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Journal article

**Scott Holland and the needs of 2025: Integrated nature and grace**

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## Scott Holland and the Needs of 2025: Integrated Nature and Grace

### *Abstract*

Donald MacKinnon once argued that the Victorian and Edwardian sermons of Henry Scott Holland (1847-1918) remained theologically relevant during the nuclear age of the 1950s. Following his lead, I argue that Scott Holland's theological message continues to remain relevant to the political situation of 2025. Examining the theological responses of John Milbank and David Bentley Hart to the recent renewal of Neo-Thomist integralism in some US postliberal circles, I explore how Scott Holland's theology adumbrated, anticipated, and prepared the way for today's critiques of right wing and separatist Catholic integralist communitarianism. Particular focus is placed on Scott Holland's theology of the supernatural, and how this enabled him to develop, via the Incarnationalism of *Lux Mundi*, a theology of radically inclusive Christian socialism.

### *Keywords*

Henry Scott Holland, *Lux Mundi*, David Bentley Hart, John Milbank, Rod Dreher, J. D. Vance, Postliberalism, Integralism

My title deliberately echoes Donald MacKinnon's "Scott Holland and Contemporary Needs", a paper which appeared first in the November and December issues of *Theology* in 1952 before being reproduced in *Borderlands of Theology* (1968).<sup>1</sup> Reassuringly, the title used for the original publication was actually "Christian optimism: Scott Holland and Contemporary

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<sup>1</sup> D. M. MacKinnon, "Scott Holland and Contemporary Needs" in *Borderlands of Theology* (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1968), pp. 105-120.

Needs”; but given that MacKinnon wrote this essay in between writing “An Approach to the Moral and Spiritual Problems of the Nuclear Age” (1948), and “Reflections on the Hydrogen Bomb” (1954), “optimism” must here have meant something other than some merely naïve attitude towards the contemporary situation.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, MacKinnon’s discussion of Scott Holland stressed that “his optimism is the optimism of a man who has made the Cross the measure of his world”.<sup>3</sup> Through reflection on Holland’s contribution to kenotic Christology – and indeed, Holland’s theological understanding of the kenosis of the entire Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as the eternal context of the Son’s mission in the world – MacKinnon reasserted Holland’s insight that Christ’s Passion was an extension into the world of the intra-Trinitarian sacrifice of love eternally offered by the three Divine Persons to one another.<sup>4</sup> Holland saw that behind the patient suffering of Christ in the world lay the infinitely deeper ground of the love of God. The hard historical fact of the death of Jesus was the concrete expression in time of a transcendent act of Divine self-giving, beyond time and space; it revealed in history the eternal character of God as love.<sup>5</sup> For MacKinnon, this

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<sup>2</sup> Much later, MacKinnon thought it significant to recollect that the primary dissenting voice in the pro-nuclear deterrence Archbishops’ Commission Report, *The Church and the Atom* (Church Assembly, 1948) was that of Scott Holland’s pupil, Percy Harthill. Evidently, MacKinnon must have thought Holland’s influence on Harthill worth highlighting when addressing this topic. See R. J. Bauckham and R. J. Elford, eds., *The Nuclear Weapons Debate: Theological and Ethical Issues* (London: SCM Press, 1989), p. 217, n. 6

<sup>3</sup> MacKinnon, *Borderlands of Theology*, p. 144.

<sup>4</sup> Although Scott Holland’s nineteenth century anticipation of key themes in twentieth century Trinitarian theology is not often (if ever) acknowledged, his understanding of intra-Trinitarian relations as kenotic adumbrates aspects of the theologies of Sergei Bulgakov, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Jurgen Moltmann. Albeit that the nineteenth century tradition of social Trinitarian thought in Britain been discussed with reference to Wilfrid Richmond and John Richardson Illingworth (see C. Welch, *In This Name: The Doctrine of the Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, [1952]2005) pp. 29-32 and S. J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), pp. 31-32), the source of such theologising in Holland’s earlier sermons of the 1870s and 1880s remains underexplored.

<sup>5</sup> MacKinnon’s emphasis on the *Christus Patiens* in Scott Holland’s theology is well-judged. The theme still demands further investigation since it helps clarify how Holland’s work is related to the so-called Anglican passibilists once celebrated by Jurgen Moltmann. In *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (London: SCM, 1981), Moltmann’s account is wholly dependent on texts quoted in J. K. Mozley’s *The Impassibility of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926). Examination of the original sources lying behind Mozley’s account, however, reveals the debt owed by passibilism to Holland. See for example, V. F. Storr’s *The Problem of the Cross* (London: John Murray, 1919), a text cited by Moltmann in *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 227, n. 32. Storr made clear his debt to Holland in the footnotes to

represented no “trivial optimism,” but a paradoxical “Christian message of hope... in the shadow of the Cross”.<sup>6</sup> Nothing within our temporal world could overcome the hope rooted in eternity. That is why MacKinnon thought Holland “a teacher for our age as well as for his own”.<sup>7</sup> In a time of post-war nuclear crisis and despair, Holland’s Victorian sermons still invited MacKinnon to see the bigger picture (that present sufferings are outweighed by the providential ordering of creation towards God), to respond in hope (beyond the interests of our own or anyone else’s schemes for a better world), and to offer reconciliation to all (in the abiding purposes of God’s promise on the Cross).

MacKinnon evidently thought that this emphatically *theological* word of hope answered the postwar “disintegration” of societies then welcomed by Stalinists.<sup>8</sup> But more than this, MacKinnon also made it clear that Holland’s Anglican incarnationism “was very emphatically not one of those who appeal to an abstractly conceived theory of incarnation to justify some previously formed attitude to social evils”.<sup>9</sup> Holland was not simply dressing his personal political views in ill-fitting theological garb; rather he was providing a genuinely *theological* critique of contemporary political and social problems, viewing his own political situation in the light of Christ, the light of the world. Anyone familiar with Holland’s own later wartime attempts to disentangle the Gospel from political schemes of any and every stripe should recognise the validity of MacKinnon’s reading here: any appeal to the “theology of the Incarnation and its bearing on the social and economic life of man” (to invoke the official theme of the Scott Holland Memorial Lectures) ought to invite Christians to see the transitory world of human politics in the light of God’s transcendent Word, as well as God’s

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pp. 135-136 of his book. God endures suffering, and by patiently bearing it reveals the method of Divine love. (Holland himself was not a passibilist, for he saw that the One who is ultimately victorious over all suffering must be eternal; the two natures of Christ are not confused in his passion).

<sup>6</sup> MacKinnon, *Borderlands of Theology*, p. 118.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

Word immanent in the midst of the very real muddles and perplexities of human moral experience as it is. In other words, Holland offers us more than just another socialist political perspective within the narrow limits of his own time and place. He understood there was much more to life than politics; the Kingdom of Heaven is eternal, and eternity is infinitely capacious.<sup>10</sup>

How can this theological perspective help us address our contemporary needs in 2025? Our world is indeed divided, and current political discourse thrives on fostering, nurturing, and reinforcing these divisions. New technology has created online echo-chambers which drive polarisation and allow for culture wars to be fought out between competing “worldviews” (apparently described as such to deny the very possibility of meaningful dialogue between different points of view).<sup>11</sup> Competing political discourses (not political conversations!) now thrive on widening divisions in a divided world. The end result is clear: consensus politics is out; conviction politics is in. This is the situation which needs to be addressed.

Now at this point it might be expected that any Christian theologian worth their salt could speak to these divisions by invoking the common good. But this only raises the difficult question, “Whose common good?”<sup>12</sup> For some years critical literature on the common good has discussed ways in which the idea has been increasingly contested. For example, Nathan Schlueter’s article of ten years ago, “A Conservative Conversation Worth Having: Alasdair MacIntyre and John Finnis on Morality, Politics and the Common Good” (2015), examined a

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<sup>10</sup> See the discussion of the disentangling of politics and theology in R. Norman, “Thanking God for the Humiliation”: Henry Scott Holland, British Idealism, and the Penitential Self” in *Journal for the History of Modern Theology*, 29:2 (2022), pp. 257-289, esp. p. 263.

<sup>11</sup> On “worldviews” as a symptom of “culture wars”, see S. P. Kennedy, “Christian Worldview and Cosmic War: Contexts and Origins of a Religion Combat Concept” in *Church History*, 93:1 (2024), pp. 63-84.

<sup>12</sup> For discussion of nineteenth and twentieth century “common good” vocabulary (including reference to Scott Holland), see R. Norman, “An Anglican Common Good?” in *Theology* 126:2 (2023), pp. 92-102.

division then emerging between two camps of “conservative” Catholics in North America.<sup>13</sup> Drawing on an article Patrick Deneen had then only recently published in *The American Conservative*, Schlueter described those conservative Catholics who tended to appeal to Alasdair MacIntyre as “Front Porch Republicans”, and those who tended to appeal to John Finnis as “Natural Law Liberals”; the former were communitarians who had come to believe that Catholicism and political liberalism were already incompatible; the latter, in contrast, believed that they remained compatible under certain conditions. The former already seemed to lean more to the left on economic matters; the latter remained more open to laissez-faire economics. The former had started to encourage “the creation of small moral communities that exist apart from society”; the latter still believed that “*true liberalism... rests... upon ‘a longer and deeper tradition of [the] natural law’*”.<sup>14</sup> And the former, not the latter, were soon to find their position expressed for a popular audience in Rod Dreher’s *New York Times* bestseller, *The Benedict Option* (2017).<sup>15</sup> Such was the state of play in America only a few years ago.

Now consider Stefan Borg’s much more recent article, “In search of the common good: The postliberal project Left and Right” (2024), which contrasts two groups which are arguably more different, the UK tradition of postliberalism which Borg associates with Maurice Glasman, John Milbank, Adrian Pabst, Rowan Williams, David Goodhart, and radical orthodoxy (amongst others), and the US tradition which Borg identifies with Patrick Deneen, Adrian Vermeule, Gladden Pappin, Chad Pecknold, and national conservatism (again, amongst others).<sup>16</sup> Taking seriously the theological basis of the UK tradition, Borg

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<sup>13</sup> N. Schlueter, “A Conservative Conversation Worth Having: Alasdair MacIntyre and John Finnis on Morality, Politics and the Common Good” in *Perspectives on Political Science*, 44:2, pp. 102-108.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>15</sup> R. Dreher, *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Sentinel, 2017).

<sup>16</sup> S. Borg, “In search of the common good: The postliberal project Left and Right” in *European Journal of Social Theory*, 27:1 (2024), pp. 3-21.

also notes that “some American postliberals have tied the common good to a particular tradition of Catholic social teaching known as integralism”.<sup>17</sup> Borg also considers some developments in the American Catholic tradition. Unlike Deneen’s earlier communitarianism, Vermeule now argues “for a wholesale restructuring of the US legal order oriented to the common good”, i.e., a “fully worked out version of... integralism”.<sup>18</sup> Borg sees this as quite different to the UK tradition of postliberalism. For a thinker such as Pabst, for example, “the common good assumes more of a perpetual quest than a clearly defined end-point”.<sup>19</sup> The important point to bear in mind is that Schleuter and Borg show that the common good can mean very different things to different thinkers.

All of this is of contemporary importance. Rod Dreher’s presence at the reception of J D Vance into the Catholic Church (in 2019) is suggestive of the potential impact of American postliberal thought on the MAGA movement at large, not least as it differentiates itself from a rapidly collapsing liberal order.<sup>20</sup> So, too, the fact that Lord Glasman was the only British Labour politician to be invited to President Trump’s inauguration in January of this year suggests that UK postliberal common good politics may be somewhere on the political agenda, too. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this context helps explain why some postliberal theologians such as John Milbank and David Bentley Hart have for some time been increasingly drawn into critical debates about Catholic integralism in particular.

Both Milbank and Hart have observed Catholic integralism’s dependence on a Neo-Thomist doctrine of “pure nature” which allows for simplistic divisions between Catholic

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<sup>17</sup> Borg, “In search of the common good”, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> J. D. Vance’s interest in Augustine, René Girard, and Basil Mitchell is evident in his blog post, “How I Joined the Resistance” in *The Lamp* (01/04/2020) available at <https://thelampmagazine.com/blog/how-i-joined-the-resistance> (accessed 26/03/2025). On Vance and Dreher see Ian Ward, “The Seven Thinkers and Groups That Have Shaped J D Vance’s Unusual Worldview” in *Politico* (18/07/2024) available at <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2024/07/18/jd-vance-world-view-sources-00168984> (accessed 05/02/2025).

Social Teaching (held to be good), and the secular order (held to be bad); both instead argue for a Christian panentheism which receives the presence of God in all things. As nature and grace are both gifts from God, nature ultimately *is* grace. The ultimate divide between what belongs to God, and what belongs to the world, is thereby collapsed into a theology of radical inclusion. This theological theme appeared in Milbank's *Theology and Secular Theory* (1990), reappeared in Milbank's short book on Henri de Lubac, *The Suspended Middle* (first ed., 2005; second ed., 2014), and, in broad terms, has been restated in Hart's much more recent *You Are Gods: On Nature and Supernature* (2022).<sup>21</sup> The latter laments that manualist Thomism has been "enjoying a revival... in certain traditionalist Catholic sects, most especially... in America".<sup>22</sup> Hart thinks that "the infamous 'two-tier' Thomism" ought to have been laid to rest by Maurice Blondel's *L'Action* (1893) and Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel* (1946); but "now... the damned monster is up from its grave and spasmodically lurching about again, spreading terror among the villagers and hill-folk".<sup>23</sup> It is not just Catholic integralism – whether of Pope Pius X in the early 20th century or possibly of Adrian Vermuele today – that Hart has in his sights; President Trump is another target of his book.<sup>24</sup> My assumption is that what we see here is one type of postliberal Christian differentiating their position from that of another type of postliberal Christian, and that the chosen differential is the relation of nature and supernature. Milbank sets out the political importance of this differential in paper available online, "On Left Integralism".<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), esp. p. 206ff. on the distinction between "integralism" and "integrism"; J. Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Renewed Split in Modern Catholic Theology*, second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014); D. Bentley Hart, *You Are Gods: On Nature and Supernature* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2022).

<sup>22</sup> Hart, *You Are Gods*, p. xii.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31 and pp. 45-46.

<sup>25</sup> J. Milbank, "On 'Left Integralism': Catholic Social Teaching as a Political Theology" available at <https://teologiapolityczna.pl/assets/Uploads/Left-Integralism-paper-Milbank.pdf> (accessed 05/02/2025). The paper was read at the Angelicum (17/02/2022), and a recording is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bd2JcXhW7dU> (accessed 05/02/2025).



What interests me here is that Milbank and Hart are echoing an important point made in the nineteenth century by Henry Scott Holland. This is notwithstanding the fact that at least one of Milbank's and Hart's shared reference points, the Russian Orthodox theologian Sergei Bulgakov, once perceived limitations in the type of Anglican theology which Holland had earlier developed. In *Sophia: The Wisdom of God*, Bulgakov remarked that although "Incarnationism... stands as the main fact of the dogmatic self-determination of Anglicanism", "it presupposes the existence of absolutely necessary dogmatic assumptions in the doctrine of God and humanity, of the primordial Divine-humanity".<sup>26</sup> What Bulgakov did not acknowledge was that Holland's essay on "Faith" in *Lux Mundi* (1889) already contained a viable form of this dogmatic assumption, most explicitly stated when Holland stressed the full continuity of nature and grace. The third footnote to his essay in *Lux Mundi* reads as follows: "The word 'super-natural' is obviously misleading, since it seems to imply that the higher spiritual levels of life are not 'natural.' Of course the higher the life, the more intensely 'natural' it is; and the nature of God must be the supreme expression of the natural".<sup>27</sup> Like Hart today, Holland emphatically rejected any two-tier grace/nature structure in theology. In contrast to his Neo-Thomist Roman Catholic contemporaries who separated nature from grace to construct a "pure" form of revelation understood as extrinsic from secular philosophy (and hence also a corresponding "pure" form of nature existing in isolation from God), the Anglican Liberal Catholic Holland saw God immanent within everyday experience. And this is why it was completely logical that Holland could never develop a "separatist" or "sectarian" form of political theology, a vision of an authoritarian Church over and against the world. Instead, Holland saw God within everyday experience. The world was, for him, ultimately good. His understanding of the immanence of God allowed him an inclusive vision

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<sup>26</sup> S. Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God. An Outline of Sophiology* (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, [1937]1993), p. 18.

<sup>27</sup> H. S. Holland, "Faith" in C. Gore, ed., *Lux Mundi* (London: John Murray, 1889), pp. 3-54, here citing pp. 15-16, n.

of God at work in all things (not just the Church); it also provided ontological ground for his own constructive theology, in which natural knowledge and natural reason had a place alongside dogmatic authority.<sup>28</sup>

This placed Scott Holland apart from contemporary developments in Roman Catholic theology. The year 1907 saw Pius X condemn the immanentism of Catholic modernism in his encyclical *Pascendi Dominici*. And as William Oddie points out in his study of G K Chesterton's early theology, "*Pascendi* nowhere preaches a sense of the immanence of God as being part of a balanced spirituality, as does Scott Holland (reflecting St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas)".<sup>29</sup> Inevitably, *Pascendi* was attacked by Alfred Lilley in the *Commonwealth* (the Christian Social Union journal edited by Scott Holland) for reviving "in its most arrogant and relentless form the conception of religion as mere submission... to a chosen and rigid system".<sup>30</sup> Not all of Holland's associates agreed on this point: the still-Anglican Chesterton, for example, wrote in *Orthodoxy* that the "separation between God and man is sacred, because... eternal".<sup>31</sup> But despite this theological fashion Holland always held to his own understanding of immanence. It was natural for Holland to chastise an Anglo-

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<sup>28</sup> To my knowledge Holland's theology of the supernatural has not been picked up in scholarship on the period. However, his anticipation of Maurice Blondel's *L'Action* (1893) was noted by Bernard Reardon in *Henry Scott Holland: A Selection from his Writings* (London: SPCK, 1962), p. 41, n. Blondel was, of course, a critical influence on Milbank (see *Theology and Social Theory*, pp. 210-219), so it is interesting that Milbank has not remarked on this aspect of the theology of *Lux Mundi* (1889). (In comparison, for Milbank's remarks on Holland and the theme of kenosis, see J. Milbank, *The Future of Love: Essays in Political Theology* (London: SCM, 2009), p. 99).

<sup>29</sup> W. Oddie, *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy: The Making of GKC, 1874-1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 340.

<sup>30</sup> A. L. Lilley, "The Encyclical 'Pascendi'" in A. L. Lilley, *Modernism: A Record and Review* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, 1908), pp. 258-267, here p. 263. The article originally appeared in *The Commonwealth*, December, 1907, and was one of many Lilley wrote for the journal when it was edited by Scott Holland, developing a persistent Anglican critique of Neo-Thomism. (Lilley's *Modernism* contains many of these alongside his 1904 discussion of Blondel and Baron von Hügel (pp. 112-128)). On this theme, see also G. Tyrrell and A. L. Lilley, *The Programme of Modernism* (London: G. P. Putnam's, 1908), and A. L. Lilley, *Nature and Supernature* (London: Francis Griffiths, 1911).

<sup>31</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, sixth edition (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, [1909]1919), p. 244.

Catholic manual for reproducing a neo-Thomist doctrine of pure nature. In one of his sermons in *Old and New*, Holland wrote,

I have read an Anglo-Catholic Manual quite lately which parades the dreadful perplexities in which nature and the natural man are inextricably plunged, without any evidence from God, or morality, or freedom of Spirit... Now, could any statement be more acutely at variance with facts?... Surely there is no antithesis more false than that between the uncertainties of Nature and the certainties of Revelation.<sup>32</sup>

But perhaps Holland's opposition to Neo-Thomism was never stronger than in his review of Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891) in the CSU journal *The Economic Review*.<sup>33</sup> Holland here argued that providence ordered all creation, ecclesiastical as well as secular. He charged the Pope with ecclesiastical separatism, writing, "we feel most strongly how far aloof the Papal letter stands from the actual dust and heat of the turmoil in which the social world is engaged".<sup>34</sup> The Pope's perspective on modern society was that of a disengaged outsider, distanced from "the strange rough-and-tumble in which man actually is set to manufacture his own social story, illumined by sudden flashes, menaced by obscurities, drawn onwards by the moving pressure of the Divine Will towards a goal that he but dimly perceives".<sup>35</sup> Holland lamented that the neo-Thomism of *Rerum Novarum* was insufficiently Aristotelian. For Aristotle was, he said, "our paramount authority against the assumption that the order of development from the individual, through the family, to the State, represented the deeper order of real existence".<sup>36</sup> The *ordo amoris* did not end with the state, but "travels, through it, up into an eternal and heavenly society". Indeed, it was "From this eternal citizenship, [that

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<sup>32</sup> H. S. Holland, *Old and New: Sermons*, second edition (London: S. C. Brown, Langham, 1903), pp. 128-130.

<sup>33</sup> H. S. Holland, "Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII On the Condition of Labour" in *The Economic Review*, 1:4 (1891), pp. 455-465

<sup>34</sup> Holland, "Pope Leo XIII on the Condition of Labour", p. 460.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 461.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 464.

the individual person] wins a right to hold his soul free against any tyrannic intervention of the State”.<sup>37</sup>

In his political theology Holland sought a careful balance between immanence and transcendence, and this informed his understanding of the balance of relationships between the individual person, their family, their community, their state, and, ultimately, the Kingdom of God. This balance of “horizontal” relations of immanence and “vertical” dimensions of transcendence was always related to his understanding of the Incarnation. In response to R. J. Campbell’s *The New Theology* (1907), Holland once wrote,

When you have come to the end of all that you can know about the divine immanence in man, you will still be in need of the word that will tell you why the divine immanence is so precious and effectual. The divine immanence points away beyond itself. Its religious value lies in its perpetual witness to the divine transcendence. Out of the play of the one into the other springs the eternal significance of the Incarnation”.<sup>38</sup>

Holland’s Incarnationalism therefore located immanentism within a wider ocean of inflowing transcendence. He saw that the whole created order was oriented to God, and that all things hold together in Christ. This allowed him to develop a Christocentric metaphysics. “But who or what is Jesus Christ?”, asked MacKinnon in another essay on the British Idealists.<sup>39</sup> He was, as we are, an individual person. If the religion of the incarnation means anything, it must mean that “We are where we are, even as Christ was where he was”.<sup>40</sup> Jesus was no *abstract* example of individuated identity (for what could that be?); rather, Jesus was

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p. 465. For reflection on the importance of individual rights against the state, see Norman, “Henry Scott Holland, British Idealism, and the Penitential Self”, pp. 277-280

<sup>38</sup> H. S. Holland, *Creeks and Critics: Being Occasional Papers on the Theology of the Christian Creed*, ed. C. Cheshire (London: Mowbray, 1918), pp. 111-112.

<sup>39</sup> D. M. MacKinnon, *Themes in Theology: The Three-fold Cord* (Glasgow: T & T Clark, 1987), p. 58.

<sup>40</sup> MacKinnon, “Scott Holland and Contemporary Needs”, p. 112.

set in his own place and time. He was not merely the ideal of humanity; more than that, he was son of Mary, a Jewish man, circumcised, born under the Law, born under Roman occupation, made by God to be himself, i.e., a *concrete* individual in order to be the concrete universal. For Holland, “His reality as Jesus in the flesh is the measure of His capacity to be the Christ”.<sup>41</sup>

Again and again in *Creed and Character*, Holland had stressed the importance of individual identity and individual diversity. “That which we are in God’s thought and intention, that is what we are discovering to ourselves... what is the peculiar combination of moral qualities which is in me and no others?”<sup>42</sup> “The core of all character lies in individuality. Character is a moral fact: and, until life is individual, it is not moral”.<sup>43</sup> “Individuality, self-identity, these are the secrets which constitute and create character”.<sup>44</sup> For all that “the whole human race is swept forward, is borne upward, by the power of the risen Lord”, it nevertheless remains the case that “we lose nothing of our distinct and personal freedom.” Indeed, “out of our very bond to Christ, we win the energy to become free friends of Christ”.<sup>45</sup> This insistence on diversity worked its way into Gore’s essay in *Lux Mundi*:

the Spirit nourishes individuality. The very idea of the Spirit's gift is that of an intenser life. Intenser life is more individualized life, for our life becomes richer and fuller only by the intensification of personality and character... from the first, Christianity has tended to intensify individual life in a thousand ways, and has gloried in the varieties of disposition and character which the full life of the Spirit develops.

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<sup>41</sup> Holland, *Creed and Critics*, p. 21.

<sup>42</sup> H. S. Holland, *Creed and Character*, second edition (London: Rivingtons, 1888), p. 343.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 333.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 157-158.

The Church expects to see the same variety of life in herself as she witnesses in Nature.<sup>46</sup>

Holland and the *Lux Mundi* school saw the Church could only be genuinely inclusive of truly diverse individuals through the relating and individuating power of the Holy Spirit, making each one of us, where we are, more fully our own true selves, just as Jesus was, in his own time and place, who he was. Here we see the full force of the group's emphasis on atonement and personality.<sup>47</sup> The atoning work of Christ atones us with God, by atoning our sinful selves with who we are truly meant to be, our perfected or ideal, yet real and diverse, selves in God. We are at once together, yet called to be more and more our own diverse selves in God. Such is the inclusive scope of God's love.

Scott Holland still invites us to see the bigger picture (that present sufferings are outweighed by the providential ordering of creation towards God), to respond in hope (beyond the interests of our own or anyone else's schemes for a better world), and to offer reconciliation to all (in the abiding purposes of God's promise on the Cross). In our own divided world, his theology still allows us to see that our true unity is in our very real diversity. People do genuinely differ. From the pleromatic fullness of created multiplicity is being built the harmonious order of the diverse body of Christ. This kaleidoscopic Church includes different individuals, it includes different cultures, it includes different nations. Or, as Gore explained to the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910,

A universal religion, a catholic religion, needs a common message such as is contained in the Apostles' Creed, and as is recorded in the Bible, but a common message comprehended by very different and various peoples and individuals, each

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<sup>46</sup> C. Gore, ed., *Lux Mundi*, p. 323.

<sup>47</sup> See R. C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality* (London: John Murray, 1901). For Moberly's re-working of the "perfect penitent" theme from Scott Holland, see Norman, "Henry Scott Holland, British Idealism, and the Penitential Self", pp. 280-288.

with very different gifts, so that each in receiving the one message brings out some different or special aspect of the universal truth or character which lies in the common religion. So it is, and so only, that the glory and honour of all nations are brought within the light and circle of the Holy City; so it is alone that the real breadth and catholicity of the life is brought out. We look around, we see the profound and wonderful qualities of the Indian, and the Chinese and the Japanese and the Africans, and we are sure that when the whole witness of Christianity is borne, when Christ is fulfilled in all men, each of these races and nations must have brought out into the world a Christianity with its own indigenous colour and character, and that the rising up of a really national Church will be to us, who remain, who were there before, life from the dead.<sup>48</sup>

We should not abandon our diverse identities, or even all of our political differences, in our divided world, for out of such grows *real* breadth and catholicity. That is what is meant by the radically inclusive Church, “which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all things” (Eph 1.23). Our theological task is to build bridges wherever we can, work for reconciliation across divides, and respect the fact that people really do differ *in Christ*.

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<sup>48</sup> C. Gore in *World Missionary Conference, Report of Commission III: education in relation to the Christianisation of national life* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), pp. 406-407.