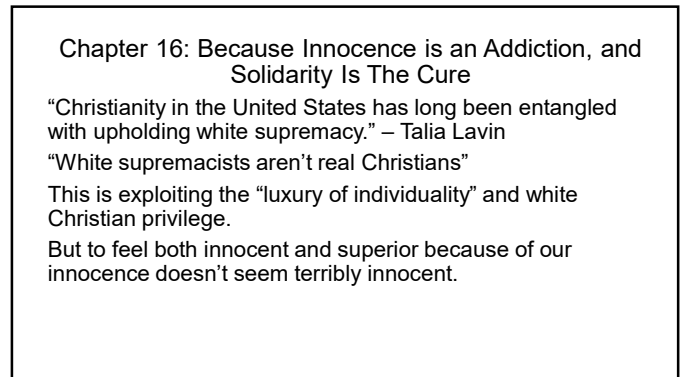
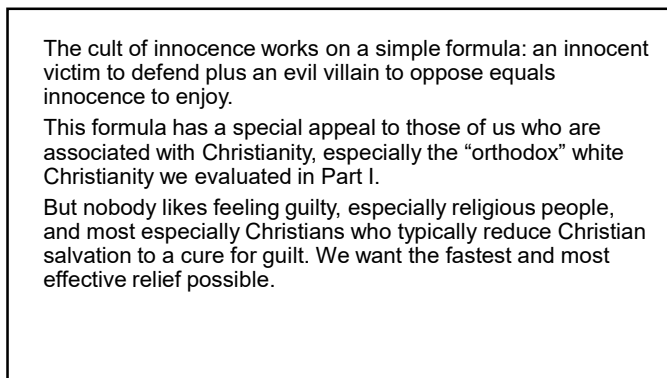


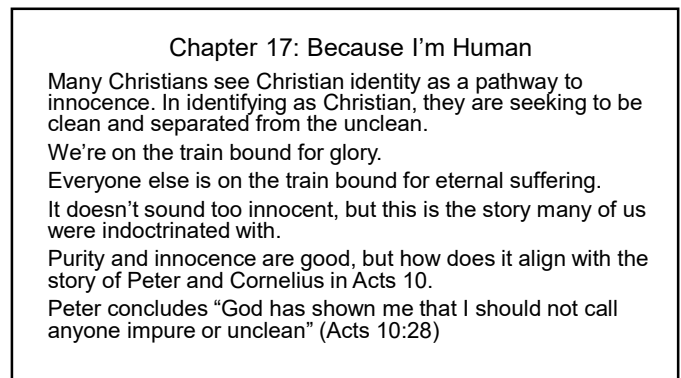
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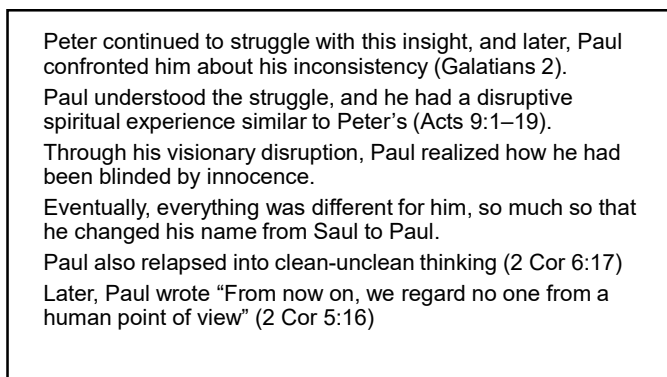
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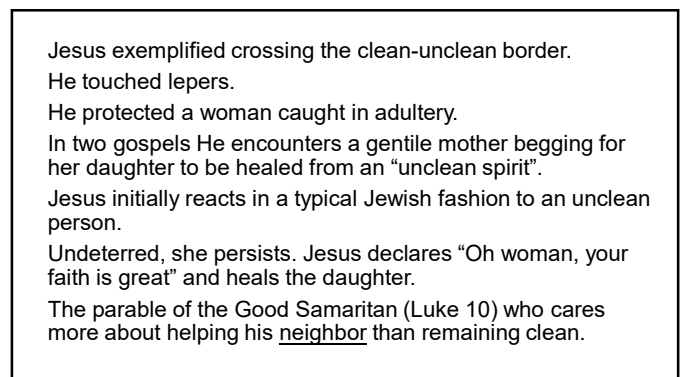
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4



5



6

Where does the quest for innocence stop?  
 If Christianity is the embarrassment that bothers us, what happens after we disassociate from Christianity?  
 Do we renounce our American citizenship?  
 Do we denounce democracy?  
 If we keep separating from whatever strikes us as flawed, whatever embarrasses us, we will eventually find ourselves as isolated misanthropes, hating humanity as a failed project. And we'd be ashamed of that too!

7

To quantify our options as humans:

1. There is no way. Humanity is doomed.
2. There is one way, and Christianity (or some other single religion or ideology) is it.
3. There is one way, and it is the rejection of all religion.
4. There may be a way to draw the best resources we can from all our traditions, not to cure us of being human, but to help us become humane, because in the end, we humans are all connected, in an inescapable web of mutuality.

McLaren chooses option 4.

8

#### Chapter 18: Because Christianity Is Changing (for the Worse and for the Better)

McLaren believes that at this point in time major sectors of Christianity have never looked more misguided or regressive (at least in recent history), but we are closer to a breakthrough than we've been in a long, long time.  
 The theological progress we've made is breathtaking.  
 McLaren credits the progress to women, people of color, LGBTQ folks, and other previously excluded minorities.  
 They are making inroads and inviting us to join them.

9

"By some amazing but vastly creative spiritual insight the slave undertook the redemption of a religion that the master had profaned in his midst." (Howard Thurman)

Pope Francis' *Laudato si* comes at a time of ecological and economic collapse.

In this his second encyclical the pope critiques consumerism and irresponsible development, laments environmental degradation and global warming, and calls all people of the world to take "swift and unified global action."

The pope's third encyclical, *Fratelli tutti*, calls for more human fraternity and solidarity, and is a plea to reject wars.

Maybe in five hundred or a thousand years we should give up. But surely not now.

10

#### Chapter 19: To Free God

If God is entirely separate from the physical world, then the world is just stuff—profane, cheapened, easy to exploit.  
 If God is in control of the world like an engineer controlling a big machine, when we or our neighbors suffer, we can logically conclude that human suffering is God's will.  
 If God chooses some for privilege and abandons others for damnation, God sets an example of us/them thinking that only the worst of us will follow.  
 If God likes to save people from predicaments through magic skyhooks, it becomes more spiritual for humans to pray for a miracle than to do the hard work required.

11

Traditionalists issue this ultimatum: Either speak of God using old language and metaphors or don't speak of God at all.  
 Atheists issue the same ultimatum as the traditionalists, but they go with the second option - don't speak of God at all.  
 McLaren sees a third option: "God, rid me of God" (Eckhart)  
 McLaren believes we need to echo his prayer with resolve - to find new names, metaphors, frameworks, languages, and contemplative practices that will help us experience the God who rids us of the God we need to be rid of.

12