



From Here to Utopia

What religion can teach the Left

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Albertson and Blakely write that to facilitate a true revolution from the ground up, we must rebuild circles of inclusion. What are some strategies for inclusivity across religious, racial, and class lines? What are some of the biggest challenges?

2. Do you agree that emphases on civic belonging and cultural transformation tend to be neglected on the American Left? What are some examples of this neglect, or alternatively, of ways in which the Left *does* emphasize cultural transformation?

3. Albertson and Blakely point to Homeboy Industries and the Catholic Worker as organizations built on radical kinship and radical generosity. Can you think of any other organizations that build anti-capitalist forms of communal belonging? How could such an organization operate in your community?

4. The authors name proponents of utopian thought who have been motivated by Christian faith, such as William Morris, Cesar Chavez, and Cornel West. What makes their thinking utopian? What kind of relationship can exist between Christian and utopian moral visions?

5. Are there any politicians, writers, activists, or artists today making the case for the cultural shift toward shared human frailty and universal belonging? How do they present their vision?

6. What “cultural liturgies” do you participate in? What are the forms of ritual and sacramentality normalized in our culture?

7. What are some of the challenges of balancing secularism with the need to incorporate religious communities for political change? How can opponents of capitalism navigate the requirements of living in spiritually diverse societies as well as the need to actively appeal to religious sensibilities?

8. What are some ways to seek out “radical belonging with the poor”?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Matthew Sitman, “Muddling Through,” July 2020: <https://commonwealmagazine.org/muddling-through>

Phil Christman, “Turning Nothings Into Somethings,” December 2020: <https://commonwealmagazine.org/turning-nothings-somethings>

Eugene McCarragher, “Turn the Page,” June 2019: <https://commonwealmagazine.org/turn-page>

Dorothy Day, “Houses of Hospitality,” April 1938: <https://commonwealmagazine.org/houses-hospitality>

Herbert McCabe, “The Validity of Absolutes,” January 1966: <https://commonwealmagazine.org/validity-absolutes>

Joseph Bishop, “Liturgy as Subversive Activity,” December 1970: <https://commonwealmagazine.org/liturgy-subversive-activity>