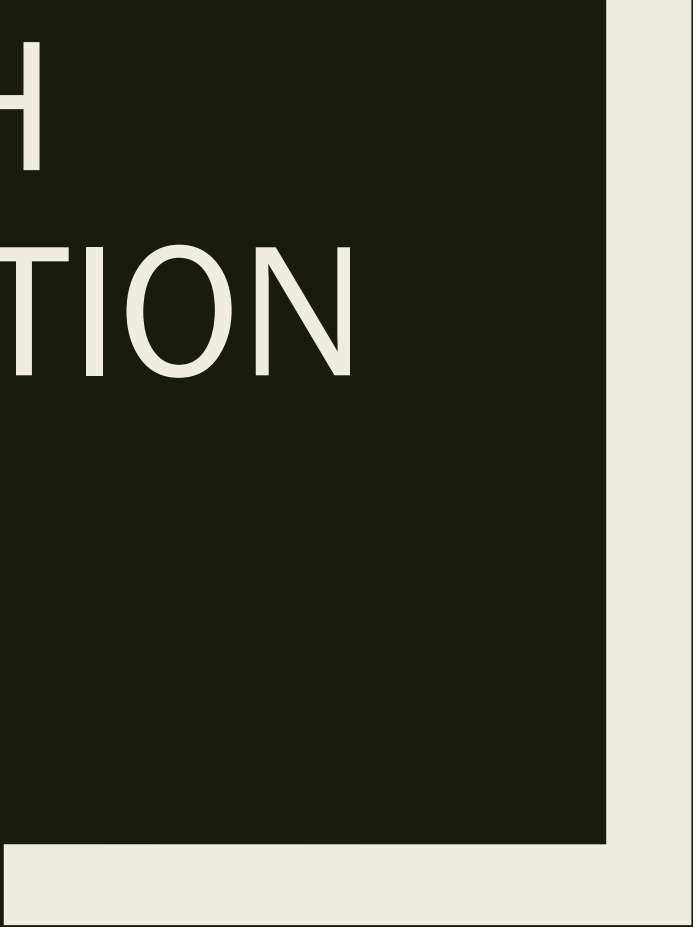


FAITH IMAGINATION



Empowering
Christian
practices for
faith in a
secular age



Charles Taylor: conditions for faith in a secular age

- The God shaped hole is gone
- The spirit filled world is emptied
- Making meaning is down to me

What won't succeed...

- Can't simply add God back in
 - *secularism is not subtraction it's abstraction*
- Transcendence isn't immaterial
 - *More than ever transcendence comes through 'things'*
- Faith isn't 'make belief'
 - *It's about living in the real world*

James K Smith: Desiring and Imagining the Kingdom

- Persons are formed through participation in cultural liturgies – secular and ecclesial
- We ‘carry’ our self-understanding in the world as a form of embodied imagination
- Christian formation is best understood as formation/mis-formation/re-formation

Get out of you head...

The church is trying to counter formation in consumer culture by targeting the head, whereas the target of [consumer culture] is the heart.

Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom* p76

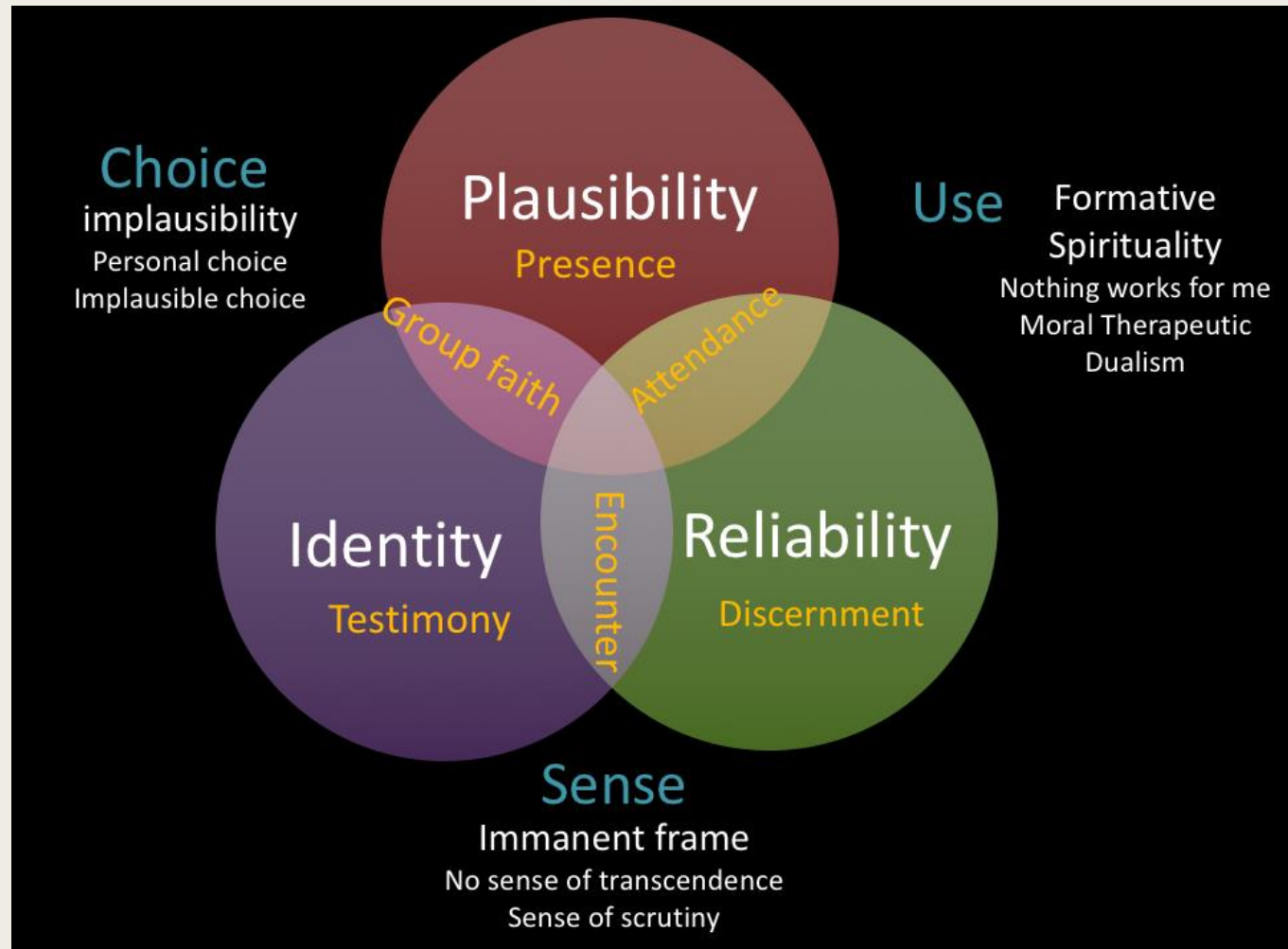




Worship for the world

The [telos] of Christian worship is sending. Having encountered God in word and sacrament, we are transformed and renewed and empowered by the Spirit to take up again the original vocation of humanity to be God's image bearers by cultivating all the possibilities latent in God's creation..

Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom* p5



PRACTICING FAITH IN A SECULAR AGE...

- What's missing from our worship?
- What might be helpful with the young people you engage with?
- What might be different for 'believers and seekers'?

Logic of practice and imagination

- Christian worship has a 'logic of practice'
 - *Carries meaning in its form and structure*
 - *Not about style but form*
- Imagination is formed through participation
 - *Carrying with us ways of seeing*
 - *Not about seeing but stance*

FAITH IMAGINATION:

How the Church can succeed into the future



DET TEOLOGISKE
MENIGHETSAKULTET

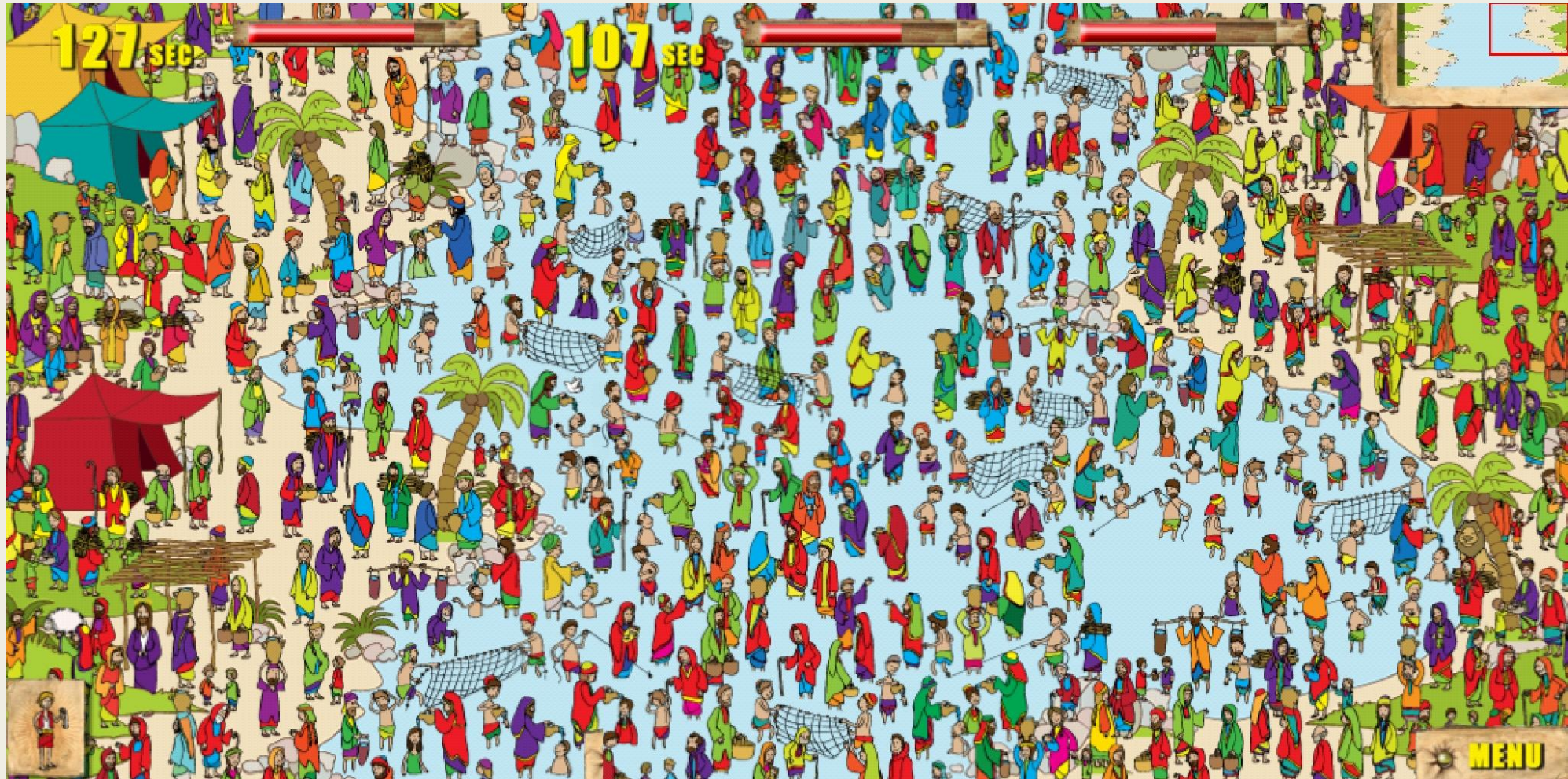


Noregs Kristelige Folkehøgskolelag

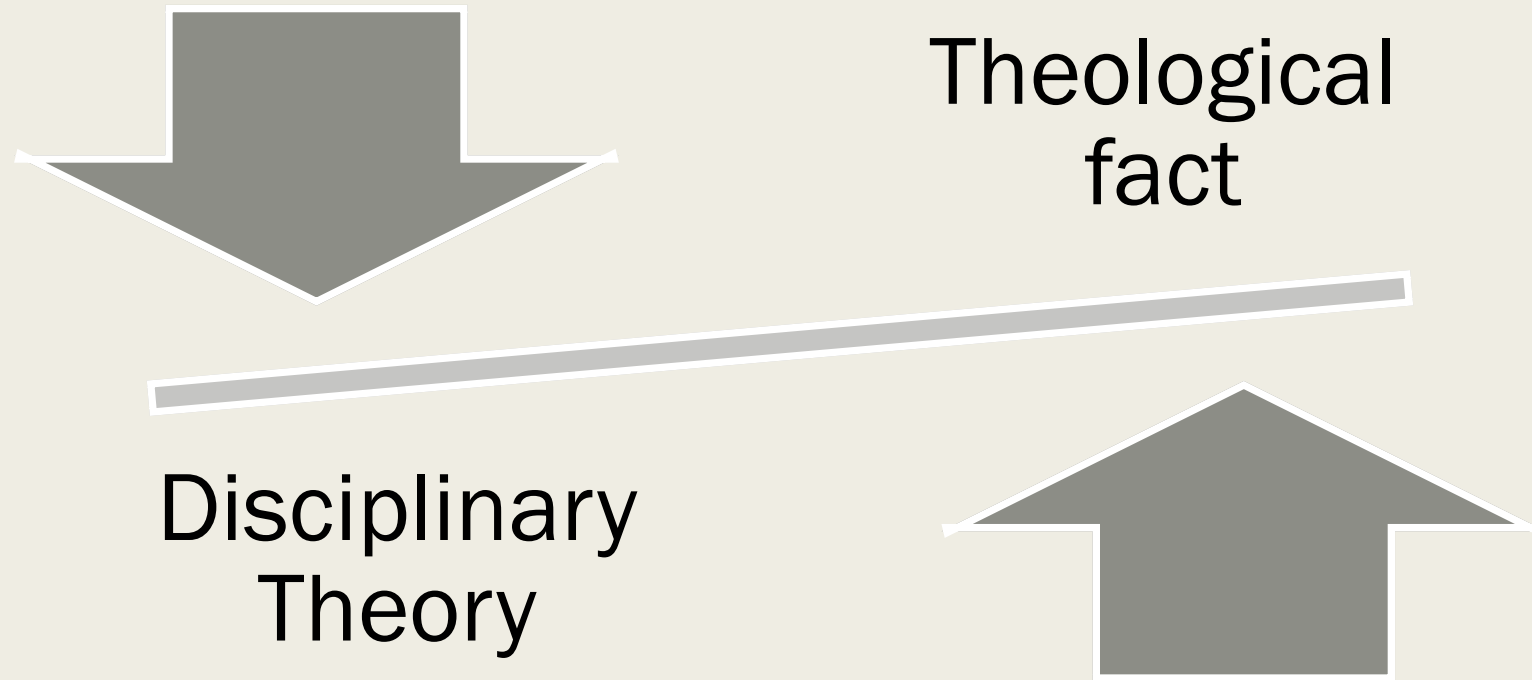


DEN NORSKE KIRKE
Kirkorådet

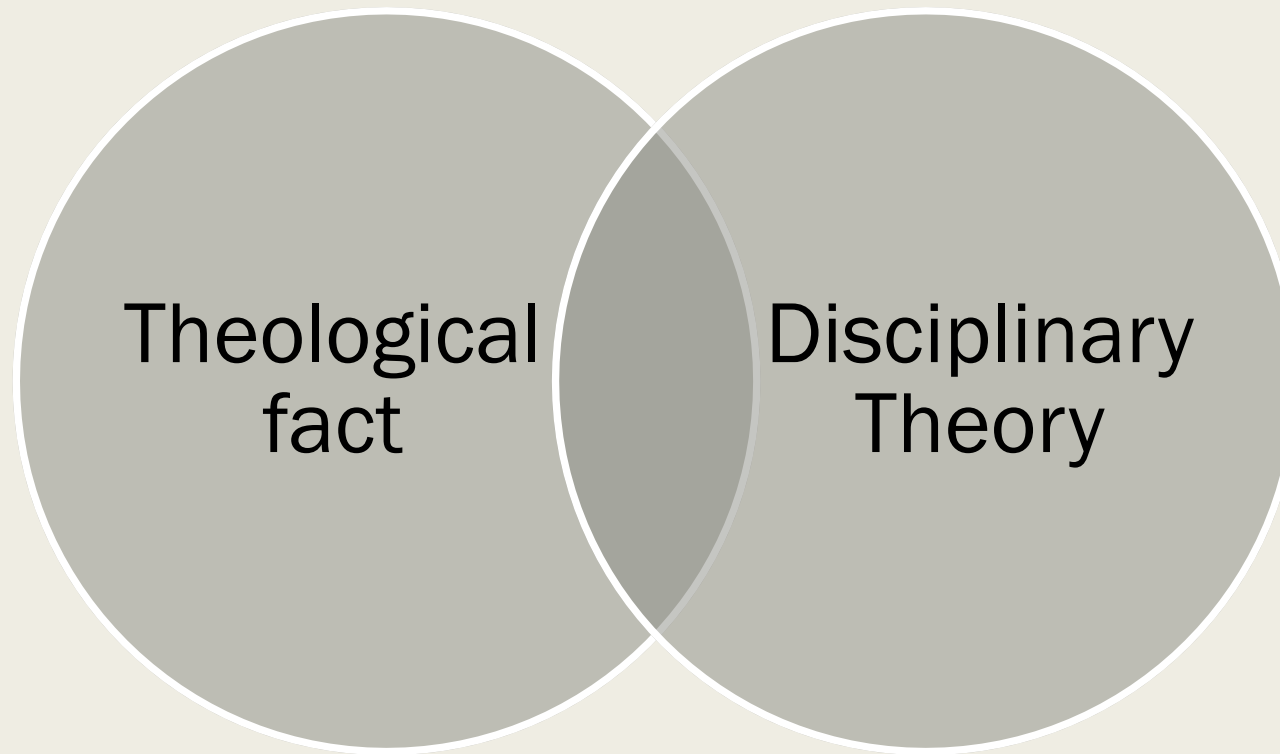
Where's Jesus...



Practical theology as metaphor: Correlational approach



Practical theology as metaphor: Hermeneutical (interpretive) approach



Practical theology as metaphor: **Transformational approach**

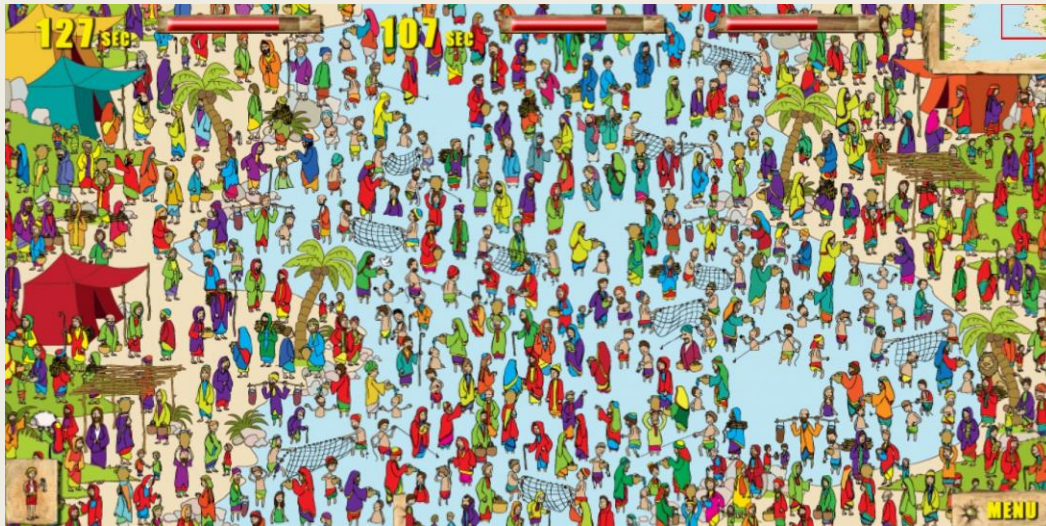


Practical Theology as action research

- Practical theology exists at the interface of “the script of revelation given to us in Christ” and the ongoing performance of the church as we interact with the practices of the world. Practical theology is dedicated to enabling the faithful performance of the gospel and to exploring and taking seriously the complex dynamics of the human encounter with God...Faith is something to be practiced not believed; the task of the practical theologian is to investigate and interpret the lived experience of people of faith in order to facilitate and deepen their faithful participation in God’s redemptive practices in, to and for the world...

Elaine Graham on Swinton and Mowatt, Practical Theology and Qualitative Research

We are all practical theologians now...



- How do we help people locate God's activity?
- How do we understand the interaction between human agency and divine agency?
- How do we integrate and enact a 'faith-full' way in the world?
- Correlate, interpret or transform?

REIMAGINING THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Setting God's People Free



Imagining church

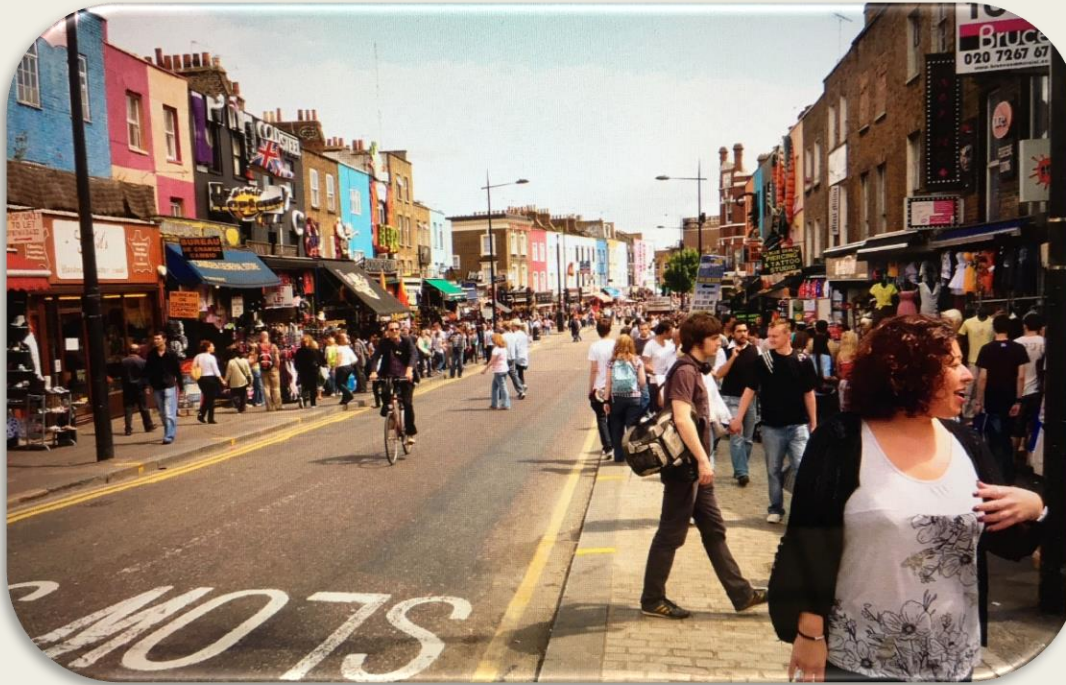
...we have the privilege and opportunity to serve Christ in every task we do, in every encounter we have, and every place we find ourselves – in the factory as well as the sanctuary, in the primary school as well as in the Sunday school, in the team meeting as well as in the prayer meeting.



...church reality

Over the last century, we, the Church of England, have been much stronger at freeing and equipping God's people to serve Christ in church-based ministries than in their Monday to Saturday daily lives. And so the Archbishops' Council commissioned this report not just to analyse the situation but to help change it.

What is *Setting God's People Free*?



SGPF is a programme of change to *enable the whole people of God to live out the Good News of Jesus confidently in all of life, Sunday to Saturday.*

Set free to fulfil our calling as the Church and as people of the Kingdom



- Shift1: Equipping the whole people of God to follow Jesus confidently in every sphere of life
- Shift2: Enriching mutual recognition and support between lay & ordained followers

Frozen since 1964 (or before)



1949



1963/4



1985



1999



2000



2005



2013



2015



2017

(Frozen) Faith in a secular Age

There is an ocean between
my work life and church...

[In ministry] We tend to start
with the badge not the
need...



SETTING GOD'S PEOPLE FREE TO BE THE CHURCH AND PURSUE THE KINGDOM...

Re-imagining Ministry & Vocation in a Secular Age



WE ARE ALL
IN THIS
TOGETHER...



“the change I want to define and trace is one which takes us from a society in which it was virtually impossible not to believe in God, to one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others. I may find it inconceivable that I would abandon my faith, but there are others, including possibly some very close to me, whose way of living I cannot in all honesty just dismiss as depraved, or blind, or unworthy, who have no faith (at least not in God, or the transcendent).

“Belief in God is no longer axiomatic [taken for granted]. There are alternatives. And this will also likely mean that at least in certain [times and contexts], it may be hard to sustain one's faith.” *Charles Taylor, A Secular Age p.3*

A Secular age



Faith in a secular age



Contested Place

We are all secular now...



Flat earth society

We all struggle to find
transcendence...



Me, myself is I

We all 'buffer' our identity to our
inner life

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 (abridged)

Christ Centred Collaborative Ministry



The Ministry of Representation

Representing Christ to the world



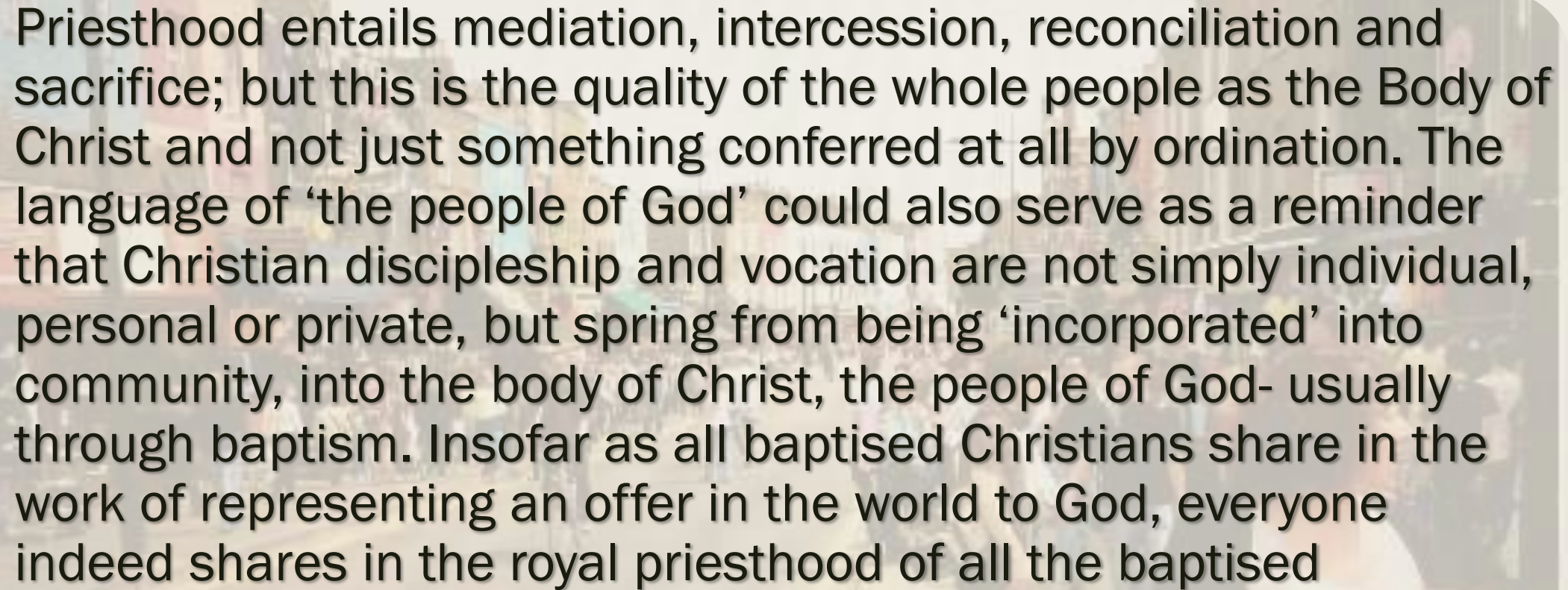
The Ministry of Reconciliation

Sharing in Christ's presence in the world



The Ministry of Regeneration

Sharing in Christ's re-forming of the church



Priesthood entails mediation, intercession, reconciliation and sacrifice; but this is the quality of the whole people as the Body of Christ and not just something conferred at all by ordination. The language of 'the people of God' could also serve as a reminder that Christian discipleship and vocation are not simply individual, personal or private, but spring from being 'incorporated' into community, into the body of Christ, the people of God- usually through baptism. Insofar as all baptised Christians share in the work of representing an offer in the world to God, everyone indeed shares in the royal priesthood of all the baptised

Elaine Graham 'Luther's Legacy: Rethinking the theology of lay discipleship'
Ecclesiology 13 (2017) p328

Christ Centred Collaborative Ministry



The Ministry of Representation

Representing Christ to the world



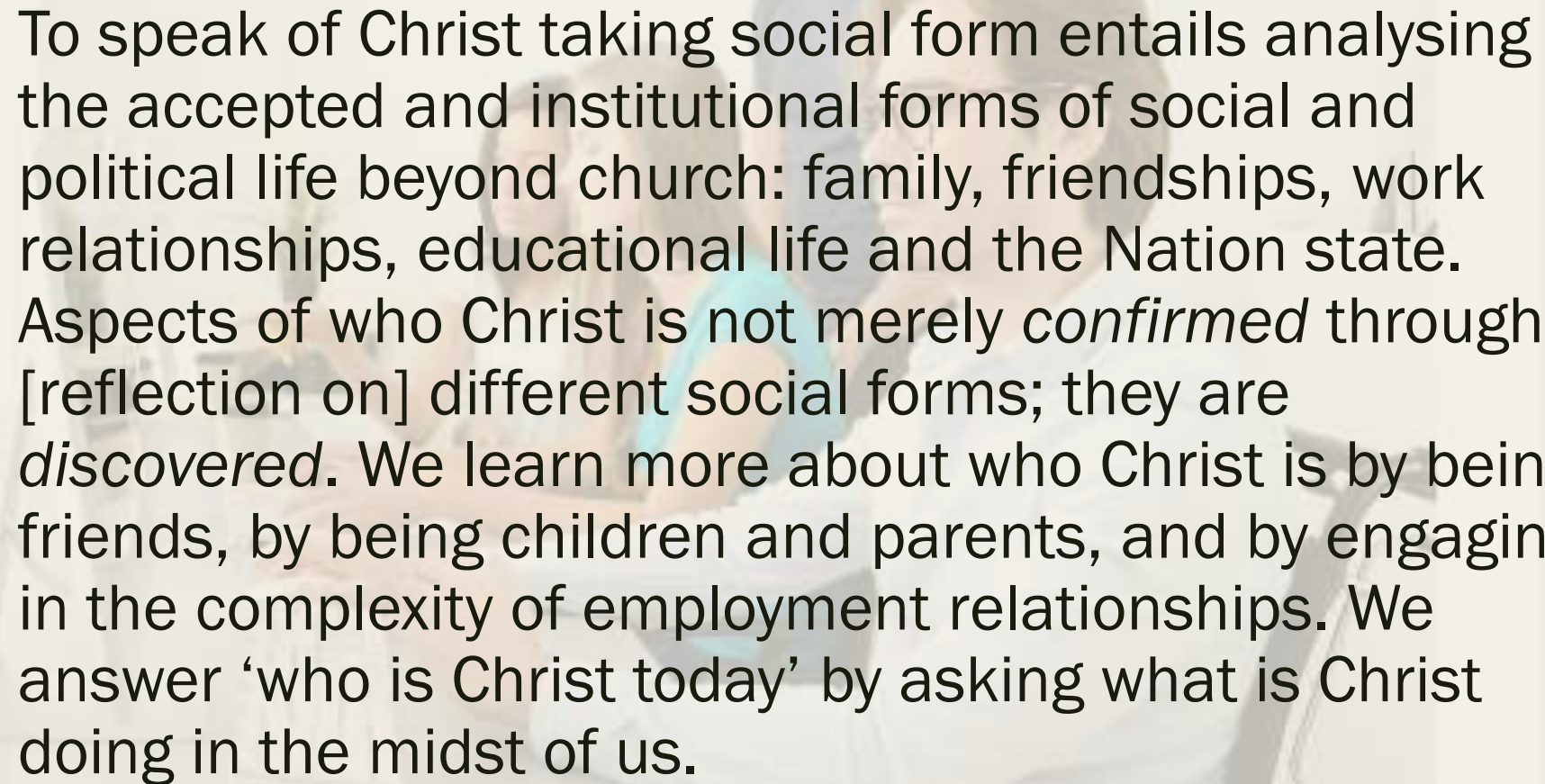
The Ministry of Reconciliation

Sharing in Christ's presence in the world



The Ministry of Regeneration

Sharing in Christ's re-forming of the church



To speak of Christ taking social form entails analysing the accepted and institutional forms of social and political life beyond church: family, friendships, work relationships, educational life and the Nation state. Aspects of who Christ is not merely *confirmed* through [reflection on] different social forms; they are *discovered*. We learn more about who Christ is by being friends, by being children and parents, and by engaging in the complexity of employment relationships. We answer ‘who is Christ today’ by asking what is Christ doing in the midst of us.

- Clive Marsh Christ in Practice: A Christology of everyday life (2006) p. 21

Christ Centred Collaborative Ministry



The Ministry of Representation

Representing Christ to the world



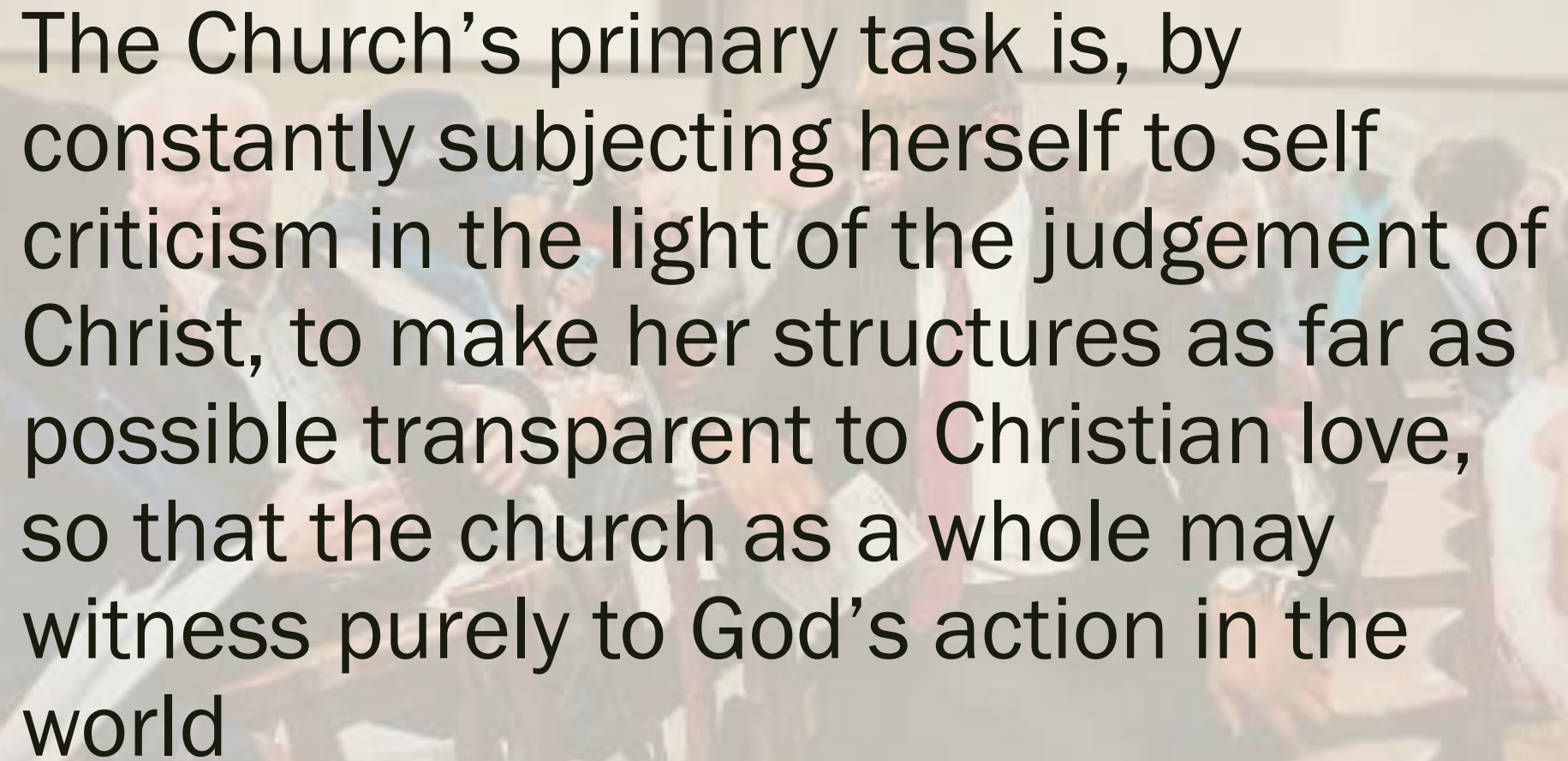
The Ministry of Reconciliation

Sharing in Christ's presence in the world



The Ministry of Regeneration

Sharing in Christ's re-forming of the church



The Church's primary task is, by constantly subjecting herself to self criticism in the light of the judgement of Christ, to make her structures as far as possible transparent to Christian love, so that the church as a whole may witness purely to God's action in the world

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Engagement with God*, (1975) 89

Reimagining Kingdom Seeking vocations



Asking where is God in the everyday?

Building patterns of kingdom seeking discipleship



Acting as Ambassadors

Building up & resourcing the whole people of god as 'image bearers'



Attending to being the church

Building church by extending kingdom presence