



A Personal Reflection on Certain Current Perspectives
Germane to Forming the Coracle Community At This Time

Rev. Bill Haley
August 2025

Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in Jesus all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through Jesus and for Jesus. Jesus himself is before all things, and in Jesus all things hold together. Jesus is the head of the body, the church; Jesus is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that Jesus might come to have first place in everything. For in Jesus all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Jesus God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of Jesus' cross. (St. Paul in Colossians 1.15-20)

Dear friends and fellow pilgrims,

All of us have many perspectives and convictions, our opinions and clarities that have developed for us over time and settle deep in our souls. I'm no different, and of the many convictions I hold, some of the perspectives I currently have are particularly relevant as we form the Coracle Community and might be helpful to those interested in the community to know these at the beginning. The following is where I am now, after a fair amount of life, observation, reflection, and experience, and there's always room to be challenged and grow. As I think about this community forming at this time, these are some things that naturally come to mind, notions that influence my thinking and that I'd want you to know that this is what/how I'm thinking.

This is not my personal creed or statement of faith,¹ that's not the purpose of this document. *This is not a position statement for the whole Coracle Community to have to agree with or ascribe to.* In fact, I wouldn't expect all these views to be shared and I welcome dialogue. Rather this is actually quite a personal document about certain of my views that I want to be up front about. *To repeat, this document is not meant to reflect the views of the community or that a person would need to be in full agreement with*

¹ For my theological understandings and how I understand the whole Christian story and worldview and then the implications, you might look at "Essential Christianity" which I wrote in December of 2020 and which Coracle developed into a video course as well. You can see the PDF [here](#), [order a hard copy or Kindle e-book from Amazon](#), or watch/do [the videos here](#).

all of it in order to be a part of the community. Just because something is on this list does not mean it will be a major theme or focus of the community, or the first things we'll talk about.

Most deeply, I offer it more in an attempt to be fully transparent with some of my views at the very beginning so that people would be less likely to be surprised when I talk about things like the below, or when we engage in discussions around some of these topics as they emerge. Personally, I'm trying to be open and transparent on the front end to avoid surprises or disappointment. What follows are some of my current perspectives germane to forming the Coracle Community at this time.

GOD—CREATION—JESUS—CHURCH

- YHWH—the name of the ineffable G-D as it was revealed to the Jewish people—is big, beautiful, and infinite. There is one God consisting in three persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- The Apostle's and Nicene Creeds, and a Celtic Declaration of Faith² are True, and are enough.
- The Bible is the inspired word of God. Jesus is the Living Word of God. God is revealed in God's "[first book of creation](#)", from the beginning, now, and always (Rms 1.19-20 etc). God reveals God's-self in a myriad and millions of ways.
- All creation is related and in relationship. There is one human family ("There is no them, there's only us") and we share our common home, and with *all* of creation.
- God is always near to us, always with us, as near as our [breath](#).
- The Beauty of God, and Jesus, is often under-recognized.
- Jesus is alive, and present by his Holy Spirit. There is such a thing as eternal life (God's life) and we can participate in it now in the concrete circumstances of each of our unique expressions of the human experience. This [eternal life](#), divine life, is what Jesus invites people to (Jn 10.10 etc).
- There is One Church, and only one church, 'There is one body and one Spirit' (Eph 4.4-5 etc).
 - The variety of Christian traditions are expressions of the one body of Christ, and need each other for a fuller Christian expression. Christians benefit from Christian traditions which understand the faith differently, with different understandings and experiences of the Trinitarian God. Along with

² "We believe and trust in the Father Almighty. We believe and trust in Jesus Christ his Son. We believe and trust in the Holy Spirit. We believe and trust in the Three in One" (from The Northumbria Community).

the Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant traditions, the ancient Celtic tradition also has a tremendous contribution to offer the whole Church.

- [John 17.20-25](#) is more about spiritual unity than visible unity. Recognizing our spiritual unity will lead to more visible unity.
- While reform in the Catholic church in the 1500s was needed, unfortunately the Reformation created significant and persistent deficiencies in the Protestant tradition which over time can obscure and limit a person's understanding and experience of God and stunt spiritual growth. Protestantism needs the correctives and contributions of the Catholic, Orthodox, and Celtic traditions, and those ancient traditions can benefit from a breadth of riches in the Protestant tradition in order that the fullness of God revealed in Christ might be more clearly seen, known, enjoyed, and God glorified. While some issues remain, many significant differences between the Protestant and Catholic traditions were substantially addressed and resolved in Vatican II (ca. mid-1960s), which was the Catholic tradition's eventual response to the Protestant Reformation 500 years later.

LOVE—JUSTICE

- God is Love (1Jn 4.8 etc etc etc) and Jesus is the incarnation of that Love. The Holy Spirit is the presence of that Love with us. Together, the Three-in-One God who is Love is the Divine Life into which we are being invited and drawn.
- Divine Love is other-centered, self-giving, and self-sacrificial.
- The Paschal Mystery is the core of the Christian faith. It reveals who God is, manifested in cruciform love.
- Love is central and essential, the *sine qua non*, in the life of a Christian. The reception and practice and pursuit of Love is the most essential element of discipleship and witness. Nothing matters more than Love in the life of a Christian (1 Cor 13, 1 Jn 4 etc etc).
 - Love and actual Christ-like behavior matter more than right-beliefism (Mt 25.31ff, Mt 7.21-23 etc).
- Christians are to love each other, love our neighbor, love the Other, and love our (perceived) enemies. Most of us need the help of a like-minded community to do this, and this Christ-like love best develops within, through, and by Christian community.
- Because God loves justice (Is 61.8 etc), Christians and God-lovers are summoned and compelled to work for justice, confront injustice, and contend for Shalom/the Kingdom of God. This takes many unique forms, both individual and structural, for the sake of people.

- Because God cares for the vulnerable and the poor (Ps 146 etc) and relies on God's people to do so (Mt 25.31-46 etc), the Church gets to demonstrate a preferential option for the vulnerable and the poor. Those in need are our neighbors (Lk 10.25ff etc).
- The Christian call to and practice of peacemaking (Mt 5.9) is beckoning to be more fully discovered and more fully developed.
- Those whose voices have been less valued in society should be elevated so that all voices can be honored and heard, so that we all can benefit from the wisdom of others. In the American context, this means conscientiously recognizing the importance of the voices particularly of women and people of color and creating ways for those to be heard more often.
- Jesus was Incarnate Love and showed compassion on everyone he encountered in different ways. Jesus loved everybody, including the religious leaders of his day even while [he reserved his anger exclusively and consistently](#) for them specifically. They killed him.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

- Union with God (*theosis*) is the goal of creation, of human existence, the Incarnation, and the Christian faith. It is God's invitation to us, summed in the phrase "[eternal life](#)", which can begin now and which we can grow in. Contemplation and the sacraments make a path, in the concrete circumstances of our everyday lives. Self-emptying (*kenosis*) is inevitable on the deeper spiritual journey, in our unique, individual expressions of it.
- Silence is a critical spiritual practice and an important way to pray.
- The Eucharist is the body and blood of Jesus, the Real Presence of Christ, and Christians feed on him in order to be his actual body in the world. Christ is present in the Eucharist.
- Saints and mystics (and prophets) are our guides and teachers.
- Monastic practice and wisdom from the earliest days of the church to the present has a tremendous [amount to offer](#) in today's world for lay people who are not monastics.
- [Beauty](#) is to be enjoyed, joy is to be pursued.

AMERICA

- From its beginning in the early 1600s through to 1776 and for many decades after, America was founded on beliefs that White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant Men were superior to all other types of people, a belief that long persisted and that has been operative for centuries in culture and law.

- While it has enjoyed many benefits from the wisdom of her founders, America is neither a Christian nation nor God's country. [America \(also\) is Babylon](#).
- There are two Kingdoms, the Kingdom/s of this world (Babylon) and the Kingdom of God. The Christian vocation is to live first as citizens of the Kingdom of God while living within the Kingdom/s of this world. Jesus says we can't serve two masters. St. Ignatius talks of Two Standards (banners to march under). We must choose.
- Christianity in America currently has a significantly damaged witness due to political partisanship and associations.

WHITE EVANGELICALISM

- The white evangelical tradition, [formed in and shaped by a particular culture](#), has made many contributions to personal discipleship and culture in America, has resulted in a lot of good work in the world, and through it many people have met and followed Jesus. And, certain aspects of white evangelicalism significantly distort God, Jesus, the Gospel, the Kingdom, and the Bible, such that it can often keep people from God and cause harm. God can and does still use this particular form of Christian tradition, and it needs to mature and where needful, repent and change.
 - From its formation and still persistent, the movement of white evangelicalism [has been afflicted by the toxins](#) of patriarchy, racism, and Christian nationalism, and has been co-opted for political gain in the pursuit of power with great effect.
 - This movement's religious leaders are those responsible for enabling these dynamics in its formation and perpetuation, *it is not the fault of people in the pew*. When Jesus saw crowds like this, 'he had compassion for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd' (Mt. 9.36).
 - We celebrate that there are some evangelical churches, leaders, and institutions that have recognized these malformations in this particular Christian tradition and are charting a different path in fidelity to God and bearing better witness to Jesus, becoming agents of healing.
- Many Christians (God-lovers, Jesus-believers, Truth-seekers) are legitimately disoriented in recent years and have deep questions about what they were taught by their leaders as being true, essential, and what was to be prioritized. Many Christians know something is off.
- The 'culture war' is a distraction. Persecution is normative for the Christian and ought not to be feared, and even welcomed (Acts 5.40-41 etc).

COMMUNITY—CHURCH

- Community is crucial for personal flourishing and transformation, marked by vulnerability, honesty, safety, and grace. Logs on a fire need each other to burn brighter and hotter.
- Hospitality is crucial, making a place of welcome and helping people feel welcome and loving with availability, without judgement and without agenda.
 - a person becoming a Christian is not the goal of loving them...loving them is.
 - a need for certainty about the eternal destiny of ourselves or others can lead to a lot of misplaced energy and anxiety, and can easily become manipulative.
- People need places where they can be safe, and bring their questions and brokenness-es without fear, a place to be accompanied in their hard seasons.
- Good questions are very important and wanted and welcomed, and asking honest questions is to be encouraged. These deserve thoughtful responses.
- A regular gathering of believers, a church service, doesn't have to be complicated to be a legitimate church service. "Church" does not have to be about the service. A service does not have to be about the sermon. The church service sustains the life of the community, not vice versa. It strengthens the individual to go into the week ahead re-oriented and fed.
- The Episcopal office and ministry (i.e the role of a bishop) deeply matters. This form of church governance is the most ancient, historic, and global, and still is representative of the vast majority of the Church today.
- Rev. Bill Haley is a priest ordained in and recognized by the Anglican Communion.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (St. Paul in Ephesians 3.14-21)