

St James's Piccadilly

Camino Companions

Session 7 - Church and Society

21 and 22 April 2024

Questions to explore:

- Does being a Christian have an impact on who we are in society both individually and collectively, locally and globally? In what ways?
- What does it look like and feel like to be Christian in public?
- What might be the relationship between 'in here' and 'out there' at St James's? Do these categories exist and if so, for whom?
- What connections might faith have to public life and to politics, now and in the future?

Lyla June, 'On being a good warrior of healing':

From what my elders told me, the battle is between what is close to Creator and what is far from Creator. So it's a real battle, it's real blood, it's real pain, it's real death. It's not like a metaphor; it's a battle. Yet, at the same time, no matter how many of us die and no matter how much of our blood gets shed, there is a spirit that will remain untouched, invincible, and unscathed through all of this.

However, the body of the earth and the body of the people are worth fighting for. And in this time, we have an opportunity to become instruments within that battle. And the fitness of our instrument will depend on how deeply we have healed ourselves and how committed we are to beginning each day in prayer, loving ourselves, and ceasing the cycles perpetuated through us.

So, I think of each of us as these warriors, these implements within the battle. We can be vessels of healing or destruction, and no matter what we've been through, we have the ability to be a vessel of healing. Again, that is just dependent on how much we're able to heal ourselves, pray in the morning to be an instrument of healing, and love ourselves and preserve ourselves.

That's a thing that a lot of women get caught up in. We want to help the world so bad that we're even willing to sacrifice ourselves. And we have no idea about what boundaries are and how they work, and if we're allowed to have them.

And that's part of being a good warrior, too, having a shield and knowing that you're allowed it to protect your space. You're allowed to be happy, healthy. You're allowed to not feel uncomfortable around the people that you're with; you're allowed to feel good around the people you're with.

Lyla June was a speaker in St James's 'Changing Our Minds' earth justice series on 21 April 2024. You can watch this on St James's YouTube channel.

William Temple, extracts from the Malvern Conference, 1941:

The Church lacks the courage to speak out. The Church should be 'disinterested' in the state not uninterested, so as to be able to criticise as appropriate.

A bad economic order makes political freedom impossible; bad politics stultified cultural and spiritual freedom in society.

The Christian ethic is primarily an ethic of personal relations; and this modern society is essentially a society in which human relations are depersonalised.

*The Malvern Conference of 1941 brought together leading Anglican social thinkers of the day to explore the Christian basis for involvement in society and Christian responses to pressing social, political and economic issues, some of which influenced thinking behind the post-war welfare state. It was convened by William Temple when he was the Archbishop of York. For more on the links between the Conference and its outcomes, see: Bob Holman, 'Rebuilding the Temple of the Welfare State', *The Guardian* (30 June 2001):*

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2001/jun/30/religion.world>