

**ANOTHER
NAME
FOR EVERY
THING**

with

RICHARD ROHR

Season 4, Episode 9
Embody | Conclusion

Paul Swanson: [music] Brie, I'm sad to say this is our last episode of the season. It was a delight to be able to walk through these seven themes of the Alternative Orthodoxy with Richard and you, and I didn't really want it to end.

Brie Stoner: Me neither.

Paul Swanson: And I didn't know how it was going to end. We came to a place of deep, continued conversation that feels like it's not over; it's going to continue.

Brie Stoner: This was such an unexpected conversation. We thought we were going to just put a bow on it, and high five each other, and walk out the door, and it actually opened up a dialogue about how do we keep working with these tenets? How do we adjust these themes to reflect some of the values that are most important to Richard and to us at the CAC, that these values of simplicity, devotion, and public virtue, where and how are those alive in these themes and how can we live into them even more?

Paul Swanson: Yeah, and afterwards we reflected on how Richard comes from the Franciscan tradition, which is an alternative community rather than an institution.

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

Paul Swanson: And Richard's own journey of starting the New Jerusalem Community and then starting the CAC, which has held both community and institution at times, and now it's in this new point of its life where it's trying to live deeper into both, and it's new territory. I feel like you hear a lot of that grappling of how do we really lean into these values and learn to embody these themes of the Alternative Orthodoxy so that we can have this prophetic stance out of devotion—

Brie Stoner: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Paul Swanson: --and not just be an institution that's alive for the sake of being alive but really have something to offer the world, to be a vessel for the way the Universal Christ is asking us to show up.

Brie Stoner: Yes. Talk about an opportunity to lean into prophetic imagination—

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Brie Stoner: --and to have an internal nondual stance because for so many of us, we equate community with institution, or we completely split them apart. So, either we flatten them too much, or we split them apart too much. And what I heard him wrestling with and bouncing back and forth with is how can we both hold the reality of institutional organizational life, and hold the hearts, the embodied hearts, the Sacred Heart, the heart on fire of community members who are deeply seeking to live this out together? That's not easy. It's such a challenge, but I find it almost as an inspiring, creative challenge for us to think about as we move forward.

Paul Swanson: Yeah, and I'm sure, for all of y'all listening, this is exactly where you're at in the context of your own life.

Brie Stoner: Exactly.

Paul Swanson: How do you hold both of these as you move and participate in the world, and family, and friends, and work? And, also, can we give a quick shout-out to Paul Thompson and to Corey Pigg for supporting this week?

Brie Stoner: Shout out to Paul.

Paul Swanson: They're the voices you don't hear, but who, without them, we couldn't do this work.

Brie Stoner: That's right.

It's been such a profound journey this week, and I have outed myself plenty of times on what a super fan I am on these themes. They mean so much to me because for me they formed the framework of a new possibility of understanding the role of belief and the Perennial Tradition, and how we can actually allow that to spur us into action and into an accountability to the whole, on behalf of the whole. So, it was an absolute privilege to sit here and dig into these themes with you Paul, and Paul, another Paul. [laughter]

We hope that you as listeners feel the same way, that the opportunity is to not just listen to these themes and think "How interesting," but to really challenge yourselves as we are challenging ourselves, to put flesh on it, to consider how we can, in our own context, live into it a little bit more, [music] these three values that keep coming up, and how we can hold the three values and these seven themes in tension as an opportunity for transformation.

Paul Swanson: Yeah, and as we both say quite a bit, it really helps us recognize that we are all in this together.

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

Paul Swanson: Not just the CAC, but everyone listening, everyone who's participating in this, we are all in this together, and we need each other.

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

So, with that, we hope you'll enjoy this final episode on the seven themes of the Alternative Orthodoxy.

Paul Swanson: [music ends] All right, well this has been a marvelous season as we've taken time to really sink in and marinate with each of these themes and see how they build off one another and connect. I'm curious for you both, did anything surprise you as we delved into these themes that you didn't expect coming in knowing that we were going to have conversations on the seven themes of the Alternative Orthodoxy?

Richard Rohr: I certainly had a feeling that they were somehow more organic than I even imagined, how they overlapped and they built on one another. So, I was entering the week almost with a bit of doubt or fear, "Oh, we're going to discover a huge missing theme," and history surely will. But as far as my capacity for teaching, it feels to me like I've got the biggies here. By the

biggies I mean the underlying—not that there aren't a lot of corollaries to every one of these—but the underlying, foundational idea, so that the wholeness of it made me happy. That's what I was surprised by.

Paul Swanson: Mm. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brie Stoner: I felt the same way.

Richard Rohr: Did you?

Brie Stoner: Yeah. I already outed myself as a super fan of your tenets in the Alternative Orthodoxy, but it was in dialogue together over the course of these sessions that I really felt the ways that they do backstitch into each other.

Paul Swanson: That's good.

Richard Rohr: Backstitch. Good phrase. Yeah.

Brie Stoner: I have this sense of almost this tapestry of how they weave together and form a holistic picture of a new way of understanding, a path of practice, and a path of what we're being invited into. It's stunning, Richard. It's so exciting.

Richard Rohr: Yeah, it is.

Paul Swanson: Yeah. I don't know if I have anything new to add as far as surprises, but just echoing that I don't think I fully recognized how much these connect to one another and play with one another in a way that creates a whole, that invites you into the whole, that it's not just one piece. And so, it's been a delight to sink into these with all of you. And, Richard, thanks for charting this territory all those years ago when you put this into practice.

Brie Stoner: Yeah. I will say maybe one other thing that I didn't expect was how much perfectionism came up as almost—

Richard Rohr: Isn't that true.

Brie Stoner: --the antithesis of what the Alternative Orthodoxy is inviting us into in a much more incarnational and human invitation; whereas, I think the ways we used to think about orthodoxy was about perfectionism, and achieving, and—

Richard Rohr: It was. It was.

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Which is quite arrogant of us. As if we could. Only the isolated ego would have such an imagination that I could achieve personal perfection. Of course, you and I, that's our Enneagram delusion. You do it aesthetically; I do it moralistically. And mine is much more distasteful, just wanting to do it right. You want to do it beautifully. And if it isn't beautiful, it's just useless. [laughter]

Brie Stoner: It's easy to dismiss. Just let that one go.

Paul Swanson: I wonder if we can continue on this thread of just seeing how these themes build off one another and how they create tension and connect.

Richard Rohr: Okay. All right.

Paul Swanson: Richard, any further thoughts for you about, as we've stepped through each of these themes, that you see the cohesive whole, that they all need one another? It obviously reminds us of the theme of the Body of Christ, of we all need one another and these themes help undergird that in a way from a deep posture of humility. Are there any further explorations that you could take us on in regards to how the necessity of having a sense of harmony with these themes where they're all playing a different role, but you can't just take one and try to ride that out?

Richard Rohr: No. Well, first of all, thank you for seeing that. I hope it's true. I want to say that the fourth one, everything belongs, is for me, a touchstone that you've put it all together harmoniously. How you end up treating the outsider, the poor, is for me, maybe it's my Franciscan training, but it is my test whether I can trust your spirituality. Forgive me for needing that, but when I find these American philosophies of, what do we call it, gospel of—

Brie Stoner: Prosperity.

Richard Rohr: --prosperity gospel, yeah. Honestly, I just had someone come and visit me yesterday. We talked for an hour and fifteen minutes. He was a sincere, spiritual man, but it was all esoteric, esoteric, the rubber never hit the road with any concern for the little guy. It was elitist spirituality.

So for me, I'm afraid I can be fine with someone talking to me and not being immediately Trinitarian, or even using the word Trinity, but if there's no nodding to the importance of those at the bottom and on the edge, I can't fully trust it. It feels like it's the ego speaking, not the spirit. It's the touchstone of orthodoxy, in many ways, and that's our fourth principle so it could get lost. That's one thing that comes to mind.

And, I guess, the path of descent is another way of saying that. If you go down, you're going to meet the others who have been told they're down too. If you go up, you can develop an entire worldview that never requires you go outside of white, suburban, heterosexual, happy, bourgeois. I think that's what the word in French, bourgeois, really meant. It's something that's unduly comfortable with itself, and without that solidarity with those who aren't in my comfort group, it won't remain wisdom for long. I don't think so. So, I just have to add that. Thank you for letting me.

Brie Stoner: Richard, as we wrap up this season and look back on these many conversations, Paul and I thought we would play a Rohr "best of" Wheel of Fortune game of connecting the dots between some of your central tenets and teachings to the Alternative Orthodoxy.

Richard Rohr: Wow!

Brie Stoner: Or at least see if we can play together and make these connections not just for our own fun but, hopefully, for our listeners and for us to see how these things weave together. The first one that we've talked a lot about, it's come up a few times, is the centrality of Jesus for you. You talk about this a lot at the center: "Jesus is our central reference point. Jesus is our central reference point, not the only one, but central."

Richard Rohr: Very good. Thank you for noting that.

Brie Stoner: In what tenets do you see that the primacy of Jesus as our central reference point, which of these tenets do you feel connects with that—

Richard Rohr: The most, huh?

Brie Stoner: --or where would you link them, maybe?

Richard Rohr: I guess mostly in the second. If we believe Jesus is the face of this hidden God, which is what Christianity believes, then we better look at that face long and hard, and seriously, and take it as the goal; take it as the ideal; take it as the norm. It keeps our religion from becoming theoretical and merely theological. Even though it hasn't, in great part up to now, I think that's its purpose—the scandal of the particular—one particular man in history gives us this is what full humanity looks like, and it's just nothing you need to be ashamed of. It's good stuff. He's good stuff. I'm not ashamed of talking that way. And the wonderful thing is that although that sounds like an exclusionary statement: What did this Jesus teach? Inclusion!

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: So, oh, I can't make him into an exclusive savior when in his lifetime he was an inclusive teacher. That's so important. Yeah. You just make me say things like that, thank you. You do, thank you.

Brie Stoner: The cool part about that is that if the second tenet in the Trinity is pointing us to the fact that Jesus is the central reference point, then when we move to number three, it seems to be pointing to the Universal Christ then that Jesus is pointing to.

Richard Rohr: Yes. Yes. Exactly.

Brie Stoner: That this one reality-- Would you say that this one reality is the incarnation of the Universal Christ?

Richard Rohr: Yes.

Brie Stoner: That's—

Richard Rohr: And then that's an ongoing mystery. So, it makes our understanding of religion very contemporary. It's not a museum. It's not the good-old-days religion, the old-time religion. It's something dynamic that is continuing in space and time. Why would we want to be a

part of a religion that wasn't including us and including now? When I teach in the Living School, I say, "Don't you get bored by all these stories of wars in the book of Kings and other books?" It just transferred that our wars matter to God too. Our droughts and whatever manifestations are happening on the planet are still in the realm of the sacred. That's helpful. Otherwise, I would just throw out two-thirds of the Bible. But that it goes to that much length to put this in the realm of sacred text—Zerubbabel, Jeroboam, and I can't even remember their names, and they don't seem mostly like canonized Catholic saints for sure—and yet we've got them in the Holy Book. That gives me great hope because I'm Zerubbabel. I don't even know what he did. [laughter]

Brie Stoner: Way to pull that name out of a hat.

Paul Swanson: I'm deeply impressed.

To spin the "Wheel of Rohr" again to find another one of your pieces to connect, where would you put embodied prophetic action within these seven themes of—

Richard Rohr: Embodied prophetic action. Wow, maybe you've touched the missing. Embodied prophetic action. I don't think it's as explicit as it could be or should be. Thank you.

Brie Stoner: Paul and I both felt like the seventh theme, if we understand Divine Union as Divine Union in prophetic action, or Divine Union resulting in prophetic action, we felt like we really saw that as alive in that tenet. We wondered if you did, too, but we're in the roulette experiment here, in real time.

Richard Rohr: Divine Union, maybe this is saying what we were playing with before we started recording here, why we need to add perhaps another sentence there. We need both private virtue and public virtue, or we ourselves are dualistic. And up to now—I know all of this couldn't be put in that—but up to now, virtue has been thought of as a private thing: "I'm patient; I'm humble," but until that takes some public face, you're onto something. So, I'm glad we're saying it here, how we change that seventh, I don't know yet, but let's seriously consider it. With some notion of—

And what I mean by public virtue is that, implied for me by Jesus's line, "Do not put your light under a bushel basket. Let it shine." We've sang that so often, it's become a children's song instead of a serious message. Unless it has public face, we're not going to change culture; we're not going to change the world. All these privately humble people are not adding up to changing the world because they never take that to-- I think someone said like sixty percent of our Congress recently was Catholic. Well, I sure don't hear in most of them much Catholic social teaching, but, oh, they're Catholic. We've got good social teaching.

Well, I guess the Democrats would probably be more likely to admit that, frankly, than the Republicans would. I don't know what the Republicans do with Catholic social teaching because we're very clear on issues like immigration and war, and so forth, now. We weren't historically. Maybe that's the best example I can give, though, of what happens to culture when virtue is relegated to the private individual.

Brie Stoner: Yeah, speaking to what we were talking about in the last episode about the wholeness and the union of seeing all these things as deeply interconnected, our social sphere is operating

as though it's separate from the spiritual, inner-life sphere, which is operating as though it's separate from the political sphere, and we don't even realize that we're perpetuating the fallacy that those fears are somehow not constantly interacting and inter-creating each other.

Richard Rohr: Thank you. That's right.

Brie Stoner: I'm confessing this just to say that I very recently came to the inner conviction and realization that I didn't actually believe that contemplation could have a direct bearing in our political sphere. It wasn't a conscious belief that I was holding, but more just the ways in which we like to keep contemplation in our private sphere over here, and we like to do retreats, and it's stimulating for the inner life, and we kind of act as though the political, the public is, "Oh, that's out there." That's like, "Well, no, I have to just be professional for work. I've got to get my stuff done." And the political is over there, and "I can't do anything about our government." I think, very, very recently for me, I started to realize that "No, this is all one reality." How I choose to see that one reality is going to have a bearing on the momentum to allow the contemplative practice to live itself out in the manifestation, of hopefully, a new political and social reality too.

Paul Swanson: Wow.

Richard Rohr: And in that we're replicating the church we all left.

Paul Swanson: Yeah. Yes.

Brie Stoner: Yes! Yes!

Richard Rohr: Really.

Brie Stoner: It's like a new, isolated church, or something.

Richard Rohr: A new, where you never preach on anything political; you don't really pray publicly; we let the priest say the prayer. Well, you prayed publicly though, didn't you?

Brie Stoner: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richard Rohr: Yeah, so you did show your—that's probably one of the great things that many Protestant sects brought to Christianity—that you did show your cards more about your faith in Jesus. We just showed our faith in the Church, but we let the official Church people do the praying. [chuckling] Yeah.

This is no small point. Do spend some time, and recommend them to Michael, or me, or whoever, how we can get this idea of public virtue in our orthodoxy. Thank you.

Paul Swanson: It's really naming for me, too, how counter-cultural these seven themes are because all of culture is telling us to remain individuals to perpetuate—

Richard Rohr: Yes. Yeah.

Paul Swanson: --the consumeristic culture, materialism, in the shallowest sense of the word, and that doesn't allow us to participate in the whole. How do we, as the CAC, stand in the place of that

prophetic lineage where we are in the world but not of the world in, hopefully, the fullest sense of that where we are able to provide an alternative of how one can follow in the way of Jesus?

Richard Rohr: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Paul Swanson: Another one here that, to spin the wheel again, we talked a lot about the values last season, and I'm curious, Richard, where would you put the role of devotion in these seven themes? Where does that show up?

Brie Stoner: I think it came up a little bit in the first tenet where we said devotion is the fuel for the methodology almost, but we're curious where you see it, Richard.

Richard Rohr: Where do I see it? Do I not see it? If so, why not? Devotion, for me, is the movement of the message to the heart, intimate, intensity level. You've heard me say to parents, "Children don't believe what you say, they believe what you're passionate about." And they can tell that mommy and daddy care about trees, or whatever it is. They know that by three, I'll bet, already.

Paul Swanson: Yep.

Richard Rohr: How do people who come to work with us, how do people that we teach, know our devotion? My fear is if we don't have a devoted core which holds public virtue—and not that our goal is to last, it isn't—but my fear is that it's not going to last. It's too abstract, conceptual, heady. You need a core where it's moved to the heart level, and they can speak from the heart level to one another, to the world.

It hit a lot of people when a few weeks ago at a—maybe you weren't there Brie—at a staff meeting, at least three have now come and told me it hit them when I said that I fear the CAC has become liberal but not prophetic. I fear that, that that's true. Liberal is still a detached observance of issues, but prophetic is a "I know you care about this." [music]

Brie Stoner: Yeah, there's skin in the game.

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Yeah. That there's real caring. My, you're coming up with good things. I don't think devotion is enough stated here.

Paul Swanson: Another Name for Every Thing will continue in a moment. [music ends]

Yvette Trujillo: [music] Embark on a spiritual journey through Teresa of Ávila's seven Mansions, with James Finley and Mirabai Starr in our eight-week online course, Interior Castle.

James Finley: I would say is that what we're doing here is brief, in-depth "touchings" of the essence of her teachings. We're honoring the depth of it, but we're honoring the depth of it briefly, like touches or glimpses, as we walk through the Castle. But what we do in the online course is we slow it down and take a slower, kind of still more subtle, refined walk-through letting her lead us to the Castle of our own soul in a richer, expanded modality, like that. I think

that would be the distinction. It's a depth in both, but this is a depth of a series of fleeting touches, as distinct from a series of longer, lingering looks, it allows to sit with and see some more.

Yvette Trujillo: Experience an embodied pathway of Divine Union with a global community of spiritual seekers inspired to find hope, love, and God in all things, even amidst suffering. To learn more, apply for financial assistance, or register, visit cac.org/interior. That's cac.org/I-N-T-E-R-I-O-R. [music ends]

Brie Stoner: I feel it a little bit also in the Trinity tenet where—

Richard Rohr: Yes, should be.

Brie Stoner: The Trinity as an image of flow and love outpouring itself into manifestation. If you're saying that God is both the ground of our being and our becoming and on our side, I feel such a deep heart-opening to be deeply devoted and in relationship to God then. Not just in—which I love that you're saying a lot lately Richard—this is not just an abstract way, and often times I think the pendulum swings when we leave the container of our first experiences within religion or tradition, and the pendulum swings out when we experience contemplation and we turn it into this almost mental, universal, there's no personal connection. It's almost as if we're trying to flatten it into this very nondual, I'm just-- But you keep reminding us, Richard, that no, there's a personal element to this in the face of Jesus as our central reference point, we can be deeply devoted without losing the universal side of it as well. I don't know if I'm making sense there.

Richard Rohr: Sure you are.

Paul Swanson: Yeah. I'm wondering, is it even possible to have embodied prophetic action without devotion, or is it just turned into liberal politics if that heart of devotion is not the fuel of the engine?

Richard Rohr: That's right.

I told this story to someone on the leadership team. When Sojourners first came to visit me and the community in Cincinnati, they were very sophisticated social activists from Washington DC, writing good articles, and I remember being interviewed by them, and then I had to go up to my room to get a call, and I don't know what else, but I was gone like ten, fifteen minutes. I came back down—we had a very small little kitchen—I opened the kitchen door, and I saw one of these sophisticated, in my language, Sojourners social activists on her knees. I don't think she knew it was a swinging door. And I just quietly closed it.

Now, what prompted her, in the middle of this heavy discussion, to take that break to go on her knees? I'm not saying that's the only way to express devotion, but if you're afraid of that, too-- Last month when we made Peter Hanley the head of the Catholic Worker House, it was the same. I don't mean to make too much of kneeling, but I said "Okay, we're now going to bless Peter to take over the Catholic Worker House." Do you both know who Peter is?

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Yeah. “Peter,” I said, “Are you not here?” I couldn’t see him. And they said “Well, he’s right there.” I looked, he was kneeling next to me. Kneeling, with his hands folded like a little Catholic boy at First Communion waiting for me to bless him. It just shocked the whole room. Hands folded, eyes closed, in position, waiting to be blessed. It was just beautiful. I don’t think I’d do that. I’ve become too sophisticated by my own teaching. But that’s devotion.

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: You’re touched at the heart level that much that you would do such a thing.

Yeah, I think I have to have a talk with the leadership team saying, “Am I off in saying that? Is it possible here anymore?” Would an Evangelical who was raised raising his hands, feel free to do that? When it happened, remember about two months when I had all these Black ministers here—god, big, macho men, you know, pastors, educated—how they spoke of God, and when they raised their hands-- Baptists don’t raise their hands though, do they? Not really.

Brie Stoner: It depends on, yeah, if the music is more progressive, you’ll see some hands kind of slowly rise up, side-hand raising. [laughter]

Richard Rohr: How about Covenanters, you don’t raise your hand do you?

Paul Swanson: Some folks definitely do.

Richard Rohr: Oh, really?

Paul Swanson: Definitely raised going to youth camps and things like that, it was free form to raise hands and to dance.

Richard Rohr: Wow. But that they’d feel free to do it. And what I’m saying is, I don’t think any of us, including myself, would feel free to do it at a CAC gathering. What does that say about what we’ve become? Well, we’re trying to honor and respect everybody.

Brie Stoner: Right. Right.

Richard Rohr: That’s the green level. Perhaps it’s why Ken Wilber says the green level is the log jam in the evolution of consciousness. It’s too eager to be flat, and so a mystic can’t really lead the group anymore. We won’t accept it.

Paul Swanson: Yeah. I want to tell a quick story, confess an Evangelical moment I had recently where I was actually at a rock concert. And to close out the show, they got the whole crowd to sing over and over again, “Let’s put all these words away.” And I found myself with my arms raised—

Brie Stoner: Yes, you did, Paul.

Paul Swanson: --eyes closed, and then all of a sudden, the concert was over, and the lights went on, and my hands were still raised.

Brie Stoner: Ah, that’s awesome.

Paul Swanson: And I had the thought of “You can take the boy out of Evangelicalism, but you can’t take the Evangelicalism out of the boy [laughter] because I was in that moment of—

Richard Rohr: Isn’t that beautiful?

Paul Swanson: --like surrender to the beauty of the moment, but it came in a venue I wasn’t expecting.

Richard Rohr: But somehow you were safe in that venue to do that.

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Did any other people raise their hands?

Paul Swanson: Not that I know. [laughter]

Richard Rohr: Well, you looked like an idiot. [laughter]

Paul Swanson: I’m sure I did.

Richard Rohr: Isn’t that terrible? My God, I did that for my whole period in New Jerusalem. We prayed every Sunday with our hands raised, and we were Catholics, but there it was socially legitimated. I’m not saying that’s the new sign that you’re saved, but we just better be careful that we don’t become too whatever. Thank you.

Brie Stoner: I really love how the values that we talked about in the last season, we’re spending so much time in them right now.

Richard Rohr: We are.

Brie Stoner: Yeah, because we talked a little bit about public virtue, and we’ve just been talking about devotion. And your third value of simplicity I also see as deeply consonant with these tenets in that if reality is Trinitarian, and there is only one reality, that we really have a responsibility to the whole, to live in right relationship with the whole.

Richard Rohr: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brie Stoner: How do you see simplicity as connecting with these tenets, or how these tenets are inviting us into simplicity?

Richard Rohr: What’s attracting me is four, but what’s disappointing me when I look at it from this viewpoint, is that we don’t have the word “solidarity” anywhere in this. I told the Living School, instead of service, we should be talking about solidarity, and then service will have an authenticity to it. Yeah. Humility, simplicity, that’s Franciscanism, of course, and I just expressed it in the reaching out to the outsider. But that has to take the form of some solidarity with the outsider, not just admiration from afar.

Brie Stoner: I wonder if in number five—

Richard Rohr: Five.

Brie Stoner: --in healing the separate self, if what I hear you saying is that we're being invited into solidarity, deep solidarity with the other, as we remember, or are remembered to the whole, we're invited then—

Richard Rohr: That works; that works.

Paul Swanson: I wonder, too, about six, about The path of descent is the path of transformation and solidarity. You almost have to go through that wounded journey—

Brie Stoner: Nice, yeah.

Richard Rohr: Path of descent, path of transformation, and solidarity.

Leading to solidarity. At least write one of those in, Paul, and I need to take these to the leadership team, and see if, we just did this week, out-of-date, the core is here, but these are some refinements based on recognition, these three values that we see we don't always express here at the CAC. We don't always express simplicity. We don't always express public virtue, "Wow, we're virtuous people." [laughter] Yeah.

Paul Swanson: I'm thinking about, as we play with these themes, and we take them very seriously but also try to nuance and how is reality inviting us to look at them in new and different ways and how can we take them on? What would you invite listeners to as they work with these seven themes? How would you suggest that they try to work with them and try them on? Does that make sense? We're talking about it in a way where we're thinking about it in our specific context of the CAC, would you invite folks to sit with these and let them resonate and see what their invitation is in their own daily life and local context to put these themes into action?

Richard Rohr: Well, for sure that. But I have a feeling it'll float off into vagueness and agreement: "Okay, I agree. I agree. I agree. I agree."

Brie Stoner: Check. Check. Check. Check.

Richard Rohr: Until there is this thing you were just talking about, a concrete practice-- Let's use the example, I'm not pushing but, like, this month we're going to go to Los Forasteros on Bridge Avenue for our staff lunch. Now, it's hard to get, "My God, these people are serious about downward mobility as a value," and giving up—I don't know if they serve beer and wine there, they probably do—so we could still have our beer and wine if we want it, but I think it's going to take concrete decisions like that. That say this is not theoretical, it asks concrete things of the leadership team and the staff, and Richard!

I've been taken for forty years to fancy restaurants, and I try to tell people, "I don't need to go here." I enjoy it when I get there, I really do. Who wouldn't? Once you know what good food is, it's hard to go back to the greasy spoon place. But do we need to make-- That shows devotion. That shows—

Brie Stoner: Yes.

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

I so appreciate the way you spoke of it as an exercise of agency out of devotion to go on the path of downward mobility.

Richard Rohr: Yeah. Yeah.

Paul Swanson: That seems like anyone listening to this could take that into their own life and look at ways that they could take that path.

Richard Rohr: Yeah. The idea of the neighborhood restaurant that's not so fancy.

Brie Stoner: You're right, Richard. We have in our culture, and here, and everywhere, we've become so disembodied—

Richard Rohr: Yeah. Yeah.

Brie Stoner: --that we can sit here glibly and have theological discussions about the seven themes of the Alternative Orthodoxy and not at all be living them, not even a little bit. We can agree with them and not even be living them, not even a little bit.

Richard Rohr: Well said, Brie. Me, too. Me, too.

Brie Stoner: I know, I'm putting myself in that too.

Paul Swanson: We're all there, yeah.

Brie Stoner: We're all there. I think, for me, as I get on a plane in a couple hours and head back to Michigan, one of the things that I feel startled into wanting to listen for, be open to, deepen into, is to embody these. To allow my heart to be, uh oh, I'm going to use the Sacred Heart again to allow my heart to be pierced, to be open and vulnerable to my context, to see how I can move more deeply into relationship with any of the places that I have split myself apart, whether it be from my neighbor or the other, or whether it be the splits within myself of perfectionism, or the splits that I create between ideas, and public action, and virtue. I think I'm feeling this growing prayer in my heart of, may I have the eyes to see and the ears to hear where and how I can live into this more deeply?

Richard Rohr: Thank you.

I'm thinking of the parallel. If you remember—maybe it isn't a good example—years after his impeachment, Bill Clinton said the reason he had an affair with Monica was because he could. He could get away with it, you know. I think it's the same for us. We take sometimes the easier path because we can. We can afford it, we can do it without anybody daring to criticize it inside, and just because we can, someone has to have the courage, now and then, to say “but should we?”

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Should we just because we can? It's always a “special occasion.” Well, we have to have a special occasion. When everything's upped to a special occasion—

Brie Stoner: It's not special anymore. [laughter]

Paul Swanson: It's the norm.

On a real practical note, something that my wife came up with, which I thought was brilliant, you know how it's so easy to buy anything now? You go online and within five seconds you can put the orders in. She's come up with the practice of if something comes up that we think we might need or want to put it on the calendar a month later so we have to sit with it for a whole month. And when it comes around it's like, do we actually need this, or was this just a want in that moment coming from some other feeling less?

Richard Rohr: Thank you. I'm glad that's recorded.

It has to become that practical. You answered, in a way, that question. That's advice for our listeners. If we don't take precautions, we are totally sucked into this capitalist culture, this consumer culture of ever-higher, upward mobility, and we don't even know we've been sucked into it. Look at your nice frumpy, jacket there.

Brie Stoner: Why, thank you, Richard. I also appreciate that you said it was frumpy. [laughter]

Paul Swanson: Yeah, it's definitely frumpy.

Brie Stoner: So I'm hitting both ego needs right there—I'm contemplative and stylish at the same time.

Richard Rohr: Do they use the word frumpy anymore? I guess they—

Brie Stoner: Yes, I used it earlier in one of the episodes.

Richard Rohr: Oh, did you?

Brie Stoner: So, looking at these tenets, also, Richard, one of the things that struck me is that a great gift that you've offered many of us is to introduce us to other teachers and help us—

Richard Rohr: Oh, I hope so.

Brie Stoner: --find other teachers that are consonant with this lens. Would you say that these seven themes comprise the lens through which you look at other teachers to feel that sense of resonance and how you have built relationships with even the core faculty here at the Living School?

Richard Rohr: Yes and no. These seven, as they're listed here, yes. But if we'd be honest, these three values that we just talked about, no. Why did I fail to see that? I'm not saying our teachers that we've invited on-site have not had these three, but sometimes they didn't. They could go a whole weekend without one mention of social justice, without one mention of the outsider or the poor. That was often a disappointment to me, but they usually did the others so well I said, "Well, you take what you can get."

I think it is one reason we invited new people onto the faculty, and we'll continue to do that. None of us are the whole Christ. We have aspects of the Christ. So, yes, ideally those were the people we invited to conferences for the thirty-two years of our existence. But there were

people, too, in all fairness, who are real strong in social justice who seem to know nothing about contemplation. Even their style of talking was not very contemplative, it was rather dualistic. But again, they did the social justice piece so well. “Many gifts, many ministries,” as Paul says.

But if we could bring these three values we just talked about—public virtue, devotion, and simplicity—a little more explicitly into our agenda, I think we’d be doing the future of the CAC a great favor, and in fact, make a future possible. You’ve done me a big favor, and I hope you’ve done whoever’s listening to this a big favor.

Paul Swanson: Richard, as another opportunity to hopefully gift the listener, we were trying to think of ways that we could almost do shorthand for these seven themes. We didn’t prepare you for this, but do you see a way to simplify these seven themes into a phrase or an icon of words that we can remember as a way of life?

Richard Rohr: That’s great. Boy, you worked on this stuff. [laughter] You did, but you know I’m not going to come up with it right now. But did you come up with some? I mean, I might come up with several.

Brie Stoner: I think we were trying to come up with a little bit of a clumping mechanism. [laughter] We were. We did the clumping approach where we thought as we looked at them, it seemed like the first couple tenets were really, if we clump them together, it’s about a perspective; it’s a lens.

Richard Rohr: All right.

Brie Stoner: The third, fourth tenets seem to be about naming a truth about reality, a foundational truth about reality. And the last few point to, or the last couple point to a process, then. So, as we were looking at it, we were like, okay, one is the adjustment of the perspective that allows us to see reality in process, and then the seventh theme seems to be the embodiment of that perspective reality in process. So, I know that’s an earful to probably hear as a listener, it’s even a mouthful to say, but maybe it’s an invitation to our listeners to look at these and maybe simplify them in your own way into something that you can grab onto, or sink your teeth into in your daily lived experience. I don’t even know if you think that works, you know?

Richard Rohr: Theoretically, I think it works, which I guess is saying I’m not sure it’s going to work practically.

Brie Stoner: Right.

Richard Rohr: You as much as said so too.

Brie Stoner: I’m just going to keep hanging onto my Sacred Heart image, I’ll tell you what.

Richard Rohr: That’s beautiful. See, that’s devotion.

Paul Swanson: It was in that striving to try to think of a way how can we make this concrete in simple words so that it almost becomes that reminder. I think that was what we came up with at the

end, was the embodiment of perspective, reality, and process. Again, like you said, it's too theoretical, but it's part of that process of trying to live these themes out is to put it in words that are going to work incarnationally for us.

Richard Rohr: One symbol that holds an awful lot of it together is our logo. The downward line, the line to the left, one reality, God's cosmos, a benevolent universe. If you really spend some time reflecting on our logo, I think that's why it's one of the few things we have not changed since thirty-two years ago.

Brie Stoner: That's beautiful.

Richard Rohr: Yeah. One reality, everything belongs, separate self, path of descent, non-duality are all implied in that logo.

Paul Swanson: I had never thought of that.

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

Paul Swanson: What an image to hold it. I'm just thinking of the downward arrow, the arrow going back—

Brie Stoner: The cross and the tension. Yeah.

Paul Swanson: --and then the circle holding it all.

Richard Rohr: Oh, I'm so glad that makes sense to you.

Boy, the Spirit is guiding us today. But you've taken notes on these few things that we—

Paul Swanson: We sure have.

Richard Rohr: Yeah. Michael's about to set up a meeting with me with the whole leadership team to ask about how we can bring more mission alignment, first among the leadership team themselves, but then the staff. They're ready for it. They know we need it because if there isn't a leaven, if there isn't a core that is invested in this, there is no momentum just by papers like this.

Brie Stoner: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Paul Swanson: Richard, I'm wondering as a way to close out this conversation if you would offer a prayer for all those listening and for all of us here as we try to seek to live deeper into these seven themes and embody them in our daily lives?

Richard Rohr: I'll try.

Holy Mysterious One, here with us even in this little hermitage, this particular ordinary place where we've now spent five days, we believe you are the same Lord and lover that embraces the whole planet and the whole universe. May whatever we're saying on these podcasts, whatever we're saying in our written documents, affirm and call forth truth, and love, and devotion, on both levels—in the concrete person, the concrete church or gathering—and offer some kind of elements for a movement in history that can make a

difference. And we say that not to be important, not to be out front, but simply because we see the suffering in the world that you have identified with, that you care so much about. We have to believe that when we gaze upon the cross. So, I thank you for Brie and the two Paul's here. (We have a Paul recording and a Paul talking. It's a holy name, you know, Paul.) [music] May we do these good things for the sake of the world, and for the sake of love. Amen.

Brie Stoner: Amen.

Paul Swanson: Amen.

And that's it for today's episode of Another Name for Every Thing, with Richard Rohr. This podcast was produced by the Center for Action and Contemplation thanks to the generosity of our donors.

Brie Stoner: The beautiful music you're listening to was brought to you by Will Reagan. If you're enjoying this podcast, consider rating it, writing a review, or sharing it with a friend to help create a bigger and more inclusive community. To learn more about Fr. Richard and to receive his free Daily Meditations in your electronic mailbox, visit cac.org.

Paul Swanson: To learn more about the themes of The Universal Christ, visit universalchrist.org. From the high desert of New Mexico, we wish you peace and every good.