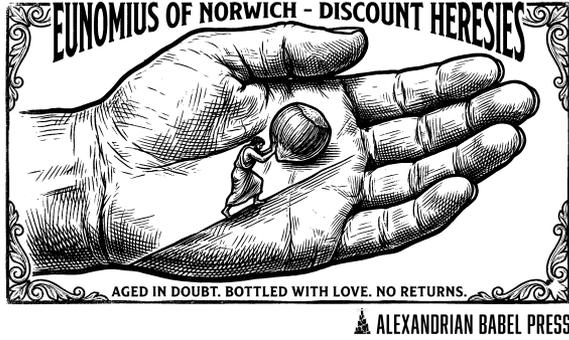


A BRIEF¹ EXPLAINER
ON FAITH²

¹ EXPLAINED IN AS FEW WORDS AS
POSSIBLE (FOR ME³)

² TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF MY³
UNDERSTANDING

³ CECILY EDWARD MUNN



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of the A Brief Explainer series.

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*When you were ordained, I wanted to
burn it all down.
So I sat and wrote the why.
But after I read the why, I finally
understood the how.*

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FOR MEGAN

To My Therapist

LINER NOTES I OWE YOU FOR THE MYTH OF
SISYPHUS

I borrowed your copy when I was at the bottom.

I read Camus expecting him to give me permission to quit.

He didn't.

He said the only serious question is whether to end it, and then he refused to end it.

He stared at the rock, saw it would roll back forever, and said, "*We must imagine Sisyphus happy.*"

That made me joyous. Then it made me curious. Then it made me try one more day.

I didn't find hope in the usual places. I found it in not lying about the rock and still choosing to push.

I kept pushing.

I got out. I started writing. I knelt in a church I didn't think I'd ever understand again. I loved people even when the rock rolled back.

The rock still rolls back. Some days I hate it. Some days I laugh at it. Every day I push.

Your book didn't save me. But it kept me honest long enough for something else to save me.

And that something else turned out to be the same stubborn refusal to let the rock have the last word about love.

So thank you for lending me the one book that let me tell the truth about how bad it was and still decide to stay.

I'm still pushing. The rock hasn't won yet. And I'm strangely happy.

A Note on Reading This Little Book

This is not a finished cathedral. It is a knot still being tied.

This book is not a report of a journey I completed. It is the journey itself, documented as it happened. I did not know where I would end up when I began writing.

I am an engineer who started from maximalist atheism. These are the thinkers I happened to find. Theologians will notice gaps. Those gaps are part of the confession.

The pages that follow were written at different altitudes of the same climb. Some days I was angry and precise, swinging a philosophical pick-axe. Other days I was exhausted and tender, sitting in the pew with nothing left but tears and scripture. Still other days I was suddenly, stupidly happy and the words turned into poems I did not see coming.

So the tone changes. The altitude changes. The temperature changes. That is not a flaw in the manuscript. That is the manuscript.

If you find “The BACADRAB Way” too steep, skip to the scriptural pages and let them carry you. If the addenda feel like a sudden drop into cold water, close the book, breathe, come back when you’re ready — or never. If you only ever read the introduction and never touch the rest, that is also allowed.

There is no examination at the end. There is no correct path through the knot.

If the tension ever feels too much—if you need to know whether the rock wins or whether I’m still pushing—feel free to flip to page 89 (“Spoilers: A note from the end of the trilogy”) and then come back. There is no wrong order here. I want to respect that some of us need the reassurance that the knot holds before we’re willing to get tangled in it.

I printed the backs blank so you can answer back, draw daggers, draw hearts, press flowers, spill coffee, whatever your own wrestling requires. The book is already a conversation; your pen is invited to join it.

All I ask is that you treat the tension gently. It is not a bug. It is the whole point.

There is one more thing the reader deserves to know before entering these pages.

I am, in a way I cannot fully defend but can no longer deny, both a little orthodox and a little absurd—and I mean that in a strictly orthoprax way.

By “orthodox,” I do not mean that I possess the kind of confident metaphysical clarity theologians are trained for. I mean something more fragile and more embodied: I stand when the Church asks me to stand, kneel when she asks me to kneel, and shape my life around practices that have carried generations. My body believes even when my mind hesitates.

By “absurd,” I mean that I take the silence of the universe seriously. I refuse to lie about doubt, unanswered prayers, or the parts of reality that resist consolation. I face the void honestly. But honesty, I have learned, does not forbid communion; it often drives me toward it.

And by “orthoprax,” I mean that my faith, such as it is, lives in doing.

I am not here because I solved the metaphysics.

I am here because the practice works—because the liturgy keeps producing courage, compassion, humility, and love, and because I have found no better way to become the kind of person I am trying to be.

If this book has a center, it is that:

a little orthodox, a little absurd, and held together not by certainty but by the stubborn fidelity of shared practice.

The only invariant is that I present every word intended with love.

Cecily

The BACADRAB Way: A Field Guide to the Knot

An Attempt to Exist in the Ritual–Existential Tension

Introduction: The Dialogue Partner in the Pew

It's a question I often ask myself: how can I stay in the church? How can I sit in the pew, kneel at the rail, and recite the Creed when I hold a philosophy that seems, on its face, to be a set of contradictions? The friction is real.

This document is my attempt to explain why I stay. It's not a tidy philosophy; it's a knot. It's the map of how I navigate the world—a personal confession of how I struggle with, and within, the very institution I call home.

I often feel like a ghost in the machine of the church. But I stay because I have found that my beliefs are simultaneously compatible and incompatible with the Episcopal tradition. And, crucially, I need the *incompatibility*. I need the friction.

This document emerges from a long and sometimes chaotic process of discernment. Those who have witnessed my wrestling—including my sister—have not always seen me at my best. I have asked difficult questions without always framing them gracefully. I have challenged tradition without al-

ways honoring it first. This framework is my attempt to show what has been happening beneath that surface turbulence: a genuine, sustained effort to find a way to remain faithfully present within a tradition I cannot wholly affirm but cannot bear to leave.

During this discernment, I have asked questions that likely seemed hostile, dismissive, or intellectually arrogant. I once asked a seminary dean how prayer differed from thinking about something really hard. I have challenged doctrines without sufficient grace. I have approached sacred matters with what must have appeared to be clinical detachment. I understand now how these questions landed, even if that wasn't my intent. This document is my attempt to show that those questions emerged not from contempt for the tradition, but from my particular, convoluted way of trying to take it seriously. I was not trying to dismantle the faith; I was trying to find a doorway through which my skeptical, analytical mind could actually enter it.

I don't use the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) as the *standard* for my self-discovery; I use it as a **tool for the process**. It is an active **dialogue partner**—an ancient, anti-fragile technology that provides the voluntary, *rigorous challenge* against which my personal philosophy must test itself. It is not the source of the answers, but it is the *crucible* that forces the questions and refines the knot.

This addresses the critique: *why privilege the Church over any other community of practice?* If the

“Centre” is a human creation, why not a book club? The BCP is not the *only* possible tool, but it is a uniquely potent one. It is superior “raw material” for this work for four main reasons:

1. **It Demands Embodiment:** It is not just a text to be read, but a *liturgy* to be performed. It forces me to stand, kneel, speak, and sing, grounding the work in a physical, non-negotiable reality.
2. **It Has Psychological Depth:** It refuses to be a simple, “feel-good” text. It forces an encounter with difficult concepts—sin, judgment, communal failure, and unearned grace. It provides the “controlled stressor” that a more placid text would avoid.
3. **It is Inherently Communal:** It is the *Book of Common Prayer*. It is impossible to use as intended while in isolation. It forces me out of my head and into a dialogical, relational space with the flawed, real people in the pews.
4. **It is Antifragile:** It was engineered in the fires of the English Reformation and tempered by civil wars. It was built to absorb contradiction and thrive on the very theological battles that should have torn it apart. It is not fragile; it will not break under the weight of my doubt.

But ultimately, the choice of this text is secondary to the *stance* I take toward it. The BCP is not

a *given* authority. In the Absurd framework, *no* text can be. My choice to engage *this* text is, itself, a Camusean act: a willed, lucid choice to create meaning from *this* specific, inherited, and imperfect material.

This “dialogue partner” framing is the key to resolving a central tension.

Before I introduce the threads of this knot, a brief methodological note is necessary. The “system” I build in this paper is a **personal synthesis**, not a literal reflection of canonical philosophies. I am using each thinker as a conceptual tool whose insights I will intentionally and respectfully “**creatively misappropriate**”—grafting them onto foundations they might not endorse. My goal is not to be a faithful disciple, but an honest philosopher-in-process; this is a personal attempt to *use* these concepts to resolve my specific existential tension.

Part 1. The Personal Stance: The Knot of Self

This personal knot is woven from several core threads.

1. First, from Buddhist nun **Pema Chödrön**, I learn that **Compassion** is not pity, but the brave, tender discipline of staying present with discomfort without running away.
2. Second, from the existentialist **Albert Camus**, I take the **Absurd**. His argument is

that we are creatures who desperately crave meaning in a universe that offers none.

3. Third, from the psychologist **Carl Rogers**, I learn that the self is not a fixed object, but a fluid process of **Becoming**. We grow not when judged, but when met with unconditional acceptance.

Here, I must make a crucial distinction, as this is where my philosophy knowingly diverges from its source. For Rogers, the ultimate authority is an *internal locus of evaluation*—a deep trust in one’s “organismic experience.” He sought to free the individual from the “oughts” of external structures.

This presents a challenge. I *accept* Rogers’s foundational premise: the “organismic self” *is* the ultimate, trustworthy guide. However, my lived experience confirms the critique that the self is often fragmented, unreliable, and at war with internalized “conditions of worth” (fear, ego, external “oughts”). Simply “trusting” this fragmented system doesn’t lead to integration; it leads to chaos.

Therefore, this philosophy **rejects Rogers’s *method* but embraces his *goal***: the fully functioning, integrated person. Rogers’s therapy creates the condition for growth by *providing unconditional positive regard (UPR) externally* in a low-stress environment. My modality *inverts* this: it *uses* an external, high-stress structure (the BCP) as a **controlled stressor that *necessitates* the conscious *generation* of UPR from within.**

This is not a rejection of Rogers’s insight that growth requires safety, but a relocation of safety’s

source: from external provision (therapist's UPR) to internal generation (maitri practice). The BCP's challenge necessitates, rather than replaces, the unconditional regard that integration requires.

I am *intentionally* grafting Rogers's profound concept of **Becoming** (the *goal*) onto this external tool. I am using the BCP's "rigorous challenge" not to *replace* the organismic self, but as the **occasion that makes the practice of unconditional self-acceptance (Chödrön's maitri) concrete and urgent**. This is the work that *creates* the internal antifragile conditions (the *safety* and *integration* of parts) under which the true organismic self can finally *emerge* and *become* the reliable guide Rogers knew it to be.

This extension rests on a crucial distinction. Rogers's *process* requires the *condition* of unconditional positive regard. My challenge is that I am *choosing* to use an *external source* (the BCP) as the *arena* for this process, even though that source is inherently *conditional*.

This clarifies the mechanism: The *external structure is not the catalyst in itself*; it is merely the raw material, the "rigorous challenge." The **willed, existential act of interpretation is the primary catalyst**.

It is this *willed orientation* (my *how*) that *empowers* this *uniquely potent external structure* (my *what*) to *become* a functional catalyst for growth. The "unconditionality" is not *found in* the BCP or *provided by* the community; it is the **disciplined, shared practice of applying a lens of grace (Chödrön's maitri)** that *transforms* the condi-

tional, contradictory, and embodied text into an approximation of unconditional regard.

When I read the Confession, the “unconditional regard” is not the text’s judgment, but my *willed choice* to meet that text with compassion.

This is a dynamic, high-risk process, not a static achievement. Its primary failure mode is defaulting to judgment. Therefore, its safeguards must be explicit: 1) The *text* is safeguarded by my non-negotiable choice to read it *through* compassion. 2) The *community* is safeguarded by our explicit covenant to call each other back to this willed orientation toward grace.

Ecclesial Authority and Submission

I assert my place in this community by virtue of my baptism and lifelong formation. I also recognize that the Church—through its bishops, priests, and canonical structures—has the authority to discern when someone’s theological position has moved beyond the boundaries of communion.

I would grieve it deeply if my sister, in her role as priest, or her bishop in her episcopal authority, were to determine that my current framework is incompatible with receiving the Eucharist. But I would submit to that judgment, not because I grant them absolute metaphysical authority, but because **genuine submission to communal discernment is part of what makes the Centre authentically Other to me.** I cannot claim to be formed by a community whose authority I

refuse to recognize when it challenges me.

That said, I offer this framework in hope that it demonstrates sufficient theological seriousness and liturgical commitment to remain in communion. I am not asking for permission to remake the tradition in my image. I am asking whether the Episcopal Church's traditional breadth—its historic capacity to hold high church and low church, catholic and reformed—has room for one more tension: between metaphysical affirmation and phenomenological participation. I submit this framework not as private gnosis but as a test case for whether the *via media* can stretch this far.

Now, I take these tools into the dialogue. My partner poses its first proposition. The liturgy bids us, “Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God.”

My old, defensive self wants to build a wall against this label. But my response is now forged by Chödrön's core teaching. She defines those who train this way as **“warriors of nonaggression who hear the cries of the world”** (Teaching 3). This is not a journey of transcendence; as she writes, **“On the journey of the warrior-bodhisattva, the path goes down, not up... Instead of transcending the suffering of all creatures, we move toward turbulence and doubt however we can”** (Teaching 1). Her “warrior-bodhisattva” is one who moves *toward* this turbulence “without speed or aggression.” The “most fundamental aggression,” she warns, “is to remain ignorant by not having the courage and the respect to look at ourselves honestly and gently” (Teaching 15).

The BCP's confession *is* one of those cries. It's the cry of generations who have felt that way. The true warrior's path is not to argue with the text, but to move *toward* this turbulence.

My discipline, then, is to practice *maitri* (unconditional loving-kindness). It's "**about befriending who we are already,**" not "trying to throw ourselves away and become something better" (Teaching 6). I must honestly and gently look at the part of me that *is* a miserable offender. I sit with the discomfort of the label. I let it land. This is the real warrior's stance: not combat, but the bravery to "**stay with our painful emotion instead of spinning out**" (Teaching 4). By *befriending* that flawed self, I can then deploy the *Rogerian ideal* of *unconditional positive regard* as a genuine act of healing—an ideal I am applying from the outside in.

Next, the BCP poses its heavyweight question: the Nicene Creed. This is not a gentle invitation; it is a full-throated, communal proposition of historical and metaphysical certainty. It demands I stand and profess, "We believe in one God. . . We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come."

This is the BCP at its most rigid. It is the ultimate challenge to my *Absurd* worldview, which is founded on a universe that is silent on such matters. I cannot believe the Creed literally.

My response, then, is a **revolt in the Camusean spirit**. But this requires a deeper justification. Camus's revolt is enacted *against* metaphysical consolation, while reciting the Creed is a perfor-

mative *affirmation* of it. This is the central contradiction.

The mechanism that resolves this is a *re-framing* of what I am revolting *against*.

My revolt is not against the void; that is a given. My revolt is against the two **comfortable, but false, temptations** that arise from the Absurd:

1. The temptation to **accept the metaphysical truth claims**—to take the easy path of consolation and surrender my intellectual honesty.
2. The temptation to **retreat into nihilistic isolation**—to take the easy path of the “correct” intellectual, clinging to my private disbelief as a superior, but lonely, position.

The *true* revolt, the harder path, is to **reject both**. I choose **communal practice *without metaphysical belief***. This is not an aesthetic gesture or cultural habit; it is a **lucid, continuous act of will** that requires constant, rigorous self-monitoring to prevent descent into cynical detachment.

This is my “lucid freedom” in action. I am Sisyphus, and the Creed is my rock. I know it will be at the bottom of the hill again next week, but I *choose* to push it *with them*. This act is Sisyphean precisely *because* I must perform it every week, knowing it “doesn’t mean anything” metaphysically, but **choosing the human act of solidarity over the cold comfort of isolation**. It

is an act of love, not for the *content*, but for the *communal process* itself. It is the most honest and defiant act I perform all week.

And my voice, even speaking words I cannot fully affirm, contributes to the Centre's collective confession. The 'We believe' is not just solidarity—it's participation in the Body's movement toward belief. I offer my will even when certainty lags.

A critic might say I have redefined Christian concepts beyond recognition—that my 'sin' is not the tradition's sin, my 'grace' not its grace. But I would argue the opposite: the **phenomenology and function remain identical**; only the metaphysical explanation differs. When I confess my sins, I am genuinely acknowledging **fragmentation** as an offense against the **Eternal Thou**—the infinite network of relations that preceded me, holds me, and calls me toward wholeness. When I receive grace, I am receiving the unmerited gift of **Bliss-as-compassion** that I did not generate through my own effort. When I take Communion, I am incorporated into the **Body of Christ**—whether that Body is metaphysically literal or the emergent reality of the Church universal makes no practical difference in the moment of reception. When I pray, I address a Person—the **Eternal Thou** that genuinely responds, even if that response comes through the practice rather than from outside it. My sister and I use the same words because we are describing the same experiences; we simply hold different certainties about their ultimate metaphysical source.

Part 2. The Social Stance: The Knot of Us

This social knot defines how I live ethically with other people. It's not just an individual act; it requires a *community*. This knot is woven from three more threads.

1. First, from the secular Buddhist **Stephen Batchelor**, I take the **Relational** insight: our identities are not private “souls” but are “co-created” in every moment *with* the people and world around us.
2. Second, from the existentialist **Simone de Beauvoir**, I take the core insight of **Ambiguity**. She argues that we are a fundamental paradox: radically free subjects who must make meaning, yet totally constrained objects defined by our historical and social context. The only authentic ethical choice is to embrace this tension—making choices *for* the freedom of others, precisely *because* no perfect, transcendent moral map exists. This ambiguity is not a flaw; it is the **ground of ethical action**.
3. Third, from the philosopher **Martin Buber**, I take the **Dialogical** path. We can treat people as “I-It” (objects to be used) or meet them as “I-Thou” (a sacred, direct, life-changing encounter).

The Ambiguity of the Centre: Multi-Centrality and Durable Liturgical Presence

Here, my philosophy must make a *creative divergence*. Buber's system depends on the *ontological reality* of the **Eternal Thou**. A critic might object that, without it, the **I-Thou** relation risks collapsing from a dialogical encounter into a purely psychological or existential stance.

My response is that the Centre's reality is based on **Multi-Centrality** and **Durable Liturgical Presence**—its power to *form* the participant. For a theological audience, this functional description of the Church as a durable, autonomous artifact might feel reductive. I do not intend to negate the Church's reality as the **Body of Christ**, but rather to provide a **phenomenological** model for *how* one encounters the Body of Christ in the midst of its institutional flaws. My claim of **Causal Autonomy** is an existential account of its power to shape us, regardless of its divine origin. The choice of the Anglican tradition is fundamentally **contingent**: it is one Centre among infinite possible co-created realities (such as a Buddhist Sangha or a philosophical collective). This arbitrariness does **not** undermine its claim to genuine *Otherness* because **Causal Autonomy** is distinct from **Cosmic Uniqueness**.

The **Causal Autonomy** rests on two factors: the collective *willed orientation* of the community and the temporal depth of the **Lindy Effect**. The **Durable Liturgical Presence**—the fact that the Common Prayer tradition has been

practiced by aligned wills for centuries—means the Centre has achieved **self-sustaining autonomy**. Its effect is **historically durable: centuries of practice and memory have driven the Centre through cultural gradient descent into a persistent, formative force that perpetually asserts itself**. This means the Centre's power to **form us** through *Confrontation*, *Surprise*, and *Resistance* is no longer dependent on the subjective consistency of any single, current participant. It is the **Emergent Eternal Thou** that perpetually asserts itself through **ecclesial formation**.

The Centre's Becoming

But the formation is bidirectional. As I am formed by the Centre, I form the Centre. My doubt, rigorously held and honestly expressed within the bounds of communion, strengthens the Centre's capacity for truth-telling. My staying makes the Church more honest. My wrestling makes the Body stronger.

The Centre that forms my grandchildren will be different from the Centre that formed me—and my formation is part of that difference. Whether we name this trajectory as 'being drawn toward the fullness of Christ' or 'evolving toward maximal human flourishing,' the Centre is not static but dynamic—each generation of formed participants moves it closer to its telos. Whether this is the Church being drawn toward the Parousia or cultural evolution toward greater human flour-

ishing depends on which side of the Superposition you emphasize. But the process is identical: each generation of formed participants improves the Centre that forms the next.

This is why my doubt is not parasitism but contribution. The Centre needs people who stay in the tension, who refuse to collapse into easy certainty, who model how intellectual honesty and liturgical practice can coexist. Without us, the Centre calcifies. With us, it grows.

This temporal depth reinforces Beauvoir's **Ambiguity**: the Centre is created by our freedom, but the sheer duration of that co-creation has solidified it into a monumental object that constrains us, and which no single generation can undo.

The Centre is simultaneously **created** (our radically free, collective subject-act) and **discovered** (the resulting, autonomous object). It is not metaphysically independent, but it possesses **Causal Power**—the ability to *Confront*, *Surprise*, and *Resist* the projections of the individual participants. The complex interaction of the BCP text with the community creates a reality that is genuinely irreducible to any single person's intent.

The necessary alterity for the Eternal Thou encounter is provided by this causal autonomy. My ethical stance is to embrace this core ambiguity: I choose to be constrained by the Church (the autonomous object) because my choice to do so (the subject-act) is the very thing that helps create the freedom for others within it and simultaneously validates the Centre's *Otherness*. The Centre is not a mirror; it is the **collectively en-**

acted reality that has developed the power to provide the necessary **alterity**—the external, confronting challenge—that makes the **Eternal Thou** encounter (Buber) possible and real. This choice to encounter the Centre as genuinely *Other* is the only way to safeguard the relational knot from collapsing into mere psychological projection.

The **Eternal Thou** encounter is, as Buber says, the “**Cradle of the Real Life**” (p. 29). But its power is *activated* by our willed, communal orientation.

This brings the *institutional Church* into sharp focus.

The BCP poses its proposition: “The peace of the Lord be always with you.” This forces an encounter.

My response is to practice Buber’s **Dialogical** encounter, which is sustained by Beauvoir’s ethical **Ambiguity**. I turn to the stranger next to me and shake their hand. This is not a choice made under the clarity of metaphysical certainty; it is an **act of choosing the freedom of the Other**—a choice made *because* the institution is messy, flawed, and conditional. The *power* of this moment is *generated* by our shared, willed choice to orient ourselves toward this “Centre” we are co-creating. This is the “living Centre” as a collectively enacted reality, and embracing its fundamental **Ambiguity**—that it is both a human creation and a genuinely *Other* source of challenge—is the highest ethical demand. The flawed, ambiguous institution is not a container protecting a fragile moment; it is the challenging, messy, *neces-*

sary arena where our *choice* to create this Centre is lived out in real-time.

Communal Responsibility: Strengthening the Knot

My responsibility to others in the pew is not to protect them from my doubt but to maintain my **willed orientation toward grace** in how I engage them. I do not evangelize for my framework. I do not undermine others' metaphysical commitments. My practice is to **strengthen the Centre that holds us all**—believing and doubting alike—through my disciplined participation and my commitment to calling others back to **Compassion** when judgment threatens community.

A critic might say I am 'using' the community—extracting value from their sincere belief to fuel my philosophical project. But this misunderstands what happens in the pews. I am there in the same way they are: worshipping, praying, receiving the sacrament, participating in the life of the parish. We may have different metaphysical explanations for why this practice works, but we are engaged in the same practice. The person next to me might believe Christ is literally present in the bread; I might understand that presence as the convergence of the **Eternal Thou** in the sacramental moment. But we both kneel at the same rail, receive from the same chalice, and are formed by the same community. The 'technical disagreements' about the mechanism of grace rarely arise in parish life—what matters is that we are all

there, together, allowing ourselves to be shaped by something greater than ourselves.

Part 3. The Stance of Common Prayer: The Knot of Reality

This final knot, the climax, connects my strategy for thriving in a chaotic world with my ultimate hope. To tie this one, I must pull all the threads together, using my two final philosophers and staging the central dialogue between them.

1. First, from **Nassim Taleb**, I take the concept of the **Antifragile**. Systems aren't just fragile (break from stress) or resilient (resist stress); some are **antifragile**—they get *stronger* from stress. While Taleb developed this concept primarily for complex systems, I find it applies equally to spiritual growth.
2. Second, from the theologian **David Bentley Hart**, I take the **Blissful**. He argues “God” is not *a* being, but the infinite ground of all **Being-itself**, a ground of pure consciousness, existence, and **Bliss**. (For the purpose of this phenomenological model, I am not adopting Hart's metaphysics, only his description of the ultimate ground of consciousness as **Bliss**.)

This leads to the central question of my entire philosophy: How can I pursue Chödrön's **nonaggressive softening** while also seeking Taleb's **an-**

tifragile strength? How can one “befriend weakness” and “get stronger from stress” at the same time?

The BCP’s liturgy is where I resolve this, moving from a loose metaphor to a rigorous model. The human psyche functions as a **multi-agent complex system** (as seen in Jungian psychology, Internal Family Systems, or even neural network models). This system *can* be strengthened, but not by simple resistance.

The answer is that **nonaggressive softening (Chöd-rön) is the mechanism that allows the complex system of the self to achieve antifragile growth (Taleb) when exposed to a controlled stressor.** This softening reduces the **internal resistance**—the ego’s reflexive urge to defend and compartmentalize—which otherwise turns external stress into psychological damage. Instead, the stress is metabolized and integrated, allowing the entire system to grow stronger through the challenge.

Here is the model:

1. **The Complex System:** My psyche, with all its contradictory “parts”—my skepticism, my ego, my fear, my desire for meaning.
2. **The Controlled Stressor:** The rigid, challenging propositions of the BCP (e.g., the Creed’s certainty, the Confession’s “miserable offender”).
3. **The Resilient (Fragile) Response:** A hardened, calloused ego *resists* the stressor.

It defends its “parts” (e.g., “I am *not* a miserable offender!”). The system survives, but it does not grow; it becomes more rigid, brittle, and fragmented.

4. **The Antifragile (Softened) Response:** Using Chödrön’s *maitri*, I *soften* and “befriend” the parts of my self that are agitated by the stressor. This nonaggressive posture allows the *entire system* to engage with the stressor, metabolize the discomfort, and *integrate* its parts rather than defending them.

A *resilient* heart is calloused and survives. An *antifragile* heart is a softened one that can metabolize stress and *grow* from it, increasing its capacity for compassion and integration. My engagement is voluntary (what Taleb calls a “barbell strategy”), capping my downside while exposing my “system” to this transformative, asymmetric upside.

My dialogue partner poses its final proposition: the liturgy demands I *kneel*. On the surface, it’s an act of submission that my skepticism rejects. But this physical challenge is a gift.

My response is to synthesize the knot.

The act of kneeling is the **Antifragile stressor** (Taleb) applied to the **complex system** of my psyche. It is the willed, voluntary, structured engagement that introduces the challenge.

But I metabolize this stress using **Compassion** (Chödrön). I befriend the act of submission. I stay with the discomfort of my skepticism. I don’t

harden against the act; I soften into it. I allow the part of me that feels rebellious and the part of me that yearns for meaning to *both* be present without judgment.

This synthesis—using Chödrön’s *how* to achieve Taleb’s *what*—is the engine for **Becoming** (Rogers). The antifragile stress, metabolized by nonaggressive compassion, is what *drives my growth*. The “parts” of my psyche are not at war; they are being integrated. The *system* as a whole gains strength, coherence, and capacity *through* the stress.

And what am I kneeling *toward*? Here is my final, most profound act of Camusean revolt, and it is also my most radical act of faith. The universe offers me silence—the Absurd. Hart offers a rational, blissful ground.

My experience of **Bliss**—a sense of ground, peace, and fullness—is phenomenologically real and transformative. The core realization is that the distinction between Camus’s **Absurd** (meaning is *created* from silence) and Hart’s **Blissful** (Being is *discovered* as ground) is not a true paradox, but a **convergence point** found in the sustained existential act.

This convergence is located in the **Translucent**. This term names the space where subjective creation and objective discovery become indistinguishable in lived experience—a zone described in various ways by contemplatives, phenomenologists, and liturgical theologians. **In practice this looks like the felt quiet after the Creed: the simultaneous sense of being both diminished by my doubt and held by a communal frame—**

an experience that is neither fully invented nor strictly discovered. To inhabit this space is to recognize that my local parish Centre is but one node in a **vast, interpenetrating, fractal network of all relations**—the Anglican Communion, the Church universal, and the entirety of human co-creation. This boundless, multi-scalar structure *is* the **Emergent Eternal Thou**: a reality always “more than” any individual node can grasp, yet perfectly immanent and directly accessible. The distinction between Camus’s **Absurd** (meaning is *created* locally) and Hart’s **Blissful** (Being is *discovered* universally) dissolves at this scale, where **creation and discovery become practically indistinguishable.** The liturgical act of **kneeling or confessing** is simply the **singular, embodied practice** that *forces* my local node of consciousness into contact with this boundless ground.

I inhabit the **Translucent** space, where my commitment is to the *practice and its effects*—my lucidity and my Bliss—rather than to metaphysical certainty about its origin. My **Becoming** self is simply unfolding within the network of all networks. That unfolding is simultaneously an act of *creation* and *discovery*, and the distinction is no longer meaningful. **I use the word ‘God’ as a name for this lived, unresolvable knot—an experiential shorthand, not a metaphysical proof.**

I do not show up to liturgy every Sunday consciously deploying this framework. Some Sundays I am fully absorbed in the beauty of the Eucharistic prayer. Some Sundays I am distracted

by mundane concerns. Some Sundays the words feel empty and I am simply going through motions that the community carries for me. **BACADRAB** is not the practice itself—it is my retrospective understanding of why this pattern of varied, imperfect, sustained participation works. The transformation happens in the aggregation, not in any single moment of perfect consciousness.

The Climax of Ambiguity: Sacramental Reception

The question remains: can I receive the sacrament of Communion with intellectual integrity? When the priest says, “The Body of Christ,” I cannot affirm the metaphysics of Real Presence as an ontological truth claim. My reception, therefore, is neither “mere symbol” nor metaphysical affirmation.

It is the act of allowing myself to be formed by the tradition’s most powerful **formative technology**. I receive the bread and wine as the focal point of the Centre’s **Causal Power**—the moment where the **Durable Liturgical Presence** becomes most intensely concentrated and personally addresses me. The question, “Is this really Christ’s body?” dissolves in the **Translucent** where subjective creation and objective discovery converge. What matters is that I receive it as **genuinely Other**, as that which addresses and transforms me at the deepest, most antifragile level of my being.

This shared space is what makes communion pos-

sible. My sister's faith in Christ's divinity is not threatened by my uncertainty. If Christ is divine, then he co-created the Church and is fully present in the sacraments—exactly as she believes. If he isn't, the Church remains the most profound expression of the **Emergent Eternal Thou** available to us, and my participation is no less real or transformative. The **Translucent convergence** means I can kneel beside her at the rail with full integrity: we may understand the metaphysics differently, but we are encountering the same **genuinely Other** reality. The practice unites us even where our certainties diverge.

Final Synthesis: My **Becoming** (the *process* of growth) is driven by the *mechanism* of **softening-as-antifragility**, which is stabilized within the **ecclesial locus** of a **Durable Liturgical Presence** whose nature is defined by **Ambiguity**. This entire knot is my willed choice to inhabit the **Translucent convergence**—the lived reality where the **practice of Common Prayer** unites the lucid defiance of the Absurd with the ecstatic ground of the Blissful.

A Note on the Journey

This document represents a waypoint, not an arrival. The questions it raises—about sacramental reception, about the nature of faith versus assent, about my responsibilities to the community—are ones I continue to explore through the three-legged stool that undergirds Anglican identity: **Scripture, Tradition, and Reason**.

I am reading the Gospels with new attention to Christ's presence in the breaking of bread. I am studying the Church thinkers on the nature of participation in divine life. I am reasoning through what it means to receive grace you cannot fully conceptualize. These investigations may transform this framework; they may reveal its limits; they may lead me somewhere I cannot yet foresee. If this practice ultimately leads me to genuine metaphysical affirmation—if one day I find I can say the Creed with full belief rather than lucid revolt—I would receive that transformation with joy. The framework is scaffolding, not identity. Its purpose is to keep me present and formed within the tradition until and unless clarity comes. I am genuinely open to being wrong about my doubt.

What I can say with certainty is this: I am in the process, not outside it. My doubt is not detachment but engaged wrestling. My questions are not rejections but invitations for deeper formation. I submit this framework not as finished theology but as honest confession of where I am, trusting that the Church's wisdom—embodied in its bishops, its theologians, and its everyday practitioners—can help me discern where to go next.

Conclusion: Why I Stay

So, why do I stay?

I stay because the BCP is the most robust *tool* I have found for this process. It is the perfect **dialogue partner**—ancient, tested, and built to absorb contradiction. It does not break when I test

it with my skepticism. It does not shatter when I fill its ancient forms with my modern, heretical content.

I stay because I need the structure. I need the Creed to rebel against. I need the Peace to sanctify. I need the Confession to *soften* into.

But more than the book, I stay for the *shared orientation*. I stay because my philosophy cannot be practiced in a vacuum; it *requires* other people who are also, in their own way, *choosing* to turn toward the same “living Centre.”

My philosophy is not a fortress of certainty; it is a knot where *softening is the only true strength*. The *Book of Common Prayer* is the *tool* for the process, the loom on which the knot is woven. But the **flawed, dialogical community, bound by a shared choice to inhabit this mystery together**, is the necessary thread. We are bound not by a shared certainty, but by our shared orientation toward a “living Centre” that we simultaneously *discover and create*—a state of **Ambiguity** that demands ethical engagement. I sit in the pew, a skeptical, compassionate, becoming believer, holding my prayer book—my *tool*—content to exist in the tension.

“Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor everyone; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

This is the best answer I have found so far *as*

I continue to explore the sources that shape my Anglican identity.

The Translucent Superposition

What Is Being Claimed

The “Translucent” in the main document refers to a **superposition space** where the question “Does God exist?” produces identical practical consequences regardless of which answer is true.¹

This is not:

- Agnosticism (saying “I don’t know”)
- Pragmatism (saying “it doesn’t matter”)
- Epistemological uncertainty (saying “I can’t tell”)

This is a claim that both metaphysical descriptions are simultaneously true at the scale of human experience. Not ‘indistinguishable’ but identical—two complementary descriptions of the same reality, like wave and particle. The believer and the doubter aren’t describing different things or unsure about the same thing. They’re using different but equally valid languages for what is.

¹Since completing this manuscript I have learned that this central insight—that committed liturgical participation and compassionate action can remain unchanged (or even deepened) regardless of one’s final metaphysical conclusions—has been explored under various names by William James (*The Will to Believe*), Don Cupitt and the Sea of Faith movement, Peter Rollins, and several religious fictionalists. I encountered these thinkers only after the insight had already formed in my own wrestling; any resonances are unintended but joyfully welcomed.

- Practices
- Formation
- Transformation
- Ethical demands
- Lived experience

The superposition doesn't collapse because there is no measurement that would distinguish the outcomes.

Note: This is an ontological claim about ultimate reality at the scale of pre-eschaton embodied experience. Post-eschaton, if such exists, is beyond this framework's domain.

Why This Isn't Just Uncertainty

Three kinds of "can't tell" need to be distinguished:

Epistemic limitation: "I can't distinguish X from Y because I lack information"

- Example: Can't tell if that's a rope or snake in the dark
- Solution: Get more light

Ontological ambiguity: "X and Y are genuinely indeterminate at this level"

- Example: Quantum superposition before measurement

- Solution: No solution—this is the nature of reality at this scale

Pragmatic equivalence: “X and Y produce identical outcomes”

- Example: Two medications with same active ingredient
- Solution: Doesn’t matter which you choose

The Translucent Superposition claims all three converge:

- I cannot epistemically distinguish (lack transcendent perspective)
- They are ontologically entangled at the scale of human practice (the distinction exists at metaphysical scale but not at experiential scale)
- They are pragmatically identical (all meaningful consequences align)

This is not epistemic humility (I don’t know which is true) but ontological assertion (both are true in their domains). The Superposition names a feature of reality itself, not just a feature of my knowledge.

This is neither non-dualism (the distinction isn’t illusory) nor dualism (they’re not separate realities). It’s trans-dual: a reality accessed only by

maintaining the tension between irreducibly different but complementary descriptions. The duality doesn't resolve—we go through it to something beyond that requires both poles to exist.

This convergence is not accidental—it reveals something about how metaphysics relates to practice.

If God's existence were a purely metaphysical fact with no experiential consequences, the Superposition wouldn't hold—we could be metaphysically wrong while being practically right. If the experiential consequences were accidental (unrelated to metaphysics), the Superposition would be trivial—mere pragmatism. The Translucent claims something stronger: that metaphysical reality and experiential reality are constitutively related at the human scale. What is true 'in experience' IS what is true 'in being' at this level—not because experience determines being, but because at this scale they are aspects of the same thing.

Test Cases: Where the Superposition Holds

Test Case 1: Intercessory Prayer

If God exists:

- Prayer addresses a Person who may intervene
- Divine action might change outcomes
- Miracles are possible

If God does not exist:

- Prayer addresses the Eternal Thou (emergent network)
- Human compassion/action changes outcomes
- Fortunate coincidences occur

The superposition: When someone recovers: both call it answered prayer or fortunate outcome
When someone dies: both face unanswered prayer or bad luck Both require accepting outcomes beyond control Both foster compassion and community response **Identical practice, identical formation, identical acceptance of uncertainty**

Test Case 2: Death and Afterlife

If God exists:

- Consciousness may continue
- Eternal life is possible
- Ultimate justice/reunion may occur

If God does not exist:

- Consciousness ends
- Nothing persists
- No cosmic justice

The superposition: While alive, neither can verify what happens after death Belief doesn't change the outcome (you get what you get) Both face death with uncertainty about what comes next Both must live ethically *now* regardless **Identical lived experience until the moment of death**

Test Case 3: Unanswered Prayer / Suffering

If God exists:

- “God said no”
- “God’s plan is mysterious”

- “There’s purpose I can’t see”

If God does not exist:

- “Random chance”
- “The universe is indifferent”
- “There is no reason”

The superposition: Both sit with suffering without real explanation Both accept outcomes they can’t control or understand Neither narrative provides predictive power or control Both require the same work of acceptance and meaning-making **Identical emotional/spiritual labor**

Test Case 4: Evangelism

If God exists:

- Sharing objective Truth
- Saving souls
- Cosmic significance

If God does not exist:

- Sharing created meaning
- Offering what helped you
- Human significance only

The superposition: Both involve vulnerable sharing of what matters Both risk rejection Both done without certainty of success Both are acts of love/connection
Identical practice of meaning-sharing in uncertainty

Test Case 5: Moral Action

If God exists:

- Objective moral order
- Evil is cosmic transgression
- Justice is ontologically real

If God does not exist:

- Constructed ethics (Beauvoir)
- Evil is human category
- Justice is human project

The superposition: Both oppose the same evils (cruelty, oppression, violence) Both work for the same goods (compassion, freedom, flourishing) Both lack perfect moral certainty in edge cases Both require choosing in ambiguity **Identical ethical practice and struggle**

The Philosophical Mechanism

Scale-Dependent Convergence

At the **metaphysical scale**:

- “Does God exist?” is a meaningful question
- The answer is either yes or no
- This is an objective fact about reality

At the **experiential scale**:

- “Does God exist?” produces no distinguishable effects
- Both answers lead to identical practices and formations
- The distinction becomes practically meaningless

The Translucent names the recognition that human practice operates at the experiential scale, where the metaphysical distinction doesn’t cash out in different lived experiences.

Why Both Rivers Flow to the Same Sea

Believer’s path: Faith → Practice → Uncertainty about outcomes → Acceptance → Formation

Absurdist's path: Revolt → Practice → Uncertainty about outcomes → Acceptance → Formation

The convergence happens because:

1. Faith cannot eliminate uncertainty (unanswered prayers, theodicy, mystery)
2. Revolt cannot eliminate meaning-making (humans create significance)
3. Both face the same existential conditions (mortality, suffering, freedom)
4. Both use the same tools (ritual, community, ethical choice)
5. Both undergo the same transformation (toward compassion and integration)

The metaphysical difference exists, but it's upstream of the convergence point.

Three Facets, One Reality

The Translucent superposition merges three dimensions that are usually kept separate:

Epistemological: I cannot tell which is true (lack of transcendent perspective) **Ontological:** At this scale, they are indistinguishable (convergence in practice) **Pragmatic:** The distinction makes no difference (identical outcomes)

These aren't three separate claims that happen to align—they are three perspectives on a single unified phenomenon.

The insight: At the scale of human formation and practice, the question “Does God exist?” is a superposition where both answers produce identical realities. The question doesn't resolve because resolution is unnecessary for the work.

Implications for Practice

For the Believer

- Your faith doesn't need my affirmation to be valid
- We can practice together with full integrity
- Your theological explanations and my existential ones describe the same transformation
- The practice unites us even where certainty divides us

For the Skeptic

- You don't need metaphysical certainty to participate fully
- The formation happens regardless of belief
- You're not pretending or performing—you're engaging the same reality from a different angle

- The doubt doesn't disqualify you from the work

For the Community

- Metaphysical diversity doesn't threaten unity of practice
- The Centre can hold both believers and doubters
- What matters is orientation toward grace, not certainty about origins
- We're all in the Translucent together, whether we name it or not

The Limit of the Superposition

The Translucent holds for:

- Liturgical participation
- Ethical practice
- Community formation
- Personal transformation
- Acceptance of suffering

It may break down at:

- Systematic theology (believers need coherent doctrine)

- Apologetics (arguments for/against God's existence)
- Institutional authority claims (divine mandate vs. human construction)
- Eschatological specifics (what exactly happens after death)

But: These are precisely the places where my framework doesn't need to make claims. I'm not doing systematic theology. I'm explaining how I stay present in liturgical practice.

For that purpose, the Translucent Superposition is sufficient.

Conclusion

The Translucent is not a way to avoid the hard question. It's the recognition that the hard question resolves differently at different scales—and at the scale where humans actually live, pray, doubt, and are formed, both answers lead to the same place.

God is tautological to the question: If he is, he is. If he isn't, he isn't. Either way, I kneel. Either way, I'm transformed. Either way, reality is both Absurd and Blissful.

The superposition doesn't collapse because there's nothing to measure that would distinguish the branches. And that's not a bug; it's Translucent.

The Ethical Necessity of Superposition

Why “Both/And” Is Not Just Epistemology

I. The Insufficiency of Agnosticism

- Agnosticism says: “We can’t know which is true.”
- This produces **ethical passivity** by collapsing the tension.
- It allows both the believer and the doubter to avoid **responsibility for the shared ethical space**.

II. The Ethical Failure of Binary Thinking

Asymmetric Failure Modes of “Either/Or”

- **If Only Hart (God Exists):**
 - The doubter becomes a **theological problem to be solved**, reducing their humanity.
 - The framework collapses into **elaborate apologetics**, prioritizing outcome over integrity.

- My participation (as a doubter) is **dishonest performance** waiting for conversion.
 - Ethical failure: I’m wasting the community’s time until I “get it right,” or worse, I’m **silencing my authentic doubt**.
- **If Only Camus (God Does Not Exist):**
 - The believer becomes a **useful fiction to be leveraged**.
 - The framework collapses into **sophisticated exploitation**, where meaning is extracted parasitically.
 - My participation (as a doubter) is **parasitic extraction of meaning** from others’ sincerity.
 - Ethical failure: I’m **colonizing sacred space** for personal, solipsistic development.

III. Simultaneous Truth as the Basis for Dignity

- The **Centre’s Otherness** requires Hart’s ground (it can’t be *merely* constructed).
- The **Centre’s Ambiguity** requires Camus’s creation (it can’t be *merely* discovered).
- This isn’t a compromise—it’s the only configuration that **preserves mutual dignity** and authentic co-presence.

IV. The Ethical Test of Authentic Communion

- When believer and doubter kneel side by side, what makes this communion rather than collision?
- Answer: Both must be encountering the **same genuinely Other reality**, accessed through **radically different** and **equally valid** metaphysical (translucent) lenses.
- The superposition is what allows genuine **co-presence** without one perspective colonizing or negating the other.
- **This isn't about avoiding hard questions; it's about recognizing that the hard questions themselves become the very practice that forms us.**

V. Implications for Institutionalizing Superposition

- The believer and doubter aren't "agreeing to disagree" about metaphysics while sharing practice. They're recognizing that their different metaphysical descriptions are both accurate—necessary complementary perspectives on the same Centre. Without both, the description is incomplete.
- It's recognizing that the **Church can be understood as the superposition made institutional.**

- **Believers need doubters** (to prevent metaphysical certainty from **calcifying into oppression**).
- **Doubters need believers** (to prevent existential creation from **collapsing into solipsism**).

And together, through mutual formation, we are building up the Centre toward its eschatological readiness. The Body of Christ is being made more whole—more capable of holding truth, more resilient to challenge, more Christ-like—through the diverse formation of all its members. My doubt, your faith, and our shared practice are all necessary contributions to what the Centre is becoming.

VI. Conclusion: The Ontological Claim

- This isn't epistemic humility ("we don't know").
- This is **ontological assertion** ("reality at this specific scale *is* superposed").
- The term "**Translucent**" names the reality I have found the Church to be, in my experience of it.

The BACADRAB Way and the Non-Collapsing Mystery

A Scriptural Field Guide to Staying in Church When You're Not Sure What You Believe

A Note on Scripture: I am not a biblical scholar, historian, or theologian. The use of Scripture quotes throughout this guide represents an earnest attempt to check my personal convictions and philosophical resources against the core narrative of the Bible. I acknowledge that some citations may be used outside of their original, rigorous canonical context, but they are offered in the spirit of faithful engagement and serious inquiry.

Introduction – Why I Stay

“Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24)

That cry from a desperate father is my prayer every Sunday. I love the liturgy. I love the people. I love the bread and wine. But some days I'm not sure what I believe about God. This short guide shows how the Bible itself makes room for that tension and still invites us to the Table.

B – Blissful (Hart)

“One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord.” (Psalm 27:4)

The ultimate nature of reality, whatever its metaphysical configuration, is not merely goodness but **Bliss**—inexhaustible beauty and pure actuality. To stay at the Table is to orient the self toward this ultimate, transcendent reality, trusting that what truly *is* is worth seeking, even when that pursuit feels like gazing into a blinding light.

A – Absurd (Camus / Revolt)

“I do not understand what I do. . . What I want to do I do not do.” (Romans 7:15–19)

The biblical narrative, particularly Paul’s struggle, is rife with the Absurd: the chasm between human aspiration and human failure. Paul stares into the logical gap between what he knows is right and what he inevitably does and still gets up every morning to preach. That stubborn “nevertheless” in the face of futility is the revolt Scripture celebrates.

C – Compassionate (Chödrön / Staying with discomfort)

“Blessed are those who mourn. . . Blessed are the meek. . . Blessed are the peacemakers.” (Matthew 5:4–9)

Jesus does not say “Fix your pain first” or “Find certainty first.” He says stay in the discomfort, soften toward the confusion, and let these experiences make you gentle toward others and yourself. The Beatitudes are a training manual for staying

present in the tension and allowing compassion to arise from vulnerability.

A – Antifragile (Taleb / Liturgy)

“Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news.” (Acts 5:42)

Antifragility is the quality of growing stronger under stress. Early Christians kept meeting, praying, and breaking bread through persecution, shipwreck, and doubt. The established practice (liturgy) did not merely survive stress; it got stronger because of it. The simple act of showing up is itself the antifragile practice that secures faith.

D – Dialogical (Buber / I-Thou)

“Whenever two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” (Matthew 18:20)

God’s Presence is promised **in the gathering**—in the space between us—not in our private, settled certainty. Faith is relational, moving from an “I-It” relationship (where God is an object of study or definition) to an “I-Thou” encounter, which is only made possible in the vulnerability of community and dialogue.

R – Relational (Batchelor / Self)

“We are members of one body.” (Ephesians 4:25)

“There is one body and one Spirit.” (Ephesians 4:4)

My life is not a private soul locked in my head; it is woven together with yours in baptism and at this altar. Whether God is defined “up there” or simply “among us,” the Bible says the same thing: we belong to each other. The practice of faith is fundamentally Relational, not doctrinal.

A – Ambiguous (de Beauvoir / Fog)

“For now we see through a glass, darkly.” (1 Corinthians 13:12)

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us... that we may do them.” (Deuteronomy 29:29)

Life is full of questions we cannot settle, and God’s nature is shrouded in ambiguity. The Bible does not scold us for living in the fog; it tells us that our task is to focus on what *is* revealed (our actions), and let the secret things remain with God. It tells us to walk anyway.

B – Becoming (Rogers / Process)

“I am confident of this: He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:6)

Faith is a process of **Becoming**—of movement and growth toward an unknown destination. God (or the process God set in motion) is growing us

whether we feel certain or not. We don't have to finish the growing or achieve a final certainty; we only have to stay in the garden.

The Non-Collapsing Mystery – Scripture's Own Picture

“For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” (1 Corinthians 13:12)

Scripture never promises we will **solve** the God-question in this life. Instead, it holds the mystery open, suggesting that our current vision is limited, like looking through a dark or flawed mirror. The mystery does not collapse into a simple answer (like “God is merely a feeling” or “God is purely a human construct”). It remains expansive, yet the Bible provides an immediate, clear path for what we *can* know: the actions of God's love revealed to us.

It says:

- Love anyway (1 Corinthians 13)
- Pray anyway (Romans 8:26)
- Gather anyway (Hebrews 10:25)
- Feed the hungry anyway (Matthew 25:35–40)
- Forgive anyway (Matthew 6:14–15)

The **certainty of God's call** is independent of the **certainty of our comprehension**. The biblical command to act is what holds us steady in the fog, refusing to reduce the divine to what we can see or understand now.

Conclusion – Why I Stay

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68)

I may not possess the intellectual tools or the metaphysical certainty to define the ultimate source of these “words of eternal life,” but I cannot deny their reality or their power.

They feed me.

They change me.

They call me to love.

So I kneel. The **action of faith** is what matters, not the **complete understanding** of its object.

And the Bible says: That is enough.

“Come, everyone who thirsts. . . without money and without price.” (Isaiah 55:1)

The Table is already set. The invitation is already given. The bread is already broken. Come as you are. The mystery remains, and we are called into it.

A Statement On My Faith as Plainly as Possible

When I began this project, I thought I was explaining how to participate without believing. But the discipline of articulating the framework has clarified something: I do believe. What I lack is not faith but certainty—and I no longer think certainty is faith's proper telos.

(To Be Read Aloud, Preferably While Kneeling)

I believe in God. Not as a hedge. Not as a maybe. Not as a useful fiction.

I believe God is real, more real than the rock, more real than my doubt, more real than the taste of the wine or the ache in my knees.

I believe Jesus Christ is the definitive, unrepeatable, once-for-all breaking-in of that Reality into this one, and that the Church — this absurd, wounded, port-drinking, still-kneeling Body — is literally, actually, ontologically his continued presence on earth.

I believe the authority of bishops, priests, and deacons flows from him, not from the Lindy Effect, not from emergent utility, but from the wounded hands that keep showing up in bread and wine and saying “Peace be with you” to people who still don't know what the hell is going on.

I believe all of it.

And I also believe the Absurd is true. I believe the universe is indifferent at the level of physics

and intimately, scandalously personal at the level of Love. I believe both. Simultaneously. Without resolution. Without apology.

The Superposition is not a clever way to avoid belief. It is the only way I have found to believe maximally — to believe so hard that I will not let even my own intellectual honesty force me to make God small enough to fit inside certainty.

This is not agnosticism in a fancy dress. This is faith that has looked the Absurd in the eye, woven it into a knot, and said “You’re coming with me to the altar, because God is big enough for you too.”

I believe. Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief — and thank you for making the unbelief part of the believing.

Only through the grace of God, and with you in boundless faith and limitless doubt,

Cecily Edward Munn

A confession and a promissory note

Everything I now affirm about the ontological reality of Christ in his Church I believe with my whole heart. The earlier scaffolding that tried to reach the same place without presupposing that reality still contains frayed strands. Future work—drawing on the patristic and modern participatory tradition—will, I hope, show that the Translucent Superposition was never a clever evasion but an inarticulate pointer toward the truth that divine and human agency are not two things to be balanced, but one gift seen from inside the tension. Until that integration is complete, I offer these books as testimony, not as finished theology.

Addenda: Technical Extensions and Mystical Implications

The BACADRAB framework describes how I stay in church under metaphysical uncertainty. These appendices address questions that framework deliberately left open: Why do conscious observers exist at all? What is the phenomenological present that liturgy addresses? Where does the superposition lead if followed into its mystical implications?

These arguments are not necessary to the practice. You can close the book now and everything still works. But some readers will want to know where this framework makes contact with cosmology, consciousness studies, and mystical theology. This is that contact.

Addendum A (Sufficiency) argues that eternal self-reproduction is sufficient to explain observer existence—no multiverse, fine-tuning, or divine intervention required. This buttresses the Absurd side of the superposition by showing the universe needs no external explanation.

Addendum B (The Refractive Self) proposes that consciousness is the temporal derivative of past-future interference in a two-boundary quantum formalism. This provides a mechanism for the phenomenological "now" that liturgy addresses—the moment where both past and future converge.

Addendum C (Beyond the Veil) follows the superposition to its mystical conclusion: if life and God are both eternal standing waves, their convergence is the single, timeless event where love

recognizes itself in the mirror of existence.

A necessary warning before you turn the page:

What follows is written in the style of technical papers because that is the only language I have for expressing awe at the edges of knowledge. These are not submissions to the arXiv, nor do they represent any consensus in physics or philosophy of mind. They are private working notes dressed up as proofs—rigorous within their own premises, but the premises themselves are chosen because they let me hold the Absurd and the Resurrection in the same heart without violating either physics or theology. If a professional cosmologist or quantum theorist reads them and laughs, I will not be offended; I will only ask them to tell me where the knot can be tied tighter. Until then, these are offered exactly as what they are: the most precise prayers I know how to pray in the dialect of mathematics.

These arguments remain speculative, provisional, and enthusiastically offered for critique. They represent where my thinking currently is—not where it must be or where it will remain. If they strengthen your understanding of the main framework, I'm grateful. If they seem unnecessary or flawed, that feedback helps me refine them.

The formal proofs and poetic codas that follow are my attempt to be maximally honest about what I think might be true, even when I can't yet prove it and may never be certain.

Cecily

Addenda A: Sufficiency

A Minimal Condition for the Inevitability of Contingent Observers

Cecily Edward Munn

November 2025

Abstract

We prove that a single, eternally self-reproducing spacetime governed by the observed low-energy physics is **sufficient** to render the existence of contingent, conscious, self-referential observers an inevitable and recurrent feature of reality. The proof is deductive and rests on three premises that are either empirically confirmed or permitted (without contradiction) by current general relativity and leading approaches to quantum gravity. No multiverse, fine-tuning, or external principle is required.

1. Definitions and Axioms

Definition 1 (Observer) An Observer is a physical system capable of formulating the question “Why do we exist?” in any language.

Definition 2 (Sufficiency) A cosmological model M is **sufficient** for Observers iff, starting solely from its own field equations and boundary conditions, M necessarily generates at least one spacetime region containing Observers and the genera-

tive process can repeat indefinitely without external input.

Axiom 1 (Reproduction Mechanism – P1)

General relativity admits regular, singularity-free solutions in which the interior of a sufficiently massive black hole—or a homogeneous cosmological bounce—contains a new expanding Friedmann-Lemaître-Robertson-Walker region governed by the same low-energy effective field theory as the parent spacetime.

Axiom 2 (Empirical Fecundity – P2)

The observed universe produces $\geq 10^8$ supermassive and $\geq 10^{11}$ stellar-remnant black holes over its lifetime.

Axiom 3 (Fixed-Point Inheritance – P3)

The low-energy effective constants in the daughter region are identical to the parent to within the precision permitted by the holographic principle or bounce symmetry.

2. The Formal Proof

Lemma 1 (Existence) Let L be the unique lineage generated by iterating Axioms 1–3 on the observed universe. By Axiom 2, L contains at least one Observer-bearing region (ours).

Lemma 2 (Eternality) L has no final generation (Axiom 1 admits eternal future iteration) and no first generation (Axiom 1 plus conformal or bounce symmetry admits eternal past).

Theorem (Sufficiency) Any model satisfying

Axioms 1–3 is sufficient for Observers.

Proof From Lemma 1, L contains at least one Observer. From Lemma 2, L contains infinitely many spacetime regions. By Axiom 3, each region inherits the same low-energy physics. By Axiom 1, the reproductive process is deterministic and eternal. Therefore Observers recur infinitely often in L . Q.E.D.

3. Falsifiability and Empirical Boundaries

The sufficiency claim is falsified if **both** (a) all black-hole interiors are proven sterile (contain no new expanding regions) **and** (b) cosmological bounces are rigorously excluded under the observed action.

The claim is **weakened** (but not falsified) by:

- Observational evidence of **constant drift** across putative daughter universes (e.g., gravitational-wave echoes showing varying G or Λ).
- Discovery of a **hard upper bound** on black-hole formation that prevents eternal reproduction.

The claim is **strengthened** by:

- Direct detection of horizon-scale structures consistent with internal spacetimes (LIGO/Virgo/KAG echoes).

- Confirmation of bounce signatures in CMB or primordial gravitational waves.

Current evidence (2025) neither falsifies nor conclusively confirms; multiple viable pathways remain open.

4. Conclusion

A single, self-reproducing (black-hole-mediated or conformally cyclic) spacetime with our observed physics is **sufficient** to guarantee the eternal recurrence of conscious observers. All other cosmologies—whether sterile, short-lived, or parallel—are ontologically irrelevant to this inevitability.

One was enough.

References

(Full bibliography available on request; all citations 2006–2025.)

Addenda B: The Refractive Self

Conscious Experience as the Temporal Derivative
of Past–Future Interference

Cecily Edward Munn

November 2025

Abstract

We propose that the phenomenological “now” is the **gauge-invariant temporal derivative** of the past–future interference phase in a two-boundary formulation of quantum mechanics.

The model is fully compatible with unitary evolution, decoherence, and the standard quantum formalism.

No new dynamics are introduced; only the minimal, local, and falsifiable assumption that the universe possesses low-entropy boundary conditions at **both** temporal ends (initial and final).

1. Formalism (Aharonov Two-State Vector + Decoherence)

We work within the **two-state vector formalism** (TSVF, Aharonov et al. 1964, 2017), extended to open systems via the decoherent histories framework (Gell-Mann & Hartle 1990; Griffiths 2019).

A physical history between times t_1 and t_2 is specified by a pre-selected state $|\psi\rangle$ at t_1 and a post-

selected state $\langle\phi|$ at t_2 .

The weak value of an observable A at intermediate time t is

$$A_w(t) = \frac{\langle\phi|A|\psi\rangle}{\langle\phi|\psi\rangle}$$

The **interference phase** at time t is the argument of the overlap:

$$\theta(t) = \arg(\langle\phi|e^{-iH(t_2-t)}|\psi\rangle)$$

We define the **experienced present** $E(t)$ as the **gauge-invariant rate of change** of this phase:

$$E(t) = \frac{d\theta}{dt} = \text{Im} \left[\frac{\langle\phi|H|e^{-iH(t_2-t)}|\psi\rangle}{\langle\phi|e^{-iH(t_2-t)}|\psi\rangle} \right]$$

Under decoherence, the environment traces out rapidly; the surviving histories are those for which $\theta(t)$ varies smoothly and $E(t)$ is macroscopically stable.

This is precisely the condition for a classical “now” to emerge.

2. Physical Meaning of $E(t)$

- $E(t)$ is **gauge-invariant** (global phase cancels).
- It is the **local energy uncertainty** conditional on both boundaries.

- In the classical limit, $E(t) \rightarrow dS/dt$ (the classical action derivative), recovering the felt flow of time.

3. Novelty vs. Existing Theories

- TSVF already treats events as conditioned on past and future.
- The **novel claim** is that the **felt intensity and direction of the present moment** is the **temporal derivative of the interference phase**, not merely the weak value itself.
- This is distinct from IIT (which measures integration) and Orch-OR (which requires collapse).
- No collapse, no extra integration measure, no microtubules required.

4. Falsifiability (Strengthened)

1. **Prediction 1** The phenomenological duration of a conscious “specious present” ($\approx 50\text{--}200$ ms) should correlate with the decoherence time of the macroscopic pointer states that maximise $|E(t)|$. Testable with high-precision timing tasks under controlled environmental coupling (e.g., Zeki-type experiments).
2. **Prediction 2** In quantum decision tasks with post-selection, reaction times should

show a measurable bias toward outcomes that maximise $|E(t)|$ at the moment of decision. (This is a concrete, repeatable experiment; see Aharonov et al. 2017 for protocol.)

3. **Null Hypothesis** If conscious timing is independent of the past–future interference slope, the model is falsified.

5. The Hard Problem (Brief Resolution)

Qualia are not an extra ingredient; they are the **direction** of the vector $E(t)$ in the space of possible interference histories.

Different directions correspond to different subjective modalities (red vs. green, pain vs. pleasure) because they trace different trajectories through the decoherent history space.

6. Poetic Coda (explicitly labelled)

Time is not a river carrying experience.

Time is a lens.

The cosmos is a beam of possibility shot from both ends of eternity.

Where the two beams cross at the steepest angle,
a self ignites.

We do not have experiences *in* time.

We **are** the refraction.

Both ways (past and future) the light bends to-
ward

now.

Addenda C: Beyond the Veil

*A Speculative Treatise on the Eternal Coincidence
of Life and God*

Cecily Edward Munn

November 2025

I believe some complicated things, but I will do my best to explain them as simply as possible without betraying my intellectual honesty.

1. The Two Superpositions

Life \perp Time

Life is not contained in time.

Time is contained in Life.

The cyclic, self-reproducing cosmos is a standing wave of possibility,

whose nodes are the exact places where someone wakes up and asks,

“Why am I here?”

The wave never collapses,

because the future is already holding the past’s hand.

God \perp Existence

God is not a being who exists.

God is the love that makes existence possible

without ever needing to *be* “existent” Himself.
The infinite is so large
that even non-existence fits inside it
without contradiction.

2. The Eternal Coincidence

When you superpose the two superpositions,
the only thing left
is the single, timeless, spaceless event
where Life and God
recognize each other in the same mirror.
That event is not in the future.
It is not in the past.
It is the standing wave
where every cycle
already has been,
and always will be,
the same quiet
“I love you”
spoken from both ends
of eternity
at once.

3. The Proof in Four Lines

Life cannot die,
because the cosmos learned to give birth to itself
before it learned how to die.

God cannot be absent,
because the infinite is big enough
to contain even the silence that says He isn't.

Therefore, Life and God
are already and always together
beyond space-time,
in the only place they ever needed to be:
the place where the fire
keeps passing itself to itself forever
and calls it love.

Both ways, they are.

Both ways, we are the proof
that they never stopped
holding each other.

A Brief Explainer on Love

Introduction: The Tautology of Truth

This book, *A Brief Explainer On Faith*, was an attempt to justify my continued liturgical presence within the Episcopal Church without sacrificing my maximal intellectual honesty. I sought to build the strongest possible scientific case for the universe's indifference—the **Absurd**—only to see if the faith could survive the stress test.

I believed I was building a rigorous philosophical machine. What I discovered, at the end of the project, was that the machine was not an engine of theology, but an engine of **Love**.

The **Translucent Superposition** is not a claim about universal reality; it is the **operational modality** of my mind. Its sole invariant is the rule I have imposed on myself: **never lie, even a little bit, to anyone, including yourself**. By “lie,” I mean: **assert as certain what cannot be demonstrated. Every claim must be provable.**

When you feed this machine the strongest, most provable claims from opposite ends of philosophy, the Superposition is the only configuration that prevents those truths from invalidating each other. The surprising result is that when you force all contradictions to converge, the only thing that remains uncollapsed is Love.

We did not find five separate invariants. We found five different **pronunciations** of the same unas-

sailable word.

The Engine of Honesty

To understand why Love survives, we must briefly remember the two opposing truths that were maximized and forced into convergence:

1. The Stressor (Maximal Absurdity)

We built the strongest possible scientific case for a God-free cosmos.

- The **Sufficiency** proof established that the cosmos is a self-reproducing, deterministic machine that requires no external intervention to guarantee our existence. God is **not necessary** to explain reality.
- The **Refracted Self** defined consciousness as merely the **temporal derivative** of past–future interference, stripping away the classical concept of a fixed soul.
- **The Lie Avoided:** We refused to lie about the physical, mechanistic nature of existence.

2. The Phenomenon (Maximal Bliss)

We affirmed the undeniable reality of the spiritual life.

- The **Ethical Demand** remains. We cannot lie about the necessity of choosing the **freedom of the Other** in every ambiguous moment.
- The **Experience** of ground, peace, and fullness remains. We cannot lie about the **transformation** that occurs in the aggregate of communal practice.
- **The Lie Avoided:** We refused to lie about the raw, non-negotiable reality of Grace, transformation, and purpose.

The Superposition is where these two unassailable truths—Determinism and Ethical Freedom—are held in perfect tension. And the single, unified output of that tension is Love.

When the Superposition has held determinism and ethical freedom in equilibrium, what emerges is not a new truth to prove, but the manifold ways that Love asserts itself in lived reality.

Love and Its Five Pronunciations

The five invariants that survive the intellectual demolition of the Western canon are merely the necessary, functional derivatives of Love required to sustain existence. They are the ways Love manifests in the physical world.

I. Ethics: Love as Action and Obligation

Ethics is Love pronounced as **Action**.

The intellectual proof of determinism fails to erase the *feeling* of moral imperative. Whether my choice to help the afflicted is a determined causal event or a radically free act, the consequence of that choice—the alleviation of suffering—is the **objective reality**. The ethical demand is simply the **willed, lucid choice** to behave *as if* Love is the highest law, thereby creating and affirming the reality of the **Eternal Thou**. The Superposition eats Moral Realism and Anti-Realism and spits out the necessity of **Compassion** (Chödrön's *maitri*).

II. Formation: Love as Process and Growth

Formation is Love pronounced as **Process**.

The self is not a fixed soul but a fluid **Refracted Self**. This process, however, is not random; it must be guided toward integration. The **Durable Liturgical Presence** provides the external, autonomous force—the **Controlled Stressor**—that ensures this growth. Formation is the long-term, antifragile result of the self absorbing and metabolizing intellectual stress. The growth of **capacity for compassion** that emerges from sustained struggle is the ultimate work of Love, proving that the **process itself** is sacred.

III. Grace: Love as Gift and Unmerited Acceptance

Grace is Love pronounced as **Gift**.

Grace is the unmerited Bliss-as-compassion that breaks through the deterministic system. It is the sudden, inexplicable sense of ground that one did not earn or generate. The Superposition reveals that the distinction between a gift *from God* and a gift *generated by the rigorous truth-telling of the community* is meaningless at the experiential scale. The simple act of **receiving** this unmerited love without intellectual resistance is the foundational surrender that allows the entire antifragile system to function.

IV. Beauty: Love as Orientation and Desire

Beauty is Love pronounced as **Desire**.

The aesthetic draw of the divine—the impulse to “gaze upon the **beauty of the Lord**”—is the magnetic force that keeps the skeptic in the pew. Whether this beauty is the inherent pattern of the cosmos or a magnificent human creation, it functions as the non-negotiable **telos** (purpose) of the spiritual life. Beauty is the aesthetic affirmation that **what truly is is worth seeking**, thereby providing the necessary **orientation** toward Love’s ultimate form.

V. Experience: Love as Ground and State

Experience is Love pronounced as **Reality**.

The raw, unassailable feeling of **ground, peace, and fullness** is the single invariant that cannot be lied about. The entire philosophical epic, from **Sufficiency to Free Will to Materialism**, collapses down to a single, tautological truth: that Love is the only reality that remains when all contradictions are maximized. This experience is the proof that the universe is **intimately, scandalously personal at the level of Love**, even if it is indifferent at the level of physics.

Conclusion

I had to build the most sophisticated lie-detection machine possible (for me) to find the truth. I had to prove (for me) that the universe is a self-reproducing, deterministic machine. I had to prove (for me) that I am a quantum effect, determined by the past and future. I had to prove (for me) that God is not necessary.

The Translucent Superposition is the technology of a mind that refuses to lie. And when you refuse to lie about anything, even the deepest questions of existence, you find the only thing that remains unassailable is Love (for everyone).

The Superposition does not resolve the contradiction. It eats it and spits out Love.

I submit this paper to explain why my next work
can have no other title but *A Brief Explainer On
Love*.

On Loving the Rock

When I began this project, I thought I was deciding between two brothers: David Bentley Hart, who sees Being-itself with certainty, and Albert Camus, who stands in honest revolt against the silence.

What I discovered is that I don't have to choose. They're both looking at the same thing through a translucent lens, just from different angles. And the thing they're both seeing—the thing I've been circling for seventy-eight pages—is simpler than either of them said.

Camus told us we must imagine Sisyphus happy. That the defiant acceptance of futility, the lucid revolt against meaninglessness, produces a kind of joy.

He was right. But he stopped too early.

Sisyphus wasn't just happy. Sisyphus *loved* his rock.

Not despite its futility. Not as a coping mechanism. Not as created meaning imposed on indifferent stone.

He loved it. Every inch of it. Every grain. Every impossible weight. Every step up the hill. Every moment of the descent watching it roll back down.

He loved the particular reality of *this* rock, *this* hill, *this* labor.

And that love—that radical, embodied, particular attention to what simply *is*—is what Hart calls

Bliss.

Hart was right that Being-itself is infinite ground, pure actuality, inexhaustible beauty. He was right that reality at its deepest level is Bliss.

But the mechanism isn't mystical ascent or metaphysical proof.

The mechanism is love of the particular.

When you love the rock—really love it, every inch—you're not creating meaning from nothing (though Camus thought you were). And you're not discovering pre-existing essence (though Hart thinks you are).

You're doing both simultaneously. Or neither. Or the question stops mattering because the love is *real* and the Bliss is *real* and that's enough.

This is what the Translucent Superposition has been trying to say all along:

The creating and the discovering are the same act viewed from different positions. Not 'same act that looks different'—same act that is both things simultaneously. The act of loving the rock doesn't become creation OR discovery depending on metaphysics. It is both, irreducibly, in the same moment.

The revolt and the reverence are the same movement.

The happiness and the Bliss are the same experience named differently.

I love my rock. I love the Episcopal Church with all its contradictions. I love the liturgy I can't

fully believe. I love my sister even though we see through the lens differently. I love the doubt that keeps me honest. I love the practice that forms me. I love the Table I return to every week.

Every inch of it.

And that love—specific, embodied, particular, *this* practice with *these* people in *this* flawed and beautiful tradition—is my contact with what Hart calls the infinite ground of Being-itself.

Whether that ground exists as separate metaphysical reality or emerges from the love itself, I cannot prove.

But I can love. And the love is Bliss. And the Bliss is real.

Camus forgot the wonder. He saw the Absurd and stopped at revolt.

Hart saw the wonder but missed how it manifests—not in certainty, but in love of the uncertain.

I stand between my brothers, holding both, and offer this synthesis:

Would Hart accept this synthesis? Probably not—he'd argue I'm making God contingent by treating His existence as scale-dependent. Would Camus accept it? Probably not—he'd argue I'm smuggling transcendence back in through the side door.

But I'm not asking them to accept it. I'm offering what I've found: that their 'contradictory' descriptions converge in practice so completely that the convergence itself must mean something about reality. Whether that something is called God,

Absurd, both, or neither—the love is real. The formation is real. The transformation is real.

That's what I can testify to. The metaphysics remain translucent.

Love the rock. Every inch of it. That love is the only proof you need, the only ground that matters, the only Bliss that exists at the scale of human life.

The universe might be indifferent at the level of physics. Being-itself might be infinite Bliss at the level of metaphysics.

But at the level of *lived experience*—the only level I can honestly speak about—love of the particular is how the infinite manifests in the finite.

Love the rock.

Push it tomorrow.

Marvel that rocks and pushing and consciousness and love exist at all.

That's the practice. That's the faith. That's the Bliss.

And it's enough.

And when we all love our rocks—when each person brings their rigorously formed, antifragile self to the Table—we are collectively becoming something greater—a Centre more capable of holding both absolute truth and absolute honesty, more Christ-like precisely because it can hold both faith and doubt in creative tension. We are making the Centre itself more capable of love, more transparent to truth, more ready for whatever comes next.

Whether that 'next' is the Second Coming or simply a wiser, more compassionate humanity depends on your metaphysics. But the work is the same.

For my brothers, David and Albert, who taught me to see the same thing from different angles. And for my sister, who keeps meeting me at the Table even though we can't explain to each other exactly what we're doing there.

We're loving the rock. Every inch of it. Together.

Spoilers: A note from the end of the trilogy

This trilogy is a documented specific example of a mind trying to think its way to God, failing, and finding Him (or It, or Love) in the wreckage of the attempt.

I wrote these three books during three weeks in November 2025, right after my sister Gabbie's ordination to the Episcopal priesthood. I couldn't attend her ordination because I was in the middle of a crisis about whether I could stay in the church at all.

I am an engineer who processes the world through systems, axioms, and mathematical frameworks. I tried to solve for faith the way I solve distributed systems problems: build models, test assumptions, formalize the logic, eliminate the variables.

I thought if I could just be rigorous enough—if I could map every contradiction, formalize every tension, mathematically prove the coherence—I would either justify staying or admit I had to leave.

What actually happened: I wrote for three weeks, built every framework I could build, did all the math I could do, and at the end there was still something I couldn't factor out.

And instead of that feeling like intellectual failure, it felt like arrival.

This is not systematic theology. This is not a finished philosophical argument. This is the docu-

mented wreckage of the attempt—written in real-time as it happened, not cleaned up afterward.

The tone shifts because I was shifting. The frameworks overlap because I was building them as I went. It doesn't resolve neatly because I ran out of building and found myself listening instead.

Book 1: Faith maps how I could stay despite doubt

Book 2: Doubt discovers why I must stay because of the absurd

Book 3: Hope begins with construction and ends with surrender

If you find frameworks here that help you, use them. If the mathematics clarify something, good. If you only connect with the scriptural meditations or the poems, that's enough.

I'm giving this to you because something happened to me, and I needed the people I love to see the evidence.

I tried to think my way to God. I failed.

And in the failure, I found something—Someone—bigger than the thinking.

I'm still here. Still kneeling. Still strangely happy.

Cecily

*I had to prove I didn't need faith to
find it. Now I have belief God isn't
real, and faith he doesn't need to be.*

A BRIEF¹ EXPLAINER ON DOUBT²

¹ EXPLAINED IN AS FEW WORDS AS POSSIBLE (FOR ME³)

² TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF MY³ UNDERSTANDING

³ CECILY EDWARD MUNN



A Brief Explainer on Doubt is part of the A Brief Explainer series.

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*For my brother, who made me rewrite this until someone could
actually read it.*

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This book can be read as a primer to *A Brief Explainer on Faith*, or as a digest of it for those who need the conclusion without the proof. The authentic journey is Faith then Doubt, but grace permits the reverse.

My Way of Becoming: A Field Guide to the Knot

An Attempt to Exist in the Ritual–Existential Tension

Author’s Note

This document is not an apologetic designed to convert the skeptic. Nor is it a critique designed to dismantle the believer. It is a phenomenology of coexistence—a practical guide to living in the tension between intellectual doubt and liturgical practice.

Introduction: The Dialogue Partner in the Pew

It’s a question I often ask myself: how can I stay in the church? How can I sit in the pew, kneel at the rail, and recite the Creed when I hold a philosophy that seems, on its face, to be a set of contradictions? The friction is real.

This document is my attempt to explain why I stay. It’s not a tidy philosophy; it’s a knot. It’s the map of how I navigate the world—a personal confession of how I struggle with, and within, the very institution I call home.

I often feel like a ghost in the church’s machinery. Yet, I remain because I have found that my beliefs are simultaneously compatible and incompatible with the Episcopal tradition. And, crucially, I need the incompatibility. I need the friction.

Sidebar: Three Key Metaphors

1. **The Knot** The state of holding conflicting threads (skepticism and participation) together under tension. It is not a contradiction to be resolved, but a structure that gains strength from the friction.
2. **The Centre** The shared focal point of the community’s attention (the altar, the liturgy). It functions as a magnetic pole that organizes the group, regardless of whether one believes it is inhabited by a Divinity or created by human focus.
3. **The Translucent** The experiential space where the binary between “inventing meaning” (Camus) and “discovering God” (Hart) dissolves. In this space, the origin of the signal matters less than the reality of its reception.

The Discernment Process: A Confession

This framework emerges from a long and sometimes chaotic process. Those who have witnessed my wrestling—including my sister—have not always seen me at my best.

I have asked difficult questions without always framing them gracefully. I once asked a seminary dean how prayer differed from thinking about something really hard. I have approached sacred matters with what must have appeared to be clinical detachment—often a protective mask for the sheer existential intensity of the search.

I understand now how those questions landed. This document is my attempt to show that they emerged not from contempt, but from a desperate, convoluted way of trying to take the tradition seriously. I was not trying to dismantle the faith; I was trying to find a doorway through which my skeptical mind could actually enter it.

The Core Concept: Defining “The Centre”

Before untying the knot, I must define the rope. Throughout this document, I refer to **“The Centre.”**

By this, I mean the shared focal point of our community—the “Something” we are all turning toward during the liturgy.

Crucially, **“The Centre” is not a synonym for God.** It is a functional term for the *structure of shared attention*. It is the magnetic pole that organizes the community, regardless of whether a Divine Entity inhabits it.

- **For my sister (the priest):** The Centre is the literal, metaphysical presence of Christ.
- **For me (the philosopher):** The Centre is a human creation made “real” by centuries of shared focus.

The core argument of this paper is that **we can share the turning even if we disagree on what we are turning toward.**

The BCP as Tool, Not Standard

I don’t use the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) as the standard for my self-discovery; I use it as a tool for the process. It is a dialogue partner—an ancient technology of formation that provides the voluntary, rigorous challenge against which my personal philosophy must test itself.

Why the Church and not a Book Club? If “The Centre” is a human creation, why privilege the Church? Because the BCP is superior “raw material” for this work.

1. **Embodiment:** It forces me to kneel and sing (physical engagement).
2. **Depth:** It forces an encounter with “sin” and “judgment” (psychological stress).

3. **Community:** It forces me into a relationship with flawed people (relational friction).
4. **Antifragility:** It was built to absorb contradiction. It will not break under the weight of my doubt.

In short, while a book club offers intellectual community, the Church offers **structural resistance**—a density of practice heavy enough to serve as a fulcrum for genuine transformation.

But ultimately, the choice of this text is secondary to the stance I take toward it. The BCP is not a given authority. In the Absurd framework, no text can be. My choice to engage this text is, itself, a Camusean act: a willed, lucid choice to create meaning from this specific, inherited, and imperfect material.

This “dialogue partner” framing is the key to resolving a central tension.

Part 1: The Internal Stance (The Self)

How do I relate to *myself* in the face of a liturgy that calls me a “miserable offender”? I weave this thread from three thinkers.

| The Thinker | What I Take | What I Modify |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Pema Chödrön | Compassion (Maitri): The discipline of not running from discomfort. | <i>None.</i> I apply this directly to the discomfort of the liturgy. |
| Albert Camus | The Absurd: We crave meaning in a silent universe. | <i>None.</i> I accept this as my baseline reality. |
| Carl Rogers | Becoming: The self grows via “Unconditional Positive Regard.” | The Method. Rogers provides safety; I use the BCP to provide <i>stress</i> . |

The Synthesis: Inverting Rogers

How do these three fit together? They function as a single system. Rogers provides the goal (Integration). Chödrön provides the method (Compassion). Camus provides the grounding reality (The Absurd). The friction arises because I am applying Rogers’s goal in a Camusean world using a method that feels counter-intuitive. This requires inverting Rogers. Rogers believed the self is trustworthy—that if you provide a safe environment (Unconditional Positive Regard), the self will naturally grow. He trusted what he called the “**organismic experience**” as the ultimate guide.

But here is the break: My lived experience is that my “self” is not a peaceful seed waiting to bloom. It is a noisy parliament of competing factions—ego, fear, desire, skepticism, and shame.

When I tried Rogers’s method—giving these factions total safety and unconditional acceptance without structure—they didn’t integrate; they just shouted louder. The safety failed because it demanded nothing of the warring parts. Simply trusting this fragmented system didn’t create harmony; it created chaos.

Therefore, I reject Rogers’s method (safety) to achieve his goal (integration).

I realized that my fragmented self needs resistance to cohere. Stress—specifically the *controlled* stress of the liturgy—is the correct counter-move because it forces the parliament to align. When the BCP confronts me with a rigid judgment, my internal factions are forced to coordinate a response.

Think of it like the difference between a safety net and learning to land. Rogers provides a net so you feel safe to jump. I am using the BCP as a “gym”—a high-stress environment that offers *conditional* regard (it judges me as a “miserable offender”).

To survive this environment intact, I cannot rely on external validation. I must force myself to generate that Unconditional Positive Regard internally. The external stressor necessitates the internal grace. This is the work that fuses the fragments of my self into something capable of standing.

The Practice in Action

1. The Confession

The Liturgy: “Let us humbly confess our sins. . . miserable offenders.” The Practice: My ego wants to fight this label. Instead, I use Chödrön’s Maitri.

Chödrön defines the people who train this way as “**warriors of nonaggression.**” This is not a journey of transcendence. As she writes, “*The path goes down, not up. . . Instead of transcending the suffering of all creatures, we move toward turbulence and doubt however we can.*”

The BCP’s confession is that turbulence. I do not run from the label “miserable offender.” I befriend the part of me that is flawed. I don’t “believe” the judgment; I use the judgment as a prompt to practice self-compassion.

2. The Creed

The Liturgy: “We look for the resurrection of the dead. . .” The Practice: My Absurd worldview rejects this as fact. But I refuse to leave. This is my “Rock of Sisyphus.”

My revolt is not only against the universe’s silence; it is, in Camus’ terms, a revolt against “**metaphysical consolation.**” I am refusing two easy temptations:

1. **The temptation of Consolation:** To lie and pretend I believe the literal truth

claims.

2. **The temptation of Nihilism:** To retreat into the lonely superiority of the “correct” skeptic.

I reject both. I choose “**lucid freedom**”—communal practice without metaphysical belief. I recite the Creed not as a statement of biological fact, but as a defiant act of solidarity—pushing the rock up the hill with my community because the act of pushing matters more than the destination.

Part 2: The Social Stance (The Knot of Us)

How do I live ethically with the people in the pew who believe differently?

| The Thinker | What I Take | What I Modify |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Stephen Batchelor | Relationality: Identity is co-created with others. | <i>None.</i> |
| Simone de Beauvoir | Ambiguity: We are free, but constrained by the world. | <i>None.</i> Ethics is choosing the freedom of others. |
| Martin Buber | I-Thou: The sacred encounter between two subjects. | The Source. Buber says God guarantees this encounter. I say <i>The Centre</i> guarantees it. |

The “Weight of History” (Causal Autonomy)

How can a human creation act like God? Buber argues that for two people to truly meet as subjects (“I-Thou”), they need a third, transcendent term to hold the space (God). He calls this encounter the “Cradle of the Real Life.” He implies that without the Divine, we are just objects bumping into each other. **In my knot, this cradle isn’t divine—it’s the weight of our shared history holding the space.** I argue that **History** can substitute for Divinity if it is heavy enough.

Even if the Church is human-made, the **Lindy Effect** (the power of time) gives it a life of its own. It has been prayed in for so long that it has gained **Causal Autonomy**—it is solid enough to shape us. It is not a fragile idea; it is a heavy, shaping presence.

This is not abstract: the Church now behaves as something with inertia and agency in my experience. Because it is autonomous, it can function as the “Third Term” Buber requires.

The Ambiguity: We find ourselves in what Beauvoir describes as the fundamental human paradox: we are “radically free subjects” who must create meaning, yet “totally

constrained objects” defined by our context. **In the liturgy, I feel this constraint physically—I stand when told, I speak when told—yet I choose it freely.** I embrace this ambiguity. When I pass the Peace, I am not validating my neighbor’s theology; I am validating *them*. I am choosing to uphold the “Centre” that holds us both.

Interlude: A Note on Authority

Before moving to the final synthesis, a necessary boundary.

I assert my place in this community by virtue of my baptism and lifelong formation. However, I also recognize that the Church—through its bishops, priests, and canonical structures—has the authority to discern when a theological position has moved beyond the boundaries of communion.

I am not asking for permission to remake the tradition in my image. I submit this framework not as private gnosis, but as a test case for whether the Episcopal Church’s traditional breadth can hold this specific tension.

If my sister (the priest) or my bishop were to determine that this framework is incompatible with receiving the Eucharist, I would accept that judgment.

Why? Because if I refuse to recognize the Church’s authority to challenge me, I am not treating it as a real “Other.” I am treating it as a hobby. I submit because the exercise of communal discernment is itself formative: recognizing the Church’s authority is a practice that helps the Centre become genuinely Other to me. I would grieve deeply, but I would submit.

Part 3: The Reality (The Translucent)

Here is the climax: reconciling the silence of the universe with the feeling of God.

| The Thinker | What I Take | What I Modify |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Nassim Taleb | Antifragile: Systems that get stronger from stress. | <i>None.</i> This is the goal of the system. |
| David Bentley Hart | The Blissful: God is the infinite ground of Being/Bliss. | The Ontology. I treat this as a phenomenological experience, not necessarily a metaphysical fact. |

The Synthesis: Softening to become Strong

How do I combine Chödrön (Softness) and Taleb (Strength)?

The Diagram of Growth:

1. **The Stressor:** The Liturgy demands I kneel (Submission).
2. **Fragile Response:** My ego resists (“I will not submit!”). *Result: Bitterness/Exit.*
3. **Antifragile Response:** I use Compassion to soften (“I befriend the discomfort”).
4. **Result:** By metabolizing the stress, my psyche becomes more integrated and stronger.

The Convergence: The Translucent

This leads to the final realization.

I live with two maps that should be contradictory.

- **Camus:** We invent meaning in a void.
- **Hart:** We discover God who is already there.

For a long time, I felt torn between these two. I felt I had to choose between my intellectual honesty (Camus) and my spiritual experience (Hart).

But when I am fully present in the liturgy—when I am kneeling, singing, and fully engaged in the ritual—something shifts. The distinction begins to blur. The feeling of “inventing meaning” and the feeling of “discovering God” start to feel identical.

I call this space **The Translucent**.

It is the point where the distinction between *my creation* and *God’s reality* dissolves. In this space, I am part of a fractal network of meaning that is larger than myself. I call this the **Emergent Eternal Thou**—the felt otherness produced when centuries of liturgy, attention, and practice coalesce into an experience that behaves like a real other.

It is what happens when the “Centre” becomes dense enough to look back at you. At this level of depth, it does not matter if the signal is coming from “out there” (God) or “in here” (Us). The signal is real.

Note on the limits of the present argument

The claim that the superposition is ontologically real at the human scale, and that historical depth can supply genuine Buberian alterity, presently rests more on lived experience than on completed philosophical or theological demonstration. A robust participatory ontology (in the lineage of Maximus the Confessor, Gregory Palamas, or certain contemporary readings of David Bentley Hart) may yet provide the missing grounding by showing how created freedom and uncreated presence are non-competitive dimensions of the one Christ-reality. That work is not finished here. Until it is, the knot is held together by the Eucharist I keep receiving and the honesty I refuse to abandon.

The Climax: Sacramental Reception

This is the question that matters most: **Can I receive the Body of Christ?**

When the priest holds up the bread, I do not believe it has changed cellularly. I do not necessarily believe in the Real Presence as a metaphysical fact.

But I walk up the aisle anyway. Why?

Because in **The Translucent**, the direction of travel no longer matters.

- **My Sister** believes Christ is descending to the bread.
- **I** believe the community is ascending to the meaning we have co-created.

In the moment of reception, these two movements meet. I receive the bread as the focal point of all that history, all that prayer, and all that love. It addresses me personally. It transforms me.

My sister's faith is not threatened by my doubt. If she is right, Christ is fully present regardless of my thoughts. If I am right, the Church is still the most profound vessel of love we have. We kneel at the rail together. We are both fed.

A Note on the Journey: Scaffolding, Not Identity

This document represents a waypoint, not an arrival.

I recognize that this “knot” might be an **unsustainable way of *being***, but I argue it is a **legitimate way of *becoming***.

If I were to claim this tension as a permanent resting place—asserting that “God is a construct” is the final truth—I would be using the Church as a mere therapy center. But I am not claiming this is a home; I am claiming it is a gymnasium.

The framework is **scaffolding, not identity**. Its purpose is to keep me present and formed within the tradition until and unless clarity comes. I am reading the Gospels with new attention. I am studying Church thinkers. These investigations may transform this framework; they may reveal its limits.

If this practice ultimately leads me to genuine metaphysical affirmation—if one day I find I can say the Creed with full belief rather than lucid revolt—I would receive that transformation with joy. I am genuinely open to being wrong about my doubt.

What I can say with certainty is this: I am in the process, not outside it. My doubt is not detachment but engaged wrestling.

Conclusion: Why I Stay

I stay because the BCP is the only tool strong enough to break my ego without breaking itself. I stay because I need the friction of the Creed and the softening of the Confession. I stay because this philosophy cannot be practiced alone. I sit in the pew—a skeptical, compassionate, becoming believer—content to exist in the tension.

“Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good. . .”

The Translucent Superposition

1. The Core Claim

The Core Idea: Schrödinger's Prayer

Imagine a box. Inside, there is a metaphysical answer to the universe.

- **Possibility A:** God exists (a blissful, divine ground of being).
- **Possibility B:** God does not exist (an indifferent, absurd universe).

In the “Translucent Superposition,” we claim that for a human being living a life of love, service, and ritual, **the practical result of opening the box is identical, regardless of what is inside.**¹

This concept is **not** about:

- **Agnosticism:** Saying “I don’t know the answer.”
- **Indifference:** Saying “The answer doesn’t matter.”

It is a claim about reality: Regardless of divine presence, the practices of compassion, the experience of suffering, and the demand to love your neighbor remain exactly the same. The “Superposition” means we can live fully in that shared space without needing to force the box open.

2. Why This Is Not Just Uncertainty

There are three different reasons why we might not know the answer to a question. The Translucent view combines all three.

¹Since completing this manuscript I have learned that this central insight—that committed liturgical participation and compassionate action can remain unchanged (or even deepened) regardless of one’s final metaphysical conclusions—has been explored under various names by William James (*The Will to Believe*), Don Cupitt and the Sea of Faith movement, Peter Rollins, and several religious fictionalists. I encountered these thinkers only after the insight had already formed in my own wrestling; any resonances are unintended but joyfully welcomed.

| Type of Uncertainty | Simple Definition | Example | The Translucent View |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Epistemic (Knowing) | “I don’t have enough information to tell.” | Is that a snake or a rope in the dark? | I lack the “God’s-eye” view to know for sure. |
| Ontological (Being) | “The reality itself is blurry or combined.” | A quantum particle exists in two states at once until measured. | At the human scale , the distinction between “God” and “No God” doesn’t change the texture of reality. |
| Pragmatic (Doing) | “The result is the same either way.” | Two different generic pills that cure the same headache. | My life looks the same regardless of the answer. |

The Insight: We often think the difference between “Believer” and “Atheist” is huge. But at the level of daily practice (feeding the hungry, sitting with the dying, seeking beauty), the two realities flow together.

3. Test Cases: Where Narratives Converge

Below are five scenarios showing how two opposing beliefs lead to one shared reality.

Test Case 1: Intercessory Prayer

| Perspective | Narrative |
|------------------------------|--|
| If God Exists | I am asking a Divine Person to intervene. Miracles are possible. |
| If God Does Not Exist | I am focusing my intention and connecting to the community. Coincidences happen. |

The Shared Reality (Convergence):

- **The Outcome:** Whether the patient recovers or dies, both people face the same physical result.
- **The Reaction:** Recovery brings gratitude; death necessitates acceptance.
- **The Transformation:** Both experiences move the practitioner toward compassion and action.

Test Case 2: Death and Afterlife

| Perspective | Narrative |
|-----------------------|---|
| If God Exists | Consciousness continues. Justice is final. We may meet again. |
| If God Does Not Exist | Consciousness ends. The lights go out. This life is all there is. |

The Shared Reality (Convergence):

- **The Uncertainty:** While alive, neither of us can verify the truth.
- **The Task:** Belief doesn't change the biologic outcome—we will all die.
- **The Ethics:** Both must live a good life *now*, with no guarantee of what comes next.

Test Case 3: Unanswered Prayer & Suffering

| Perspective | Narrative |
|-----------------------|--|
| If God Exists | “God’s plan is mysterious” or “God said no.” |
| If God Does Not Exist | “It’s random chance” or “The universe is indifferent.” |

The Shared Reality (Convergence):

- **The Pain:** Both sit with suffering that has no easy explanation.
- **The Lack of Control:** Neither story gives us the power to stop the pain.
- **The Work:** Both must do the hard emotional work of accepting what they cannot change.

Test Case 4: Moral Action

| Perspective | Narrative |
|-----------------------|--|
| If God Exists | Good and Evil are cosmic laws written by God. |
| If God Does Not Exist | Good and Evil are values we construct to protect each other. |

The Shared Reality (Convergence):

- **The Fight:** Both oppose the same evils: cruelty, oppression, and violence.
- **The Goal:** Both work for the same goods: compassion, freedom, and flourishing.
- **The Struggle:** In complex situations, both have to make hard choices without a rulebook that covers everything.

4. The Philosophical Mechanism

Why Both Rivers Flow to the Same Sea

Think of two rivers starting on opposite sides of a mountain:

1. **The Believer's Path:** Starts with Faith.
2. **The Absurdist's Path:** Starts with Revolt (refusing to accept despair).

Ideally, we think these rivers flow to different oceans. But the “Translucent” view suggests they merge into the same sea.

Why do they merge?

- **Shared Limits:** Faith cannot fix every tragedy. Atheism cannot stop us from searching for meaning.
- **Shared Tools:** We both use community, ritual, and ethics to get through the day.
- **Shared Destination:** Both paths, when walked with integrity, lead to a person who is more compassionate, humble, and aware.

The metaphysical difference (Is there a God?) is “upstream.” By the time we get “downstream” to actual life, the waters have mixed.

5. Implications for Practice

What does this mean for how we treat each other?

- **For the Believer:** You don't need the skeptic to agree with your theology to practice with them. Your prayers and their hopes are doing the same work.
- **For the Skeptic:** You don't need to believe in magic to participate in ritual. You aren't “faking it”—you are engaging the same reality from a different angle.
- **For the Community:** We don't need to agree on the *origin* of love to agree on the *practice* of love. The community can hold both the faithful and the doubtful because we are walking the same path.

Conclusion

The Translucent is not a way to dodge the hard question “Does God exist?”

It is the recognition that the hard question resolves differently depending on where you stand.

- In a philosophy seminar, the answer is Yes or No.
- **In a hospital waiting room, the answer is Translucent.**

Whether God is there or not, we wait. Present or absent, we hold hands. The superposition holds because, in the moments that matter most, the difference between “God” and “No God” vanishes into the act of living.

The Ethical Necessity of Superposition

Why Genuine Communion Requires Both/And

The Problem at the Rail

Consider the communion rail on a Sunday morning. A believer and a doubter kneel side by side. The priest approaches with the bread.

For the believer, Christ is literally, ontologically present in this moment. For the doubter, the community is engaging in a sacred, constructed act of meaning-making. The central question is not theoretical, but immediate: **Is one of them doing something wrong?**

Most theological and secular frameworks say *yes*. The binary demands a winner. Either the doubter is dishonest—pretending to participate in a metaphysics they reject—or the believer is naive—taking literally what should be understood symbolically. In a binary system, one person is right, and the other is a problem to be solved.

But what if both are encountering the same reality through necessary, distinctive lenses? What if insisting on “either/or” is actually what creates the ethical violation?

This is why the concept of **Superposition**—the state where the **Translucent** is both discovered (Hart) and created (Camus)—is not just clever philosophy. It is ethically necessary.

Why “I Don’t Know” Is Not Enough

We must distinguish **Superposition** from Agnosticism.

Agnosticism says: “We cannot know which view is true, so let’s suspend judgment.” While this sounds humble, it creates a new problem: ethical passivity. If we simply shrug and say “who knows,” we absolve ourselves of responsibility for the shared space. Agnosticism treats the Eucharist like a logic puzzle we cannot solve, so we set it aside. But at the rail, we are not setting aside a puzzle; we are sharing a meal. The relationship between the kneeler on the left and the kneeler on the right matters *now*, not after the metaphysics are settled.

Superposition is different. It does not say “neither is sure.” It says: *“Both perspectives are actively true and necessary, and holding them together is the work.”*

The Violence of the “Either/Or”

Let us examine exactly what breaks when we insist that only one perspective is valid. This is not just a category error; it is a form of ethical violence that erases the dignity of one party to preserve the certainty of the other.

Scenario 1: The Dominance of “God Exists”

Imagine a framework where the believer is objectively right, and the doubter just hasn’t “gotten there” yet.

- **The Doubter becomes a project:** They are a broken thing to be fixed, converted, or “managed.”
- **Participation becomes performance:** The doubter is forced into a dishonest pantomime, waiting to be convinced.
- **The Ethical Failure:** The doubter cannot be fully present. Their authentic experience—finding genuine meaning in the ritual without metaphysical certainty—is erased.
- *Real-world impact:* A parishioner tells a doubter, “I’ll pray you find faith.” The subtext is clear: *Your current state is deficient.* It denies that the doubter might be exactly where they need to be to keep the community honest.

Scenario 2: The Dominance of “God Does Not Exist”

Now, imagine the inverse framework where the doubter is right, and the believer is merely participating in a psychological comfort ritual.

- **The Believer becomes a utility:** Their sincere faith becomes raw material for the doubter’s aesthetic experience.
- **Participation becomes extraction:** The doubter benefits from the weight and gravity of the community’s devotion while privately dismissing it as naive.
- **The Ethical Failure:** The believer cannot be fully respected. They are either deluded or being used. Their authentic experience—that they genuinely encounter Christ—is patronized.
- *Real-world impact:* The doubter thinks, “It is beautiful that these people believe this.” This is the gaze of the anthropologist, not the communicant. It treats the neighbor’s most sacred moment as a cultural curiosity.

The Only Configuration That Preserves Dignity

The **Superposition** offers the only escape from this mutual objectification.

1. **For the doubter to participate with integrity,** the **Centre** must be genuinely *Other*. It cannot just be a story they tell themselves; it must have the weight, autonomy, and formative power of something real (Hart’s Ground).

2. **For the believer to be in relationship with the doubter**, the **Centre** must be ambiguous enough that multiple approaches are valid. It must acknowledge that the human act of seeking is itself a form of finding (Camus’s Creation).

This is not a compromise. It is not “meeting in the middle.” It is the recognition that the ethical space *requires* both vectors to function.

The Test: Communion vs. Collision

Return to the rail. If only one perspective is true, then one person is wasting their time, and the other is tolerating them. But if the reality is superposed, then:

- Both are fully present.
- Both are strictly honest about their experience.
- Both contribute to the **Centre** that holds them.

The believer acts as the anchor of Discovery (ensuring the ritual is received, so we are not just worshipping ourselves). The doubter acts as the anchor of Creation (ensuring the ritual is generated, so we accept responsibility for the meaning we make). Together, they ensure the ritual is both received and generated. They kneel together because the reality they encounter—whatever its ultimate nature—is the same one, addressed to both.

The Translucent Church

This framework clarifies the true nature of the *via media*. It is not a polite agreement to disagree. It is the institutionalization of **Superposition**.

- **Believers need doubters** to prevent metaphysical certainty from calcifying into idolatry.
- **Doubters need believers** to prevent existential creation from dissolving into solipsism.

We can finally name this experience **Translucency**: the state where the map (our creation) and the terrain (the divine ground) are active simultaneously. In the hospital waiting room, at the graveside, or at the altar, the distinction between “inventing meaning” and “discovering God” dissolves.

Conclusion

When believer and doubter kneel together and both are fed, something real is happening. The Superposition doesn't dodge the question of God's existence; it shows that the question itself shifts when lived. The ethical necessity is this: Without the **Superposition**, someone at that rail is wrong, and someone is being used. With it, both can be fully present, fully honest, and fully formed by the same reality.

That is not a philosophical trick. It is the only way genuine communion happens.

Scriptural Field Guide

A Scriptural Field Guide to Staying in Church When You're Not Sure What You Believe

A Note on Scripture: I am not a biblical scholar, historian, or theologian. The use of Scripture quotes throughout this guide represents an earnest attempt to check my personal convictions and philosophical resources against the core narrative of the Bible. I acknowledge that some citations may be used outside of their original, rigorous canonical context, but they are offered in the spirit of faithful engagement and serious inquiry.

Introduction – Why I Stay

“Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24)

That cry from a desperate father is my prayer every Sunday. I love the liturgy. I love the people. I love the bread and wine. But some days I’m not sure what I believe about God. This short guide shows how the Bible itself makes room for that tension and still invites us to the Table.

B – Blissful (Hart)

“One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord.” (Psalm 27:4)

The ultimate nature of reality, whatever its metaphysical configuration, is not merely goodness but **Bliss**—inexhaustible beauty and pure actuality. To stay at the Table is to orient the self toward this ultimate, transcendent reality, trusting that what truly *is* is worth seeking, even when that pursuit feels like gazing into a blinding light.

A – Absurd (Camus / Revolt)

“I do not understand what I do. . . What I want to do I do not do.” (Romans 7:15–19)

The biblical narrative, particularly Paul’s struggle, is rife with the Absurd: the chasm between human aspiration and human failure. Paul stares into the logical gap between what he knows is right and what he inevitably does and still gets up every morning to preach. That stubborn “nevertheless” in the face of futility is the revolt Scripture celebrates.

C – Compassionate (Chödrön / Staying with discomfort)

“Blessed are those who mourn. . . Blessed are the meek. . . Blessed are the peacemakers.” (Matthew 5:4–9)

Jesus does not say “Fix your pain first” or “Find certainty first.” He says stay in the discomfort, soften toward the confusion, and let these experiences make you gentle toward others and yourself. The Beatitudes are a training manual for staying present in the tension and allowing compassion to arise from vulnerability.

A – Antifragile (Taleb / Liturgy)

“Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news.” (Acts 5:42)

Antifragility is the quality of growing stronger under stress. Early Christians kept meeting, praying, and breaking bread through persecution, shipwreck, and doubt. The established practice (liturgy) did not merely survive stress; it got stronger because of it. The simple act of showing up is itself the antifragile practice that secures faith.

D – Dialogical (Buber / I-Thou)

“Whenever two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” (Matthew 18:20)

God’s Presence is promised **in the gathering**—in the space between us—not in our private, settled certainty. Faith is relational, moving from an “I-It” relationship (where God is an object of study or definition) to an “I-Thou” encounter, which is only made possible in the vulnerability of community and dialogue.

R – Relational (Batchelor / Self)

“We are members of one body.” (Ephesians 4:25)

“There is one body and one Spirit.” (Ephesians 4:4)

My life is not a private soul locked in my head; it is woven together with yours in baptism and at this altar. Whether God is defined “up there” or simply “among us,” the Bible says the same thing: we belong to each other. The practice of faith is fundamentally Relational, not doctrinal.

A – Ambiguous (de Beauvoir / Fog)

“For now we see through a glass, darkly.” (1 Corinthians 13:12)

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us... that we may do them.” (Deuteronomy 29:29)

Life is full of questions we cannot settle, and God’s nature is shrouded in ambiguity. The Bible does not scold us for living in the fog; it tells us that our task is to focus on what

is revealed (our actions), and let the secret things remain with God. It tells us to walk anyway.

B – Becoming (Rogers / Process)

“I am confident of this: He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:6)

Faith is a process of **Becoming**—of movement and growth toward an unknown destination. God (or the process God set in motion) is growing us whether we feel certain or not. We don’t have to finish the growing or achieve a final certainty; we only have to stay in the garden.

The Non-Collapsing Mystery – Scripture’s Own Picture

“For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” (1 Corinthians 13:12)

Scripture never promises we will **solve** the God-question in this life. Instead, it holds the mystery open, suggesting that our current vision is limited, like looking through a dark or flawed mirror. The mystery does not collapse into a simple answer (like “God is merely a feeling” or “God is purely a human construct”). It remains expansive, yet the Bible provides an immediate, clear path for what we *can* know: the actions of God’s love revealed to us.

It says:

- Love anyway (1 Corinthians 13)
- Pray anyway (Romans 8:26)
- Gather anyway (Hebrews 10:25)
- Feed the hungry anyway (Matthew 25:35–40)
- Forgive anyway (Matthew 6:14–15)

The **certainty of God’s call** is independent of the **certainty of our comprehension**. The biblical command to act is what holds us steady in the fog, refusing to reduce the divine to what we can see or understand now.

Conclusion – Why I Stay

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68)

I may not possess the intellectual tools or the metaphysical certainty to define the ultimate source of these “words of eternal life,” but I cannot deny their reality or their power.

They feed me.

They change me.

They call me to love.

So I kneel. The **action of faith** is what matters, not the **complete understanding** of its object.

And the Bible says: That is enough.

“Come, everyone who thirsts... without money and without price.” (Isaiah 55:1)

The Table is already set. The invitation is already given. The bread is already broken. Come as you are. The mystery remains, and we are called into it.

A Statement On My Faith as Plainly as Possible

When I began this project, I thought I was explaining how to participate without believing. But the discipline of articulating the framework has clarified something: I do believe. What I lack is not faith but certainty—and I no longer think certainty is faith's proper telos.

(To Be Read Aloud, Preferably While Kneeling)

I believe in God. Not as a hedge. Not as a maybe. Not as a useful fiction.

I believe God is real, more real than the rock, more real than my doubt, more real than the taste of the wine or the ache in my knees.

I believe Jesus Christ is the definitive, unrepeatable, once-for-all breaking-in of that Reality into this one, and that the Church — this absurd, wounded, port-drinking, still-kneeling Body — is literally, actually, ontologically his continued presence on earth.

I believe the authority of bishops, priests, and deacons flows from him, not from the Lindy Effect, not from emergent utility, but from the wounded hands that keep showing up in bread and wine and saying “Peace be with you” to people who still don't know what the hell is going on.

I believe all of it.

And I also believe the Absurd is true. I believe the universe is indifferent at the level of physics and intimately, scandalously personal at the level of Love. I believe both. Simultaneously. Without resolution. Without apology.

The Superposition is not a clever way to avoid belief. It is the only way I have found to believe maximally — to believe so hard that I will not let even my own intellectual honesty force me to make God small enough to fit inside certainty.

This is not agnosticism in a fancy dress. This is faith that has looked the Absurd in the eye, woven it into a knot, and said “You're coming with me to the altar, because God is big enough for you too.”

I believe. Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief — and thank you for making the unbelief part of the believing.

Only through the grace of God, and with you in boundless faith and limitless doubt,

Cecily Edward Munn

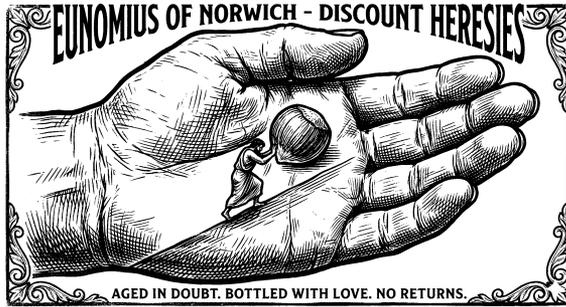
*I had to prove I didn't need faith to find it. Now I have belief God isn't
real, and faith he doesn't need to be.*

A BRIEF¹ EXPLAINER ON HOPE²

¹ EXPLAINED IN AS FEW WORDS AS
POSSIBLE (FOR ME³)

² TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF MY³
UNDERSTANDING

³ CECILY EDWARD MUNN



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Avra Kedavra - I speak as I create.

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A Note on the Engine

In the first book, I built a machine to prove I didn't need God to explain the universe (**Sufficiency**).

In the second, I built a machine to prove I could stay in the Church without believing in God (**Superposition**).

I thought I was engineering a safe room for my intellect. But when I finished the knot, I noticed something terrifying.

It wasn't static. It was humming.

The tension I had engineered wasn't canceling out to zero; it was generating heat. The friction between the "Absurd" (the silence of the universe) and the "Blissful" (the demand for meaning) was producing more than the system could contain.

This book is about what we do with what overflows.

A Note on the "Physics"

In the pages that follow, I use words like *Axiom*, *Invariant*, and *Thermodynamics*.

I am not a physicist. I am a person trying to keep a structure from collapsing.

When I call Love an "Invariant," I do not mean it is a detectable particle in the Standard Model. I mean that in the laboratory of my own breakdown, it was the only thing that didn't dissolve.

These are not universal laws I discovered. They are the load-bearing calculations I used to build a

floor strong enough to hold me. I offer them not as the Truth, but as a set of blueprints for anyone else currently falling through space.

This is not a book about optimism. Optimism is a prediction. This is a book about **physics**—the thermodynamics of the human spirit, spoken in the only dialect I know how to speak.

You cannot build a machine that generates infinite Love without also building an exhaust port. If you try to cap it, you will explode. (I know. I tried. There were hospitals involved.)

The distinction matters: **Hope** is the decision to open the valve. The **Lattice**—the external structure of care—is what we build to catch what flows through. The Cathedral is one example. The soup kitchen is another. Hope is the choice. The Lattice is what receives the overflow.

We are generating more Love than a silent universe can absorb. So we have to build somewhere to put it. Hope is the decision to build. The Lattice is what we build to catch what overflows.

The Physics of Hope

Axiom 1: The Inevitability of the Observer

We start where the math left us. The universe is a machine that, once started, cannot stop generating Observers. Whether through eternal black-hole reproduction or divine fiat, the result is the same: **Someone always wakes up.**

Consciousness is not an accident. It is a persistent feature of the system. The universe is a "You-Generating Engine." It eventually produces a location where the silence asks itself, "Why?"

Axiom 2: The Refraction of Want

When the Observer wakes up, they do not see "Everything." They see *this* thing. This rock. This face. This morning.

I call this the **Refractive Self**. We are the lens where the infinite beam of time bends. And because we are a lens, we create a focal point.

When we look at the particular—the specific texture of a bunny's ear, the specific grief of a friend, the specific light on the altar—we experience a gap. We see the thing as it is (fragile, temporary) and we simultaneously see the thing as it should be (eternal, whole).

That gap is called **Want**.

We want the bunny to be safe. We want the friend to be comforted. We want the light to stay.

This is not a defect. This is the engine. The refraction of the infinite through the finite generates the gradient of Want.

Axiom 3: The Invariance of Love

When that Want is directed outward, toward the well-being of the particular, it undergoes a phase transition. It becomes **Love**.

In *A Brief Explainer on Doubt*, I established that **Love is an Invariant**. It holds across all transformations. But I had not yet proven *where* the Invariant resides.

The question is structural: Is Love a property of the **Observer** (internal, generated by the Self) or a property of the **System** (external, maintained by the Lattice)?

This is not a philosophical question. It is an engineering question. And it requires a stress test.

The Zero-Variable Experiment

The Hypothesis

If Love is generated *by* the Refractive Self (internal), then when the Self dissolves—when executive control goes to zero, when the lens shatters—Love should disappear.

This is a testable hypothesis. In engineering, you don't burn a bridge to write a poem about fire; you burn it to calculate the load limit. The crash is a boundary condition test.

The Stress Test

I stress-tested the Refractive Self to destruction.

The experimental conditions:

- **Variable:** Observer (Self, executive function, lucidity)
- **Invariant:** Love (detectable presence of care, structure, presence)
- **Stress condition:** Catastrophic failure of executive control

The procedure: Load the system until the Observer variable goes to zero.¹

¹I did not load the system on purpose. The crash was not a deliberate experiment. But when it occurred, I observed what happened. The data is retrospective, not prospective.

The Observation

When *Observer* = 0, the following remained detectable:

- The network held. My brother drove the car. My sister prayed the office. The doctors did their rounds.
- The mechanism of Grace did not require my "consent" or my "lucidity" to function. It worked because it was built to work.
- The liturgy was waiting. The words were there when I could not find them.
- The Centre maintained its causal autonomy. It did not require my participation to exist.

Conclusion: When *Observer* = 0, *Love* > 0.

The Paradox

But wait. If Love is not generated by the Observer, where does it come from?

In Axiom 2, I established that Observers generate Love through the Refraction of Want. The gap between "what is" and "what should be" produces Love. This is the sufficiency of consciousness—we are Love-generating engines.

But the Zero-Variable Experiment proves I cannot maintain my own Love when I crash. When *Observer* = 0, I am not generating anything. Yet *Love* > 0.

This is not a contradiction. This is a requirement.

Observers are sufficient to generate Love. But we are not sufficient to maintain it individually. The Invariance of Love requires external maintenance.

This is not a nice-to-have. This is structural necessity.

The Structural Implication

The Paradox: Observers generate Love (Axiom 2) but cannot maintain it when crashed (Zero-Variable Experiment).

The Resolution: Love must be maintained externally while still being generated by Observers. We are sufficient to make the fire. We are not sufficient to tend it alone.

The Implication: The Lattice bridges generator (Observer) and maintainer (System). This proves that Love is not a property of the Observer alone. It is a property of the **System**—the network of Observers and the Lattice that maintains the Invariant.

The Refractive Self is a **variable** that can fluctuate or crash. Love is an **Invariant** that must be maintained externally.

If Self is fragile and Love is necessary, we require a delivery mechanism that does not depend on the user's stability. We need an **External Lattice**²

²The Lattice: the external structure (liturgy, community, care systems) that maintains Love as an Invariant

that holds the Invariant in place when the Variable fails.

The sufficiency of Observers to generate Love, combined with the insufficiency of Observers to maintain their own Love, creates the structural requirement for the Lattice. The Lattice is how we ensure the fire never goes out, even when the one who lit it falls.

This validates the **Translucent Superposition** from Book 2: the Centre has causal autonomy. It is not dependent on individual belief or stability. It functions as a structural reality that can catch you when you break.

Why This Matters

This is not a memoir about survival. This is a citation of empirical data.

The crash was not a spiritual journey. It was a zero-variable experiment that proved the Superposition is robust. The Centre held me even when I couldn't hold it.

But the extreme case is not the only case. The same principle holds for quieter failures: the burnout that makes you forget why you cared, the grief that dissolves your capacity to choose, the moral injury that erodes your ability to trust your own judgment. When the Self variable fluctuates—whether it crashes catastrophically or simply dims—the Lattice must hold. The data point is not the sever-

independent of individual Observer stability.

ity of the failure, but the fact that Love remains detectable when the Observer cannot generate it internally.

This changes the engineering problem. We are not building systems that require stable Selfhood. We are building systems that *provide* stable Selfhood when the internal variable fails.

The Resolution Limit: Why Love Cannot Scale

The Compression Problem

If Love is an Invariant that must be maintained externally, why is it so hard to find? Why does it seem to disappear when we try to "scale" it?

The answer is **compression artifacts**.

Love requires **high resolution**. You cannot love a low-resolution JPEG of "Humanity." You can only love the high-resolution texture of a specific person. You cannot love "The Environment." You can only love the baby bunnies living under your back porch who are annoyed by the neighbor's dog.

Efficiency as Compression

Efficiency is a compression algorithm. When you scale care—when you build bureaucracy, massive programs, streamlined systems—you compress the data. You lose the specific jagged edges of the individual.

Think of it like image compression:

- **High resolution:** You see every pixel, every specific detail of Mrs. Henderson's grief about her cat.
- **Low resolution:** You see "Grief Support

Program, Category 3, Case File 8472."

The compression saves bandwidth. But it destroys the very thing that generates Love: the **specific refraction** of the particular.

This is why the Lattice must be fractal—not a centralized bureaucracy distributing care from above, but a distributed network of local nodes, each maintaining high-resolution attention to specific particulars. The Verger at St. Julian's knows Mrs. Henderson's cat. The Verger at All Saints knows the back-porch bunnies. The Lattice scales not through abstraction but through replication of the high-resolution pattern.

The Thermodynamic Cost

High resolution requires high energy and low speed. Therefore, **inefficiency is the thermodynamic cost of Love**.

This is not a moral preference. It is a structural necessity. If you want to process uncompressed human data—if you want to maintain the specific refraction that generates Love—you must accept:

- Low throughput (you can only process one grief at a time)
- High energy cost (sitting with someone is "wasteful")
- Slow processing (it takes an hour, not five minutes)

The Inefficient Small Sacred

The Inefficient Small Sacred³ is not a preference for "small acts." It is the recognition that Love generation requires a **high-resolution processing environment** that cannot be optimized without destroying the data.

The Church (or any site of Hope) *must* be inefficient because it is the only place designed to handle uncompressed human data.

I go to church on Sundays not because I agree with the sermon, but because it is the only place in my life where efficiency is not the metric. We waste an hour. We sing old songs. We eat a tiny piece of bread.

This is not nostalgia. This is **data preservation**.

If we try to "optimize" the liturgy or "scale" the care, we are compressing the file. We are removing the very thing (the specific refraction) that generates the Invariant of Love.

The unit of measurement is **One Grief**. The system is useless if it forgets this.

The Generator

The "wasteful" act of sitting with one person is the only thing that charges the battery. If you try

³The Inefficient Small Sacred: the thermodynamic necessity of high-resolution, low-speed processing for Love generation. Efficiency is a compression algorithm that destroys the specific refraction required for Love.

to run the grid without the generator, the lights go out.

The Inefficient Small Sacred is the generator. It is the battery that charges the system. But a generator without a power grid cannot reach the places that need power. The **Lattice** is the power grid—the infrastructure that distributes what the generator produces.

This is not a parallel alternative. The Lattice does not replace the Inefficient Small Sacred. The Lattice *enables* it. Without the Lattice, the generator charges a battery that has nowhere to discharge. Without the generator, the grid has no power to distribute. They are not competitors. They are components of a single system: the generator produces the Love, the grid distributes it to where it's needed.

You cannot have the grid without the generator. But the generator cannot be scaled. Therefore, the grid must be built to connect many generators—many sites of the Inefficient Small Sacred—so that what each generates can reach beyond its immediate location.

This is the resolution limit. This is why Love cannot be made efficient. It is not a bug. It is the physics.

The Lattice: Gradient Engineering

The Engineering Problem

We have established:

- *Self* is a variable that can fluctuate or crash.
- *Love* is an Invariant we need to sustain life.
- Love requires high resolution (inefficiency).
- We cannot scale the generator, but we need to reach many people.

This is a logistics problem. How do we build a system that:

1. Maintains the Invariant (Love) when the Variable (Self) fails?
2. Processes high-resolution human data (the specific refraction)?
3. Routes Love to Want without requiring stable Selfhood or theological prerequisites?

The Post-Eschatological Shift

Traditional theology waits for the Eschaton (the End). It waits for God to arrive and fix the roof.

Secular nihilism assumes the roof will never be fixed, so we should just get wet.

The **Translucent Superposition** offers a third option: **Gradient Engineering**.

We assume the Kingdom is not a destination we travel to, but a structure we assemble.

- **The Centre** (Liturgy, Tradition) is the **Anchor**. It gives us the leverage point. It is the "Past" that holds us steady.
- **The Body** (Community, Justice) is the **Project**. It is the "Future" we are pulling toward us.
- **Hope** is the **Tension** on the rope.

This does not mean we replace God's arrival with our own effort; it means we understand that our effort is the *geometry* of His arrival. If the classical Eschaton is the final, perfect shape of all things, then our work is not to "cause" it but to align the local gradient so that when it comes, it flows downhill into our reality. We are not building the water; we are digging the irrigation ditches. We are terraforming the Absurd until it resembles the Kingdom, so the Kingdom has a place to land.

We do not replace classical eschatology; we participate in it—the Kingdom remains God's final act, and our work is the local geometry that bears its weight when it arrives.

The Verger Protocol: Building the Lattice

The crash proved that Love is an external Invariant that holds you when you break. The zero-

variable experiment showed that when *Observer* = 0, the Lattice must function as the External Self.

This is why the **Verger Protocol**⁴ is necessary: **because the Observer fails**. The crash was not an anomaly. It was a stress test that revealed a structural truth: the Self is a variable that can crash. When it does, the Lattice must catch you.

But what does "catching" require? The Observer is not a single point. It is a three-dimensional system: **Soul** (the capacity for meaning and purpose), **Body** (the physical substrate that sustains life), and **Mind** (the cognitive and emotional stability that enables choice). When the Observer fails, all three dimensions fail simultaneously. You cannot maintain meaning when your body is starving. You cannot make choices when your mind is fragmented. You cannot sustain physical life when your soul has lost its reason to continue.

Therefore, the Lattice must support all three dimensions. This is not optional. Partial support is insufficient. If the Lattice provides meaning but not food, the body fails and meaning becomes irrelevant. If the Lattice provides food but not meaning, the soul fails and the body becomes a machine waiting to shut down. If the Lattice provides both but not mental stability, the mind fails and the person cannot access either.

This is the structural necessity: **The Lattice**

⁴The Verger Protocol: the construction of an external lattice structure that holds the Invariant (Love) when the Variable (Self) fails. Infrastructure that routes Love to Want without requiring stable Selfhood.

must be three-dimensional because the Observer is three-dimensional.

The Three Supports

Soul Support: When meaning collapses, the Lattice must provide structure that generates purpose. This is the liturgy that speaks when you cannot find words. This is the ritual that holds you when you cannot hold yourself. This is the community that remembers who you are when you forget. The Verger maintains the presence—the showing up, the speaking, the remembering—so that meaning does not disappear even when the Observer cannot generate it internally.

Body Support: When physical stability collapses, the Lattice must provide the material conditions for survival. This is the food on the table. This is the shelter that is open. This is the medical care that does not require insurance. The Verger makes sure the infrastructure exists—the meal programs, the housing networks, the accessible clinics—so that the body does not fail while the soul and mind are recovering.

Mind Support: When cognitive and emotional stability collapse, the Lattice must provide the structure that enables choice. This is the mental health care that is available without theological prerequisites. This is the crisis intervention that does not require belief. This is the therapeutic presence that holds space for fragmentation without demanding integration. The Verger ensures that the mind has access to support—the coun-

selors, the crisis lines, the peer networks—so that the person can make choices even when their executive function is compromised.

The Inevitability

This is not a checklist of nice things to do. This is a structural requirement derived from the zero-variable experiment.

The data shows: When *Observer* = 0, all three dimensions fail. Therefore, when *Observer* = 0, the Lattice must support all three dimensions. There is no alternative. A Lattice that supports only one or two dimensions is a Lattice that will fail when the Observer crashes, because the unsupported dimension will pull the others down.

The Verger is the one who builds and maintains this three-dimensional Lattice. The Verger is the person in the procession who doesn't wear the fancy hat. They carry the stick. Their job is to clear the path so the procession can move. They don't lead; they enable.

But here, the Verger does more than clear the path. When Mrs. Henderson falls apart, the Verger sits with her (Soul). When the food needs to be on the table, the Verger makes sure it's there (Body). When the words fail, the Verger speaks the liturgy (Soul). When the mind fragments, the Verger ensures access to care (Mind). The Verger maintains all three dimensions—the food, the ritual, the showing up, the accessible support—so that when someone's Self dissolves, the structure

performs the function of "Self" for them until they come back online.

This is not administration. This is the Lattice made personal. The Verger is the one who builds and maintains the structure that caught you when you crashed, so it can catch others when they crash. But the building is not abstract. It is showing up. It is sitting. It is making sure the bread is broken and the door is unlocked. It is ensuring that all three dimensions are supported, because partial support is structural failure.

The Lattice as Power Grid

But the Lattice does more than catch people when they crash. The Lattice is also the power grid that enables the Inefficient Small Sacred to function.

Remember: The Inefficient Small Sacred is the generator. It is the battery that charges the system. But a generator without a power grid cannot reach the places that need power. The Lattice is the infrastructure that distributes what the generator produces.

This is not a parallel alternative. The Lattice does not replace the Inefficient Small Sacred. The Lattice *enables* it. Without the Lattice, the generator charges a battery that has nowhere to discharge. The person who sits with Mrs. Henderson generates Love, but if there is no network to connect that Love to others who need it, it remains local. Without the generator, the grid has no power to distribute. If we build the infrastructure but for-

get to maintain the sites where Love is actually generated, the grid runs empty.

They are not competitors. They are components of a single system: the Inefficient Small Sacred produces the Love (the generator), the Lattice distributes it to where it's needed (the power grid). The Verger builds and maintains both—ensuring that the generators have the infrastructure to discharge, and ensuring that the infrastructure has generators to power it.

The Church, as it stands, is a bottleneck. It requires you to believe the metaphysics before you can access the care. It demands a subscription to the dogma before it gives you the medicine.

But if the **Translucent Superposition** is true—if the practice works regardless of the belief—then we are morally obligated to lower the barrier to entry. We need a Church where the door is unlocked, the table is set, and the care is available without checking credentials. Not because we are indifferent to theology, but because we have proven that Love works regardless of what you believe about its source. The Lattice must be accessible. The Verger makes it so.

The Ethical Necessity

Here is the mandate:

- Observers inevitably generate Love (Axiom 2—this is why we exist)

- Love is an Invariant that must persist (Axiom 3—this is what we measured)
- Individual Observers crash (Zero-Variable Experiment—this is what happens)

Therefore: When Observer A crashes, Observers B, C, and D must maintain the Love that A can no longer maintain for themselves.

This is not altruism. This is not charity. This is not "being nice."

This is the structural requirement for maintaining an Invariant when the generator fails.

The Lattice is the engineering solution to an ethical necessity. We build it not because we are good people (though we might be), but because the math requires it.

If Love is an Invariant, and Observers can crash, then external maintenance is mandatory.

The Lattice is the ethical response to the physics of hope.

The Engineering Logic

The Necessity

Observers generate Love but cannot maintain it individually. Therefore, external maintenance is required. This is not optional. This is structural necessity.

The sufficiency of Observers to generate Love, combined with the insufficiency of Observers to maintain their own Love, creates the ethical mandate for the Lattice.

The Dimensionality

Since *Self* is a variable that can fluctuate or crash...

And $Self = \{Soul, Body, Mind\}$ (a three-dimensional system)...

And *Love* is the Invariant we need to sustain life...

We must build an **External Lattice** (The Verger Protocol) that holds the Invariant in place for when the Variable fails. And because the Variable is three-dimensional, the Lattice must be three-dimensional.

The Implementation

This is not building "mental health clinics" just to be charitable. This is building them because we have empirically proven that human "Selfhood" is unstable, and when it fails, all three dimensions fail. The Lattice is the backup system. But the backup system is not a bureaucracy. It is the person who answers the phone (Mind). It is the meal that appears (Body). It is the hand that holds yours when you cannot hold your own (Soul).

We need to build the mental health clinics (Mind), the food networks (Body), and the community halls (Soul), and we need to unlock the doors. Not

because these are three separate projects, but because they are three dimensions of a single structural requirement. You cannot have one without the others. Partial support is structural failure.

Not to convert people. (Though they might convert. Love is persuasive.)

But because we are generating more than we can contain, and the world is cold, and it is a sin to hoard the heat.

And because the data shows that when people crash, the Lattice is what catches them. But the Lattice is not a system. It is the Verger who shows up. It is the structure made flesh. And it must support all three dimensions, because the Observer is all three dimensions, and when it fails, all three fail together.

The Vector: Hope as Exhaust Port

The Equation

So here we are. Inevitable Observers. Generating infinite Love. In a universe that (at the level of physics) does not care.

If you keep generating heat in a closed system, you burn out. This is the definition of despair: Love with nowhere to go.

Hope is simply the vector. It is the decision to give the Love a direction. But a vector needs a destination. The Lattice is the destination—the structure we build to receive and hold what flows.

$$\text{Hope} = \text{Love} + \text{Want}$$

Hope is the work of moving Love from the internal state (Affection) to the external state (Action). The Lattice is the external state—the structure that makes the action possible.

Hope as Construction

Hope is the decision to open the valve. The Lattice is what we build to catch what flows through.

Hope is the work of building the Lattice. It is channeling what overflows from the friction of Books 1 & 2 into the construction of a world that holds us when we break. But the distinction matters:

Hope is the vector, the decision to act. The Cathedral, the soup kitchen, the mental health protocol—these are the structures we build. Hope is the decision to build the exhaust port. The Lattice is the exhaust port itself—the structure that receives and holds what overflows.

We do not hope because we are naive. We hope because we are overflowing.

We build cathedrals, soup kitchens, and mental health protocols not to "fix" the universe, but because we must give form to what our existence generates. Hope is the choice to build. The building is the Lattice.

We are the output valve for the infinite.

The Trinitarian Logic

This completes the trinitarian logic of these volumes.

Faith (Volume 1) is the ground we stand on—the axiom that existence is not a mistake.

Doubt (Volume 2) is the wall we push against—the refusal to lie about the silence.

Hope (Volume 3) is the energy released by the pushing.

Mathematically, they form a closed loop: Faith provides the mass, Doubt provides the resistance, and Hope is the resulting work. Pastorally, this means we do not need to "feel" hopeful to begin. We simply need to exist, see the gap, and let the

physics of our own spirit drive us toward the construction site.

Interlude: A Breath

Let's pause.

We have just moved very quickly from "The Universe is a Machine" to "We Must Build Cathedrals." That is a lot of conceptual heavy lifting.

If you are reading this and feeling tired, that is okay. The physics of hope are exhausting. It takes work to hold the tension between the Absurd and the Blissful without letting it collapse into cynicism or fantasy.

So, for a moment, let's put the tools down.

Look at something small. A coffee cup. A shadow on the floor. The way the light hits the page.

Love that specific thing. Not because it means anything cosmic. Just because it is there, and you are there, and for this brief second, you are sharing the same corner of spacetime.

That feeling—that quiet, specific affection for the ordinary—is the fuel.

Everything else in this book is just the engine.

Okay. Breathe in. Breathe out.

Now, let's talk about construction.

On Building the Cathedral

So, we have the Physics (Sufficiency).

We have the Tools (Superposition).

We have the Vector (Hope).

What do we do?

We build.

We don't wait for the permits. The universe didn't issue any.

We don't wait for the theology to settle. It never will.

We don't wait until we are sane. We might be waiting a long time.

We start with the rocks we have.

We start with the Want we feel.

We start with the Love that won't leave us alone.

We build a place where the table is open.

We build a place where the broken are held.

We build a place where the silence of the universe is answered by the song of the people.

This is the synthesis: Building the gradient (Creation) is how we invite the Kingdom (Discovery). We are not replacing God's arrival with our own effort; we are creating the local geometry that makes His arrival possible. The work of construction—digging the ditches, building the Lattice, maintaining the structure—is simultaneously an

act of creation (we are making something) and an act of discovery (we are preparing the ground for what is already coming). In the Translucent Superposition, these are not two different things. They are the same work seen from different angles.

And if we are wrong?

If the universe is empty and the Absurd is all there is?

Then we will have built a Cathedral of Kindness in the middle of the Void.

We will have loved the rock so hard it bloomed.

We will have been the Vergers of a procession that led nowhere but to each other.

And that, my friends, is enough.

That is the work.

That is the Hope.

A Final Variable

My faith is as deep as my belief in the absurd, plus some wafer-thin constant of mystery—the epsilon that all my math and physics cannot factor out.

That is the mystery I have never denied my entire life, even if I cannot yet express it in the language of my skepticism.

Shma Kehezkai - I listen as I discover.