records have custodians, catalogues, access rules, staffing, and budgets. An institution can praise truth while making it practically difficult to find.

A language is used by someone

Remembering a language is different from displaying a few of its words. A word on a sign can be a meaningful beginning, especially when it replaces an erasure. But a language also needs people who can speak to one another, teach children, disagree, joke, make plans, and carry ordinary life through it. Public affection for the idea of a language does not by itself create those conditions.

The First Peoples' Cultural Council's Language Nest Toolkit makes that ordinary work visible. Its resources include teaching activities, administration, curriculum planning, assessment, and support for families.¹³⁸ We should notice the practical nouns. Behind the ceremonial recognition of a language are schedules, trained people, spaces, and time.

That offers a useful test for our professions of respect. Are we willing to support the conditions under which another person's language can be used, including when we do not understand it? Or do we welcome it primarily when it adorns an event conducted entirely on our terms?

The question applies differently in different settings. The institutional position of French in Quebec is not identical to that of any particular Indigenous language. Treating them as the same would erase history and present circumstances. Yet a reader concerned about one language's future may have a point of entry into another person's concern. Recognition can begin in a familiar feeling without ending in an assumption that the situations are equivalent.

An English-speaking Canadian may worry about exclusion from a conversation. That concern can be reasonable in a public service or a decision affecting that person's rights. It can also become unreasonable if it demands that every gathering be organized around English-speaking convenience. The work is to distinguish access that a public obligation requires from an expectation that other people make their own lives immediately legible to us.

Translation is one answer, but it has costs. Someone must do it, someone must pay, and some meanings need explanation rather than

a substituted word. If we insist that the person already carrying the burden of preserving a language must also provide free translation for every outsider, we have quietly transferred the cost of our inclusion to them.

There is no single national formula that resolves every such question. There are habits that help: describe the actual purpose of the setting, hear the people using it, identify rights and duties, pay for the work needed, and revise when the arrangement fails. These are modest habits compared with a grand declaration of cultural harmony. They are more likely to make that declaration credible.

Affection without an alibi

I want to retain affection for Canada. A book written only to expose would have missed part of what I am trying to say. The places that formed me are not abstractions. Neither is the gratitude I feel for the life I did not choose and was fortunate to receive.

The danger is not affection. It is the demand that affection must be protected from knowledge. That demand makes love brittle. Every new fact becomes a threat to the relationship, and every person who brings it becomes a possible enemy. A country loved under those terms has to spend too much of its energy defending a picture of itself.

There is another possibility. We can love a place enough to want its promises to become more reliable. We can recognize that someone who challenges our account may be trying to make room for a life they also want to live here. Even when the challenge is angry, its substance deserves examination. Anger is not proof of truth, but neither is our discomfort proof that the claim is false.

This is especially important in our relationship with the United States. Defining Canada chiefly by what we dislike in America gives our own failures somewhere to hide. A comparison may reveal a useful difference. It cannot absolve us of asking how our institutions behave. The neighbour's excess is not a measure of our sufficiency.

Nor should American readers be asked to receive this Canadian

examination as entertainment. If the book has worked, we should have less appetite for one another's humiliation. We have been looking for ways to preserve gifts while correcting the conditions under which those gifts become instruments of harm. Each country needs the other's freedom to tell a more truthful story.

A shared memory does not have to be a single memory. People can inhabit the same political relationship while remembering its beginnings differently. The important question is what happens when those memories meet. Does one possess the authority to erase the other? Can evidence alter the public account? Can an unresolved disagreement remain visible while practical work proceeds?

We should be able to tell children that a country contains achievements worth continuing and harms that demand repair. They do not need a flawless ancestry in order to grow into responsible adults. They need enough security to ask questions and enough honesty from adults to learn that love does not depend on concealment.

Je me souviens can remain an unfinished sentence. *I am Canadian* can become the beginning of an obligation rather than the conclusion of an argument. What I remember and what I claim to belong to should make me more available to the people with whom I share the place.

Then memory may do more than preserve a grievance or protect a reputation. It may help us recognize a relationship that still needs an answer. The answer will have to travel in more than one direction.

Chapter 19

Healing Is a Two-Way Street

What can travel both ways

Healing is a two-way street. I mean that a relationship becomes different through the lives and decisions of the people within it. I do not mean that every injury has two equally responsible parties, or that the person harmed must supply half the remedy before the person responsible begins.

An apology can be offered by one person. Restitution can be undertaken before it is welcomed. A harmful practice can be stopped without waiting for praise. Those actions matter even if reconciliation does not follow. They are within the actor's responsibility. A restored relationship, however, cannot be declared into existence by that actor alone.

The distinction is easy to lose when healing becomes a public objective. A government, church, or company wants to report progress. It has a timetable, a communications office, and a need to demonstrate that its intervention worked. The person whose life was injured may have a different timetable and a different account of what progress would mean. If the institution makes its preferred outcome the measure of that person's cooperation, it repeats a familiar exercise of power.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission described reconciliation as the establishment and maintenance of a mutually respectful relationship. It explicitly recognized that some people reject the suggestion that such a relationship existed before and merely needs restoring.¹³⁹ That matters. We may be trying to build something that was promised but never made dependable. The past cannot always supply a harmonious state to which we can return.

A two-way street must therefore allow people to move differently. One may be ready to talk; another may need records first. One may want an agreement; another may need to consult family or community before deciding. A person may decline a relationship while still being owed compensation, safety, or the return of property. A refusal does not cancel the underlying obligation.

An agreement with room to be real

Imagine a proposed development near a community. This is an illustration, not an account of a particular dispute. The proponent has invested in designs and studies. Officials expect jobs and revenue. The community is invited to a meeting after the main decisions have been presented publicly as settled. Its members are asked which benefits they would prefer.

The meeting may be courteous. Everyone may be given time at the microphone. Yet the central question has already been removed from the conversation: should this proposal proceed in its present form? If the community cannot alter the decision, calling the gathering participation does not make it so.

Now imagine a different beginning. The parties identify who has authority and what remains uncertain. The proposal is presented early enough to change. People receive usable information and resources to obtain independent advice. Meetings follow procedures the affected community can recognize as its own. There is time to examine alternatives, including a different location or no project. Benefits, risks, responsibilities, and means of resolving later disagreement are

described in terms the parties can challenge.

This would still be difficult. A community need not have one opinion. A government may have responsibilities extending beyond the immediate locality. A business cannot operate without some capacity to plan. Treating these difficulties seriously is part of designing an agreement. It does not justify arranging the conversation so that one party's uncertainty counts as a crisis and another party's uncertainty counts as obstruction.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples addresses participation through peoples' own representative institutions and calls for consultation and cooperation in order to obtain free, prior, and informed consent in specified decisions affecting them. Its provisions on development also recognize peoples' authority to determine priorities for their lands and resources.¹⁴⁰ The language directs attention to who decides and when. It is not satisfied by finding a convenient person willing to endorse an outcome already chosen.

The distinction between a legal minimum and a relationship we can defend also matters. We have seen that Canadian title jurisprudence includes a framework for justified infringements as well as consent. That is a legal framework to be applied carefully, not a moral instruction to aim for the least relationship the law will tolerate. A proponent can ask what would make a project desirable to the people concerned, rather than immediately asking how to proceed over their objection.

We should apply the same seriousness to an agreement freely reached. Outsiders can romanticize refusal until an Indigenous community's decision to pursue a project is treated as a betrayal of the identity they have assigned it. That is another way of denying agency. The obligation is to understand the authority, process, evidence, and conditions of the decision. It is not to require that every community select the outcome that makes an outsider's philosophy look correct.

Love outside an emergency

The Samaritan story brought us to the possibility that love can be measured partly by our willingness to be changed by another person's situation. A crisis makes the demand visible. Someone is injured; the journey must be interrupted. Ordinary agreements test the same willingness without the dramatic clarity of the roadside.

A person tells us that a meeting time excludes them because they are caring for someone. We can admire their devotion and keep the schedule, or we can consider changing it. A neighbour explains that a project we like would create a burden we have not counted. We can thank them for their perspective, or allow the proposal to become different. These examples do not settle every competing claim. They show where recognition begins to acquire a cost.

There is a form of generosity that loves to respond after disaster and resists being inconvenienced beforehand. Rescue allows the giver a clear role. Mutual agreement requires the giver to become one participant among others. The second can be less emotionally satisfying and more respectful. It lets another person's needs and purposes influence the conditions under which we live together before someone has to be rescued.

This is part of what I mean by love. It includes a willingness to reconsider what I thought was reasonable when I learn what the arrangement asks of someone else. It does not require surrendering every boundary or accepting every demand. It requires reasons that take the other person's situation seriously, including when the eventual answer remains no.

That last qualification protects both parties. An agreement is not caring if one person is made responsible for preventing every disappointment the other might experience. Consent needs limits that can be stated without making affection disappear. People should be able to identify what they can offer, what they cannot, and what conditions would require them to reconsider.

A nation can learn something from that ordinary discipline. The

language of friendship between countries becomes more credible when one can decline a proposal without having its loyalty or right to exist questioned. The language of reconciliation within a country becomes more credible when participation includes a real ability to influence terms.

The work of answering

Reciprocity also means that an offer, when it is freely considered, deserves an intelligible answer. That need not be an affirmative answer. It may identify missing information, an unacceptable condition, or the wrong decision-making body. Where parties have undertaken to negotiate, they can owe one another good faith without owing agreement.

We should distinguish that situation from a demand that an injured person enter a conversation at all. A survivor does not become publicly available because the country wants to learn. A family is not obliged to turn its grief into a lesson. A community can direct an outsider to published resources rather than provide a personal audience. Those boundaries may be part of the conditions that make future contact possible.

The rest of us can respond by doing work that does not require another disclosure. We can read the records already offered, correct what we teach, support access to information, and change practices within our control. Listening is not confined to the moment when another person speaks directly to us. It includes how we receive what people have already taken the trouble to make known.

The Commission's Calls to Action asked church communities to learn their own institutions' histories and asked religious education to respect Indigenous spirituality in its own right.¹⁴¹ For the Christian audience of this book, that is a practical starting point. We can undertake education within our own congregation rather than wait for an Indigenous person to persuade each of us separately that the history matters.

The phrase in its own right deserves attention. It asks for a hearing that does not first make another tradition useful to ours. We may discover agreement, disagreement, or questions that remain unresolved. Respect does not require us to conceal those differences. It requires that the encounter not be organized as a test the other person must pass to qualify for ordinary dignity.

The same applies when Christians are on the receiving end. A person should not have to renounce a freely held faith to be treated as a serious participant in public life. The limit concerns what we impose through public power, not whether our convictions may inform why we care. We can bring reasons from our traditions while accepting that neighbours will need to examine a policy through reasons they can also assess.

Repair that survives disappointment

A difficult test comes when a good effort produces no immediate reconciliation. Someone returns a record and receives criticism for taking so long. A church changes a practice and is reminded of a further obligation. A government funds a program and learns that the program's design excluded people. It is tempting to respond that nothing will ever be enough.

Sometimes a demand will indeed be unreasonable, and we should retain the ability to say so. But the fact that one action has not resolved a relationship does not establish the futility of the action. It may reveal the scale of the work or the limits of the original plan. We should examine the criticism before making our disappointment into a verdict on the people we hoped to help.

Institutions need ways to make that examination routine. An agreement can specify review dates, access to data, independent complaint procedures, and what happens when a promise is not met. Those arrangements reduce the need to make every failure a personal contest between goodwill and ingratitude. They give the relationship memory and a way to correct itself.

Accountability should also reach the people who authorize a remedy. A funder ought to disclose its conditions. An implementing body ought to explain its decisions. Participants should be able to say when the process is burdensome or harmful. The capacity to challenge a repair effort is part of what distinguishes it from another program imposed for someone else's supposed benefit.

We can be patient without becoming indefinite. A promise needs a responsible party, resources, and a date on which its progress can be examined. Otherwise patience becomes something one side is asked to provide while the other keeps control of the clock. Conversely, a deadline set only for political display can make the appearance of completion more important than the work.

There is no device that removes judgment from this process. We will have to distinguish delay from deliberation, a necessary boundary from evasion, and a revised plan from a broken undertaking. That is one reason relationships need more than a dramatic beginning. They need people who remain available after the ceremony.

Healing, in this sense, is not a national mood we can announce. It is a change in the conditions under which people encounter one another. It becomes visible when a promise can be relied upon, a refusal can be heard, and a disagreement no longer threatens someone's standing as a person.

The two-way street has room for different speeds and different destinations. What it cannot honestly promise is that one party may keep every advantage of the old arrangement while both are said to have moved. If Canada is to learn to heal, we must begin where that movement can be observed.

Chapter 20

Learning to Heal

A calling we have to learn

Canada was born to heal. I offer that sentence as a hope about what we might become willing to do. It is not a finding about the intentions of Confederation, and it does not place Canadians above our neighbours. The history we have just encountered will not sustain that kind of innocence.

A calling can be understood as work that becomes ours when we recognize the need before us. We do not have to prove that every ancestor intended it. We have to decide whether we will undertake it now. In that sense, a Canadian vocation of healing would begin with the relationships through which our own country is constituted, including those it has injured or refused to recognize adequately.

The word learning is essential. It leaves room for a teacher other than ourselves. It also leaves room for a practice to be corrected. A nation that declares itself a healer before asking those affected what it has done may simply have found a more flattering name for its authority.

There are practical places to begin. Some involve a changed decision. Others require years of work that will never fit into the photograph of an agreement being signed. We should learn to value both, and to distinguish the public announcement of a purpose from evidence that

the purpose is being served.

Making room for a living language

The language work discussed in the previous chapter offers one example. The First Peoples' Cultural Council supports community language revitalization through immersion, documentation, and planning.¹⁴² This places living speakers and future use at the centre of the task. The work involves people making decisions about how their language will continue, rather than outsiders merely recording that it once existed.

A supporting institution can ask practical questions without presuming to direct the language's future. Is funding stable enough for a teacher to plan? Are speakers being compensated for their time? Does the administrative burden leave energy for teaching? Who determines what may be recorded, how recordings are held, and who may use them? These are questions I would bring to the design of support. They are not a report that every existing program has failed to answer them.

The distinction between an archive and a living relationship is useful here. An archive can preserve something precious. It cannot by itself guarantee that a child has someone with whom to speak. A funding announcement can provide resources. It cannot by itself establish that the people doing the work have the authority to use those resources well.

The Commission's Calls to Action included language rights, funding, and the principle that language preservation and revitalization should be managed by Indigenous people and communities.¹⁴³ The task for a Canadian public institution is therefore not to congratulate itself on permitting culture to survive. It is to examine whether its own arrangements support the people carrying the language forward.

There will be disagreements about teaching methods, priorities, and measures of progress. A living culture is allowed those disagreements. Respect does not require imagining a community without internal

debate. It requires refusing to exploit that debate as a reason to take its decisions away.

Nor should funding depend entirely on results that can be counted within a short political term. We need evidence, but we must choose evidence suited to the work. Attendance, hours of use, learner confidence, opportunities for conversation, and community-defined goals might each reveal something different. A single headline number may conceal as much as it shows. The people responsible for the program should help determine what success means and how it can honestly be assessed.

A table with more than one authority

Gwaii Haanas offers a different kind of example. Its 2018 Land-Sea-People Management Plan describes cooperative management by the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada through an Archipelago Management Board with equal representation. It identifies consensus as the basis of decision-making and treats the area from mountain-top to seafloor as connected. The Council of the Haida Nation's announcement likewise presents the plan as direction for managing that interconnected ecosystem.¹⁴⁴

This is a Haida context. It should not be substituted for T̓silhqot'in governance or offered as a universal model for every nation. Its relevance here is more specific: it makes it possible to examine an institutional arrangement in which collaboration has a form beyond an invitation to comment.

Equal seats and a consensus process do not remove unequal resources or guarantee wise decisions. Those are questions a serious evaluation would have to investigate. But the arrangement gives us concrete features to examine. We can ask who participates, how a decision is reached, and what responsibilities the participants accept. That is more useful than a general assurance that everyone has been listened to.

For someone accustomed to a single chain of command, shared

authority can look inefficient. It may take longer to reach a decision. Yet speed is not the only cost. A decision made quickly over a continuing objection can create a long and expensive conflict. The relevant comparison includes the quality and durability of the relationship, not just the hours spent in a meeting.

The deeper question is whether the parties are willing to be altered by the work. If every disagreement must end with one side's initial position intact, the table has not acquired two directions. If participants can revise a plan while remaining answerable to the people who sent them, the relationship has a way to learn.

That observation belongs beside our discussion of the Crown. An institution can use a language of service while keeping all practical discretion to itself. The test is what happens when someone with a different source of authority makes a claim. Is that claim allowed to change the decision, or is it received only as information for the original decision-maker?

We do not need to pretend that every jurisdictional issue has been resolved to recognize the value of arrangements that make cooperation possible. Nor should an example of cooperation be used to silence a dispute elsewhere. A working relationship is evidence of a possibility, not a certificate that all relationships have been repaired.

The congregation's next meeting

The Christian reader may be wondering where this leaves an ordinary congregation. Most of its members cannot negotiate a constitutional agreement. Many have limited money and time. A demand addressed only to the nation can leave them feeling simultaneously accused and powerless.

There are responsibilities close enough to name. A congregation can establish what its denomination and local institution actually did, which records it holds, and which commitments remain outstanding. It can teach that history accurately. It can examine whether its public account acknowledges the experience of those harmed. It can support

work led by the people concerned without making conversion or public gratitude a condition of that support.

These are proposals, not an assumption that every church has the same history or obligations. A church that operated a school, one that inherited relevant property, and one founded recently by immigrants may have different direct responsibilities. Each can still ask what its present conduct contributes to the relationships around it. Precision makes the inquiry fairer and more useful.

The Commission called for permanent support for community-controlled healing, cultural, educational, and relationship-building work by church parties to the Settlement Agreement, in collaboration with Survivors and Indigenous organizations.¹⁴⁵ That recommendation gives the word service an institutional test. Who controls the work being supported? Who can change its direction? Does the support remain when the result is not a flattering account of the donor?

An ordinary meeting could begin by choosing one responsibility the congregation actually has. The next step would be to identify the records, people, and resources needed to act on it. A public commitment could state what will be done, who is responsible, and when progress will be reported. The work might be modest. It would at least have a shape that others could examine.

No guest should have to disclose trauma to make such a meeting meaningful. Published testimony and institutional records already provide material for learning. If a person is invited to teach, the invitation should state the purpose, allow refusal, and provide compensation. The congregation's need to feel an emotional connection does not create an obligation for someone else to perform their pain.

There is also work within our own speech. We can stop turning every criticism of a church into an attack on the possibility of faith. We can distinguish the person who rejects a doctrine from the person who reports an injury. We can let evidence change our account without insisting that the entire tradition must either be vindicated or abandoned in one conversation.

Promises with a means of correction

A useful commitment survives a change in personnel. If a program depends entirely on one sympathetic official, the people relying on it remain vulnerable to the next appointment. A durable arrangement records responsibilities, provides resources, and includes a way to resolve failure. It should be understandable to those who must live under it.

Suppose a public institution promises access to records. The promise needs a process, an identified custodian, reasonable response times, and a way to challenge refusal. Suppose it promises support for language work. The undertaking needs more than a launch announcement: it needs clarity about duration, conditions, renewal, and whose evaluation matters. These are illustrative tests of a promise, not a report on a particular institution's compliance.

The demand for accountability must not itself become an instrument of control. A small community organization can be required to spend so much time proving that it deserves a grant that little remains for the work. Oversight should be proportionate, intelligible, and designed with those who must meet it. The funder should be accountable for the burdens it imposes as well as the money it distributes.

We also need to know what a review cannot tell us. A successful project in one place does not establish that the same arrangement will succeed elsewhere. A positive report does not mean every participant agrees. A completed task does not prove that a relationship is healed. These limits should guide the next inquiry rather than prevent us from recognizing work that has been done well.

Leadership through example would mean making both achievements and failures available for examination. Other countries might learn from a Canadian practice. They might also identify a weakness we have missed. If we demand that recognition travel only outward, we have recreated the very hierarchy this book asks America to question.

A future that does not require disappearance

The ambition is larger than the avoidance of scandal. I want Canada to become a place where people can build a future without being required to disappear into someone else's account of progress. Material security, political voice, language, and authority over one's relationships belong together in that ambition. A person should not have to choose between being fed and being heard.

This does not mean that every inherited practice must remain unchanged. People change their own lives. Communities debate their futures. Children grow into convictions their parents did not anticipate. Healing should make those choices more possible, not preserve a culture as though its members were exhibits responsible for satisfying an outsider's idea of authenticity.

The word inward is helpful if it keeps our attention on responsibilities we can actually exercise. Canada leading by inward healing would begin by making its own relationships more truthful and dependable. It would still learn from elsewhere, cooperate beyond its borders, and respond to urgent needs. It would have less reason to confuse a reputation for goodness with the work that goodness requires.

I do not know what that future will look like in every detail. No one person should. The hope is precisely that more people will have an effective part in deciding it. That includes people whose accounts unsettle mine, whose faith is different, and whose preferred arrangement is not the first one I would have proposed.

Canada is still learning. The statement can be an excuse if it postpones responsibility indefinitely. It can be a useful truth if it commits us to the practices by which learning becomes visible: hearing, deciding, acting, examining the result, and accepting correction.

If we can do that at home, we may have something worth offering the world. We will also be better prepared to receive what the world has to offer us.

Part VI

A World We Share

Chapter 21

One Among Many

The world does not begin at our border

Western civilization is one of many ways human beings have learned to organize their relationships. It has produced instruments of inquiry, law, art, and cooperation that deserve gratitude and continued use. It has also produced powerful arguments for arrangements that excluded people from the benefits it praised. Neither fact cancels the other.

The difficulty begins when an inheritance is made to answer a question it cannot settle: who is entitled to direct the future of everyone else? Achievement can establish that a practice works under particular conditions. It can give others reason to learn from it. It does not make the people associated with the achievement omniscient, or remove the need for consent when their decisions reach beyond themselves.

Our journey through Mycenae, Miletus, and Athens has already made a single, clean origin difficult to maintain. The past is deeper than the place where a familiar story begins. The Greek inheritance itself contains different answers to questions of authority and knowledge. To call that inheritance ours should make us more willing to inquire, not less.

The Canadian chapters have brought the same problem home. A people can possess a relationship to land before a court recognizes it. A

language can carry knowledge before an institution decides to fund it. A practice can organize obligations without first being translated into the categories through which I learned to understand responsibility.

That does not make every claim true. It does make my unfamiliarity a poor reason for deciding that there is nothing to learn.

Another text at the table

A brief encounter with the *Analects* can make the point more concrete. In the collection of teachings associated with Confucius, the cultivation of conduct is inseparable from relationships and the exercise of authority. One passage contrasts governing through punishments with leading through virtue and appropriate conduct; another offers reciprocity as a guide to life.¹⁴⁶

The questions are substantial. What kind of person does a political arrangement encourage us to become? Does compliance mean that a community has learned to live well, or only that people have learned how to avoid a penalty? How should my treatment of another be affected by what I would refuse for myself?

A reader of Paul may recognize a concern about conduct that exceeds merely satisfying a rule. Recognition is a beginning, not proof that the texts are saying the same thing. The *Analects* has its own relationships, vocabulary, and assumptions. Its attention to family and hierarchy can itself raise difficult questions for readers concerned with freedom and equal standing. We should allow the text to be more than a convenient witness for a conclusion reached elsewhere.

There is a discipline in reading a short passage without making it stand for all of China, all Confucian traditions, or the conduct of a contemporary government. We would object if someone selected one biblical sentence and used it to explain every Christian society. The same restraint belongs in our approach to traditions outside our own.

The text can also put a question to the critic. A society may have strong procedures for exposing misconduct while giving too little attention to the formation of the people who will exercise its

powers. Rules and oversight remain necessary. But the question of character does not disappear because we have designed an appeal process. We still need people able to recognize an obligation before someone compels them to perform it.

Conversely, an appeal to virtuous leadership cannot replace protections against a leader who is mistaken, self-interested, or cruel. That is a question a reader can bring to the text without dismissing the text. An encounter becomes useful when neither side is required to leave its most serious questions outside the room.

We can therefore learn without converting another tradition into an accessory. A thought need not have originated among our ancestors to deserve consideration. It also need not be beyond criticism because it comes from somewhere else. The work is to understand what is being proposed and examine its consequences with the people who live through them.

Difference without immunity

There is a legitimate anxiety about pluralism. If every tradition is one among many, do we lose the ability to condemn violence or coercion? Does respect become a polite word for leaving vulnerable people alone with whoever claims to speak for their culture?

That would betray the argument of this book. Alienation, theft, and unsubscribed dominance do not become harmless when performed under an unfamiliar banner. Cultural difference cannot give an authority permission to make the people subject to it disappear from the account. The person inside a tradition who dissents belongs in the conversation too.

UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity joins its defence of diversity to human rights. Article 4 rejects the use of cultural diversity as a justification for infringing rights, while Article 5 affirms participation in cultural life and expression in one's chosen language.¹⁴⁷ That pairing matters more than a general celebration of difference. It protects the possibility of a culture continuing and the

standing of persons within it.

A public commitment to plurality therefore has at least two directions. It resists the demand that everyone become like the majority. It also resists the demand that every member of a community conform to an official description of that community. People can maintain an inheritance, revise it, combine influences, or leave a practice. The conditions of those choices matter, especially when material dependence makes an apparent choice costly or dangerous.

This makes the work more difficult than choosing between individual freedom and collective continuity as though one must erase the other. A language needs a community of speakers; a speaker needs room to live as a person. An institution needs rules; the people within it need ways to challenge their application. We should investigate the actual tension instead of treating one abstract principle as an answer to every case.

It also means that we should listen beyond the most convenient representative. A government official, a religious leader, a scholar, and a family may describe the same tradition differently. Their positions and responsibilities matter. None should be assumed to contain the whole simply because they speak in a form we find easy to recognize.

Plurality is demanding because it preserves the possibility that the next person we hear will complicate the account. We can neither surrender judgment nor finish the inquiry by classifying the speaker.

What science can and cannot decide for us

The defence of plurality should not become an attack on evidence. If a bridge must carry a load, its performance is not established by the cultural prestige of the engineer. Claims about water, illness, or a machine's operation need methods capable of detecting error. Different accounts may illuminate what to investigate, but contradictory predictions do not become equally reliable merely because they are sincerely held.

At the same time, a measurement does not choose every purpose

for which it will be used. An accurate estimate of a project's output does not tell us who should receive the benefits, which risks people should be required to bear, or whose consent is necessary. Those are questions of relationship and authority as well as knowledge.

A technically successful instrument can therefore serve a badly chosen end. We have encountered that danger throughout the book. The answer is to make the instrument answerable to a fuller inquiry. We need the measurement and the account of what has been left outside it. We need people able to test the model and people able to say that the model has misunderstood what matters.

Imagine a proposal to improve access to a public service through an automated system. This is a hypothetical example. The system reduces average processing time. That is useful evidence. It is not yet a complete assessment if people with unusual circumstances cannot obtain a hearing, or if the institution no longer knows how to explain a refusal. The average can improve while some people become less able to act within the relationship.

The lesson is not to reject automation. It is to retain a way for a person's actual situation to correct the abstraction. A tool should be evaluated in the setting where it operates, including the people who encounter its errors. Technical capacity and human answerability have to develop together.

That applies to this book as well. A persuasive sentence can make an incomplete account feel settled. The reader is entitled to ask for the source, distinguish testimony from interpretation, and identify what the author has not earned. The argument would contradict itself if it demanded an exemption for its own eloquence.

A shared world without a final proprietor

We do not need a single account of ultimate reality before we can cooperate over a watershed, a workplace, or a border. We do need enough shared understanding to make an agreement intelligible and enough confidence in the process to examine what happens when it

fails.

People may arrive at an obligation through different reasons. One may understand care through Christian love, another through obligations to ancestors and descendants, another through a philosophical account of reciprocity, and another through a secular commitment to human dignity. Those descriptions are starting points, not a claim that each tradition can be reduced to one motive. Their adherents may agree on a task while continuing to disagree about its deepest explanation.

Such agreement is neither empty nor total. It can be enough to protect a place, make a school accessible, or establish a fair procedure. The participants need not conceal their convictions. They need to avoid making acceptance of those convictions an unnecessary condition of cooperation.

The alternative is often a demand for prior sameness. We will work together when you understand the world as I do. That demand can postpone every practical obligation indefinitely. It also gives the more powerful party an easy way to call its own preferences universal while describing another's concerns as merely cultural.

A shared world requires limits on that habit. We can ask whether a rule is being applied consistently, whether people affected can question it, and whether its justification survives being heard from the receiving end. We can examine who has the resources to participate and who is being asked to consent under pressure. These questions will not eliminate conflict. They can make conflict less dependent on the ability to impose an outcome.

There will be occasions when cooperation breaks down and protection is necessary. A commitment to plurality does not require leaving people exposed to violence. It requires that protective authority remain bounded by its purpose and open to examination. An emergency should not become a permanent explanation for why some people must never recover a voice.

This is where the earlier warning to America and the later appeal to Canada meet. The creative nation must be able to hear that its

instruments do not authorize universal command. The nation aspiring to heal must be able to hear that it cannot appoint itself physician to the world. Both can offer what they know while recognizing that others will decide what to receive, what to question, and what to make differently.

Western civilization does not lose its worth by taking its place among others. Its achievements become more available when they can travel without a compulsory allegiance attached. Its questions become more fruitful when they can be answered by someone it did not train.

We have not reached the end of inquiry. We have reached a more honest place from which to continue it: a world in which no one tradition has to know everything for its contribution to matter. What remains is to decide how we will make that possibility practical.

Chapter 22

What We Can Make Possible

A possibility with an address

A book can leave its reader with a feeling too large to use. We recognize a problem, agree that the world should be different, and return to a week already full of obligations. The distance between the scale of the argument and the scale of our own authority can make inaction feel inevitable.

We should close that distance carefully. No household can redesign an economy by becoming more considerate. No nation can heal an injury merely because enough of its citizens feel remorse. But institutions are sustained through decisions made at particular places by people with identifiable responsibilities. The work becomes possible when we locate the part of the relationship we can actually change.

A worker may have knowledge that a manager needs to hear. A manager may have discretion over a practice that has become unnecessarily harsh. A congregation may hold records. A council may control a hearing's procedures. A citizen may be able to support a policy whose benefits will reach people beyond their own household. These positions are unequal, and so are their powers. We should begin with an honest account of both.

The first useful question is therefore not whether I can save the country. It is what decision is mine, what I know about its consequences, and what would make the people affected more able to participate in shaping it.

Creation that widens the future

To American readers, I want to repeat the hope that brought us through the difficult examination of power: the country's creative capacity can be directed toward a more widely shared abundance. The question is not whether Americans should cease to invent, build, organize, or aspire. It is whether the gains from those activities can increase the practical freedom of the people who make and live with them.

The economic chapter considered law, bargaining, ownership, public investment, and democratic accountability. Those are different tools with different costs. A serious reform has to specify what problem it addresses, how it works, who bears its burdens, and how failure will be detected. Compassion does not remove the need for competent design. Neither should a demand for perfect certainty become a permanent defence of an arrangement that is already producing harm.

I hope America will revise capitalism through lawful discourse and democratic principles, so that its wealth is distributed more broadly and its productive gifts serve a larger common good. That is a political hope, not a prediction. It requires disagreement over means, and it should leave room for evidence to improve or replace a proposed policy.

Redistribution should also be understood broadly enough to reach the conditions under which wealth is created. A society can debate transfers after income is received. It can also examine who owns productive assets, who has bargaining power, who can acquire skills without intolerable insecurity, and who can enter a market that established actors would prefer to control. The question of distribution begins before the final ledger is drawn.

We should want a person who works to have more than permission

to endure. We should want a person who creates something useful to be rewarded without acquiring unlimited authority over those who depend on it. We should want someone who cannot work, or whose work is unpaid care, to retain a secure place in the community. These aims can conflict in their implementation. They are still reasonable aims around which democratic argument can be organized.

The strongest objection deserves a hearing. Excessive or badly designed intervention can discourage useful activity, concentrate discretion, and create new opportunities for capture. That is a reason to scrutinize the design and preserve checks on public power. It does not establish that private concentration is harmless or that existing market rules arrived without political choices. Both public and private authority need an account of whom they serve.

The creative task is therefore institutional as well as technical. Can we design arrangements in which people gain enough security to question those on whom they depend? Can we make prosperity less dependent on another person's inability to refuse? Those are challenges worthy of a nation that values invention.

Healing that changes the arrangement

To Canadian readers, the parallel hope is that we will lead through the work we undertake at home. That work has to reach authority, resources, and the terms of relationship. A reputation for kindness cannot carry it for us.

A useful beginning is to choose a commitment whose fulfilment can be examined. A public body might make a defined set of records accessible through a fair process. A supporting institution might provide stable resources for work directed by the community concerned. A congregation might identify and meet an outstanding obligation. A decision-making body might revise a process so that participation occurs while the outcome can still change.

The specific task should follow from evidence and the people involved. We should not arrive with an attractive project and then

search for someone to receive it. An offer becomes more respectful when it is willing to discover that another priority matters more.

Nor should inward healing become a way to postpone every responsibility beyond our borders. The point is to align our external claims with practices we are willing to examine at home. We can cooperate internationally while acknowledging that we are still learning. What we should relinquish is the notion that good intentions abroad compensate for an unanswered obligation nearby.

The two national appeals meet here. Creation needs relationships that can receive and direct its possibilities. Healing needs material resources, practical skills, and the ability to make new arrangements. A country that can build but cannot listen will repeatedly create injuries it then struggles to repair. A country that speaks of repair but will not build the conditions for a different life will leave its promises suspended.

Neither capacity belongs exclusively to one nation. The names in this book are invitations to examine particular strengths and failures, not assignments that forbid Canadians to create or Americans to heal. Kinship can become useful when gifts travel without becoming claims to mastery.

A meeting we can imagine differently

Consider one final hypothetical. A community institution plans to introduce a service intended to make people's lives easier. The proposal has a budget and an enthusiastic sponsor. Its designers can explain its advantages. Before approval, the institution makes room for people who are likely to encounter its limitations.

One person identifies a cost the budget has omitted. Another explains that the service assumes a kind of access some users do not have. A third supports the proposal but wants a way to appeal errors. Someone else fears that the change will remove a relationship on which they rely. The sponsor now has a choice. These accounts can be treated as resistance to progress, or as information that changes what

responsible progress would require.

A good process does not promise that every preference will prevail. It records the claims, investigates them, identifies the authority responsible, and explains the decision. Where uncertainty remains, the institution can begin on a limited basis, retain a workable alternative, and schedule a review. Where a right or serious risk is involved, it may need to stop or redesign the proposal before proceeding.

The resulting arrangement may be less dramatic than the original announcement. It may also be more useful. People can see where their knowledge altered the design and where it did not, with reasons they can challenge. The institution has acquired a way to learn from the people it serves.

This is an imagined example, but the questions are portable. Who defines the problem? Who chooses the measure of success? Who can identify a harm without being punished for complicating the plan? Who has the authority to correct a failure? The answers reveal whether our language of service reaches the structure of the decision.

A democratic culture needs those questions outside election season as well as within it. Voting is indispensable, but people also encounter power at work, at school, in public services, and through organizations that shape their choices. The ability to be heard in those settings affects what political freedom can mean in an ordinary life.

Discourse that remains lawful and alive

Lawful discourse must leave room for forceful criticism. A public argument can be uncomfortable, angry, or deeply unwelcome without ceasing to deserve a hearing. We should not make civility a condition applied chiefly to those who have had the least success obtaining a response.

At the same time, disagreement cannot remain fruitful if threats and humiliation become its ordinary instruments. The point is to make claims answerable to evidence and reasons. We should be able to identify a false statement without declaring its speaker incapable

of ever learning, and identify a harmful policy without making every person who supported it an enemy beyond conversation.

There are limits. Some people will use an invitation to dialogue to delay accountability or continue abuse. A commitment to hearing does not require indefinite exposure to that conduct. Boundaries, enforcement, and independent adjudication can protect the conditions under which discussion remains possible. Their legitimacy depends on their purpose and application, not simply on the fact that an authority has invoked them.

We also need room for a person to revise a position without treating the revision as proof of weakness. If every admission of error becomes a permanent weapon, public life rewards people for never admitting anything. The ability to correct course is one of the capacities we should want most in those who govern, teach, build, and speak on our behalf.

The same generosity must be joined to memory. An apology cannot erase the evidence needed to understand what occurred. A change of position does not remove an outstanding obligation. We can welcome movement while still asking what remains to be done.

The next generation's evidence

The future will not receive our intentions directly. It will receive institutions, landscapes, records, debts, opportunities, and relationships. Our explanations may be among the records. They will not be the whole evidence.

That thought gives a practical meaning to hope. Hope can be an undertaking to leave better conditions for people we will never meet. It does not require confidence that history will vindicate every decision. It requires enough humility to leave them the means to examine and correct what we have done.

We can preserve the sources behind a public claim. We can make an agreement readable. We can limit a power to its purpose. We can distribute the ability to question a decision. We can support learning

without requiring that the next generation repeat our conclusions. These are ways of giving the future more than a demand for gratitude.

The work will contain failure. Some proposals will disappoint. Some agreements will break down. Some of what we sincerely believe will prove incomplete. A society's moral capacity includes how it responds when those facts become clear. Does it make the evidence available, repair what it can, and alter the arrangement? Or does it make loyalty depend on protecting the original story?

The heart of this book is a hope that love can bear the first response. Love of country, love of neighbour, and love of the traditions that formed us can include a willingness to be changed by what we learn. That willingness is not limitless submission. It is an active commitment to remain answerable to the lives our choices touch.

America can create with others. Canada can heal with others. The world can receive what is useful from both without becoming either. Those possibilities are not guaranteed by our names, our constitutions, or our prayers. They become more real through the next decisions we make.

The History We Will Leave

The writing of future healing is in the reading of our history.

I return to that sentence with more questions than it first seemed to contain. Who is doing the reading? Whose account has been kept? Who can correct the record? What changes when we discover that the familiar story has left someone outside it?

History does not write the future for us. It gives us a more demanding place from which to choose. We can recognize a pattern without declaring it inevitable. We can acknowledge an inheritance without making it either a permanent accusation or a permanent excuse. We can learn what a promise has meant to the person who relied on it and then decide whether to make that promise more dependable.

The countries named on the cover remain places of affection. That was not something the inquiry had to destroy. It was something the inquiry had to make more capable of truth. A love that can survive correction may become less theatrical, but it can also become more useful to the people who depend on it.

I think again of the child in Abbotsford who understood that he had to be honest about the bad things he did before inviting God into his heart. I do not offer that childhood understanding as a complete theology. I remember its simplicity. There was something to admit, an invitation to make, and a life that would continue afterward.

The adult task is harder because we have learned so many ways to preserve our preferred account. We can explain why an injury was necessary, why a benefit proves our merit, why an objection comes from the wrong person, or why someone else should begin. We can make a

complicated defence out of a simple unwillingness to be changed.

Yet we have also acquired capacities the child did not have. We can read records, examine institutions, distinguish different kinds of responsibility, and cooperate over work too large for one person. We can make repair more durable than a moment of feeling. Maturity need not mean abandoning the child's willingness to be honest. It can mean giving that willingness better tools.

The mustard seed offers an image for the beginning. In Matthew's telling, a small seed grows into a plant in whose branches birds find room.¹⁴⁸ I do not want to turn the image into a guarantee that our preferred project will flourish. I hear in it a way to take a beginning seriously without mistaking its smallness for its final measure.

The seed we have been considering is a willingness to remain answerable. It appears when we allow another person's situation to enter our decision as something capable of changing it. It grows through practices that give that attention continuity: an agreement honoured, a source preserved, an error admitted, a power limited to the purpose for which it was entrusted.

Some of that work will be public. Some will be difficult to see from outside. A person may change how they chair a meeting, teach a history, respond to a complaint, or distribute the rewards of a shared effort. None of those actions alone is the healing of a nation. Each can alter a relationship through which the nation is lived.

We should resist the wish to make every beginning evidence of our goodness. The people affected are entitled to evaluate it differently. A proposal may need revision. An apology may leave an obligation unanswered. A new process may discover that it has excluded someone it meant to include. The capacity to receive that answer is part of the work, not an interruption of it.

America's creative gifts remain worth wanting. A future with less imagination, less courage to build, and less capacity to solve practical problems would be poorer. What needs examination is the conversion of those gifts into a right to mastery. The world can benefit from what Americans make without consenting to become the material of

an American design.

Canada's hope of healing also remains worth wanting. We can make the country more honest about the histories through which our lives meet. We can build agreements in which another people's authority is not treated as a temporary obstacle. We can support the conditions under which a language, a family, and a community carry their own future. We will have to accept that this work may change the Canada we thought we were defending.

Neither country needs to become the other's opposite. We are neighbours with different institutions and histories, with kinship that does not erase a border and responsibilities that do not stop at one. We can refuse domination without refusing affection. We can learn from an achievement without subscribing to every claim made by its author.

The same possibility extends beyond us. Western civilization can recognize the value of its inheritance while receiving itself as one participant in a much larger human conversation. That recognition need not produce paralysis or indifference. It can make inquiry more serious. We will have more people to hear, more assumptions to test, and more possibilities from which to learn.

There is grief in the history we have read that no conclusion can settle. The book should not make it disappear in order to leave the reader uplifted. Some losses remain losses. Some people will never receive the answer they deserved. Hope has to be honest enough to live beside that fact.

There is also life that exceeds the injury. The people whose voices we have encountered are not merely evidence of what went wrong. They have relationships, knowledge, humour, purposes, and futures that do not belong to this argument. To respect them is partly to remember that the book ends while their lives continue.

Our own lives continue too. The next week will contain familiar duties. There will be bills, work, family, ordinary fatigue, and decisions that seem too small to carry a philosophy. We need not inflate every one of them. We can begin by noticing a place where our comfort

has depended on not asking, or where our authority has become less answerable than its purpose requires.

Then we can do the next honest thing available. Read the account we have avoided. Ask whose decision it is. Correct the statement we can no longer defend. Make the promise specific enough to be kept. Accept a boundary. Offer an agreement that can genuinely be refused. Support work whose direction we do not own.

The future will have its own language for what we leave. It may understand some of our failures more clearly than we do. We can at least leave it the evidence and the freedom to do so. We can give the people who come after us something better than a demand that they defend our reputation.

I began with gratitude for a life whose time and place I did not choose. I end with responsibility for the part of that life I can now direct. Between those two is room for love: love of the people who formed us, love of the neighbour who unsettles us, and love expressed through a willingness to make a different future together.

The story goes deeper than we remember. Our part in it is still being written.

Author's Note

I write from Matsqui territory in Abbotsford, British Columbia, as a Canadian of English, Irish, and Italian ancestry. The personal passages in this book describe my own recollections and the standpoint from which I ask its questions. They are not a claim to speak for the peoples whose territories my family history crosses.

This is a philosophical inquiry addressed particularly to Christians in Canada and the United States whose reading has been shaped by Paul. It is not a comprehensive history of either country, a survey of every tradition discussed, or a statement that all Christians hold the same beliefs. The national vocations proposed here are hopes about responsibilities we might undertake. They are not findings that a nation was divinely commissioned to direct others.

The endnotes distinguish historical sources, attributed testimony, and my own interpretation. Ancient works are identified by passages as well as titles. Where a source reports an event from a particular perspective, that perspective remains part of the account. A comparison between two texts or institutions is not, by itself, evidence of a causal connection between them.

My discussion of *Lha yudit'ih—We Always Find a Way* uses the book's verified identifying information and particular photographed passages made available during drafting. It does not claim a complete independent review of its oral histories. Two supplied photographs do not show page numbers; the notes identify the speakers and section titles instead of supplying numbers that could not be checked. Readers should turn to the book itself for the fuller accounts. The people who

speak there retain purposes and authority beyond the use I have made of their words.

Some examples in the final chapters are explicitly hypothetical. They are ways of examining a proposed principle, not reports of interviews, research findings, or events that I witnessed. Program descriptions establish the existence and design of practices; they are not treated as proof that every stated goal has been achieved.

Artificial intelligence assisted the research workflow, drafting, editing, and preparation of this manuscript. I supplied its direction, personal testimony, and editorial decisions. I retain creative authority and responsibility for what is eventually published. This first complete draft remains subject to my review, further source checking where identified, and revision. AI assistance does not turn an unverified statement into evidence.

I hope readers will use the notes to question the argument as well as follow it. A correction may change more than a sentence. If the inquiry asks institutions to remain answerable, the book must accept the same demand.

Notes

¹National Archives. *Declaration of Independence: A Transcription*. Transcription of the Stone Engraving; original document dated July 4, 1776. URL: <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript> (visited on 10/18/2026), paragraph beginning “We hold these truths”; Department of Justice Canada. *The Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982*. Consolidated text; citations in this manuscript identify provisions of the Constitution Act, 1982. URL: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-12.html> (visited on 10/18/2026), Part I, section 15(1). The comparison concerns their stated principles, not an equivalence of constitutional status.

²National Archives, *Declaration of Independence: A Transcription*, paragraph beginning “We hold these truths” and grievance beginning “He has excited domestic insurrections”.

³Chief Roger William, “Healing,” in Lorraine Weir. *Lha yudit’ih We Always Find a Way. Bringing the Tsilhqot’in Title Case Home*. With Chief Roger William. Talonbooks, 2023. ISBN: 9781772013825. URL: <https://talonbooks.com/books/lha-yudit-ih-we-always-find-a-way> (visited on 10/18/2026), pp. 56–59, especially pp. 57–58.

⁴Department of Justice Canada, *The Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982*, Part II, section 35(1)–(2).

⁵*World English Bible Classic*. Public-domain English translation; quotations checked against the Classic text at ebible.org/eng-web. Scripture locators give book, chapter and verse. eBible.org. URL: <https://ebible.org/bible/details.php?id=eng-web> (visited on 10/18/2026). Scripture quotations in this chapter use the public-domain World English Bible Classic. Book, chapter and verse locators identify the passages; the applications to contemporary national life are the author’s interpretations.

⁶*World English Bible Classic*, Luke 10:25–29.

⁷*World English Bible Classic*, Luke 10:30–37.

⁸*World English Bible Classic*, Mark 10:35–45.

⁹*World English Bible Classic*, Mark 10:46–52.

¹⁰*World English Bible Classic*, Mark 10:17–27.

¹¹ *World English Bible Classic*, Luke 19:1–10. The cited translation renders Zacchaeus’s declaration in the present tense. This reading does not depend on resolving whether he announces a new practice or defends an existing one.

¹² *World English Bible Classic*, Matthew 5:43–48.

¹³ *World English Bible Classic*, Matthew 5:38–42.

¹⁴ *World English Bible Classic*, Matthew 22:15–22.

¹⁵ *World English Bible Classic*, Matthew 15:21–28.

¹⁶ *World English Bible Classic*, Luke 19:11–27.

¹⁷ *World English Bible Classic*, Matthew 25:31–46.

¹⁸ *World English Bible Classic*, Matthew 7:1–5.

¹⁹ *World English Bible Classic*, Matthew 7:15–23.

²⁰ *World English Bible Classic*, Acts 17:16–34. This identifies Paul’s role in the narrative of Acts; it does not establish that no earlier follower of Jesus had visited Athens.

²¹ Jeffrey Spitzer. *Babylonian Exile*. My Jewish Learning. URL: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/babylonian-exile/> (visited on 10/18/2026); *World English Bible Classic*, 2 Kings 25:8–21. Spitzer gives 586 BCE; the biblical passage supplies the narrative of destruction and deportation.

²² *World English Bible Classic*, Philippians 3:4–11.

²³ *World English Bible Classic*, Acts 22:1–5.

²⁴ *World English Bible Classic*, Acts 22:17.

²⁵ *World English Bible Classic*, Acts 22:24–29.

²⁶ *World English Bible Classic*, Acts 17:16–22.

²⁷ *World English Bible Classic*, Acts 17:22–34.

²⁸ *World English Bible Classic*, Galatians 1:13–16, 22–24.

²⁹ *World English Bible Classic*, 1 Corinthians 11:17–22, 33–34.

³⁰ *World English Bible Classic*, 1 Corinthians 12:12–27.

³¹ *World English Bible Classic*, 1 Corinthians 12:28–13:3.

³² *World English Bible Classic*, 1 Corinthians 13:4–13.

³³ *World English Bible Classic*, Galatians 5:1–15.

³⁴ *World English Bible Classic*, Galatians 3:26–29.

³⁵ *World English Bible Classic*, Philemon 8–19.

³⁶ *World English Bible Classic*, Philemon 19–21.

³⁷ *World English Bible Classic*, Romans 13:1–7.

³⁸ *World English Bible Classic*, Romans 12:1–3, 9–21, 13:8–10.

³⁹ Chief Roger William, “Healing,” in Weir, *Lha yudit’ih We Always Find a Way*, pp. 57–59.

⁴⁰ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. *Archaeological Sites of Mycenae and Tiryns*. URL: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/941> (visited on 10/19/2026), description and Statement of Outstanding Universal Value. Dates refer to the broader civilization, not to the construction of every surviving monument.

⁴¹ Colette Hemingway and Seán Hemingway. *Mycenaean Civilization*. The

Metropolitan Museum of Art. Oct. 1, 2003. URL: <https://www.metmuseum.org/essays/mycenaean-civilization> (visited on 10/19/2026), paragraphs on Minoan influence, commerce, crafts and engineering.

⁴²Martin Finné et al. “Late Bronze Age climate change and the destruction of the Mycenaean Palace of Nestor at Pylos”. In: *PLOS ONE* 12.12, e0189447 (Dec. 27, 2017). DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0189447. URL: <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0189447> (visited on 10/19/2026), sections 3–4, especially Conclusions. This is evidence concerning Pylos and its region, not a direct finding about the destruction of Mycenae.

⁴³Finné et al., “Late Bronze Age climate change and the destruction of the Mycenaean Palace of Nestor at Pylos”, section 4.

⁴⁴Patricia Curd. *Presocratic Philosophy*. Substantive revision date; first published March 10, 2007. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. June 22, 2020. URL: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/presocratics/> (visited on 10/19/2026), sections 1–2.

⁴⁵Aristotle. *Metaphysics, Book I*. trans. by W. D. Ross. Ancient work in English translation; locators use chapter and Bekker numbers. The Internet Classics Archive. URL: <https://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.1.i.html> (visited on 10/19/2026), book I, chapter 3, 983b6–984a8.

⁴⁶Curd, *Presocratic Philosophy*, section 2, discussion of DK12B1 and DK13A5.

⁴⁷Herodotus. *Histories, Book II, Chapters 99–182*. English Loeb Classical Library text reproduced online; section 109 consulted. LacusCurtius. URL: https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Herodotus/2B*.html (visited on 10/19/2026), book II, section 109.

⁴⁸Curd, *Presocratic Philosophy*, section 2, discussion of DK11A22.

⁴⁹Plato. *Apology*. Trans. by Benjamin Jowett. Ancient work in English translation; locators use Stephanus numbers. The Internet Classics Archive. URL: <https://classics.mit.edu/Plato/apology.html> (visited on 10/19/2026), 21b–22e. The account is Plato’s presentation of Socrates’ defence, not a verbatim court transcript.

⁵⁰Thucydides. *The History of the Peloponnesian War, Book V*. trans. by Richard Crawley. Ancient work in English translation; locators use book and section numbers. The Internet Classics Archive. URL: <https://classics.mit.edu/Thucydides/pelopwar.5.fifth.html> (visited on 10/19/2026), book V, sections 84–116, especially 89, 94–95 and 116. The dialogue is Thucydides’ literary presentation of the confrontation; its speeches are not treated here as a recorded transcript.

⁵¹Aristotle. *Politics, Book I*. trans. by Benjamin Jowett. Ancient work in English translation; locators use chapter and Bekker numbers. The Internet Classics Archive. URL: <https://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.1.one.html> (visited on 10/19/2026), book I, chapters 3–6, especially 1253b–1255b.

⁵²*World English Bible Classic*, Acts 22:3, 22:25–29.

⁵³Strabo. *Geography, Book XIV, Chapter 5*. English Loeb Classical Library

text reproduced online; sections 13–15 consulted. LacusCurtius. URL: https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Strabo/14E*.html (visited on 10/19/2026), book XIV, chapter 5, sections 13–15.

⁵⁴ *World English Bible Classic*, Philippians 3:4–8.

⁵⁵ *World English Bible Classic*, Acts 17:16–34, especially 17:18 and 17:28.

⁵⁶ *World English Bible Classic*, Acts 17:30–34.

⁵⁷ Bernard of Clairvaux. *In Praise of the New Knighthood*. Trans. by Conrad Greenia. Online excerpt from Bernard of Clairvaux: Treatises Three, Cistercian Fathers Series 19 (1977), pp. 127–145; prologue and chapters 1–5; cited here by chapter. Internet Medieval Sourcebook, Fordham University. URL: <https://sourcebooks.web.fordham.edu/source/Bernard-praiseofnewknighthood.asp> (visited on 10/19/2026), prologue and chapters 1–2.

⁵⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, chapter 3. This is an analysis of Bernard’s exhortation, not evidence that every Templar acted alike or that every campaign met his stated conditions.

⁵⁹ Compare Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, chapter 3 with *World English Bible Classic*, Romans 13:1–4.

⁶⁰ *World English Bible Classic*, Romans 12:17–21.

⁶¹ Tertullian. *De Corona (On the Crown)*. Trans. by S. Thelwall. Translation from Ante-Nicene Fathers, volume 3 (1885), revised and edited online by Kevin Knight. New Advent. URL: <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0304.htm> (visited on 10/19/2026), chapter 11. Tertullian is an earlier Christian countervoice, not a contemporary opponent of the Templars.

⁶² Francis of Assisi. *The Unconfirmed First Rule of St Francis (1221)*. Trans. by Paul Schwartz and Paul Lachance. Chapter 16; translation credited on the host page to The Birth of a Movement, pp. 63–85. CapDox. URL: <https://www.capdox.capuchin.org.au/legislation/the-unconfirmed-first-rule-of-st-francis/> (visited on 10/19/2026), chapter 16. The chapter’s historical term is “Saracens.” Its instructions are not represented here as a modern declaration of religious pluralism.

⁶³ *World English Bible Classic*, Luke 10:25–37.

⁶⁴ John L. O’Sullivan. *Annexation*. Unsigned editorial conventionally attributed to O’Sullivan; United States Magazine and Democratic Review 17, no. 85 (July/August 1845), pp. 5–10. Online transcription is excerpted; locators identify paragraph openings. Teaching American History. 1845. URL: <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/annexation/> (visited on 10/19/2026), paragraph beginning “Why, were other reasoning wanting”. The editorial was unsigned; the conventional attribution is retained with that qualification.

⁶⁵ O’Sullivan, *Annexation*, California paragraphs beginning “Already the advance guard” and “And they will have a right”.

⁶⁶ John Ross. *Letter to the Senate and House of Representatives, September 28, 1836*. Two-page excerpt transcription, American Indian Removal: What

Does It Mean to Remove a People? Page locators refer to the online excerpt. Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Sept. 28, 1836. URL: <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/removal-six-nations/pdf/cherokee-quote-transcript.pdf> (visited on 10/19/2026), pp. 1–2. This appeal precedes the 1845 editorial and is not presented as a response to it.

⁶⁷O'Sullivan, *Annexation*, paragraphs beginning “Nor is there any just foundation” through “Themselves already”.

⁶⁸Henry David Thoreau. *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*. Electronic text, ebook 71; essay first published in 1849 as Resistance to Civil Government. Locators identify paragraph openings. Project Gutenberg. URL: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/71/71-h/71-h.htm> (visited on 10/19/2026), paragraphs beginning “How does it become a man” and “Practically speaking”. The essay was first published in 1849 as “Resistance to Civil Government.”

⁶⁹United States and Mexico. *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo*. Treaty transcription; locators identify articles. National Archives. Feb. 2, 1848. URL: <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/treaty-of-guadalupe-hidalgo> (visited on 10/19/2026), articles V, VIII and IX. This citation identifies the treaty's provisions, not proof that their protections were fully honoured in practice.

⁷⁰Channel McGilchrist. *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*. Author's official book overview; consulted for the stated two-part scope and hemisphere framework, not as an independent evaluation of the thesis. URL: <https://channelmcgilchrist.com/master-and-his-emissary/> (visited on 10/19/2026), book title and description of the two-part argument.

⁷¹Channel McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*, description of hemisphere differences and the master/emissary relationship. These sentences summarize his framework rather than treating it as an exhaustive account of brain function.

⁷²Iain McGilchrist. *The Master and His Emissary: Introduction*. Author-hosted 22-page PDF containing contents and a retrospective introduction. Printed and PDF page numbers are supplied in chapter endnotes; this is not a citation to an unexamined full edition. Channel McGilchrist. URL: https://channelmcgilchrist.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/The_Master_and_his_Emissary_by_McGilchrist.pdf (visited on 10/19/2026), contents, PDF p. 1, introduction, printed pp. 6–7, PDF pp. 9–10. The contents establish the itinerary; the introduction explains the scope and limits of the historical hypothesis.

⁷³Channel McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*, description of the cultural journey from ancient thinkers and artists to the modern world. The phrase about a path out of Athens is this book's description of the connection, not a quotation from McGilchrist.

⁷⁴McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary: Introduction*, introduction, printed pp. 6–7 and 14–17, PDF pp. 9–10 and 17–20. This is his cultural hypothesis, not a

neurological diagnosis of a nation.

⁷⁵McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary: Introduction*, introduction, printed pp. 16–17, PDF pp. 19–20.

⁷⁶Dwight D. Eisenhower. *Farewell Address*. National Archives transcript; locators identify paragraph openings. National Archives. Jan. 17, 1961. URL: <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/president-dwight-d-eisenhowers-farewell-address> (visited on 10/19/2026), transcript, paragraphs beginning “A vital element” through “We must never let”.

⁷⁷Eisenhower, *Farewell Address*, transcript, paragraphs beginning “Down the long lane” and “Such a confederation”.

⁷⁸National Archives. *Executive Order 9066: Resulting in Japanese-American Incarceration (1942)*. Historical introduction and transcription of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s order dated February 19, 1942. URL: <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/executive-order-9066> (visited on 10/19/2026), historical introduction and transcript, opening authorization.

⁷⁹National Archives. *National Archives Commemorates the 25th Anniversary of the Civil Liberties Act*. Institutional account of the 1988 act; distinguished from the act’s full statutory text. 2013. URL: <https://www.archives.gov/press/press-releases/2013/nr13-118.html> (visited on 10/19/2026), paragraph beginning “Forty-six years later”.

⁸⁰*World English Bible Classic*, 1 Corinthians 12:12–26.

⁸¹Sarah A. Loff. *Apollo 11 Mission Overview*. NASA. Apr. 17, 2015. URL: <https://www.nasa.gov/history/apollo-11-mission-overview/> (visited on 10/19/2026), Mission Objective, Mission Highlights.

⁸²Fannie Lou Hamer. *Remarks of Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer from the Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention Credentials Committee*. Transcript from the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Collection LBJ-DNC, Records of the Democratic National Committee, DNC Papers Series 2, Organizational, Research, and Campaign Records, 1960–1968. DocsTeach, National Archives Foundation. Aug. 22, 1964. URL: <https://docsteach.org/document/hamer-dnc/> (visited on 10/19/2026), transcript: registration attempt, plantation owner’s ultimatum, Winona imprisonment, and closing question. The quotation reproduces the opening words of her longer question.

⁸³Marco Rubio. *In Defense of Western Civilization*. Published remarks on the State Department’s Substack account; locators describe the relevant paragraphs. Published text consulted; no separate audiovisual collation claimed. U.S. Department of State. Oct. 7, 2026. URL: <https://statedept.substack.com/p/in-defense-of-western-civilization> (visited on 10/19/2026), title, date, and attributed author; Voice of America Editorials. *Reclaiming the Roots of Western Civilization*. U.S. government editorial; photograph caption consulted for event date and Pnyx location, not as independent evaluation of the speech’s claims. Oct. 9, 2026. URL: <https://editorials.voa.gov/amp/reclaiming-the-roots->

of-western-civilization/8209698.html (visited on 10/19/2026), photograph caption identifying the Pnyx and October 7 address. This chapter examines the published remarks, not a separately verified audiovisual transcript.

⁸⁴Rubio, *In Defense of Western Civilization*, passages on Western confidence, national power, diplomacy, transatlantic cooperation, and the purpose of alliances. These are the speaker's claims and priorities; this note does not independently establish each diagnosis.

⁸⁵Rubio, *In Defense of Western Civilization*, paragraph setting out the crossroads and the choice for the next decade. Both short quotations are from that paragraph.

⁸⁶Curd, *Presocratic Philosophy*, sections 1–2, especially the accounts of Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes. The political implications drawn here are the author's interpretation, not a claim that the Milesians proposed modern democratic institutions.

⁸⁷UNESCO World Heritage Centre, *Archaeological Sites of Mycenae and Tiryns*, Description and Statement of Outstanding Universal Value; Hemingway and Hemingway, *Mycenaean Civilization*, discussion of Minoan influence and Mediterranean commerce. See Chapter 6 for the bounded historical argument.

⁸⁸Rubio, *In Defense of Western Civilization*, paragraph connecting the American frontier with a continental empire. The quoted phrase is the speaker's description, not this manuscript's account of an uninhabited continent.

⁸⁹Ross, *Letter to the Senate and House of Representatives, September 28, 1836*, 1836 letter protesting the removal treaty and its claimed authority. The historical case is developed in Chapter 10; the comparison here concerns whose agency an expansion narrative makes visible.

⁹⁰*World English Bible Classic*, Matthew 20:20–28. This is a contextual reading of Jesus' response to the request for places of honour, not a complete theory of modern foreign policy.

⁹¹*World English Bible Classic*, 1 Corinthians 12:14–26. Paul addresses a community of believers; the national application is an analogy whose relevance must be argued.

⁹²*World English Bible Classic*, Ezekiel 33:1–6. The trumpet supplies an image for public warning; the author makes no claim to Ezekiel's prophetic commission or divine knowledge of contemporary events.

⁹³Emma Lazarus. *The New Colossus*. Original poem date; National Park Service transcription, updated April 9, 2026. Locators give poem lines. National Park Service. Nov. 2, 1883. URL: <https://home.nps.gov/stli/learn/historyculture/colossus.htm> (visited on 10/19/2026), lines 1–6. The slash marks a line break in the poem.

⁹⁴National Park Service. *Emma Lazarus*. Date identifies the page's stated last update. Feb. 25, 2025. URL: <https://home.nps.gov/stli/learn/historyculture/emma-lazarus.htm> (visited on 10/19/2026), paragraphs on Ward's Island, the 1883 fundraiser, and the 1903 plaque.

⁹⁵ *World English Bible Classic*, Exodus 32:1–6. The chapter’s later violence is not a model for political purification; this reading concerns the attribution of saving authority to a fashioned object.

⁹⁶ *World English Bible Classic*, Matthew 6:19–24. The passage concerns treasure, attention, and service; it is not a statement that every financial transaction is evil.

⁹⁷ *World English Bible Classic*, Mark 11:15–18. Jesus invokes Jewish prophetic scripture, including Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11. The passage does not establish a particular fraudulent exchange rate or authorize violence against contemporary financial institutions.

⁹⁸ *World English Bible Classic*, Luke 19:1–10, especially verses 8–9. The argument here concerns the distinction between giving and restitution in Zacchaeus’s statement; it does not depend on resolving whether his present-tense words describe an existing practice or a new undertaking.

⁹⁹ Federal Election Commission. *Citizens United v. FEC*. Institutional case summary of the Supreme Court decision of January 21, 2010; distinguished from a complete account of later campaign-finance law. URL: <https://www.fec.gov/legal-resources/court-cases/citizens-united-v-fec/> (visited on 10/19/2026), Summary, Supreme Court decision. Independent spending and direct candidate contributions are distinct categories. This paragraph summarizes the decision, not every subsequent development in campaign-finance law.

¹⁰⁰ Congressional Budget Office. *The Distribution of Household Income in 2021*. Historical 2021 distribution; income before means-tested transfers and federal taxes includes social insurance benefits. Sept. 2024. URL: <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/60706> (visited on 10/19/2026), opening overview, Transfers and Taxes Produced a More Even Distribution of Income, Notes About This Report. The comparison concerns household income, not wealth. Income before the specified transfers and taxes already includes social insurance benefits.

¹⁰¹ Congressional Budget Office, *The Distribution of Household Income in 2021*, At a Glance, Notes About This Report, Overview of Effects of Transfers and Taxes on Household Income. The 2021 figures are a historical illustration, not a statement of the current distribution or the newest available estimates.

¹⁰² National Labor Relations Board. *National Labor Relations Act*. Statutory text as reproduced by the NLRB; sections 2, 7 and 8(d) consulted. Coverage limits and the distinction between bargaining and compulsory concession are retained. URL: <https://www.nlrb.gov/guidance/key-reference-materials/national-labor-relations-act> (visited on 10/19/2026), sections 7 and 8(d), coverage and definitions in section 2. The Act’s coverage is limited; this is not a claim that every worker falls within it or advice about an individual dispute.

¹⁰³ U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division. *The Antitrust Laws*. Date identifies the page’s stated update; institutional explanation, not a judgment about any particular company. Dec. 20, 2023. URL: <https://www.justice.gov/atr/antitrust-laws-and-you> (visited on 10/19/2026), The Sherman Antitrust Act,

The Clayton Act. This summary distinguishes competitive success from unlawful conduct; it does not judge a particular company or transaction.

¹⁰⁴ *World English Bible Classic*, 2 Corinthians 8:8–15. This is an appeal among early Christian communities, not a tax statute or a direct blueprint for a modern welfare state.

¹⁰⁵ Weir, *Lha yudit'ih We Always Find a Way*. The title and subtitle are also confirmed on Lorraine Weir's author website, <https://www.lorraineweir.net/lha-yuditih>, consulted October 19, 2026.

¹⁰⁶ Talonbooks. *Lha yudit'ih We Always Find a Way*. Publisher's book description and contributor profiles; credits Lorraine Weir with Chief Roger William. URL: <https://talonbooks.com/books/lha-yudit-ih-we-always-find-a-way> (visited on 10/19/2026), book description and contributor profiles.

¹⁰⁷ Government of British Columbia. *Tsilhqot'in Nation, B.C. strengthen relationship*. Quick Fact supplies the introductory English pronunciation aid Tsill-COAT-teen; cited only for that aid. Sept. 26, 2022. URL: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022PREM0059-001448> (visited on 10/19/2026), Quick Fact. This published English respelling is an introductory aid, not a substitute for learning the sounds from Tsilhqot'in speakers. It gives the nation's name, not the pronunciation of the title phrase *Lha yudit'ih*.

¹⁰⁸ Yukon Legislative Assembly. *Info Sheet 7: Differences between Provinces and Territories*. Page 2 consulted for the development of responsible territorial government. Sept. 1, 2021. URL: <https://yukonassembly.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Info-Sheet-7-Differences-Provinces-Territories.pdf> (visited on 10/19/2026), p. 2, Responsible Government in Yukon. Territorial status does not mean the absence of local government. Yukon's system and powers developed over time; the distinction here is between a territory and a province.

¹⁰⁹ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Canada's Residential Schools: The Legacy*. Vol. 5. The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Introduction consulted; printed and PDF page locators distinguished. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015. URL: https://nctr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Volume_5_Legacy_English_Web.pdf (visited on 10/19/2026), Introduction, printed pp. 3–4, PDF pp. 10–11. This source supports the broader intergenerational context, not a diagnosis of the causes of a particular childhood encounter.

¹¹⁰ Tsilhqot'in National Government. *Tsilhqot'in Fisheries*. URL: <https://tsilhqotin.ca/our-territory/fisheries/> (visited on 10/19/2026), opening description of the territory and its three major salmon-bearing watersheds.

¹¹¹ City of Quesnel. *Recognizing First Nations Culture and History*. Municipal statement identifying Quesnel's location on Lhtako Dene territory; relevant passage retrieved through the indexed page. URL: <https://www.quesnel.ca/our-community/news-notice/news-releases/recognizing-first-nations-culture-and-history> (visited on 10/19/2026), discussion of the city's location on traditional

and unceded Lhtako territory.

¹¹²British Columbia Assembly of First Nations. *Matsqui*. URL: <https://www.bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc/lower-mainland-southwest/matsqui> (visited on 10/19/2026), Community Description. This identifies the Matsqui context; it does not make the territories of the region's distinct First Nations interchangeable or equate municipal boundaries with Indigenous territory.

¹¹³Mennonite Church Canada Archives. *West Abbotsford Mennonite Church Fonds*. Historical note on settlement in the late 1920s and early 1930s and the congregation's founding in 1936. URL: https://mennonitechurch.ca/programs/archives/holdings/BC/BC_westabbotsford.htm (visited on 10/19/2026), Historical note; Mennonite Heritage Museum. *History: The Mennonite Story*. URL: <https://mennonitemuseum.org/learn/history/> (visited on 10/19/2026), The Mennonite Story; Selma Hooge. "Sixty Years (Plus Ten) of Peace and Plenty". In: *Roots and Branches* 25.1 (Feb. 2019). Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia; opening retrospective on postwar immigration consulted. URL: https://www.mhsbc.com/news/pdf/RB25-1_2019_Feb.pdf (visited on 10/19/2026), Sixty Years (Plus Ten) of Peace and Plenty, opening paragraphs. These sources distinguish prewar settlement from postwar migration rather than assigning one arrival story to every Mennonite family.

¹¹⁴National Archives. *The Constitution: What Does it Say?* URL: <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution/what-does-it-say> (visited on 10/19/2026), discussion of Articles I–III.

¹¹⁵House of Commons of Canada. *The Canadian System of Government: House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Fourth Edition*. URL: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/procedure-and-practice-4/ch01-3-e.html> (visited on 10/19/2026), The Constitution, The Governor General, The Legislature, The Senate.

¹¹⁶Canadian Heritage. *About The Crown*. URL: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/crown-canada/about.html> (visited on 10/19/2026), opening explanation of constitutional monarchy and the Crown's representatives.

¹¹⁷Canadian Heritage. *The Monarch*. URL: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/crown-canada/monarch.html> (visited on 10/19/2026), discussion of the separate Canadian proclamation and the monarch's independent Canadian role.

¹¹⁸The Royal Household. *The Coronation Service: Order of Service*. URL: <https://www.royal.uk/news-and-activity/2023-05-06/the-coronation-service-order-of-service> (visited on 10/19/2026), opening explanation of the service's theme, and description of the anointing.

¹¹⁹Department of Justice Canada, *The Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982*, Part I, section 2(a).

¹²⁰National Archives. *Treaty of Paris (1783)*. URL: <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/treaty-of-paris> (visited on 10/19/2026), historical introduction and Article 1.

¹²¹Government of Canada. *Why, in 1931, Canada Chose Not to Exercise Its Full Autonomy as Provided for under the Statute of Westminster*. URL: <https://www.canada.ca/en/intergovernmental-affairs/services/federation/statute-westminster.html> (visited on 10/19/2026), The Statute of Westminster, 1931, Canada's reservations relating to the Statute of Westminster.

¹²²National Archives, *The Constitution: What Does it Say?*, Articles IV–VII and discussion of the Bill of Rights.

¹²³House of Commons of Canada, *The Canadian System of Government: House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Fourth Edition*, The Constitution.

¹²⁴Commonwealth Secretariat. *About Us*. URL: <https://thecommonwealth.org/about-us> (visited on 10/19/2026), opening definition and Head of the Commonwealth; Commonwealth Secretariat. *Our History*. URL: <https://thecommonwealth.org/history> (visited on 10/19/2026), discussion of India and the London Declaration of 1949.

¹²⁵Department of Justice Canada, *The Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982*, Part II, section 35.

¹²⁶Talonbooks, *Lha yudit'ih We Always Find a Way*, book description and contributor credits.

¹²⁷Government of British Columbia, *Tsilhqot'in Nation, B.C. strengthen relationship*, pronunciation guide for Tsilhqot'in. The approximation is English-language guidance; it does not reproduce all features of the language.

¹²⁸Weir, *Lha yudit'ih We Always Find a Way*, p. 46, Rita Lulua Meldrum, How It All Started. This reading is based on the author-supplied photograph of that page.

¹²⁹Weir, *Lha yudit'ih We Always Find a Way*, Rita Lulua Meldrum, How It All Started, continuation following p. 46. The supplied continuation photograph has no visible page number. The historical events are presented here as Meldrum's attributed family account, alongside her personal testimony; no independent reconstruction of the incident is claimed.

¹³⁰Weir, *Lha yudit'ih We Always Find a Way*, Chief Roger William, Feeding the Fire, Feeding the Ancestors. Section title identifies the supplied photograph; its page number is outside the image. The following section, Healing, is only partially visible and is not reconstructed here.

¹³¹Supreme Court of Canada. *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*, 2014 SCC 44. June 26, 2014. URL: <https://decisions.scc-csc.ca/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/14246/index.do> (visited on 10/19/2026), paragraphs 2, 73–77, 89–90.

¹³²Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. 2015. URL: https://nctr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf (visited on 10/19/2026), Introduction, printed p. 1.

¹³³Department of Justice Canada, *The Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982*, Part II,

section 35(2). The statutory term Indian is reproduced here solely to identify the wording of the provision.

¹³⁴*World English Bible Classic*, Luke 19:1–10, especially verse 8. This is a reading of Luke’s narrative, not a formula for calculating present legal compensation.

¹³⁵Gouvernement du Québec. *Devise du Québec: Je me souviens*. URL: <https://www.quebec.ca/gouvernement/portrait-quebec/drapeau-symboles-nationaux/devise> (visited on 10/19/2026), historical account and Sa signification.

¹³⁶Molson Coors. *Everyone In: Molson’s New Campaign Is a Love Letter to Canada*. URL: <https://www.molsoncoorsblog.com/molson-everyone-in-campaign> (visited on 10/19/2026), retrospective paragraph on the 2000 advertisement. The source establishes the company’s account of its campaign, not a measurement of Canadian public opinion.

¹³⁷Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. 2015. URL: <https://nctr.ca/about/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-of-canada-calls-to-action/> (visited on 10/19/2026), Calls 67, 69–70, 77. These are the Commission’s recommendations, not a claim that each has been completed.

¹³⁸First Peoples’ Cultural Council. *Language Nest Toolkit*. Feb. 1, 2023. URL: <https://fpcc.ca/resource/language-nest-toolkit/> (visited on 10/19/2026), Teaching Tools, Resources for Administrators, Program Planning, Resources for Parents. The toolkit describes support and practice, not a controlled evaluation of outcomes.

¹³⁹Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, Introduction, printed pp. 6–7.

¹⁴⁰United Nations General Assembly. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Sept. 13, 2007. URL: https://justice.canada.ca/eng/declaration/decl_doc.html (visited on 10/19/2026), Articles 18–19 and 32. The Declaration’s provisions are distinguished from the detailed domestic legal tests governing a particular project.

¹⁴¹Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, Calls 59–60.

¹⁴²First Peoples’ Cultural Council. *Language Program*. URL: <https://fpcc.ca/programs/about-our-language-programs/> (visited on 10/19/2026), three language-revitalization strategies.

¹⁴³Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, Calls 13–16.

¹⁴⁴Council of the Haida Nation and Government of Canada. *Gwaii Haanas Land-Sea-People Management Plan 2018*. 2018. URL: <https://parks.canada.ca/pn-np/bc/gwaiihaanas/info/plan/gestion-management-2018> (visited on 10/19/2026), opening message and governance discussion; Council of the Haida Nation. *Gina ’Waadluxan KilGulhGa Management Plan*. 2018. URL: <https://www.>

haidanation.ca/public-notices/gina-waادلuxan-kilgulhga-management-plan (visited on 10/19/2026), announcement of the completed plan. This describes the documented arrangement and purpose, not an independent evaluation of ecological or reconciliation outcomes.

¹⁴⁵Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, Call 61.

¹⁴⁶Confucius. *The Analects of Confucius (from the Chinese Classics)*. Trans. by James Legge. Ebook 3330; nineteenth-century translation. Book and chapter locators follow the digitized Legge edition, whose numbering sometimes differs from modern editions. Project Gutenberg. URL: <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/3330/pg3330-images.html> (visited on 10/19/2026), Book II, chapter III, Book XV, chapter XXIII in Legge's numbering. The chapter numbering follows this edition; the reciprocity passage is often numbered 15.24 elsewhere.

¹⁴⁷UNESCO. *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*. Nov. 2, 2001. URL: <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/unesco-universal-declaration-cultural-diversity?hub=72609> (visited on 10/19/2026), Articles 4–5.

¹⁴⁸*World English Bible Classic*, Matthew 13:31–32. The image here is a reflection on the parable, not a promise that every small initiative will succeed.

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