

Tinder on Hope

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[0 : 00] You mentioned the book is called The Fabric of Hope and Glenn Tender is Professor of Political Science, University of Massachusetts in Boston.

He's been thinking about this subject for a long time and it has to do really with his own pathway to Christian faith from a place that was very far away.

The story is not told in the book but I think I must give you a little bit of background just on what he passed through himself. And I'll try to cover this fairly quickly but I believe it's important to understanding what he has to say.

He was raised from infancy on a cattle ranch in the southwestern USA about 300 miles across the desert from the nearest city. His mother inculcated him early in the philosophy of Mary Baker Eddy to which we all know that teaching that sickness is not real.

It's to be ignored. But the denial actually went much deeper because Mary Baker Eddy had confronted the question, If God is good and omnipotent how can there be evil in the world?

[1 : 15] And she said, He is good and He's omnipotent and therefore there can't be evil in the world and therefore there isn't. And so he was raised with no moral foundation for understanding, repentance, forgiveness, no Christian background.

Actually Tender says that what Mary Baker Eddy had promulgated was so far from Christianity isn't even a heresy. It left him with no moral background.

He went off to university as an undergraduate, studied political theory. He knew nothing about Christianity and cared little about it. The writer whose writings he admired the most was that atheistic person, philosopher John Stuart Mill.

In 1945, something very important in his life happened. He was a young officer aboard a Navy ship in Manila Bay just after the Japanese surrender.

And there were a number of half-sunken hulks in the bay on which there were Japanese military still hiding out trying to avoid surrender. And with a party of his men, they loaded up their guns and they went off to visit some of these hulks.

[2 : 33] And they came to the first ship company, very, very carefully down the aisles of the sunken vessel, looking to see who would be there. And they found a man sitting with his back to them and Tender raised his rifle and shot the man dead.

And he was not much, he found later the man was unarmed and he was not much affected on the spot. But the same thing happened a few days later. And again, on the spot, he was rather indifferent.

But shortly after that, he was crushed with a feeling, he was conscience-stricken. And the word murder came into his mind.

And he realized he had done something terrible against someone or something holy and what he felt would be merciless and unforgiving. And there was a terrific burden laid on his back and actually stayed with him for many years.

After the war, he became a PhD student in California. And for six years, he studied political theory. And he did a PhD thesis on that same John Stuart Mill.

[3 : 41] And then he became a professor. And at that point, he had to immerse himself in the subject. He wanted, well, first of all, his own private search for truth.

But also, he wanted to give his students the very best he could on the actual meaning of life and the ideas of good and evil and all the rest of it. And he wrote in a sacred article that the 20 years during which I was inching my way toward Christianity was a time of intense study and reflection.

I was absorbed daily and hourly by the enigmas and demands of the intellectual universe in which I dwelt. I was absorbed in trying to understand my life and life generally. The short steps forward that

I made were recorded in lectures I inflicted on my students in the articles and books that I began to write.

It was a lonely pursuit, unhelped, it seems, by any Christian or any church. But he got a lot of insight from the reading of philosophers like Plato and Kant and Hegel and Augustine and Kierkegaard and Martin Huber and other writers.

And then perhaps he got on a little later into actually reading the works of theologians. Reinhold Niebuhr, for instance, and his treatment of original sin. And then he came to Karl Barth.

[5 : 07] And at first he was very apprehensive about Barth because he felt that Barth's writings would only intensify this feeling of guilt. But he found that Barth instead was expanding a great deal on the mercy of God.

And so he delved deeply into, I think he studied all twelve volumes of what I understand as Barth's major work. And it was Barth who got him interested in the Book of the Romans, in which he is fascinated still.

And then there were others who wrote, there was a Russian, Berdia, who focused his mind on the possibility of Christ's return. And so these things came deeper and deeper into his feelings.

By the way, he told us this story one night at home with friends when he was visiting at UBC some years ago.

And later it was published in Christian Today. And if you'd like a copy of it, you could perhaps let me know later. And as to becoming a Christian, he writes, I can say I was not a Christian during my time as a graduate student, but well before reaching the age of fifty, I was.

[6 : 22] And he's had a profound experience of guilt and grace. After Manila Bay, he felt he could only live as one forgiven by God. He says, I felt I had forfeited the right to live. Only grace could restore that right.

From Barth, I had learned that if you're a Christian, you have made a choice. You have made a choice, but the reality is that God has made a choice of you. Christianity was written into your destiny on the day of your creation.

Now, I'd like to come to the book. There's two great questions that he raises. And the first is, why is modern hope, that is the hope that's typical in modern times, why is it a failure?

And the second is, why, what is authentic hope? Now, I think I'm going to skip over the first question, just time being short.

And the really big theme here is, what is authentic hope? And I think it's just a beautiful thing that he's written. But I'll just read you a closing word on the first question.

[7 : 31] And really, in reviewing the tragedies and the disappointments and the despair and the dismay of the last century in particular, he concludes, of course, that modern hope is truly a failure.

And there's a reason for looking at this, because in doing it, we can understand that the failure is due to two categories of reasons. And one is a massive failure of wisdom.

And the second is moral ineptitude, widespread, systemic. The failure in wisdom and the failure in goodness is what marks the modern age.

And he says, look, it's important to look at this. First of all, he wants to be in dialogue with every thoughtful seeker after truth. And he knows that such a person will recognize the reality of that diagnosis.

He also wants us to be aware of what people are suffering who are searching for truth and who are faced with those realities, even though they may be a long way from Christ.

[8 : 41] And so he says, we've got to look at that, because, in fact, it points to the features of authentic hope.

Now, here we come, as I say, to the big subject of the book, authentic hope, on which the author, drawing on perhaps 20 years of thought, has written something of a masterpiece.

And it's just too good to be summarized in a hurry, especially when I wait. So what I'm going to do this morning is to ask you to engage in an imaginary exercise in which we pretend that the author is here in this room, so that I can put to him on your behalf some questions, and so that we can hear parts of his answers in his own language, in his own thought.

And so if you'll go along with that, I will conduct a little interview with the author. And by the way, to help you fix his image in your mind's eye, I'm going to just pass around this book, because on the back bottom corner here, there's a small photograph of him, and so you can think of him when you hear his words.

Thanks. So, let's get underway. Well, suppose that he's standing right here.

[10:06] Professor Tinder, we're delighted that you're here. And some of us remember, some years ago when you were here, how great a friendship you extended towards us, and so we know that you would be happy to have us call you Glenn.

We're welcoming you to the Learners' Exchange, which is now in its 20th year operation as a truth-seeking activity. And we're very pleased that you're willing to answer some questions. Now, the first question I have for you is a foundational one. What is the source of modern hope? It is the cross. The Son of Man on the cross created and set before us the possibility of becoming new men and new women.

This is the source of hope. Anyone who understands Christ, crucified, understands hope. And against the failure of modern hope, the failure of wisdom, and the failure of goodness, Christ offers us both wisdom and righteousness.

He offers us wisdom not primarily by words, but by bowing before the will of his crucifiers. In his suffering and death, he summarizes and sets forth the infinite yet concentrated understanding that Christians call God's Word.

[11:43] In that understanding, the human state is understood, and the manner of God's presence among us is also understood. Christ offers righteousness by expiating our crimes and misdeeds, thereby releasing us from the past and opening the way to sanctity.

The sanctity that lies in reproducing in our own lives the self-sacrificial love that Christ displayed in accepting the cross.

Creating us anew was tantamount to placing us in a new universe, under new heavens, on a new earth. We have been liberated from the stultifying illusion that the most lovable things are things we can see and touch.

We can thus live in a universe far wider and more glorious than the universe we had long inhabited. But Glenn, in all its richness of understanding, and with the possibility of true goodness, is the new life easy?

No. There is possibly not a single great Christian who has held that the Christian life is easy.

[13:11] Christian life is difficult because, to use a strong term, it is humiliating. One must give up every effort at self-justification, even the justification one might feel entitled to, such as books written, political causes fought for, or morally good acts carried out.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that when God calls a man, he bids him come and die. The cross does not offer, in Bonhoeffer's famous words, cheap grace.

To accept the cross means to give up not only every public claim, but also every secret thought that my own moral or intellectual deeds will justify me.

It is to realize that neither the record of my past nor my own intrinsic qualities give me any right to life or the goods of life.

And I should say more. Emotionally and spiritually, I must be, as Paul expressed it, crucified with Christ.

[14:20] Crucifixion must be actual. It must be mine, as well as Christ's. I must actually experience evils which in one way or another bring about my own nullification.

Evils such as sickness, material insecurity, and persecution. Christians who are shielded from such evils may in reality be unfortunate.

People who are rich and powerful and healthy and everywhere respected may find it virtually impossible to live the life of the cross.

On the other hand, people whose lot it is to suffer greatly may, like Paul, come to rejoice in their sufferings. The point, simply, is that faith in the cross requires participation in the cross.

And this is why the Christian life is not easy. Glenn, since the cross requires on our part, and maybe for all of our lives, a process of self-discovery, a painful process, what is it that keeps us going on?

[15:34] What is the object of our hope? The Word of God tells us that the only hope that can quiet our natural restlessness is hope for a life with God.

Hope is directed toward God and rests in God. But hope for God is not hope for God alone. God is a companion of being.

Not only the persons of the Trinity, but also angels and the whole company of heaven are in fellowship. And Jesus said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul, and thy neighbor as thyself.

And so, for hope to be authentic, it must be for God, for neighbor, and no less than for our neighbor, for an authentic view of ourselves.

True hope can never be for God alone, but also for a community centered in God. We cannot hope for community without love for neighbor.

[16 : 45] Glenn, this is an old but persistent question. How can I love that neighbor I don't respect or even like?

The Christian answer is that a person is worthy of love not because of intrinsic merits, but because God impresses on each one the divine image.

Your neighbor stands before you as a representative of every human being. It is God who has created and dignified every human being. And therefore, one who sees nothing in the neighbor worthy of love is not seeing that neighbor.

Glenn, you've spoken of hope for community as well as for neighbor. Now what is entailed in that? Hope, as I said, is never for God alone, but is rather for an all-encompassing and never-ending community centered in God.

The statement that hope is for a perfect community is not mere speculation. It's grounded in scripture. Jesus proclaimed the coming not of God alone, but of the kingdom of God.

[18 : 09] So hope can be defined as life consciously oriented toward the discovery of God in the island of one's fellow human beings and in all of oneself.

Hope for community is longing for light, and not just on others, but in the self as well. The search for community is a search for self as well, because apart from self, apart from community, selfhood is impossible.

Glenn, we would like to dwell on that, but can we turn now to the experience of hope in the ups and downs of everyday life. In your book, you use three words to describe that experience.

Mystery, exaltation, and obedience. Could you explain what they mean? Well, living in hope means living in mystery.

God is humanly incomprehensible. We can say true things about God, but we do not know God as we are now known by Him. The depths of God and even of others and even of self are beyond objective knowledge.

[19 : 31] We do not really know our neighbor in all the depths and complexities of what it means to be human. For that matter, we do not even really know ourselves.

Then too, we do not understand the interactions of causality and freedom, time and eternity, freedom and grace, reason and faith.

We do not know the final disposition of evil. We do not know exactly what will happen to us. In short, we are profoundly ignorant. So living in hope means living in mystery.

Authentic hope calls us to walk in darkness, though there are glimpses of light, signs of transcendence which may come our way through nature or art, music, poetry, suggesting reality beyond time and sense.

And we respond deeply when we read that Jesus is the light of the world, that in His light confusion and ignorance will someday simply disappear.

[20 : 37] But in the meantime, there is darkness in the experience of hope. So many things we do not know or understand, and thus a big part of hope is coping with mystery or even darkness.

But to come to the second word, a second part of the experience of hope can be exaltation, the uplifting of the Spirit. Hope means that we are now, by definition, deprived of what we hope for. But this need not be a state of misery, because not only are we on a journey toward God, but we have the assurance that God is with us even in the journey.

Sometimes hope comes to us as a blissful emotion which fills our spirits and minds. In its fullness, hope is a consciousness of being lifted above chance and fate.

So we may have moods of deep happiness, but we can at times be cast down. And when hope is small and verges on despair, our destiny as persons being fitted for the kingdom is something we must submit to.

[21 : 48] When we are threatened by some despair, hope will not be recovered by strenuous acts of imagination, but only by doing and suffering what we have to do and to suffer.

Now this is hope as obedience. And the question in that experience is always, what must I and all of us together do or suffer to be true to our destiny?

And the answer always depends on what is possible and what is obligatory. Though sometimes hope as obedience means not action or suffering, but simply waiting.

Hope as obedience is dramatized in the Beatitudes which teach us that hope is not simple and harmonious, but a state of spiritual tension.

Those who are poor in spirit, who are sorrowful and meek, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, know they are fallen and grace responds and they are given the kingdom.

[22 : 52] Hope is anticipatory membership in the kingdom of God. Now sometimes when we are cast down, hope may come to us as mere possibility.

And we are then called on to entrust ourselves to God. And with such a trust, we can be lifted up even in suffering. But Glenn, aren't there times when hope fails completely?

It's not a mere misfortune when hope fails.

It's one of the mysteries of our destiny that divine grace does not remove human responsibility.

Hopelessness indicates an unreadiness for God, a mistrust of God.

It's therefore a culpable state. So it follows that hopelessness is not merely to be endured, it must be resisted. To resist despair is to strive toward hope, and that means to strive toward God.

[23 : 59] One cannot do this if hope is lacking altogether. One cannot strive toward hope without hope. What is the source of this last vital remnant of hope?

Here we reach the ultimate foundation for hope. We can hope for hope only if God enables us to. When God gives us the ability, however, we are responsible for using it.

Glenn, how can we cultivate hope? Is it to be done simply as a solitary exercise?

What do you mean by the spirituality of hope? On your third question. The spirituality of hope consists, as I understand it, in disciplines calculated to bring forth hope.

It is attempting to attain the exaltation of hope in its fullness, and when hope has become obedience, to keep alive and fan into flames the spark of hope that remains.

[25 : 09] Now, as to solitude, there is solitude inherent in spirituality, because whether I live compassionately, prayerfully, or thoughtfully, and so forth, is decided largely by my own choices.

So, the Christian experience does require a measure of solitude and withdrawal. But the cultivation of hope cannot be wholly solitary.

It must be situated in a context of truth-seeking relationships with other people. After all, the object of hope is for God and neighbor and self.

So, the solitariness is paradoxical. We are solitary at times, but it is for the sake of community. Our spirituality is not an end in itself.

It is for others as well as for ourselves. Then where and how can hope best be encouraged?

[26 : 09] Christian spirituality cannot properly be pursued apart from the Church, because the Church is the Kingdom of God in the making.

So, the Church is the natural realm of hope. It is there we engage inquiringly together in the difficult task of truth-seeking communication about the most serious matters, that is, ultimate truth.

Accordingly, it is where human beings brought together and guided by faith engage in a dialogue search for God. The word dialogue enables us to envision the Church as a living and personal association, bringing to life ultimate truth in a setting of face-to-face relationships.

After all, all love and all spiritually truth-seeking is face-to-face. This is implicit in Jesus' command that you must love not the human race generally, but your neighbor.

The Church is real and alive, then, insofar as it consists of neighbors, is where human beings, in the measure of their faith, live into the future. It provides the virtual environment of hope.

[27 : 26] Because the Church is an earthly analog of the ultimate human destination, a perfect community, called by Christians the Kingdom of God.

Then, could you expand a little on the importance of truth-seeking and truth-speaking? The Church is the one human grouping that seeks, above all else, to comprehend and voice in its unity and depth, the one truth that underlies and gives significance to all worldly truths.

We need to remember, however, that if Paul is right, unless truth is spoken in love, it might as well not be spoken at all. However, it's also important that love needs to be expressed in speaking the truth.

Otherwise, it is mere sentimentality. If the Church is the one place on earth where the whole truth is sought, it's also the one place where, within earthly limits, love can be fully realized and humans can reach their full stature.

Doctrinal responsibility and dialogue, in a word, truthfulness, sustain hope and contribute to a setting in which the spirituality of hope can be pursued.

[28 : 55] The imperfect doctrines of the Church cast our minds ahead to a time in which human words and God's word will perfectly coincide.

Within history, however, there is truth beyond doctrine, and therefore the truth must move beyond words. It does this by means of wordless pathways to ultimate reality, pathways which have been trodden since the earliest stages, and these are called sacraments.

Glenn, how do sacraments relate to truthfulness? The sacraments and preeminently the Eucharist express the Christian understanding of Christ as the definitive incarnational being.

When a baptism is performed or the Eucharist celebrated, those taking part relate themselves through things we can touch and taste to the ultimate meaning of all life and history.

In other words, Christian practice implies that doctrine and dialogue, great as they are, are not enough. Once the teaching has been done and the sermons delivered, one more thing is needed.

[30 : 10] Recognition that our words are earthen vessels, and the ultimate truth is higher than the highest human truths. Now, in what sense do we find hope in the sacraments?

The hope inherent in the sacraments is evident in the light that the Eucharist casts on the greatest threat to hope, and that is death. Ordained by Jesus on the eve of his crucifixion, bread and wine are reminders of death.

At the same time, however, since the crucifixion was followed by the resurrection, they are reminders of life. The bread and wine tell us that the full and glorious life of a person's eternal body, represented by the risen Christ, is gained only by giving up to God the deficient and inglorious life of the temporal body.

Glenn, you've spoken so highly of the Church, but the Church as we know it is imperfect.

Yes, to understand a person's relations within the Church, it is vital to remember the difference between the ideal and the actual.

[31 : 33] Hope for the Kingdom of Heaven compels Christians to look on the Churches critically, and to support them only conditionally. It is a burdensome obligation forced on every Christian because of our individual responsibility.

Not only did God refrain from giving us a common mind and will, He did not elect to save us in groups. Salvation always depends on a personal commitment.

Each one alone must decide what is true and false, right and wrong. One of the major strains inherent in the life of faith lies in the lack of any absolutely reliable intermediary between us, between an individual and God.

Any Church which assumed this role would be an idol. And idolatry can be avoided only by those who are capable of solitude.

Glenn, thank you for all these words of insight and caution regarding the cultivation of hope.

[32 : 46] Before you have to go to catch your plane, are there any final words that you would like to leave us on the subject of hope? Any final thoughts?

Yes. Hope is not merely possible. It is required of us. Hope is at the center of the Christian life.

Without hope it is tempting to say there can be no relationship with God.

And because hope can be defined as life consciously oriented toward the discovery of God, and then toward the discovery in God of one's fellow human beings and of oneself.

To live with hope is to live in one's full humanity. To harbor hope is to situate oneself in the midst of the human race.

Another thought. Hope is the capacity for carrying on one's life in the confidence that it will finally be seen as a story fashioned by an omnipotent and merciful God.

[33 : 56] A story, therefore, in which there will be no absurdities. And maybe one last thought.

Hope is far oftener disciplinary than exalting. But hope proves itself by staying alive and strong in spite of temporal disappointments and fears.

True hope is undefeatable because it is anchored in eternity. And, again, thank you very much for what you have given us.

And may God be with you in the remainder of your journey to Him. Well, that's my little interview with Glenn. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. My hope is that I'll be hearing from you on your thoughts of this subject.

[34 : 55] Perhaps your experiences. Perhaps on the questions of whether we have dealt with the important questions today. Perhaps there are questions that Glenn Tender hasn't thought about.

Or maybe he's thought about them and I just haven't told you. So, please, let me hear from you. Thank you. Thank you. Very much.

Well, it was worth waiting for. I didn't hear you say. I said it was worth waiting for. Oh, thank you.

Yeah. The book is a gem. I must say that.

Yeah. Katie. You and I both heard a talk recently where we were told that maybe we wouldn't, maybe there would be outstanding absurdities in our story.

That there's no obligation on God to make sense of everything. Yeah. I, this isn't for me a huge doctrinal point, but since you and I were both there and I hear you just said that, I just wanted to see if you had a comment on that.

[36 : 08] Well, it's not Tender's conviction. And he's still worrying about some problems, for example, and Harvey, maybe you could comment a bit about this.

One of the problems that Tender is working on, he's still working on it, is how to reconcile God's mercy and his justice.

How to reconcile his love with the possibility of eternal punishment, for example. Tender confesses that he does not understand how these two could go together.

But he expresses the deep hope. I wonder if I've got a reference to that here. Oh, did I pass the book about him? Yes, you are. I think we're all there. That's all right.

And, and just since you raised that point, Katie. He, he says we face an immensely serious challenge. One that we can neither meet altogether satisfactory nor ignore.

[37 : 12] Christian hope is not for community. It might be charged. He's taking up the reverse position. but for a system of terror based on eternal suffering.

Now, he's concerned about that project. In thinking about it, he thinks, well, maybe, in fact, hell will be empty, just to take up that question.

Then he says that can't be, because it would be incompatible with the liberty that God has given to mankind. And so then he ends up with a dilemma.

Which he confesses, he cannot understand how to reconcile God's justice and his mercy. And he says, we must look on the reconciliation of God's sovereign love and the same God's eternal reprobation of some persons as a mystery beyond our present comprehension.

But here's where he goes on to say, but certain to be entirely acceptable, even glorious, when finally comprehended. That's where he sits with those questions.

[38 : 17] You picked the toughest one that he's been thinking about. Bill. Would you go so far as to say that hope is an absolute?

I hadn't thought of using the word.

Do you mean that it always exists within us? Or what do you mean, Bill? No, it's available to us. Ah. Like grace.

Right, yes. I think Tender would say that. It is absolutely available. But it's not necessarily there. Harvey.

Harvey. Please tell us. Harvey's read Tender's book, I think some years ago. Please give us your thoughts on the book itself. It's rich.

[39 : 42] On the earlier question perhaps, of how Tender helps. Yes. The word certainty came out there. I think Tender is certain that God will always be rightly related everywhere.

And if that means hell, it means hell. Yeah, right. So, does that help, I believe?

Mm-hmm. I think hope's eternal. Does he believe it's eternal? Even in heaven, we'll be hoping for more.

Really? So long, yeah. We'll not be emptied into light. As the hymn says, that's a theological misapplication. We better learn hope now because you'll always be hoping, even in eternity.

Right. For the mystery of God will not mourn anymore. Right, right. Good. Jean? Does he talk about the connection between death and love?

[40 : 47] You know, like, the cross and love are so connected. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. The death of Christ and love?

Well, death and our death. Yes. I die. Yes. You know. This is when I read that hard bit about our lives and Christ's crucifixion being intertwined.

And that we must somehow live in identification with Christ so that his death, in some sense, is related to our dying to the world.

anybody else like to expound that? Dr. Packer, could you help us a bit?

I, you know, I sense that he's, what he's describing is something true and real, but how do we understand it in terms of our own experience?

[41 : 55] Well, I think we have to fill in something which, if, if I was listening right, tender doesn't directly fill in for us.

Right. Namely, the centrality of Christ Christ, and the fact that the final meaning of our lives, of human life as such, is fixed and determined by the relational pattern between Christ and us. Everyone in this world, I believe, is given fundamental awareness of God, general revelation, as the theologians label for that, and even when people, like apparently Tinker in his earlier days, aren't aware of the awareness of God that's there, somewhere in the way, psyche, it's there, and people choose their path.

I'm probably still Lewis here, by the way. I think Lewis is a good point at her own what Tinker has been saying. People choose their path either in terms of following the game of that awareness of God, which, for those who follow it, becomes an awareness of the divine reality that's involved in Christ, or they shut their eyes to their awareness of God, they turn their back on it, and thus, in effect, walk away from God, so that, on the one hand, the justice of God comes out in the fact that he honors the self-determining freedom that he's given confidence by letting people do that, and they walk into deeper and deeper darkness, and that's it.

But, on the other hand, in his prominence, he guides those who are seeking to some knowledge of Christ somehow.

[45 : 10] Lewis takes it so far as to believe that there are persons, religious persons in the world, who never, who never at any stage hear about Christ, but yet the values, realities, perspectives, attitudes that are there in Christ, are somehow perceived by them, and then entered into by them, and they will find in a world to come that they have been brought Godward by, this is Lewis, don't play me for it, by the Christ they never knew in this world.

And that's mercy, linked with justice on God's part. And for us in a Christian medium, where the facts of Christ are available in the culture, and you do have to shut your ears pretty vigorously in order to miss them, to us, God, in his mercy, moves those who are moving his feelings, so that some knowledge of Christ becomes theirs in this world.

I think that that's the way of looking at it, of which Tinker's presentation of hope is, shall I say, the underside.

The shadow of Christ, it seems to me, is cast over, is overshadowing so much that he says. the full account of this point of view must be set out in the book, well, it's the shadow, and it's the references to Christ are indirect all the way through.

when I heard about when he came to the church, when he came to the sacraments, I expected to hear him saying, here, you have the pointers to Christ, the apprehension of who and what Christ is and who are the scriptures, and you see that part of the pattern of redemption is death issuing in resurrection, and Christ leads us into that on the basis of the vicarious death that he died for us, that's fundamental, that brings us forgiveness of sins on a solid basis for the hope that we are to have, and then he leads us along the path of identifying with him, in terms of, again and again, going into death, in experiences which feel like death, in one way or another, experiences of loss, experiences of frustration, experiences of disappointment, so on and so forth, but out of them come resurrection, because Christ is there, and we're going through it with him, and he leads us out of the darkness, into the light, over and over again, you could call that the baptismal pattern, actually, of living, well, it seems to me that

[49 : 18] Tinker was hinting at that all the time, and not saying it explicitly, and so, he leaves us having to scratch our heads of it, as to what the condition of all the hope that we have, really is.

Partly because I've been giving you only fragments, of course, of what he's saying, but I think he would thoroughly agree with you that if we have a sense of dying in our lives, we have a rich sense of living as well.

Well, is it explicit in the book? I mean, I haven't read the book, you tell me. I'm going to give you a copy. Well, thank you, but what's the answer to my question?

I would say it is, but maybe not in quite the way you expressed it, but I would say there that he feels we're partaking of the risen life of Christ, as well as being, as well as explicitly rejecting some

deadly part of life.

And so I think that's where he stands, but I'd love to hear more from you about that. Well, may I say, I mean to say actually that I am saying all of this out of something that has been happening to me increasingly over the years, or at least something that I'm increasingly aware of as happening as I get older, you see, Christ himself, the person in the power of his work, the work that he's done for us and does for us, and in the power of the course or the track or the route by which he leads us, Christ increasingly fills my horizon.

[51 : 26] You see what I mean by horizon? Yes. You look out, you see the horizon, well, there's an image in Chesterton at one point, oddly enough, not explicitly Christian image, of a huge face filling the whole of one's horizon.

Christ. And that makes up for me with the thought of seeing the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Wherever I look, increasingly I find I'm seeing the face of Jesus Christ.

In this sense, this isn't pictorial imagination, I'm trying to articulate the thought that I understand just about everything in life in terms of Christ and my relation to Christ as one who's involved with Christ and being led by Christ in the living of this life in which the puzzling things have surfaced.

And that, I think, is linking up very directly, isn't it, the way that Antinja was putting things. Well, I'm telling you all, I didn't ever ask for this to happen, but by the grace of God, it is happening to me as I get older, and I am very thankful.

Now, make of it friends, whatever, whatever you think. Thank you very much for putting it that way. Very good. Harvey.

[53 : 04] Just a little foot note, I think he's a modest man, he doesn't write as a theologian, and his whole life has been a magnificent obsession with the political meaning, of hope, political.

political. Yes. Why did Plato think about the life of man collectively in the world? Why does it keep going? What are we thinking about?

How do we anticipate in the future? That is very central point. Yeah. He's got a passion for communicating with people who are searching for truth, but may be a long way from Christ.

He writes in a prologue to the book, an appeal to such people, saying, look, we Christians, we study Marxism, and we study various things to see what insights there can be on the human condition, and you really should study Christ.

So, that's why he writes, as you say, Harvey, the absence of theological terminology, largely. He writes in what you may call a theological layman's language.

[54 : 11] So, yeah. Can I ask a question? Jim, Dr. Parker? When you were speaking this now, I heard or understood that you were saying something about in C.S.

Lewis' words, that there is still hope for redemption, in other words, after death. I mean, that's what I was hearing, and I would really like to clarify that from you.

I mean, Lewis, obviously, thought something like that, because you write books like *The Great Divorce*, where people seemed to get another chance after death at redemption, and no sense of temptation.

So, could you? Well, I mean, there's a thing most Christians who say, no, that's not, you know, that's not reality, and there's no chance of eternal life after death.

But I heard you say something else. maybe I'll, maybe I'll, maybe I'll, it doesn't know what I thought. What I thought I was saying, what I meant to say, was that this was, was clear, and explicitly, the view of C.S. Lewis.

[55 : 27] Yes. Yeah. I didn't identify with it in what I said, at least I didn't think I didn't. And now that you put me on the spot, I don't identify with it in positive terms.

I ask myself only, is it permissible for a Christian like Lewis, all Christians in many ways, is it permissible for a Christian to hold such a view?

Or should one, like those to whom you were referring to ask the question, should one rule it out and say categorically, no, we have been told that that's impossible?

This is a question of how you understand scripture, and it can only be resolved if we sit down and have a fairly extended study of scripture and or texts which, in which some people find more than others do.

And my position is that I don't think one is compelled to reject this idea, same as, just as, I personally don't dare affirm it.

[56 : 57] I am saying that to me it's an open question, and I don't know how to resolve it, and I don't believe I'm called to resolve it. I believe that what I am called to do is to spread the gospel invitation as far and as wide as I can, and to tell people what on the surface, plainly, explicitly, over and over again in text after text, scripture tells us, without Christ we're lost.

Just like that, you see. And that's where my communication starts. and I'm not dodging anything, I don't think, because when I leave the question open, I believe that's what the Lord teaches me to do from such study of reflection as I've done.

And I believe that I honour him by leaving the question open, because it's his business rather than mine. But you see that. And I have a conscience about leaving God's business to God and concentrating only on what scripture shows to be my business, which is to spread the gospel on the basis that everybody needs Christ.

Just like that. So that I mean, when I say you're okay, I'm not asking whether you agree with me. I certainly would hesitate to cut Canon Packer short.

But I think it's now time to call this to a conclusion. I wonder if you would also comment on this as another contribution of...

[58 : 56] Yes, this is the political meaning of Christianity. this was a book that he wrote in the 80s and it came to our attention indirectly through an article in Atlantic Monthly which some of you may remember in the period about 1990 called Can We Be Good Without God?

It was a remarkable exposition in ordinary language of the agape love of God and his desire for the exaltation of man and the in contrast to the typical human desire to exalt ourselves.

So it was a beautiful explanation of the gospel and when some of us at UBC read it we said who is this man? Couldn't he come and preach the gospel on our campus? And so he did for a week.

And then I must go on now but I'll tell some of you later if you're interested. Very interesting story of how that article actually came to be written and how it came to be published.

So Glenn had to go to the airport but Phil will be with us. So let me thank Phil for this personal introduction to Professor Tinder.

[60 : 12] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

And then we'll talk about the question it again.

People