

# Between Exile and Redemption: a View of the Catholic Church in England

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On 5 September 2001, Cormac Murphy O'Connor, the newly-appointed Archbishop of Westminster, gave an address to the National Conference of Priests of England and Wales on the state of the Church in Britain. It was a measured and thoughtful meditation on things as they are and things as he hoped they could be. It was not the substance of the speech which drew the headlines, but an off-the-cuff remark thrown off in the course of it which suggested that the Catholic Church had lost its place in society and had almost been vanquished by the forces of secularism. At last it seemed to many that the Cardinal realised that he was on the deck of the Titanic and that there was no further point in re-arranging the deckchairs if the ship was going down. Preachers often discover that if they tell a joke at the beginning of their homily then it is the joke that people will remember, not the matter of the sermon. In a recent French study of the secularisation of the European mind the Cardinal was quoted as an authority on the question, with this remark cited in support of that claim.<sup>1</sup> Soundbites stick!

There were a number of things about the Cardinal's throwaway remark which some found disturbing. He was not saying that the Church is finished, he was not saying that it will pass away and that it is on the way to extinction. He was saying that its purchase on public life is now attenuated; the public, institutional forms of our civic life are not obviously touched by the spirit and forms of Christianity. The society in which we live no longer seems to resound to the rhythms of divine grace, it has lost the religious habits of the heart and can no longer speak the language of religious tradition. More than that, although it seems to be able to recognise some religious symbols and aspire to some religious or spiritual fulfilment, ours is, in fact, a society of practical atheists. There may occasionally be some consonance between the civic and the religious, but if there is, this will always be marked by the pluralism that not only has come to characterise our social life, but is actively sought as an ideal by many. What the Cardinal was suggesting was that the process of secularisation

<sup>1</sup> René Rémond, *Religion et Société en Europe: la Sécularisation aux XIX<sup>e</sup> et XX<sup>e</sup> siècles 1789–2000* (Paris, 2001). See also Colin Greene, *Christology in Cultural Perspective: Marking out the Horizons* (Paternoster Press, 2003).

in our country had perhaps gone further than many people had suspected.

When I was an undergraduate at Oxford over thirty years ago, I went to hear a lecture by a distinguished historian, on the effects of the Arab conquest of North Africa. Why was it the agricultural productivity of a province that had been one of the grain baskets for Europe, declined dramatically within a few generations? The answer was: 'the Arabs did not tether their goats'. A goat will eat indiscriminately. It will strip the bark off a tree as high as it can reach. The tree will begin to wither, eventually the roots will die, the soil will lose its coherence, the ecology of the area will change and the landscape will alter. It will not happen overnight; it will take some time, but the process is inevitable, the younger generations will not remember what once was, they will assume that things have always been this way and they will lose the necessary skills to live any other way. Within two generations the environment will have altered, people will accommodate themselves to living in it. They will learn to cope with a collective loss of memory.

We in the Catholic Church have been through such an ecological change in the past forty years. Many changes have been slow and imperceptible, because they have involved not only the Church, but the whole social and cultural environment. Consequently, it has been difficult to evolve a consistent theological and apostolic response to these changes. Any strategy is necessarily reactive and not pre-emptive.

A concentration on the establishment of parishes and schools in the 1950s and 1960s, to accommodate the increase in the Catholic population and to occupy the greatly increased numbers of priests and religious who were appearing on the scene (in 1961 England had 1 priest for every 511 Catholics, second only to Malta and the Netherlands in Europe) meant that sufficient attention was not given to the support and development of Catholic intellectual institutions devoted not only to education, but to theological research and the engagement with culture, which the increased representation of Catholics in the professional and academic classes warranted. We educated our young well in our schools, but we did not really know what to do with them after university. In some ways you could say that Catholicism has consequently lost the public intellectual argument in this country. Its academic institutions are under increasing threat of secularisation and the costs of maintaining them are vast. Theologians are an endangered species, while theology in universities is often seen as a subject for those destined for a career in social work, those looking for an easy way into university, or else as a form of apostolic engagement for those who have reached retirement. The problem of declining numbers of candidates for the priesthood or religious life, indeed the problem of finding suitable candidates at all,

forces theological institutes not into co-operation but competition. The fragmented world in which we live touches us all, even at the deepest level of our religious and apostolic life.

In a technical sense secularisation does not necessarily entail the vigorous promotion of a purely secular ideal that might involve the active persecution of Christianity. It cannot be said that Christianity has shared in the experience of the church of silence of the Stalinist and post-Stalin years. Secularisation may also unfold in a slow, often imperceptible way. Its advance may be unheeded by believers; gradually, as the process unfolds, religious ideas, religious values and the institutions that transmit and guard those values and ideas, lose their public status. They are no longer recognised and supported by society at large, which does not see something of its own identity and tradition reflected in them. As an increasing number of people become indifferent, if not overtly hostile to these ideas and values, they inevitably lose their plausibility. Even those charged with the preaching and defence of Christian doctrine find their confidence in that mission undermined. Without a tradition of corporate intellectual and evangelical engagement with contemporary society, and having failed to build and sustain the institutions and communities which could nurture and promote such an engagement, the Catholic Church finds itself following the public agenda and has become a muted critic of the aggressively, secular humanist policies of the political establishment. It has lost confidence in its dissenting tradition, having grasped at the tantalising chimaera of 'establishment'.

There is no disputing the fact of the decline of religious practice in modern times. The eclipse of traditional, stable and close-knit communities, united not simply by religious ties, but by social or ethnic bonds; the gradual assimilation of Catholics into the wider society through a lessening of forms of exclusion, oppression or discrimination; the greater social mobility of Catholics, through their increasing participation in the forms of higher education, allowing them access to the professions, have all played their part in this decline. The political and social revolution of the 60s, the failure of those aspirations and projects which issued in a return to a pre-occupation with the self in the 70s, the consumerism and disillusion of the 80s and 90s, have now produced a generation of nominal Catholics whose ignorance of the principles of their faith is abysmal. It could be argued that Catholicism has lost the intellectual argument with contemporary society, not through any implicit intellectual defect or incoherence, but by default and through complacency. At the beginning of the twenty-first century we find ourselves confronted with the challenge of the evangelisation of a secular society, but we do not know how to respond to that challenge. At the same time we find ourselves chronically under-resourced. Meanwhile, Church authorities and their press agents grab for comfort at any survey that suggests that our contemporaries might retain the vestiges of religious belief. A recent poll established that

about 75% of the population believed in an after-life, this was taken as demonstrating some interest in religion. Still, this should be set against another poll that revealed that 25% of the inhabitants of this country also believe in re-incarnation. What kind of after-life are we talking about here?

What the Cardinal was implying was nothing essentially new to the world of religious sociology and anthropology. Peter Berger, the American sociologist, who wrote in his *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, about 35 years ago, that the withdrawal or departure of religion from the institutional heart of modern European society leads not only to the secularisation, but also to the pluralization of the modern consciousness. The 'sacred canopy', the over-arching metaphysical and symbolic structure provided by the religious story, has been removed or drawn back, modern society now appears so complex with a plurality of possible meanings and codes of behaviour, that individuals are left to their own devices to work out and decide for themselves whatever explanation, or interpretation of social order makes sense for them, in their particular circumstances in their setting, with their history. As a result, we become a society of explorers, travellers destined never to arrive. The journey we make is one of gregarious solitude, we may all be making it together, but we are not necessarily on the same trail. Religion is not built into the pattern of a communal, social order, it is a matter of personal preference, an aid to my making the journey. It has become therapeutic in some sense, and therefore runs the risk of being self-generated.

One of the consequences of the secularisation of modern life is what a French anthropologist has called: 'the terror of history'. This compels us to attempt to create our own meanings and purposes in a world that is not addressed and transformed by the word of revelation carried by the living stream of tradition. If God does not tell us who we are, if we cannot read anything of God in our own fashioning, then we have to try and make sense of ourselves, by ourselves. We do this in the light of our own accomplishments and in our own historical achievements. I am what I do and what I create. The mystery of myself is the ultimate depth to be fathomed.

It is not surprising, then, that there should be some crisis in the self-understanding of the people of God given the general difficulties that social and communitarian language and theory undergo in our society. In our resolutely post-modern world questions are raised not simply about meanings, but about meaning itself. We also, allegedly, live in an age of rampant individualism. We can be what we want to be, if we choose any particular identity then it is because it suits us or allows us to develop our own potentiality in a particular way. Needless to say, drawing the relational map in this way undermines notions of election and vocation, and the sacrifice and altruism that are often associated with certain roles either in the Church or in secular society. Our age often seems to leave little space for heroes.

It is no surprise then that we appear to live in a more transitory and unstable world than some of our ancestors. In what is often called, somewhat dismissively by our contemporaries, a hierarchical society, that is a relatively stable society in which change is controlled and managed through strongly supported representative institutions with their own traditions and ethos, individuals are more accustomed to operating within a role. A society, having a vision of itself as an organic reality, recognises the various indispensable functions that individuals can fulfil for the benefit and proper ordering of that society. It honours certain professions and certain roles as symbolising essential services, or ministries, to use a modern term, without which no society can function. The role allows the personality to be expressed in the context of service. The honour or public acceptance that is directed towards those who accept these public responsibilities sustains individuals and enables them to feel valued. They are not perceived as technocrats or mere functionaries who keep the wheels of social machinery oiled.

If you operate with a technocratic or almost mechanical view of society in which the servants of society become part of the engineering process then, paradoxically, you get a less humane society. Those who serve society are taken up into the process of social engineering; they become social engineers who learn a series of prescribed skills. If they fail in these skills, if they make errors of judgment then they are subject not to dishonour primarily, but to financial penalty. In a society like ours in which notions of honour and shame are largely redundant the only way of showing disapproval or condemnation is through imposing financial penalty. The principle way of punishing people who fail or make errors of judgment in public service is through disgracing them by removing from them the one sign of status which is universally recognised, money. The way that they come close to losing their full civic participation is by financial ruin. In this context we have no more public servants, we can have no common wisdom of mutual service in sacrifice for the common good, because those who serve society are its employees, to be hired at will and fired and punished when they show some form of human failing or weakness. In our consumer society it can be no other way.

The consumer society is a society that is brought up on the notion of purchase; its goods are designed to promote individual flourishing, or to satisfy individual needs and desires. Inevitably, demand will be immense because there is no created good that can ultimately satisfy human aspirations. The purchasing power of the consumer is supposed to give freedom, individual liberty to obtain those material goods that will lead to the development of full human potential. Consequently, every form of public service can be interpreted in those terms. Lawyers are there to protect my individual rights and to see that I get my due and that nobody puts one over on me;

questions of justice are more difficult to resolve against such a background. Teachers are there to educate my children in the way that I want them to be educated. In effect, as many will admit, they are becoming child-care officers charged with the full and unrewarded duty of being agents of government social engineering policy. If they fail parents will be on the doorstep of the classroom asking why their children are being victimised and their rights ignored. Doctors are there to help us deny our fear of death and the realisation that we inevitably decline in health, as we get older. A lot of their work arises from the unwillingness of our society to accommodate weakness and the projection of the image of a fully human and integrated existence as being healthy, young, energetic and immortal. If they show any signs of not being able to shoulder this unreasonable burden then we can always refer to Doctor Shipman to show that every surgery may shelter a potential mass murderer. What about priests, what about religious figures, what can they offer? This brings me back to Cardinal Murphy O'Connor and where I disagree with him.

What I have been describing is the phenomenon of what has been called the 'unanchored self'. You can sometimes tell what really bothers a society from those whom it regards as irremediably evil, those who are completely beyond the pale, and worthy of no humane consideration whatsoever. The degree of social disapproval and inclination to punishment of such individuals is the nearest our irreligious society comes to constructing a vision of hell. What it wants for such people is eradication and non-existence, absolute negation, even extermination. In the recent past there have been various acts of violent delinquency that have shaken societies to the core. These are often related to mass killings of the innocent, as in terrorist attack or, more alarmingly, the sudden eruption of adolescent killers intent on massacring their schoolfellows. Those responsible for such mayhem are frequently described as 'loners', individuals who are unable to connect with those around them, who live isolated lives, often with a degree of material security which has enabled them to develop some form of effective fantasy life in which images of control go together with deep personal feelings of rejection and anger. They are classic and symbolic representations of the 'unanchored selves' that are to be found throughout our society. In an odd kind of way they are the negative image of the positive heroes held up for our approval and idealisation especially in popular American films. Think of the old Clint Eastwood films of the 'make my day punk' type. The lone hero who comes into town sorts out the hypocrisy and disorder which lurks under its surface. He is usually touched by a romantic encounter, but then in a controlled and self-disciplined way moves on to the next mission renouncing the attractions of normal human society. He has been the liberator, but only because he has retained the mystique of being unanchored. He is

free of all human attachments, it is this that enables him to act as the agent of natural justice, but he never stays. He is always in control. From a psychological point of view, of course, this is the only thing that allows him to massacre people without turning a hair. Why do such characters appeal to the popular imagination, why are they the icons of contemporary integration?

If, as seems a commonplace in our society, the self is defined by its ability to choose its own values, what are the grounds on which those choices can be safely or intelligibly made? For many of our contemporaries there are actually no objective criteria for choosing one value or course of action over another. The very fact of a preference being personal, even if idiosyncratic, is justification enough. It is these preferences that truly define what and who we are, so it is claimed. In this connexion the right action, the right belief system is simply the one that affords the most exciting challenge or the most good feeling about themselves.

Now, what is our response as Catholic Christians to this?

One of the ways people attempt to find the self-expression or self-realisation that they feel is missing from the rest of their lives is by finding what are sometimes called 'life-style enclaves'. You find a community, a group, which accepts roughly the same values as yourself, where constant self-justification is not necessary and where a corporate sense of identity and purpose sustains the individual on his or her quest. In a way such communities are contractual communities, you belong to them because you are admitted, you can satisfy the membership criteria and you live according to the rules.

In his address the Cardinal specifically mentioned the importance of 'small communities'. He says, explicitly, that in the future most Catholics will need to belong to some form of small community and be more actively involved in Church activities apart from attendance at Sunday Mass. He moved from there to speak in favour of what are called the 'new movements'. These are a sign of renewal and hope in the Church and provide the framework in which people can live out their faith in a satisfying and meaningful context. He also said that in the Church in the West parish communities will become more a movement. First of all, the development of religious movements is not a new phenomenon. Renewal in the Church has always been associated with religious movements; traditionally these have been religious Orders. Religious Orders were not intended to be life-style enclaves where people could find the security and environment in which to become themselves. They were summoned into existence by the Holy Spirit, recognised as authentic by the Church and entrusted with an ecclesial mission. They did not, in the beginning, exist for themselves. Everything about their life was to equip them for the mission. The development and success of Religious Orders is a testimony to the vitality of the Church at particular periods in its

history. The spiritual temperature of the Church is low, in fact, when there is not an upsurge of new religious Orders or reformed traditional Orders. We have not seen such an upsurge in this country since the nineteenth century. New religious movements, which have taken shape in the context of secularised Europe, have often been seen as filling this role. Many of them have integrated various forms of Catholic life within their ranks: the celibate, the ordained, the lay, the married, and families. The danger is that the sustaining and nurturing of such a movement becomes its mission. The movement becomes an image of an ideal Church. Inevitably, there is only room for the committed and the enthusiast in such a movement. A movement has a more restricted form of life than the Church demands of every Christian. Over the years, alarmed by decline and because some bishops have imprudently adopted contemporary management strategies for their dioceses, great stress has fallen on the need for Catholics, to be committed. It is not enough to come to Mass on Sunday. Cardinal Murphy O'Connor seems to be conceding that. There must be some other kind of input. People have to be drawn into the management, administration and functioning of their congregation. They have to share 'leadership' as he says. The parish is no longer enough.

There may be many things wrong with parishes and with parish priests, but we must be careful about any tendency to make the parish into a life-style enclave. Research has shown that the number of fully involved, insiders in a parish, amounts to about 10% of a registered congregation. They sustain the activities of the parish and are closest to the pastor. Their opinion counts in the life of a parish. A further 30% are active members who support activities and who participate generally and selectively in parish life. Of the remainder, 40% are what might be called functional members; they come to Mass and that is it as far as participation in parish life is concerned. Then there is the 20% who are seasonal members and who come for special events. In practice those whose opinion counts are the 10%, and the majority of the parish priest's time, and the main influence on how the parish is run, comes from the 10% with some of the 40% occasionally contributing. The 60% who are the majority are not involved at all at the 'leadership' or 'service/ministerial' level, even though they constitute the majority. The danger is that in opting for a bureaucratic, managerial, administrative model of parish life, you, in fact, given that people shop around for parishes these days, create a life-style enclave whose purpose is to provide a 'spirituality' to sustain it and its life-style option. It loses out on the challenge to mission. Traditionally, the parish exists not just for those Catholics who happen to worship in the parish church, but is called to be the mission of the Church in a particular area. The entire parish is charged with the duty of evangelising the area in which it is.



Some of the difficulties faced by modern clergy stem from the presumption that clerical life provides the structure of a life-style enclave. Many people, I am sure, enter it for idealistic reasons. I do not mean for the best motivation. They come because it seems to offer an opportunity for them to develop their 'full potential as persons', as it was once put to me. Some understand this to mean that it will provide a disciplined framework in which certain aspects of their personalities may remain unacknowledged or suppressed. Their expectations of this profession are highly personalised, and doomed to disappointment, since it is impossible to provide the support system that they feel is necessary for their survival as human persons. When the system fails them, which is inevitable, they sometimes take leave of it. Life-style enclaves are the death of mission and the death of vocation.

The Cardinal also pointed out, quite rightly in my view, that the crisis of vocations to the priesthood and religious life is a crisis that faces the whole community. It is a crisis of faith. He then went on to ask if the indifference of many people who are members of the Church is due to the alien culture that surrounds us. He said we are not to think that. We cannot simply blame the culture and say there is nothing to be done. So, what is the remedy?

The Cardinal proposed that the decline in religious practice may result from a strategic failure on the part of the Church's ministers. Perhaps this stems from a pastoral failure to discover where 'people itch'. It may be that the Church is undergoing a presentational crisis and failing to uncover people's true religious needs. If we cannot blame culture maybe we can blame ourselves. It is our reluctance, our obtuseness, and our failure to find the right response, the right strategy to combat the background noise of modern society. You could say we have not found the right translation programme for the Gospel, that it has not been communicated in the right way. Maybe if we were to stumble on the right way of presenting it might then all would be well. What we are talking about here is marketing. I was in America recently and heard, to my horror, a woman religious speaking about her congregation's concern for promoting vocations. They had been talking to their marketing consultant about it. They were trying to learn how to 'sell themselves and their charism in a more productive way.'

The Cardinal actually pinpoints what precisely it is that makes our Gospel and our preaching of it so difficult for people to receive. He reminded the priests present that they should endeavour with all their hearts and minds to speak out about what is true. He spoke about how edified he has been by those, not necessarily Christian, who want to hear what is traditional morality. This surprises me. The current onslaught on the Church in the press is partly motivated by a belief that Catholic morality, apart from being bankrupt in the lives of the

hypocritical clerics who proclaim it, is also dangerous to your health. Its main defect, as far as these observers are concerned, is that it claims to be true, and only those systems of morality that can accord with it, or be reconciled with it or share in it in some way can be truly regarded as acceptable. In a world where relativism is king it is very difficult, despite what the Cardinal says, to get a hearing for a claim for the sovereignty of absolute truth spoken by a religious body. In this context all people think of are abusive priests and bloodthirsty mullahs stoning helpless women. Crude, but effective.

In our world morality is judged to be true and necessary in so far as it serves human need. Genetic research, the cloning of embryos, many aspects of expensive and largely pointless medical research, are justified in terms of the potential value they may have for horrible diseases that affect us. The fact that the resources spent on these cases might actually contribute to the saving of life in other areas of medical care is ignored. The fact that happiness is the great ideal in our society is demonstrated by a recent poll where most of the people asked how happy they were confessed to being not entirely happy. If we are regularly exposed to presentations of what it is to be 'happy' then we come to regard it as our right to be such. Those who get in the way of this must be depriving us of a right, structures that prevent it must be oppressive and therefore should be questioned. If there is something wrong with me it is because somebody else has caused this damage, it is not because of human sin. The almost complete disappearance of the sacrament of reconciliation from most English Catholics' lives shows that we are not immune to this development.

Each generation needs to be taught that Christianity is true in its own terms; that the cross of Christ stands as a sign of love but also as a sign of judgment. It is difficult to see how the cross can ever be successfully 'marketed'. Some generations will not be receptive to that. It will need to be taught by those who believe it and practice it. Most of our educational system is severely damaged. But this is not primarily the fault of teachers. We need a new concern for education. Catholicism must attempt to regain some of the lost ground in things of the mind. It must try to reclaim some of the intellectual battleground it has lost. It should devote renewed attention to apologetics. It should contest, in an intelligent way, the hidden agenda of much of the media by trying to establish alternative forums for debate, instruction and learning. It should attempt to reclaim its liturgy from banality, poor performance and boredom. It should encourage professional Catholics to see themselves as part of the Catholic intelligentsia whose life and witness is important to the Church's mission. This should not be presented as a clerical movement under clerical direction designed to reinforce clericalism. It should involve itself in service of the poor and the marginalized. It should appeal to the idealism of youth and above all educate the young in the faith.

During his address the Cardinal quoted from Psalm 137 proposing that the question the psalmist asks is appropriate for the English Catholic Church at this time in its history:

*How can we sing the song of the Lord on alien soil?*  
(Ps 137 vv 4–6)

We all ask at some point ‘how can we sing the song of the Lord on alien soil?’

I suppose the first thing to note is that it is His song and not ours. If He wants it sung, He will get it sung somehow. Secondly, the people of Israel did manage to sing the song of the Lord on alien soil. Exile meant dislocation and dispersion; not being at home. It meant political powerlessness. When the Church loses a measure of political clout we all begin to feel anxious. How safe are we in this hostile environment? Exile for Israel also involved a kind of spiritual disorder.

The people of Israel interpreted their exile as punishment for failure; it was a chastisement for their sins. Exile was a kind of reversal of the Exodus, a leading back into captivity, whereas the Exodus had been a leading out of captivity. Some who faced this experience refused to believe it would last, the prophet Jeremiah was the exception. He denounced the false optimists, saying it would be prolonged (Jer 29). The exile forced the people to consider their failures, they had to confront their shame and the powerful had to acknowledge their abuse of power. This realisation of corporate and individual failure prompted a confession of sin and a return to the mercy of God and to trust in it. God’s presence was real, even in the midst of the trial. His faithfulness never deserted them; He was there in the exile as He had been there in the Exodus.

Walter Brueggeman, the American Old Testament scholar, has pointed out in a number of his works that exile is always lived with a view to redemption. We live the two experiences. The space between is the space of God’s providence. In the midst of this exile we must not forget that this is God’s purpose too. God is no less in control than he has ever been. When the risen Christ tells his disciples to be his witnesses in Luke’s gospel, he says that this process will begin in Jerusalem. They are told that it will begin where they are. In rejecting and crucifying Jesus, Jerusalem was merging with the forces of disintegration. Jerusalem was mother to every pious Jew, the true pole of the earth, in obeying Jesus’ command to preach the good news the disciples were entering into alienation. Jerusalem their mother would reject them as it had rejected him. Yet, Jesus does not tell them to go elsewhere, he does not tell them to find more fertile soil or more favourable conditions. He tells them to begin where they are. They are to enter into the place of exile that their homeland has become and preach redemption to it. It is this that they have been chosen and designated for.

Many of us feel disorientated and discouraged because having been at the heart of a society we wonder if we shall continue to be. In many ways we live in the same landscape but all of the monuments by which we might take our bearings have changed. We are at home but can sometimes feel in exile.

We are being called as Catholic Christians to intensify our fidelity to Christ in his Church clothed in his promises. It is sometimes the fidelity of an exile, but it is also the fidelity of the pilgrim, the one who journeys in hope between exile and redemption that the image of His pilgrimage represents. We follow Christ, our pathfinder, as the Epistle to the Hebrews calls him. We are being summoned now to be pioneers in our turn, in fidelity to the tradition we have received, to sing the song of the gospel on alien soil. As Abraham our Father in faith heard the voice of God calling him to

*Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.*

(Genesis.12:1)

The Letter to the Hebrews tells us,

*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. For he looked forward to the city that has its foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*

(Heb, 11.8–10)

When Gregory of Nyssa comments on this passage he says that it was only when Abraham did not know where he was going that he knew he was going the right way. We are all sons and daughters of Abraham so maybe the same is true of us. In the midst of our identity crisis we often do not know where we are going, but maybe that is when we know we are going in the right direction!

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