

# CITYtheology

THE MAGAZINE OF THE LEEDS CHURCH INSTITUTE

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# WAITING TO RECEIVE GOD: ADVENT AS A CALL TO RESISTANCE



**CJ Ojukwu**, Community and Inclusion Consultant, writes in poetic form to express the Advent challenge to the realities of racism in our city and our churches

**Waiting is an inward posture and practical discipline.** Perhaps, it is one of the most important postures of Christian discipleship for those who are willing to wrestle with the promises of God. It is, in many ways, at the heart of God's invitation to His people: a call for intimacy which thinly veils God's commitment to waiting.

We are called to wait on God with child-like curiosity and meekness: attentive to the rhythm and dance of His precious Word and Spirit. We are called to wait, patiently, for ourselves and for others, even as we bear the reality of human frailty with grace, humour, and gentle correction. We are called to wait for the unveiling of the face of God to be revealed at the end of human history: the ultimate prize for the *redeemed* whose lives were punctuated by the pursuit of truth, mercy, and justice: lived intentionally on a *narrow* path of humility and holiness.

Holiness and humility.

A life that bears witness and witnesses to others.

Advent, however, bears witness to another mystery of waiting: God has come to *us* with a human face as both Saviour and Servant. In essence, He has *already* arrived in the fulfilment of a promise that was first gifted to Abraham and his descendants.

**Advent is an invitation to prepare to receive the God who comes in solidarity with His creation, which is also a call to affirm, celebrate and receive the human face—in all its complexions, complexities, wrinkles, and vulnerability.**

And yet, Advent is also a call to *see, know* and *touch* the disfigured face of God—that is, those human faces that remain disfigured by violence—particularly a *racial logic* that is as old Abraham's well, and yet *strangely* modern. A racial logic that flows from the poisoned well of Western Christianity, and its brutal history of crusades, colonial conquest, and the commodification of human beings into private property: in the name of a white-washed God, Church, King and not to forget, *profit*. For it is precisely in the making of an Imperial and Slave holding Christianity that certain *beautiful, dark skinned* and *precious* faces were both stigmatised and condemned on the altar of whiteness—an attitude and posture of moral, cultural, and intellectual superiority. It is this history, particularly its legacy of racial inequality, which still hounds us all: ordering the flow of wealth, privilege, and power along a narrow colour line that continues to privilege *whiteness* at the expense of human dignity:



From the altar to the pews. From access to employment to the awarding gap in schools.

From the privacy of family jokes to the unwritten rules about who can be invited to the dinner table.

Truth be told, even our child-friendly City of Sanctuary, Leeds, continues to mirror this history despite the significant work being undertaken to make it more welcoming and compassionate. To pretend otherwise is to forget that the contours of an Apartheid city are not drawn with ink and paper or even discriminatory laws, but with the unwritten laws of private prejudice and public indifference: particularly a long, deep, and painful silence.

A silence which ensures that the deep waters of institutional racism remain untroubled.

A silence which hides the cry of those precious victims of discrimination and their sighs of despair and frustration.

A silence which speaks of an unwritten social contract between citizens and State that ensures that some lives are *perceived* as more valuable than others.

**Advent is an invitation to respond to God's arrival, and to join Him in wrestling with the racial logic and the complex social, economic, ecological forces that continue to disfigure the human face.**

We are called to prepare our hearts, minds and hands through *prayer, action, and reflection* as part of a Beloved community that is attentive to the cry of the wounded—a welcoming community of care, attention, and love where every human face is received as a gift and sign of God's goodness.

Even those faces which mask prejudice, fear, and indifference behind a veil of *liberal* pretence, *evangelical* zeal, and *British* politeness.

## JOURNEY TO THE MANGER

A reflection on what 'Journey to the Manger' means to the people of Leeds Kirkgate Market.



Words by **Bronagh Daly**, Faith and Creativity Lead for Leeds Church Institute and illustration by **Luke Walwyn**, local artist.

**Luke's gospel account of Mary's journey to the manger begins with a decree, issuing a census to be taken of the entire Roman world.** Luke gives us a glimpse of the lengthy journey ahead for Mary, heavily pregnant and full of concern, yet comforted by the reassuring words of Angel Gabriel.

The journey of 90 miles, leaving the security of Nazareth in the north, must have been a challenging one. By foot, or with a donkey to assist, Mary covered

tough terrain towards the place of Joseph's ancestors, south along the flatlands of the Jordan, then west over the hills surrounding Jerusalem and on to Bethlehem.

**"While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born"** Luke 2:6

Unfortunately, Luke doesn't provide much detail in his writings about the journey. Readers of the time will have been all too familiar with the warnings of attacks



by wild forest animals, dangerous hills and valleys, rocky paths and the threat of pirates taking money for safe passage along the trade routes. Days and nights of provisions will have been carried either on their backs or by donkey. The cold, damp evening air fended off by heavy woollen garments, slowing down progress. The list of challenges is rarely mentioned in our retelling of this much-loved nativity story.

We also don't hear any detail of Mary's reaction as she arrives in Bethlehem, most likely bursting at the seams with people from far and wide, arriving to register with Roman officials. I imagine it must have been a busy, thriving scene, perhaps there was a market like ours here in Leeds, the Kirkgate Indoor Market, with international and local customers arriving continuously, seeking shelter from the rain clouds that have just burst, as we start our listening project.

All around us we smell the inviting aromas of the international food court. We take a moment to photograph the hustle and bustle of shoppers as they buy their enormous clumps of fresh ginger, choose Christmas cards to post to loved ones and chat with fellow punters at the latest pop-up tea kiosk. We are welcomed with interest and insight as we discuss Luke's nativity story.

Inspired by Paula Gooder's book 'Journey to the Manger' I designed a small listening project borrowing the title as an opening question in our conversations at Leeds Kirkgate Market. Luke Walwyn, an illustrator from Leeds, helped me to start the project, taking photographs and making voice recordings of the people we met.

We wanted to hear from a wide range of voices. We asked people what it would have been like for Mary to make that difficult journey, in the knowledge that she was about to give birth to the long-awaited son of God, Jesus Christ.

**Within moments of arriving in the busy market, we begin a conversation with Yuen, a young woman recently arrived in Leeds from Hong Kong. We talk about the nativity story, and she soon tells how it makes her think about her current housing issues, living in a temporary hotel.**

She asks us for help. We give her advice and contact details of a friend we think might be able to help and wish her well. She asks us for a selfie, and we happily oblige. We are moved by her gentleness as we reflect on the parallel of her housing needs and Mary's search for somewhere to stay.

We stop to chat with a local card stall owner and his wife. He tells us the religious cards are increasing in popularity, especially the depiction of the three wise men who travel to see the infant, baby Jesus, lying in a manger. He smiles and explains how people come from as far away as Scarborough to buy his cards, complete with the familiar crib scene.

The talk of cribs, makes me nostalgic for childhood advent traditions, helping the three wise men as they journey around the living room until eventually, on the twelfth day of Christmas, they arrived to find baby Jesus, asleep in his crib on the top of the bookshelf or the telly.

In many homes across Leeds a crib will be brought out of its box complete with the infant Jesus, laid in a humble manger softened by hay and surrounded by lowing animals.

We are familiar with the nativity story, inviting us to look upon an idyllic family scene as Jesus settles down to sleep in heavenly peace. We hear from shoppers who tell us about their own childhood nativity plays, with their favourite characters, essential to the script; the angels, Mary and Joseph, shepherds and the wise men. Just as Paula Gooder's writing encouraged us to look closer at the cultural and historical interpretation of the birth story in Luke's gospel, we are likewise interested to hear questions about how his words spark imagination in our retelling of the nativity story.

It is drizzling outside where we meet local market shopper, Michael. He invites us to stand under his enormous umbrella. Michael tells us the journey Mary undertook would have been filled with uncertainty and was undoubtedly a difficult one. He thought there would have been quiet times, a private and intimate scene. **"When I think about journey to the manger, I think about where Christ was born. There was nobody, just the Mum and Dad. Ultimately, it is about salvation."** We say goodbye to Michael and ponder for a while on the word salvation. God's kingdom was first revealed at the manger, a humble place among the poor and the marginalised. Luke's gospel sets the scene for the rest of the story of Jesus, and God's plan of salvation.

Local shopper, Karl, tells us the journey to the manger reminds him of family. We listen to his concerns, Christmas can be a tough time for some, far away from their family. **"It's a time to be with family, and it is about the nativity story. The manger, it is an old way of speaking. When agriculture wasn't mechanised."** Karl makes us think of simpler times, when a manger was all Mary had to offer her new-born child. A soft, warm place to rest.



We chat with Karl for a while, at the pop-up tea kiosk. He recommends we try their special blend, and we talk at length about what it must have been like for Mary and Joseph as they approached Bethlehem, full to the brim with those returning to make themselves known to the Roman census officials. As we sip our hot tea, we notice lots of people rush by. The hustle and bustle of the market. The booming voices of the traders. The endless noise announcing the good news of their bargains is not lost on us. We wonder what Mary would have heard as she arrived in Bethlehem, with all those people, we wonder if there would have been sounds and smells from the busy market filling her head with added worry and fright. Or would it have been reassuring to see so many people, after the arduous 90 mile walk from Nazareth.

We look around for a few more people to speak to.



At the market's fabric store we meet with art student Thea who tells us **"I don't really have any connection to the nativity story. I remember it from my time at primary school."** It looks as though she wants to tell us more but isn't sure. We reassure her that our listening project is open and inclusive, that we want to hear a wide variety of views from the city. She continues, **"Well, it is a bit of a weird story when you start to really think about it. Were they a real couple? Or was Joseph just sent to look after Mary?"** Thea told us the young age of Mary was troubling, **"She was so young, and Joseph would have been much older probably."** We listen to her concerns about the tough physical journey Mary had to take, as she accompanied Joseph to his home place. **"I wonder why God chose someone to be pregnant with Jesus, who lived so far away from Bethlehem. It was such a long way to travel."**

Thea's words make us reflect on our reason for starting this listening project. Hearing and recording the voices from people at the Leeds Indoor Market offers us a 'real time' insight into the relevance of the nativity story and Advent, at a time when we can easily become consumed with festivities and trimmings, rather than focusing on the lessons of Christ's life.

It is also interesting to hear the connection mothers in the market have to the birth story. This makes me draw on my own experience as a mother. When I hear the phrase 'Journey to the Manger' I remember back to when I was expecting my first-born son. I was excited and anxious, full of questions as to how my life was about to change for ever. I wonder if Mary had that overwhelming mix of feelings too. I imagine Mary will have been tired, exhausted and emotional, as any expectant mother arriving in a new place would be.

Near to the international food stall, we notice a collection of religious images for sale, framed pictures of the virgin Mary and her cherished infant portrayed in hologram form. We stop and chat with Nkechi who told us she thought Mary had a difficult journey, coming to a place she didn't know. Nkechi holds her toddler's hand tight. He smiles at us and taps his foot to the music playing from the picture seller's stall.

Nkechi tells us it is hard to settle in a new place, **"You take a look around and get to know your surroundings, get to know people and see if it is safe"**. Nkechi empathises with Mary's situation **"In a new place, you don't get to settle, it is just like getting a new house and to see if I am safe. It must have been hard, and it must have been very confusing for her."**

Of all the voices we listened to in the market, it is that of Damien from the vegetable stall that has resonated with me the most. In between sales of tomatoes and oranges, Damien gives us a very clear message. A positive affirmation, **"It reminds me of Christmas. Simple. The journey to the manger would have been a tough one. All the obstacles they had to overcome. But they did it."**

I am inspired by the people we met at the start of this listening project, and I am excited to hear more voices when we return to the Leeds Indoor Market throughout Advent.

What would be your reaction be, if you bumped into us in the market, asking to record your voice for a listening project based on story of the birth of Christ in Luke's gospel? Would you stop and chat with us? If you did, what would you say?

Share your voice and tell us what 'Journey to the Manger' means to you [creativity@leedschurchinstitute.org](mailto:creativity@leedschurchinstitute.org)

#### Recommended reading:

Gospel of Luke 2: 2-7

Paula Gooder 2015 *Journey to the Manger* Blackwells







"Christmas. Simple.  
It reminds me of Christmas.  
The journey to the manger would  
have been a tough one.  
All the obstacles they had to overcome.  
But they did it."

*London*



**TRIGGER ALERT:**  
the following articles include references to the church and sexual abuse

# FALLING AMONG THIEVES

**Andrew Graystone**, theologian, writer and activist, has spent a lot of time walking with victims and survivors of church-related abuse since he uncovered the activities of serial abuser John Smyth QC in 2017. This year he published an article, *Falling Among Thieves*, that offers a theological response to be considered alongside other responses within the Church of England. Andrew uses a radical re-telling of the Parable of the Samaritan to shine light and hope on the gathered testimony and stories of victims and survivors, as well as on ways the church has responded and could respond. It is honest and hopeful, and a good base for further reflection and action.

The article was published as a Temple Tract by the William Temple Foundation and was downloaded over a thousand times in the first month it was available demonstrating the hunger for a theological perspective on abuse. To extend learning and reflection, Leeds Church Institute hosted an event where Andrew spoke about the text and two speakers offered a considered response. Feedback from the event was:

*We are all valuable. The seduction of power reaches the highest places. The importance of the victim receiving time, healing, support and attention*

*Theologically sound and widened my horizons*

*The opposite of an echo chamber*

*Good to hear from different perspectives and speakers*

*Are Temple Tracts printable? Andrew Graystone's breath is precious – preserve it in print - give a complimentary copy to all General Synod members*

The following articles are based on the two responses offered to Andrew's presentation of *Falling Among Thieves*. Videos of all three speakers are available on our YouTube channel: Leeds Church Institute, LCI.  
You can read Andrew's article on <https://williamtemplefoundation.org.uk/temple-tracts/>



# SO WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE? CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH IN THE LIGHT OF CHURCH SEXUAL ABUSE

**Catherine Beaumont**, Parish Safeguarding Officer at St Margaret's Church in Ilkley and author of *Supporting Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse*, discerns a clear challenge for the church in Leeds

**I first became aware of Andrew Graystone when I heard him speaking about church related abuse in a podcast and I remember feeling a huge sense of relief.** Not because he was saying anything that was new to me, but because he was saying it in a way that could be heard and understood by church leaders as well as by the average person in the pew. That the Archbishop of York has written the foreword to *Falling Among Thieves* shows that the establishment are at least attempting to listen, even if they are still not quite hearing.

The parable of the good Samaritan is known to survivors and victims, bystanders, and abusers alike, it is part of our shared Christian heritage. So, in viewing clergy related abuse through the lens of this familiar story, Andrew offers a safe space in which we can explore together past and current failings, and in which we can begin to work toward something better.

*Falling Among Thieves* encourages us to recognise those who have been abused in the man who is assaulted on the road to Jericho. He is humiliated, alone, wounded, exposed and vulnerable. His needs are complex. He is half dead. He is victimised twice, first by the robbers and then again by the failure of compassion from those he would expect to care for him. In the Priest and the Levite, we see representatives of the religious community. Their treatment of the victim is inhumane, their sense of privilege has blinded them to their own vulnerability. They are too busy; they are not equipped to deal with this situation or to do what needs to be done. They too are robbers; they rob the victim of his self-worth and his hope for recovery.

The article is split into two chapters, and I want to look at one theme from each chapter.

The first chapter is entitled 'Stripping'. I am interested in how Andrew addresses the subject of power. He writes that misuse of power is an essential part of the abusive relationship. The abuser takes on a god-like status within the relationship, using their power to invade and take ownership of their victims. That abuse involves a misuse of power is a familiar concept which most would agree with, but Andrew also points out that this power, which is so easily misused, is often handed to abusers by the church through the way church structures confer power and spiritual authority on its leaders, through titles, costumes, and deference from church members. Andrew claims that this culture of deference renders the church institutionally abusive.





From the second chapter entitled 'Re-dressing', I want to focus on suggestions made by Andrew as to how the church could become less like the Priest and the Levite and more like the Samaritan

**He says the primary task for the church is to repair its relationship with its victims.**

It will do this by drawing close to those it has harmed and devoting extended time to listening to them, with humility and transparency. It must restore the personhood, dignity and hope that has been stolen. To do this it will need to practice self-examination and repentance. It must recognise its own wounds and nakedness and allow its own spiritual brokenness to direct any engagement with victims and survivors. It must pay attention to those aspects of the culture and theology of church life that lend themselves to exploitative relationships.

While I agree with all of the above, they sound a lot like the sort of things the church says it is doing, or intends to do very soon, without producing any discernible change for victims and survivors. So, I'm pleased that Andrew also recommends more tangible goals which would make it easier to hold church leadership to account.

These include:

- The church accepting a lifelong duty of care for its victims.
- Provision of lifelong sustained income rather than a one-off payment, as well as financial support for counselling, payment of debts and medical bills.
- Compensation for loss of earnings, savings, or status.
- Long term pastoral and spiritual support which may need to come from outside the church
- Private and sincere apologies rather than impersonal generalised apologies.
- Deep listening to the victim's impact statement, in person, by leaders of the church.
- Honest information about what happened and how the individual's case has been handled by the church.

As Andrew points out, taking reparation seriously will be costly, time consuming and disturbing for the church.

So, what is our response to *Falling Among Thieves*? We too are the church. There is no character in the parable of the good Samaritan who stands near the injured man shouting at the Priest and the Levite to please do something.

Two points from the article strike me as good places to start. The first is the observation that

**the Priest and the Levite didn't fail to act because they hadn't noticed the victim or the state he was in. They did see him; they saw what had happened to him and they made a conscious decision to cross the road.**

Pleading ignorance is not an option and there is no neutral position. If we're not helping, we're harming.

The second point is the possibility that the Priest and the Levite might change their minds and turn back along the Jericho Road in order to do the right thing. Had they done this the Samaritan may have already taken care of the man who was assaulted, and their change of heart would have come too late. It is not too late for the church now to turn back and do the right thing. Us would-be Samaritans have not yet got the assaulted ones safely to the inn, they are still there, still looking to the church to have a change of heart.

Andrew writes that those who have power in the church want to address the issue of abuse without changing anything substantive in its culture, practice, or theology. But those of us who don't have our livelihoods and our reputations tied up with the interests of the church are free to disrupt the status quo, to call out inhumane behaviour, and to demand something better. And perhaps to begin the change that church leaders are not yet ready to make. We can share our resources with survivors, either financial or in kind, we can give them our time and our attention, we can set an example, modelling the type of care victims want and deserve. We can be the Samaritan.

I want to thank Andrew Greystone and the William Temple Foundation for producing this tract. My hope is that it is read widely and that it prompts all of us in the church to achieve these changes that are so long overdue.





# IS THERE A VACUUM OF THEOLOGICAL DIAGNOSIS IN CHURCH RESPONSES TO SEXUAL ABUSE? IDENTIFYING A DISTINCTIVELY CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

**Susan Shooter**, author of *'How Survivors of Sexual Abuse Relate to God. The Authentic Spirituality of the Annihilated Soul'*, considers the spiritual and theological elements of responses to church sexual abuse.

**As a survivor of Child Sexual Abuse, a survivor of Clergy Sexual Abuse, I want to begin by saying 'Thank you Andrew for this vital piece of work'.** As an ordained priest, I want to say, 'Thank God that you have listened'. Like the lawyer who knew what mercy was when he saw it in the Samaritan, you have gone and done likewise, not only for those you have advocated for, but for readers of this tract: it is accessible, to the point, and most importantly raises theological challenges.

I'll speak first about surviving the dog collar. The Church of England is a medieval edifice built within the context of feudalism, which in turn was built upon the foundation of a crumbling empire. Feudalism and imperialism are intrinsic to our ecclesiology, our liturgy, and our theological concepts. So vicars in the 21st century, whilst on the one hand try not to identify with those two millstones, they must on the other hand learn to function as a CEO of a corporation. Our priestly identity is stripped right away from us. The chaos Andrew notes in church responses to victims is perhaps an external sign of an internal state. We tighten up, fearing to put a foot wrong, hence the managerialism in Andrew's assessment.

He also writes of a *'vacuum of theological diagnosis'* which was a statement that raised my eyebrow. So I asked a former colleague what spiritual and theological elements are now included in safeguarding training:

*'We didn't touch on any of that. Both the basic and leadership training was a self-preservation exercise by the institution, treating people who have been abused as objects and problems to be identified and protected, broken people who need to be done unto, rather than spiritual exemplars who are frequently more real than most.'*

So when it comes to clergy training, there may be a vacuum of theological diagnosis; it may also be so within the church leadership. However, there is no



vacuum when it comes to the material produced over the last three decades. In 1991 James Poling published *The Abuse of Power: A Theological Problem*. In 2000, *Bound to Sin* was Professor McFadyen's analysis of the idolatry at the heart of abusive relationships, a dynamic Andrew explains for us.

To be fair, by 2012 there had been very few works by survivor theologians. Then, two months after my own work on survivor spirituality was published, the Jimmy Savile story broke the dam and there has since then been a flood of theologies of abuse. Therefore, church leaders have no excuse for dodging their diagnosis. Perhaps they have read *about* church-based abuse; but reading about something is not the same as *knowing*. You have to immerse yourself in a country for some time before you can truly speak the language.

And so, Andrew writes of abuse as a gaping hole in the Church. This imagery reminded me of a reference in Catherine's book to the church member who referred to a particular survivor as a *'pastoral black hole'* because no matter how much time, prayer and attention he was given, his condition never improved. Survivors are seen as nuisances. One of the women I interviewed, whom I call Joanna, was banned from Alpha course meetings because she asked too many awkward questions.



I was so pleased to read Andrew's description that "*victims are our premier theologians*". He also says, truthfully, that "*the victimised individual is forced into a diminished version of their own personhood,*" but I want to comment on the second half of the sentence: he says, "*the window through which their relationship with God is realised also shrinks.*"

Yes, they have been, or are, in the 'black hole.' But they have survived. And some have kept their faith. Some have deepened it.

**I contend that if there is one thing we *should* retain, or perhaps rescue, from the medieval church, it is the exemplar we have of certain mystics. Mystics trod the path of darkness.**

Mystics willingly stripped themselves of their identity before God and knew that beyond their own agency is a God who acts only in mercy, love and righteousness. Of course this often made them into 'nuisances' because they knew the true freedom of being agents of God, not beholden to the virtue signalling required by church leaders. And that is why the Inquisitors oppressed and executed some.

**Survivors have, by necessity, trodden the same dark paths to save their souls. By default and involuntarily they have entered the same spiritual locus that the mystic enters voluntarily; they have found there the same 'Presence'. Getting past victimhood means resting in the mercy of God who holds us as we heal and are restored.**

Priscilla, an incest victim I interviewed, said this:

*If somebody said to me, you can go back and have that not happen, but not have that relationship with God, I would go through all of that again for that relationship. I wouldn't want to change that. If it was either or, there's nothing that would make me not want to have that relationship. Although it was awful and it was horrible, I'd rather that than not have God.*

This is very tricky. I am still grappling with this. As the Archbishop of York writes in his foreword: this is Holy Ground. We must tread lightly.

When Andrew suggests that a kenotic ministry might be possible, I admit I was a little disappointed with the conditional tense. But as he so rightly indicates, the church must find its meaning: It must feel the

wobble of its imperial foundations and we can see this change underway in our culture.

**I'm going to state boldly now: God is not a king or a sovereign or lord. Mercy, the presence of God in life, is a different sort of power, and victims know this. Instead of the faith of Constantine, the church needs the faith of Mary Magdalene who enters the black hole of the tomb.**

Astrophysicists tell us there is a singularity at the heart of a black hole. What if it is bursting with resurrection vibes?

I want to finish by referring to Korean theologian Chun Hyun-Kyung. She caused a stir at the 7th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1991 when in her lecture she invoked the Holy Spirit.

*"I come from the land of Spirits of Han. Han is anger. Han is resentment. Han is bitterness. Han is grief. Han is broken heartedness, and the raw energy for struggle for liberation."*

Han-ridden spirits are all over the place, she said; spirits of the unjust dead seeking the chance to make the wrong right again, and it is the responsibility of living persons to listen to them and participate in the spirits' work of righting the wrong. Han-ridden spirits are the agents through whom the Holy Spirit has spoken her compassion and wisdom for life.

On reading *Falling Among Thieves* for the first time, one word kept creeping up in my throat. For those who perpetrate abuse, sorry may be the hardest word. But for a victim, who is beaten, forced into accepting their worthlessness at the hands of a tyrannical power who has fashioned themselves as your God, the hardest word to say, when you feel the band tightening around the throat, the panic settling into your chest, is a word of only one syllable, and two letters: 'NO'. This is the spirit of Han. It lies behind every word Andrew has written. It is the spirit of outrage, and we need its energy to be able to stand up and say No; to join with the victims Andrew tells us are saying to the Church, 'You are better than this, and No, I will accept nothing less than mercy.'

If you are affected by these issues, please contact Helen Reid on [director@leedschurchinstitute.org](mailto:director@leedschurchinstitute.org) or on 07539736832





# WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**Helen Reid**, Director of Leeds Church Institute, asks for feedback on CITYtheology

Leeds Church Institute has been producing CITYtheology for eight years with the aim of stimulating theological thinking on issues affecting Leeds. It seeks to resource diverse Christians in their engagement with city life as we live faithfully, seeking justice and living relationally.

CITYtheology is a platform for local voices and includes a wide range of contributors. Contributors are encouraged to address questions rather than provide answers, to apply their thinking and learning directly to Leeds, and aim to inspire and resource readers to reflect and act. This means when you read it, you are part of a wider community with a commitment to 'learning for a faithful city'.

It is helpful when we hear from readers about articles or the magazine as a whole, and proposals for articles are also welcomed. Please do send in feedback or ideas to [director@leedschurchinstitute.org](mailto:director@leedschurchinstitute.org). I would be delighted to hear from you.



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