

## The Work of the People's

# EMBODYING ADVENT

A Journey of Hope, Peace, Faith, and Joy with Phuc Luu

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### SERIES INTRO

This Advent series, rooted in the teachings of Peter Traben Haas and inspired by his book *The Advent Remedy*, invites participants on a spiritual journey into the heart of Advent. This is a time of waiting, watching, and wondering—a season where the light of Christ pierces through our deepest darkness and offers hope, healing, and transformation. Each session focuses on one of the core themes of Advent, exploring how the light of Christ illuminates our path and transforms our lives, both spiritually and practically.

We're so glad you found your way here and hope you find the time exploring through these films, prayers, practices - and listening to your own life - a mini, life-giving journey for you.

### SERIES SESSIONS

*Click on session titles to navigate to the beginning of the session.*

1. [Wait, Watch, and Wonder](#)  
Exploring the Advent Practice of Waiting
2. [Lived by the Light](#)  
Exploring the Transformative Power of Christ's Light
3. [The Christmas Miracle](#)  
Embracing the Transformative Power of Love
4. [The Great Exchange](#)  
Reflecting on the Mystery of Divine and Human Union
5. [The Hope of Something New](#)  
Embracing Advent's Promise of Hope and Renewal

*Click on the link below to visit the film series homepage on The Work of the People.*

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/film-series/advent-the-light-that-guides-us>

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## AUTHOR BIO - PETER TRABEN HAAS

Peter was born on a summer Sunday morning in Traben-Trarbach, Germany. Returning home stateside, Peter grew up in Wisconsin, where, at thirteen years old, after visiting a state park with excellent granite top rope routes, a life-long love for the mountains and outdoor adventure was born. That love took him to the Adirondacks for six summers during high school and college, where he worked as a hiking guide at Camp of The Woods. Today, Peter is an avid hiker/walker and enjoys the thrill of skiing and mountain biking – “greens.”

At seventeen years old, Peter had a spiritual experience that initiated his sense of call to become a pastor. After high school, Peter enrolled at Northland College on the shores of Lake Superior in Ashland, Wisconsin to pursue a degree in forestry and outdoor education. However, the call to ministry soon prevailed, and Peter transferred to Moody Bible Institute and double majored in New Testament and Theology. While at Moody, Peter was drawn to become a Presbyterian, and ultimately joined the Fourth Presbyterian Church in downtown Chicago, which took him under care and supported him through his three years at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he earned a Master of Divinity degree and received the Jagow award in excellence in preaching and the Maitland Award in New Testament Exegesis. During seminary, Peter served a year-long clinical pastoral care/chaplaincy residency at Trenton State Psychiatric Hospital, as well as a two-semester internship as a pastoral resident at Moorestown Presbyterian Church in Moorestown, New Jersey.

Since graduating from Princeton Seminary in 1999, Peter has served pastoral roles in Flint, Michigan. Waterloo, Iowa. Austin and San Antonio, Texas. Peter began his pastoral tenure with Christ Presbyterian Church Telluride on June 30, 2024.

Peter is currently the pastor at The Christ Presbyterian Church in Telluride, Colorado. In addition to being an avid reader, Peter is the author of multiple books, and is widely known for his book of daily prayers, *Centering Prayers* and is pleased to announce the forthcoming Vol. 2 of *Centering Prayers for Turbulent Times*, forthcoming fall, 2024. Peter is a leading voice for the renewal of contemplative practices in the church. In recent years, Peter has also served as an Adjunct Faculty Member in Spiritual Formation Member at the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas.

**TWOTP Author Page:** [Peter's TWOTP author page with books and films and links.](#)

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## GUIDE NOTES TO CONSIDER

### Discernment vs. Debate

The Goal of these mini film journeys is to provide space for deep, personal, and communal listening. It's not about agreeing or disagreeing with a speaker but about where we are led.

The focus is on spiritual discernment, not intellectual analysis or doctrinal debate. Healthy wrestling and imagination are encouraged, but determining who's right or wrong doesn't nurture discovery and transformation.

### Deep Listening

Essential for discovery and transformation, prompts throughout the guide will help cultivate awareness and fresh perspectives.

### Spiritual Practices

Engage the suggested series practice provided below here in this intro on your own during the week to stay marinated in the ideas you are exploring through the series..

### Groups

- **Start with Stories:** In a new group, consider having participants share their faith journeys in the first session to build connectedness through vulnerability.
- **Be Present:** Use "I" statements when responding to others and avoid giving unsolicited advice. Focus on "hearing each other into deeper speech."
- **Pre-session Prep:** Encourage participants to engage with the film and discernment questions before the group meets for richer conversations.

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## EXPLORE MORE

The Explore More section at the end of each session offers additional resources to help you dive deeper into the themes discussed in the videos. This section includes scripture passages for reflection, spiritual practices to incorporate into your daily life, book recommendations for further reading, and reflective questions to guide your personal or group exploration. It is designed to support your journey in embodying the Advent themes of birthing, hope, faith, peace, and joy in practical and meaningful ways.

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## FEATURED SESSION PRACTICE

The Spiritual Practice section provides a hands-on, contemplative exercise designed to help you embody the themes of each session. These practices are meant to move you from reflection to action, allowing the insights from the session to take root in your daily life. Whether through prayer, meditation, or intentional action, these practices invite you to engage with God in a personal and transformative way. They are designed to help deepen your connection with the divine and with the Advent themes of birthing, hope, faith, peace, and joy.

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## SESSION DESCRIPTIONS & TRANSCRIPTS

*Click on session titles to navigate to the beginning of the video transcript.*

**Wait, Watch, Wonder** - Exploring the Advent Practice of Waiting - This film invites us to embrace the Advent season through the practice of waiting, watching, and wondering. Peter Traben Haas reflects on how Advent expands the meaning of Christmas, encouraging us to anticipate the new things God is doing in the world and in our lives. Drawing on themes of light and darkness, Haas explores how waiting is not passive, but an active, sacred practice of trusting in God's unfolding work. Through this reflection, viewers are called to engage with the spiritual rhythm of Advent and find peace in the unknown.

**Lived by the Light** - Exploring the Transformative Power of Christ's Light - In this film, Peter Traben Haas contemplates the transformative power of Christ's light. Advent is a time to not only believe in the light but to be lived by it. Haas emphasizes that Christ's light illuminates everything, allowing us to see ourselves, others, and the world as God does. As we journey through Advent, this light reveals both comforting and challenging truths, guiding us toward healing and peace. Viewers are encouraged to reflect on how the light of Christ is shining in their lives and where it is inviting them to deeper transformation.

**The Christmas Miracle** - Embracing the Transformative Power of Love - The Christmas miracle goes beyond the virgin birth and angelic proclamations—it is the profound mystery of the incarnation itself. In this film, Peter Traben Haas explores the meaning of God becoming human so that we might share in divine life. The film invites viewers to reflect on how the miracle of Christmas continues to unfold in our lives today. As we

prepare for Christ's coming, Haas encourages us to make room for this miracle, let go of what no longer serves us, and open ourselves to the love and transformation that the incarnation offers.

**The Great Exchange** - Reflecting on the Mystery of Divine and Human Union - In this reflection on the "Great Exchange," Peter Traben Haas explores the mystery of the incarnation—God becoming human so that we might share in divine life. This film delves into the ultimate act of love, where the infinite enters the finite, and the holy enters the ordinary. Haas invites viewers to participate in this exchange by letting Christ's love transform their lives from the inside out. Advent is portrayed as a time to embrace this divine mystery, trust in God's transformative work, and live as reflections of divine love and grace.

**The Hope of Something New** - Embracing Advent's Promise of Hope and Renewal - Advent is a season of hope, and in this film, Peter Traben Haas reflects on hope as the central promise of this sacred time. Hope is not wishful thinking but a deep trust in God's ongoing work of renewal, even in the midst of darkness. Haas invites viewers to open their hearts to the new possibilities that God is bringing to life, even when they are not yet visible. As we approach Christmas, this film encourages us to carry the hope of Advent forward into our lives, trusting that new beginnings are always unfolding.

# // SESSION ONE //

## Wait, Watch, and Wonder

### Exploring the Advent Practice of Waiting

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#### WELCOME

In this session, Peter Traben Haas invites us to reflect on the Advent themes of waiting, watching, and wondering. Advent is a season of anticipation, where we are called to wait on the unfolding of God's work in our lives. Peter reminds us that waiting is not passive but an active, spiritual practice that opens us to receive the light of Christ.

**About this guide:** *It's simply that—a guide. A "trellis" to support your exploration of the wisdom and questions offered up here for you to consider. Receive what is yours to receive. Ditch the rest.*

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#### PREPARING and PRESENCING

##### Create a Sacred Space

- Turn off distractions and set aside your phone.
- Consider brewing a cup of tea, paying attention to its warmth and aroma as a ritual for grounding yourself.
- Light a candle to represent the light of Christ, inviting you to be fully present to the moment.

##### Reflective Journaling

Write down thoughts to help internalize and process things more deeply.

##### Notice Your Deep Listening Limiting Voices

- **Judgment:** Can you release the need to have all the answers right away?
- **Cynicism:** What if you allowed yourself to believe in the possibility of newness?
- **Fear:** How might God be asking you to trust in the unknown?

## Centering

- Take a deep breath. Inhale peace, exhale any tension or distractions.
- Set your intention: *I am open to what this time has to offer me.*

## Invocation

Let these words from Peter Traben Haas open your heart to this session:

"Waiting is not passive. It is a sacred practice of trusting in God's unfolding work, even when we can't see what is ahead."

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## WATCH THE VIDEO

"Wait, Watch, Wonder" with Peter Traben Haas (16:56)

- Watch the video [here](#).
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## INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

As you reflect on the video, consider the following questions without pressure to answer all of them:

- What word, image, or phrase stood out to you?
- How does this reflection on waiting connect with your current spiritual journey?
- What emotions arose as you listened? Did you feel a sense of openness or resistance?
- How might the Spirit be at work in you during this season of waiting?

**Second Viewing:** *Consider watching the video again if the suggested prompts aren't cultivating curiosity.*

**A Note to Groups:** *Share initial observations with one another. Listen to understand not to respond.*

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## DEEPER EXPLORATION

In this session, Peter emphasizes the importance of embracing the practice of waiting. Take time to explore these questions:

- How has waiting played a role in your spiritual life? What challenges do you encounter in waiting?
- What might God be inviting you to see or experience during this season of waiting?
- Peter says, "Waiting is not passive." How does this challenge or affirm your understanding of waiting as a spiritual practice?

**A Note to Groups:** *Share any personal experiences where waiting led to transformation. How did the waiting shape your relationship with God?*

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## REFLECTING / RECEIVING / RESPONDING

Take time to process the themes of this session through prayer or journaling:

- Breathe deeply and move from your head to your heart. Allow yourself to rest in the creative energy that flows within you, knowing that it is a gift from God.
- Reflect on how the Spirit might be inviting you to participate in the birthing of new realities.
- Consider journaling your thoughts, responding to prompts like:

*What is the Spirit stirring in me during this time of waiting?*

*I sense God inviting me to...*

*I feel drawn to let go of...*

*I am ready to embrace...*

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## RESTING

Before concluding your reflection, take a moment to be still. Let go of any effort, and simply rest in God's presence.

- Take a deep breath, slowly exhale, and rest in the presence of God.
- Sit in silence, knowing that waiting is part of the sacred rhythm of life.

**A Note to Groups:** *Group prayer is a powerful way to close. Invite each participant to share a word or phrase that summarizes what they are taking away. The leader may then say, "May this be our prayer and our practice. Amen."*

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## CLOSING

As you move from this space, allow the insights you've gained to continue guiding you.

- Revisit your reflections in the coming days, noting any new insights.
- Trust in the unfolding of God's work, even in the silence.
- Remember, you are not alone in this season of waiting.

## Benediction

Finally, allow this closing blessing to marinate and accompany your soul as you're carried forward with grace and peace from this sacred space into the mystery of your unfolding day and week ahead.

## ANCHORED IN HOPE

### A Closing Blessing

May you find peace in the waiting,  
knowing that God is at work in the unseen.

May you rest in the assurance  
that the light of Christ is on its way,  
and that hope will be born anew in your heart.

Go forth with trust,  
carrying the light of Advent into your life  
and into the world.

Amen.

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## EXPLORE MORE

If you're feeling called to explore hope more deeply, here are a few suggestions:

- **Scripture for Reflection:** Psalm 27:14 – "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!"
- **Book:** *Advent: The Once and Future Coming of Jesus Christ* by Fleming Rutledge. A deep exploration of Advent's theological significance.
- **Meditation:** Practice mindful waiting with a candle, letting the flame symbolize the presence of God in your waiting.
- **Sacred Writing Practice:** Set aside 10-15 minutes each day to simply sit in silence. As you sit, focus on your breath and allow yourself to wait in the presence of God. Resist the urge to fill the space with thoughts or distractions. Let this be a time of trusting that something new is being born within you, even if you cannot yet see it.

## FEATURED LECTIO/VISIO DIVINA PRACTICE

The Lectio and Visio Divina practices offer a contemplative way to engage with the benediction, encouraging a deeper connection to the theme of the session and creating a spiritual rhythm that fosters reflection, prayer, and transformation throughout the week.

// Birthing the Divine Within //

May you find peace in the waiting,  
knowing that God is at work,  
even in the silence and uncertainty.

As you wait, may your heart be open to wonder,  
and your spirit be filled with hope.

Go forth, trusting that God is always unfolding  
something beautiful and new in your life.

Amen.

## Lectio Divina Practice

- **Read:** Slowly read the benediction aloud. Focus on the words "peace in the waiting" and "open to wonder."
  - **Reflect:** What do these words stir in your heart? How is God inviting you to find peace in times of uncertainty?
  - **Respond:** Consider what it means to be open to wonder. How is God asking you to trust in the new things that are unfolding in your life?
  - **Rest:** Spend a few moments in silence, resting in the assurance that God is at work, even when you cannot see it. Let this peace fill your heart.
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## Visio Divina Practice

- **Prepare:** Light a candle or sit near a window where natural light shines. Take a few moments to focus on the light.
- **Focus:** Read the benediction slowly, reflecting on the words "light of Christ" and "healing, transformation, and peace."
- **See:** Close your eyes and picture an image of light in darkness—a single flame, the dawn breaking, or light streaming through a window. Allow this image to take shape in your mind.
- **Meditate:** Contemplate this image. How does it connect with the benediction? Where do you need Christ's light to shine in your life right now?
- **Pray:** Offer a prayer asking for Christ's light to guide you and to heal the hidden places of your heart.
- **Contemplate:** Sit in stillness, letting the image of light fill your heart. Carry this image with you throughout the week as a reminder of Christ's guiding and healing presence.

# // SESSION TWO //

## Lived By The Light

### Exploring the Transformative Power of Christ's Light

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#### WELCOME

In this session, Peter Traben Haas reflects on Christ as the light that heals, reveals, and transforms. This light not only guides us but also illuminates the hidden places in our hearts. We are invited to walk in this light, allowing it to bring healing and peace as we move forward.

**About this guide:** *It's simply that—a guide. A "trellis" to support your exploration of the wisdom and questions offered up here for you to consider. Receive what is yours to receive. Ditch the rest.*

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#### PREPARING and PRESENCING

##### Create a Sacred Space

- To deepen your engagement, set aside distractions and create a space that fosters stillness.
- Consider lighting a candle or placing a small object that represents hope before you. Maybe dim the lights, allowing the candlelight to symbolize Christ's guiding presence. Or, just sit by a window where natural light shines to help ground you in the theme of this session.
- Engage in a simple grounding ritual, like taking a few deep breaths or making a cup of tea, to prepare your heart and mind.

##### Reflective Journaling

Write down thoughts to help internalize and process things more deeply. Before watching the video, write about your current experience of God's light. Where do you see it guiding you? Where do you need healing or clarity?

## Notice Your Deep Listening Limiting Voices

- **Judgment:** Can I let go of the need to fully understand the light and instead allow it to simply guide me?
- **Cynicism:** What if I trusted that Christ's light is already healing and revealing, even if I can't see it clearly yet?
- **Fear:** How might Christ's light be inviting me to open up, even to difficult truths?

## Centering

- Take a deep breath. Imagine that the light of Christ is filling your heart and mind.
- Set your intention: *I am open to receiving Christ's light, letting it guide and heal me.*

## Invocation

Let these words from Peter Traben Haas center your heart for this session:

"Christ's light reveals, heals, and transforms. It shines into the hidden places of our hearts, bringing us closer to wholeness and peace."

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## WATCH THE VIDEO

**"Lived by the Light" with Peter Traben Haas (15:04)**

- Watch the video [here](#).
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## INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Now that you've watched the film, sift through the prompts below. Resist forcing a response or trying to answer every question. Be open to how the Spirit might be guiding. Don't overthink it, just **notice what you notice**.

- What word or image from the video connected most deeply with you?
- How does the idea of being “lived by the light” resonate with your current spiritual journey?
- What hidden places in your life are being illuminated by Christ’s light?

**Second Viewing:** *Consider watching the video again if the suggested prompts aren't cultivating curiosity.*

**A Note to Groups:** *Share initial observations with one another. Listen to understand not to respond.*

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## DEEPER EXPLORATION

Explore these questions as you contemplate the theme of light in your life:

- How does Christ’s light reveal both the joyful and challenging parts of your heart?
- What parts of your life need healing through the light of Christ?
- How can you allow Christ’s light to guide you in your decisions and interactions?

**A Note to Groups:** *Take time here to share deeper explorations with one another. Discuss how Christ’s light has brought clarity, peace, or healing in your life. Where do you feel called to walk more fully in this light?*

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## REFLECTING / RECEIVING / RESPONDING

Take a few moments to sit quietly and let the session’s themes settle within you.

- Breathe deeply, allowing Christ’s light to fill your heart. Notice how this light brings peace and clarity to areas of darkness or confusion.
- Reflect on how you are being invited to live more fully in Christ’s light.
- Consider responding by journaling your thoughts or answering these prompts:

*Where do I need the light of Christ to guide me right now?*

*How is the light of Christ inviting me to heal or transform something in my life?*

*I sense Christ calling me to be a source of light by...*

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## RESTING

Before concluding your reflection, take a moment to be still. Let go of any effort, and simply rest in God's presence.

- Sit quietly, breathing slowly. Imagine the light of Christ surrounding you, filling every part of your being.
- Rest in this light, knowing that it is always with you, guiding and healing.

**A Note to Groups:** *Group prayer is a powerful way to close. Invite each participant to share a word or phrase that summarizes what they are taking away. The leader may then say, "May this be our prayer and our practice. Amen."*

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## CLOSING

As you move from this space, allow the insights you've gained to continue guiding you.

- Revisit your journal entries in the coming days, adding new thoughts as they arise.
- Trust that you are a work in progress, deeply loved and never alone.
- Remember that the hope you carry is a gift to the world, waiting to be born.

## Benediction

Finally, allow this closing blessing to marinate and accompany your soul as you're carried forward with grace and peace from this sacred space into the mystery of your unfolding day and week ahead.

## GUIDED BY CHRIST'S LIGHT

### A Closing Blessing

May the light of Christ guide your steps,  
illuminating the path before you  
and shining into the hidden places of your heart.

As you walk in this light, may you find healing,  
transformation, and peace.

Go forth, carrying the light of Christ  
into the world and your daily life.

Amen.

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## EXPLORE MORE

If you're feeling called to explore hope more deeply, here are a few suggestions:

- **Scripture for Reflection:** John 1:5 - "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."
- **Book:** *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown Taylor. A reflection on how God meets us in both darkness and light.
- **Light Practice:** Spend time outdoors at dawn or dusk, reflecting on the way light transitions and transforms the day.
- **Light Meditation:** Set aside time to meditate on the image of light. Sit in a quiet place with a candle lit before you. As you focus on the flame, imagine Christ's light entering the places within you that feel dark or broken. Ask for healing in these areas, trusting that Christ's light is working within you, even if the process is slow.

### // Guided By The Light //

May the light of Christ guide your steps,  
illuminating the path before you  
and shining into the hidden places of your heart.

As you walk in this light, may you find healing,  
transformation, and peace.

Go forth, carrying the light of Christ  
into the world and your daily life.

Amen.

## Lectio Divina Practice

- **Read:** Slowly read the benediction aloud. Focus on the words "light of Christ" and "healing, transformation, and peace."
  - **Reflect:** What areas of your life need the light of Christ to bring healing or clarity? How is God inviting you to walk in this light?
  - **Respond:** Consider how you are being called to live in the light of Christ. What steps can you take to allow this light to guide your decisions and interactions?
  - **Rest:** Sit in silence, resting in the light of Christ. Let this light bring you peace, knowing that it is always with you.
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## Visio Divina Practice

- **Prepare:** Light a candle or sit near a window where natural light streams in. Take a few moments to focus on the light.
- **Focus:** Read the benediction, paying attention to the words "light of Christ" and "hidden places."
- **See:** Close your eyes and imagine an image of light breaking through darkness—a sunrise, a single flame, or light piercing through a dense forest. Let this image form clearly in your mind.
- **Meditate:** Reflect on the image. How does it relate to the benediction? Where do you need the light of Christ to shine in your life right now?
- **Pray:** Offer a prayer asking for Christ's light to guide you and to bring healing to the hidden places of your heart.
- **Contemplate:** Rest in the image of light, allowing it to fill your heart and mind. Carry this image with you throughout the week as a reminder of Christ's guiding and healing presence.

# // SESSION THREE //

## The Christmas Miracle

### Embracing the Transformative Power of Love

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#### WELCOME

In this session, Peter Traben Haas reflects on love as the miracle of Christmas. Love, embodied in Christ's birth, is the remedy for fear and division in our lives and in the world. Peter challenges us to embrace love, even when it feels risky, and to trust in its transformative power

**About this guide:** *It's simply that—a guide. A "trellis" to support your exploration of the wisdom and questions offered up here for you to consider. Receive what is yours to receive. Ditch the rest.*

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#### PREPARING and PRESENCING

##### Create a Sacred Space

- Light a candle, symbolizing the light of Christ's love entering the world through the miracle of Christmas.
- Consider holding a small object that represents love to you—a heart-shaped stone, a picture of a loved one, or a symbol of compassion.

##### Reflective Journaling

Write down thoughts as you go to help internalize and process things more deeply. *(If you have time, consider journaling about a time when love transformed a difficult situation in your life. Ask yourself: Where am I being invited to choose love, even in the face of fear?)*

## Notice Your Deep Listening Limiting Voices

- **Judgment:** Can I release the need to understand how love works and simply trust in its power?
- **Cynicism:** What if love really does have the power to heal fear and division in the world around me?
- **Fear:** How might God be inviting me to take a risk and love more boldly?

## Centering

- Breathe deeply, imagining Christ's love filling your heart and mind.
- Set your intention: *I am open to receiving and embodying the love of Christ.*

## Invocation

Let these words from Peter Traben Haas guide you into a place of openness and love:

"Love is the miracle of Christmas. It transcends fear, heals wounds, and invites us to live in unity with one another...Love is the remedy for fear, division, and polarization. Christ's birth is the miracle that invites us to live from love."

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## WATCH THE VIDEO

**"The Christmas Miracle" with Peter Traben Haas (18:07)**

- Watch the video [here](#).
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## INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Now that you've watched the film, sift through the prompts below. Resist forcing a response or trying to answer every question. Be open to how the Spirit might be guiding. Don't overthink it, just **notice what you notice**.

- What word or phrase resonated with you in the video?
- How does this reflection on love connect to your own experiences of fear or division?
- What is God inviting you to consider about love in your relationships?

**Second Viewing:** *Consider watching the video again if the suggested prompts aren't cultivating curiosity.*

**A Note to Groups:** *Share initial observations with one another. Listen to understand not to respond.*

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## DEEPER EXPLORATION

Explore the following questions as you reflect on Christ's love:

- How does love challenge the fear and division you see in the world?
- In what ways are you being invited to love more deeply or courageously?
- How can you embody Christ's love in small, everyday ways?

**A Note to Groups:** *Take time to discuss these questions together, allowing space for each person to share. Discuss how love has played a role in transforming difficult relationships or situations in your life. How does the miracle of Christmas invite us to live differently?*

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## REFLECTING / RECEIVING / RESPONDING

Take time to process the theme of love:

- Breathe deeply, moving from your head to your heart. Let go of any fear or division you may be holding onto and allow Christ's love to flow freely.
- Reflect on how you are being called to embody love in your interactions, especially in challenging situations.
- Consider journaling your thoughts, responding to prompts like:

*How is Christ's love inviting me to transcend fear or division?*

*I sense God calling me to embody love in this relationship or situation by...*

*I feel drawn to release fear and embrace love through...*

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## RESTING

Before concluding, take a moment to sit quietly in the presence of Christ's love:

- Sit comfortably, focusing on your breath. Imagine that Christ's love is filling your heart, calming any fears, and healing any wounds.
- Rest in the peace of this love, trusting that it is guiding and transforming you.

**A Note to Groups:** *Group prayer is a powerful way to affirm and close out a vulnerable time of deep listening with one another. Consider inviting each participant to say a one-word phrase that they are taking with them from this time exploring together or share one word that expresses how they will carry love into the world this week. Maybe At the conclusion, the leader may wish to say, "May this be our prayer and our practice. Amen."*

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## CLOSING

Carry the miracle of love with you as you go:

- Reflect on how love can guide your actions and relationships in the coming days.
- Trust that love is the foundation of all healing and transformation.

## Benediction

Finally, allow this closing blessing to marinate and accompany your soul as you're carried forward with grace and peace from this sacred space into the mystery of your unfolding day and week ahead.

## ROOTED IN LOVE

### A Closing Blessing

May you be filled with the miracle of love,

a love that heals wounds, bridges divides,  
and calls you toward wholeness.

Go forth with confidence, knowing that  
this love guides you, sustains you,  
and empowers you to love as Christ loves.

Amen.

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## EXPLORE MORE

If you're feeling called to explore hope more deeply, here are a few suggestions:

- **Scripture for Reflection:** 1 John 4:18 - "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear."
- **Book:** *Love Does* by Bob Goff. Stories of how love is a powerful force for change.
- **Prayer:** Pray for someone with whom you are struggling, asking God to fill both of you with
- **Practice:** *Love In Action* - Each day this week, choose one small act of love that you can offer someone in your life. It could be a kind word, an act of service, or simply a moment of listening. At the end of the week, reflect on how these acts of love transformed both you and those around you.

## FEATURED LECTIO/VISIO DIVINA PRACTICE

The Lectio and Visio Divina practices offer a contemplative way to engage with the benedictions, encouraging a deeper connection to the theme of the session and creating a spiritual rhythm that fosters reflection, prayer, and transformation throughout the week.

// Rooted in Love //

May you be rooted in the love of Christ,  
a love that transcends fear,  
heals wounds, and breaks down divisions.

As you embrace this love, may it transform you,  
and may you become a vessel of love to those around you.

Go forth in the peace and power of Christ's love.

Amen.

## Lectio Divina Practice

- **Read:** Slowly read the benediction aloud, focusing on the words "rooted in the love of Christ" and "heals wounds."
  - **Reflect:** How has Christ's love healed wounds in your life? How are you being called to embody that love in your relationships?
  - **Respond:** Consider how you are invited to be a vessel of love. In what areas of your life is Christ asking you to let go of fear and embrace love?
  - **Rest:** Sit quietly, resting in Christ's love. Let go of any fear or division you may be holding onto and allow love to transform you.
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## Visio Divina Practice

- **Prepare:** Light a candle or hold a symbol of love—such as a heart, a photograph, or a symbol of kindness.
- **Focus:** Read the benediction, reflecting on the words "love that transcends fear" and "heals wounds."
- **See:** Close your eyes and imagine an image of love—an embrace, an act of kindness, or a family gathering. Let this image fill your heart.
- **Meditate:** Contemplate the image of love. How does it relate to the benediction? Where do you need Christ's love to heal wounds or break down divisions in your life?
- **Pray:** Offer a prayer, asking for Christ's love to fill you and heal the places in your life where fear or division still exists.
- **Contemplate:** Sit in stillness, allowing the image of love to fill your heart. Carry this image with you throughout the week as a reminder of Christ's transforming love.

# // SESSION FOUR //

## The Great Exchange

### Reflecting on the Mystery of Divine and Human Union

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#### WELCOME

In this session, Peter Traben Haas explores the mystery of the "Great Exchange"—Christ becoming human to lift us into divine life. This reflection invites us to consider what it means to participate in the divine nature and how this transformation shapes our lives as followers of Christ.

**About this guide:** *It's simply that—a guide. A "trellis" to support your exploration of the wisdom and questions offered up here for you to consider. Receive what is yours to receive. Ditch the rest.*

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#### PREPARING and PRESENCING

##### Create a Sacred Space

- Prepare your environment. Maybe put on calming music.
- Engage in a simple ritual to center yourself, such as lighting a candle, symbolizing the union of divine and human in Christ.
- Maybe hold an item that represents your connection to God, such as a cross or a symbol of your faith.

##### Reflective Journaling

- Write down thoughts as you go through the session to help internalize and process things more deeply.
- If you have time, consider reflecting on how you experience your relationship with Christ. Write down moments when you have felt closest to God.
- Consider: *What does it mean for me to participate in the divine nature?*

## Notice Your Deep Listening Limiting Voices

- **Judgment:** Can you release any need to fully grasp the mystery of the divine?
- **Cynicism:** What if you trusted that Christ's presence truly transforms you, even in ways you don't fully understand?
- **Fear:** How might Christ be inviting you to embrace your own transformation?

## Centering

- Take a few deep breaths, focusing on the presence of Christ within you.
- Set your intention: *I am open to the mystery of Christ's presence in my life.*

## Invocation

Let Peter's words open your heart to the mystery of divine and human union:

"The great exchange—Christ becoming human to lift us into divine life—is at the heart of the Christmas story."

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## WATCH THE VIDEO

"The Great Exchange" with Peter Traben Haas (18:07)

- Watch the video [here](#).
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## INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Reflect on the video using these prompts:

- What resonated most deeply with you from the video?
- How does this reflection on the union of divine and human nature challenge or inspire you?
- What might it mean for you to participate in the divine life in your everyday actions?

**Second Viewing:** Consider watching the video again if the suggested prompts aren't cultivating curiosity.

**A Note to Groups:** Share initial observations with one another. Listen to understand not to respond.

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## DEEPER EXPLORATION

Explore the theme of divine and human union in your life:

- How does the concept of the "Great Exchange" expand your understanding of what it means to follow Christ?
- In what ways do you sense Christ's presence working in you to bring about transformation?
- How can you more fully dwell in the presence of Christ, allowing divine life to flow through you?

**A Note to Groups:** Take time here to share deeper explorations with one another.

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## REFLECTING / RECEIVING / RESPONDING

Take time to reflect on the mystery of divine and human union:

- Breathe deeply, imagining Christ's presence filling your heart and guiding your thoughts. Allow this divine presence to transform your actions and words.
- Reflect on how you are called to embody the divine life in your everyday experiences.
- Consider journaling your thoughts, responding to prompts like:

*How is Christ inviting me to participate in divine life?*

*I sense Christ calling me to live out the divine nature in my daily actions by...*

*I feel drawn to release fear and embrace the mystery of...*

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## RESTING

Before closing, take a moment to rest in the presence of Christ:

- Breathe deeply, imagining yourself dwelling in the love and presence of Christ.
- Rest in the truth that Christ's presence is transforming you, even now.

**A Note to Groups:** *Invite each participant to share one way they will dwell more fully in Christ's presence this week.*

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## CLOSING

As you move forward from this experience, continue to let it guide and inform you.

- Revisit your journal entries and add to them in the days to come.
- Reflect this week on how Christ's presence is at work in your life, transforming you from the inside out.
- Remember to trust that you are being invited into deeper union with God through Christ.

## Benediction

Finally, allow this closing blessing to marinate and accompany your soul as you're carried forward with grace and peace from this sacred space into the mystery of your unfolding day and week ahead.

## DWELLING IN CHRIST

### A Closing Blessing

May you be anchored in the love and presence of Christ,  
who dwells within you and invites you into divine life.

May you trust that you are being transformed  
by this sacred union, day by day.

Go forth as a bearer of this love,  
carrying the presence of Christ into the world.

Amen.

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## EXPLORE MORE

If you're feeling called to explore hope more deeply, here are a few suggestions:

- **Scripture for Reflection:** 2 Peter 1:4 – "He has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature."
- **Book:** *Becoming Human* by Jean Vanier. A reflection on the intersection of the divine and human in our everyday lives.
- **Practice:** Spend time in nature, reflecting on how creation reveals both the divine and human aspects of existence. Let this experience ground you in the reality of God's presence in all things.
- **Meditation:** Spend 10-15 minutes each day in silent prayer or meditation, focusing on the presence of Christ within you. As you breathe, imagine that Christ's divine love is filling every part of your being. Let this love guide your thoughts, emotions, and actions throughout the day.

## FEATURED LECTIO/VISIO DIVINA PRACTICE

The Lectio and Visio Divina practices offer a contemplative way to engage with the benedictions, encouraging a deeper connection to the theme of the session and creating a spiritual rhythm that fosters reflection, prayer, and transformation throughout the week.

// Dwelling in the Mystery //

May you dwell in the mystery of Christ,  
who became human to lift us into divine life.

As you abide in Christ, may you be transformed  
by his love, his grace, and his presence.

Go forth, living as a reflection of the divine nature,  
in your actions, words, and being.

Amen.

**Lectio Divina Practice**

- **Read:** Slowly read the benediction aloud, focusing on the words "dwell in the mystery" and "transformed by his love."
  - **Reflect:** How do you experience the mystery of Christ in your life? What does it mean for you to abide in Christ and be transformed by his love?
  - **Respond:** Consider how you are called to reflect the divine nature in your words and actions. In what areas of your life is God asking you to live out this transformation more fully?
  - **Rest:** Spend a few moments resting in the mystery of Christ's love and grace. Allow the sense of transformation to settle deeply into your heart, trusting in God's ongoing work within you.
- 

## Visio Divina Practice

- **Prepare:** Sit quietly with a symbol of union, such as an intertwined vine, hands holding, or a bridge. Let this symbol guide your reflection.
- **Focus:** Read the benediction, paying attention to the words "dwell in the mystery" and "reflection of the divine nature."
- **See:** Close your eyes and imagine an image that represents union—whether it's two hands joined, light blending with water, or nature revealing its beauty. Allow this image to grow in your mind.
- **Meditate:** Contemplate the image. How does it speak to you about the mystery of divine and human union? Where do you see Christ's presence in your life, guiding you to live out divine love and grace?
- **Pray:** Offer a prayer, asking for Christ's presence to dwell more fully in your heart and mind, transforming the way you see and live in the world.
- **Contemplate:** Sit quietly with this image of union, allowing it to fill your heart. Carry this image with you throughout the week as a reminder of Christ's presence and transformative love.

# // SESSION FIVE //

## The Hope of Something New

### Embracing Advent's Promise of Hope and Renewal

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#### WELCOME

In this final session, Peter Traben Haas reflects on hope as the central promise of Advent. Hope is not only about waiting for something new but about opening ourselves to the possibilities that God is already working within us. This session invites us to embrace the hope that Advent brings and to carry it forward into our lives.

**About this guide:** *It's simply that—a guide. A "trellis" to support your exploration of the wisdom and questions offered up here for you to consider. Receive what is yours to receive. Ditch the rest.*

---

#### PREPARING and PRESENCING

##### Create a Sacred Space

- Light a candle, symbolizing the hope of Christ's light breaking into the world.
- Consider holding a small object that symbolizes hope to you, such as a stone or a symbol of new beginnings.

##### Reflective Journaling

- Write down thoughts as you go to help internalize and process things more deeply.
- Reflect on where you are currently experiencing hope or a need for hope. Write down any areas where you are longing for something new.
- Consider: *Where is God inviting me to hope during this season of Advent?*

##### Notice Your Deep Listening Limiting Voices

- **Judgment:** Can you release the need to see immediate results from hope?

- **Cynicism:** What if you allowed yourself to believe that something new is possible?
- **Fear:** How might hope be calling you to trust in the unseen work of God?

### Centering

- Take a few deep breaths, inviting a sense of hope to fill your heart.
- Set your intention: *I am open to the hope that Advent brings.*

### Invocation

Let Peter's words guide your heart into hope:

"Advent is the promise of hope. Even in the darkest places, God is at work, doing something new."

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### WATCH THE VIDEO

"The Hope of Something New" with Peter Traben Haas (18:56)

- Watch the video [here](#).
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### INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

After watching the video, reflect on these questions:

- What word or phrase resonated most with you?
- Where do you sense God's invitation to hope in your own life?
- What is the Spirit stirring within you as you reflect on this promise of hope?

**Second Viewing:** *Consider watching the video again if the suggested prompts aren't cultivating curiosity.*

**A Note to Groups:** *Share initial observations with one another. Listen to understand not to respond.*

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## DEEPER EXPLORATION

Reflect on the promise of hope and how it applies to your life:

- Where in your life do you feel the need for hope or renewal?
- How can you open yourself to God's work of bringing something new, even when it's unseen?
- How does the promise of Advent hope shape your perspective on the future?

**A Note to Groups:** *Take time here to share deeper explorations with one another. Discuss how the promise of hope has played a role in your spiritual journey. Where have you seen new beginnings emerge in your life?*

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## REFLECTING / RECEIVING / RESPONDING

Take time to reflect on the theme of hope and how it applies to your life:

- Breathe deeply, allowing hope to fill your heart. Let go of any worries or fears, trusting that God is at work in your life.
- Reflect on how you are being called to embrace new possibilities and trust in the unfolding of God's plan.
- Consider journaling your thoughts, responding to prompts like:

*Where is hope guiding me to trust in something new?*

*I sense God inviting me to embrace hope by...*

*I feel called to trust in new possibilities through...*

---

## RESTING

Before closing, take a moment to rest in the hope of Christ:

- Sit quietly, breathing slowly and deeply. Imagine the light of hope filling your heart and mind, guiding you into new beginnings.
- Rest in the assurance that God is at work, bringing renewal and transformation in ways that you may not yet see.

*.A Note to Groups: Conclude by inviting each person to share one way they will embrace hope in the coming days.*

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## CLOSING

As you move forward from this experience, continue to let it guide and inform you as you carry the hope of Advent with you as you go.

- Revisit your journal entries and add to them in the days to come.
- Reflect on how hope can shape your actions and thoughts in the coming days.
- Trust that something new is always being born, even in the darkest moments.

## Benediction

Finally, allow this closing blessing to marinate and accompany your soul as you're carried forward with grace and peace from this sacred space into the mystery of your unfolding day and week ahead.

## HOPE OF RENEWAL

### A Closing Blessing

May the hope of Christ fill your heart,  
calling you into new possibilities and new life.

May you trust that God is at work,  
bringing forth renewal in ways you may not yet see.

Go forth with hope as your guide,  
knowing that Christ is leading you into something new.

Amen.

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## EXPLORE MORE

If you're feeling called to explore hope more deeply, here are a few suggestions:

- **Scripture for Reflection:** Romans 15:13 – "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."
- **Book:** *Advent Conspiracy* by Rick McKinley, Chris Seay, and Greg Holder. A guide to reclaiming hope and wonder in Advent.
- **Practice:** Go for a walk in nature, paying attention to signs of new life and growth. Reflect on how these small signs of renewal mirror the work of hope in your life.
- **Journal:** At the end of each day, take a few moments to journal about where you saw glimpses of hope during the day. These might be small moments of connection, kindness, or insight. Allow this practice to help you cultivate a deeper awareness of the ways God is working in your life, even in the smallest of ways.

## FEATURED LECTIO/VISIO DIVINA PRACTICE

The Lectio and Visio Divina practices offer a contemplative way to engage with the benedictions, encouraging a deeper connection to the theme of the session and creating a spiritual rhythm that fosters reflection, prayer, and transformation throughout the week.

// Hope in New Beginnings //

May the hope of Christ fill your heart,  
calling you into new possibilities and new life.

As you trust in this hope, may you experience  
the renewal and transformation that God brings.

Go forth, guided by the hope of Advent,  
knowing that Christ is always doing something new.

Amen.

### Lectio Divina Practice

- **Read:** Slowly read the benediction aloud, focusing on the words "hope of Christ" and "new possibilities and new life."

- **Reflect:** What new possibilities is Christ inviting you to embrace? How does hope lead you into renewal and transformation?
  - **Respond:** Where is God asking you to trust in new beginnings, even when they are not yet fully visible? How can you open your heart to the new life Christ is offering you?
  - **Rest:** Rest in the hope of Christ, trusting that God is always at work, bringing something new into your life.
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### Visio Divina Practice

- **Prepare:** Sit near a window or outside, focusing on the natural world around you. Breathe deeply and invite a sense of hope into your heart.
- **Focus:** Read the benediction, paying attention to the words "hope of Christ" and "new possibilities and new life."
- **See:** Close your eyes and imagine an image of new life—a flower blooming, a sunrise breaking over the horizon, or a sprouting seed. Let this image of new life take shape in your mind.
- **Meditate:** Reflect on this image. How does it connect with the benediction's theme of hope and new beginnings? What new possibilities are emerging in your life, even if they are small or unseen?
- **Pray:** Offer a prayer, asking for God's hope to guide you into new possibilities and to give you the strength to trust in the unfolding of God's plan, even when it is not immediately clear.
- **Contemplate:** Rest in the image of new life. Allow it to fill your heart with hope and trust in God's ongoing work of renewal. Carry this image with you throughout the week as a reminder of Christ's promise of new beginnings.

# VIDEO TRANSCRIPTS

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## Wait, Watch, and Wonder

**Peter Haas:**

Christmas is really all about God doing a new thing in the world and totally unexpected ways. And there's nothing more that we need than God doing new things in our lives. And so advent just expands Christmas. So if you love Christmas, you love advent.

As I was thinking about advent, I think there's nothing more that our world needs than a remedy for the division and the polarity and the angst in that. Christmas is supposed to be such a time of peace on earth, but for a lot of people, Christmas is miserable and lonely, and they don't. They go into debt to buy presents.

And, it's materialistic. It's a sign of everything that's wrong with our culture. Commercialization of the sacred thing, not to mention the cosmological aspects of Christmas and the holy way in which our ancestors celebrated the dimming of the light. I mean, if you can imagine a world without electricity and you're watching the sun get farther and farther on the southern horizon, if you're in the northern hemisphere and like you're wondering, is that sun ever going to come back as the warmth of we're going to come back, you can feel the terror of the situation living on planet Earth wondering, where's the sun going?

The sun is everything. And, so December 21st, the sun hits. You know, that's the lowest nadir in the on the southern horizon. And it just seems to sit there for like three days. And then visibly on the 25th of December, you can see the sun has moved a little bit, and then it starts moving north up to June 21st, the summer solstice.

So it's a beautiful image, cosmological, to remind us to keep watching for the light. And the light will dissipate, and it will come back. So even in our darkest times, you know, the light may not be as present as we think, but it will come back. So that's the advent remedy. God does a new thing. God does an unexpected thing.

The light comes back even through the darkness, even when you're cold and despairing and at your wits end and you don't know how you're going to make it, don't know if you're going to make it. Don't know where you're going to stay, where you're going to get warm, where you're going to get your food. That's the advent story.

And it's a cast of characters that connect with the human experience in a big way, like Mary, for example. You know, a totally vulnerable young woman, Joe Briscoe, one of my mentors, she says, the angel comes to Mary and says, I'm going to ruin your life. And, don't be overwhelmed. The Holy Spirit will overshadow you, you know?

And I think that's the message of the advent remedy. When we're overwhelmed, the holy Spirit overshadows us. And, what happens then? Miracles. You know, the unexpected. God does the new thing. We can't see around the corner, but grace leads us, you know, and gives us the hope to keep moving and keep breathing and keep waiting.

So those touchstone words of advent waiting, watching and wondering. I think the quintessential aspect of being human. We wait, we watch, we wonder what's going to unfold in our lives. And if you can wait with other people, the community of saints, you know, in a Christian community or even just your family, you're not alone. That takes the edge off of the cold.

You know that you're waiting with others. And, to me, that's the advent remedy. Waiting, watching and wondering together.

There are big themes in advent, and these huge themes of the scriptures come together just colliding with each other. You know, John the Baptist representing the Old Testament law of the Jewish people. He's coming to a head. He's announcing the coming of this Messiah, the whole Messiah theme of the coming of the light, the suffering servant who's going to come and join us and lead and liberate the people of Israel.

Big, huge themes of the contrast between light and darkness. You know, these are archetypal things that speak to the human heart, and they're all coming together in this advent remedy season, waiting, watching, wondering when's the light going to come?

There is this element of religion that confronts us that it is the *mysterium tremendum*, the terrifying of the unknown. And unfortunately, a lot of people use that in an abusive, harmful way. It's low level conscious thinking, you know, lowest common denominator. Get people to do something by scaring them. The angels must have terrified Mary, you know, at some level.

But the holy always does gut punch us. We can't stand up in the presence of the holy. We get down on our knees. It's not like I'm scared of God's presence. Like I'm scared of an abusive father. It's not like that. There's a there's an awe and reverence there that is a part of this presence of the holy coming down to earth and showing up here in a way that is unexpected.

And we've lost that transcendence in our culture. Everything's dumbed down to the lowest common denominator, transcendence. What do you mean by that? The high and holy dimension of God. There's no vertical dimension in our culture. It's really flatlined. And someone said, it's the flatland. Everything is against science. Is that what you're saying? No. Well, at its best, I think science lifts us up, you know, to think what's what's the where's the why?

But there's this transcendent dimension is the source of science in a way. You know, it lifts us up out of our day to day thinking. So, all transcendental thinking lifts us up out of our lower, lower level thinking. So if I can't get to joy, for example, this is just an illustration. But if I can't get to the joy, maybe I can at least get to contentment.

And if I can't get to contentment, maybe I can at least get to, you know, not not complaining. And if I can't get there, I'm not complaining. Maybe I can just feel angry, you know? So I'm always looking for the next higher emotion or the next higher thought. So what's the highest thought? That's the transcendent dimension, the highest thought that comes down to us and meets us to lift us up.

And ultimately, you know that sense of the holy or the higher that which is above us. Same thing, like a kindergartner, eighth grade awaits them. They don't they don't know everything that still awaits them, but they're at the highest level they've ever been. They're at kindergarten. Same thing, a third grader. They've grown more than the kindergarten.

So that the high and the Holy has come to them. But they can't even begin to imagine a PhD level. So what's it like for us as human beings to say, I know this much about God. I know this much about the transcendent dimension, but there must be more. And so to be humble before the more, and to be expectant for the more to watch and wait and wonder, what's God going to do with my life, with our life, with this planet, with our culture, with our world, with our faith, with our churches?

There's got to be more than what we're doing now. This can't be the best humans can be. We're evolving, we're growing. There's more to us than what we've made of the world. And that's what the advent remedy is saying is don't get stuck at this particular level. Keep growing, keep going. And it might cost you everything to do.

So you know, you're going to have to, you're going to have to trust me with your whole life in a way that you never could have imagined, and let go of your confidence and your security and journey with me. And that's that's the light drawing

us forward, into the darkness that doesn't take the darkness away. There's a lot of darkness here, but the light journeys with us through the darkness.

And so the journey is transforming. The advent remedy is transforming. It takes the darkness and uses it as our teacher, takes the darkness and uses it as our healer. Actually the healing is in the darkness, the healing is in the unknowing, the healing is through not out. How does a knowing heal? Well, it humbles us first and foremost.

You know, the unknowing is, is humbling and that we're not in control. And so the second we can get out of this sense of control or, or even judgment with the way things are, it humbles us. And when we're humbled, we're often soft hearted. And that's when we're teachable. And, ultimately, you know, that's a place of consent, as Thomas Keating puts it, we consent to the presence and action of the Holy Spirit.

And that doesn't mean that we give up. But it means that we're able to wait and not take action on our own behalf, but to just be content in this particular moment to wait and watch and see what arises. And we'll know what we need to do. Right action will unfold, right thought will unfold, right choices will unfold, but from a totally different place of consenting.

And so here I am, Lord, you know, let it be done through me.

To celebrate Christmas is really to celebrate that the Divine Healer has shown up as one of us, with us, among us, for us, and for our healing and salvation. And you know, the light does so much of the work. We don't even have to sometimes know that it's happening. The light does the work.

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## Lived by the Light

### Travis / TWOTP

What is that like? What? What is the light and how does it reveal what's unfolding?

### Peter Haas

Well, I think I mean, physical light is a beautiful symbol or analogy for the mystery of the presence of the Holy Spirit on this planet. Light. Clearly, from the beginning of the Jewish scriptures, is associated with God's first action. And that light even existed in a certain sense before everything else. And so light is this. I would say this ultimately, it's this analogy for the context in which all thought or consciousness occurs, that light is a symbol for that which opens us up and shows us and reveals us ourselves.

You know, you could talk about light as being consciousness and that there are different types of consciousness, you know, low level consciousness, like infantile consciousness or anger consciousness or hateful vengeful consciousness, and then higher depth consciousness, like love, joy, peace, all that would be a way of talking about light. But I think to the idea of light as a symbol of Ed, that it's really the it's it's the touch point of what advent is.

The light is coming. Prepare for the light. Prepare for the next intensity of light that will show you yourself in a new way, and open yourself up to a new way that will show you other people in a new way. That's the remedy. The light does the healing. You just have to say yes to it. And you don't even have to say yes to it.

It can just happen to you. You know, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't know what to do with it. It just heals. The darkness transforms the darkness. So the light is a symbol for ultimately the presence of Jesus Christ. You know, Jesus is the light of the world in the Christian scriptures, and he's very clear that he is somehow associated with that physical dimension of light.

And if you look at his ascension, which is, you know, months down the road after the Christmas season, you go through Christmas and then you go through Easter, and then you go through Pentecost and Ascension in terms of the liturgical calendar. But if you look at that, the descent of the light in the incarnation and then the ascent of the light and in the Ascension, and if you read the passage in Acts two very closely in Acts chapter one, it's not clear what happens to Jesus.

It doesn't say that he, you know, disappears. It says that the clouds covered him up. He ascended into heaven. And so there's this sense of light is returning to light. It's like he's almost becoming a particle of light particles and light into.

#### **Travis / TWOTP**

That light begets light, saying...

#### **Peter Haas**

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. The light. God from God, light from light. It's just core to this notion of whatever the mystery of light is both a particle and a wave. It's profoundly a part of reality as we know it. And Jesus as the logos, as the Son of God, is the Divine One who comes and becomes fully human and fully divine, somehow is embodying the light in a physical way.

And we know that light is energy. So, you know, people touch him and they're healed. He speaks and are healed. He raises the dead so that light and energy is life and energy. It's very powerful. It's very ancient symbol that should encourage human beings that we're not alone here. We're, we're we're left bathing in the light of the sun, which is a symbol of the Son of God.

Jesus. What the sun is, what the physical sun is to planet Earth, so too is Jesus, the living Christ to to us spiritually. And if you just wanted to know what Jesus Christ is, just look at the sun. You know, the physical sun. It's everything to us. If the sun went out nine minutes later, planet Earth would start freezing just like that.

We would be dead without the sun. In the same way, we're dead without the Son of God, the living Jesus. Who was the witness the way or what? What what? How much human beings mean to God. That's what Jesus is. The light of the world is showing us how much human beings mean to God. Will we wake up?

Will we return? Will we remember? Will we stay in communion with God? Will we live in the light, or will we choose the darkness? It's really quite a contrast.

#### **Travis / TWOTP**

How do you get in on a life? But also like, where is Jesus? Like, I'm not choosing, you know, darkness. But I feel the...

#### **Peter Haas**

A lot of people feel down inside. But we're more asleep than dead in some ways. And of course, there is a spiritual dimension of death that haunts human beings that, we can become so turned around inside that we're closed and hardhearted to God. And even dead people spiritually can be raised to life. So there's always hope, you know, even for the worst hardhearted people in the world, there's always hope to be made alive again and touched by that advent grace, the miracle.

You know, I've often thought, you know, where is Jesus in this Christmas story for us now, it's one thing to celebrate Jesus was born, you know, at Christmas time or whatever. But what does that have to do with my life now? You know, and when I'm dealing with my, my, my family members who have got addictions to heroin and people in debt, you know, people who are dying because they have cancer.

Our little granddaughter, three year old, dealing with leukemia right now in the hospital, you know, where is Jesus for all that and, well, for me, I've come to see that, the message of Christmas is that God doesn't abandon human beings on this planet, that God joins us in the fullness of the depth of human condition, coming not as a king or a conqueror, but as this humble, simple little peasant baby boy.

And so it's it's a story of, God's humility and joining us in our, in our vulnerability and weaknesses and, and disappointments and, and just being with us because the story for at least the Jesus story, you know, some 30 years Jesus is just with us, the with us, God just living normal life with us in the normal human experience.

And God doesn't seem to be in a big hurry, you know, why didn't God just start with Jesus? He started with Abraham. You know, it would have saved a lot of time if God had just started with Jesus and the son from the beginning, rather than starting with Abraham, you know, so there seems to be a deep patience in the heart of God to just kind of wait and evolve with us and lay down the tracks so that in the centuries to come, you know, the train could run on.

I mean, Christ could be the great Engine and line up, a train of people to hook up and pair with the Christ. I don't know, it's a big mystery, but, Jesus is with us in our human suffering, and that is a totally unique statement in all of world religion that Jesus is the sign of weakness among us, the sign of emptiness among us, a sign of powerlessness among us, the sign of vulnerability among us, the sign of despair.

And God forsaken us. Among us, the sign of surrender to the powers that be. Here, take me and you can kill me, take me, take you. Take me with all your empire powers. And here I am. I'm not going to resist. Watch what love does. It faces your power and your anger and your loathing of my teaching. And lets you have your own way.

Take my life. Here it is. And, that's the mystery of the humility of God among us right there in the story of Jesus doesn't change anyone or anything, but when I look at Jesus now and the story of Jesus in the story of Christmas, it gives me. It buoys me with the joy of freedom that this life is not all that there is, and that I don't have to try and grasp to make it any different.

I can be here right now and trust that if I wait, if I watch, if I wonder, I know God will do a new thing and ways I may. Totally unexpected, but I believe that deeply. And Jesus shows me that way.

### **Travis / TWOTP**

How does Jesus show you that way? I mean, how is that? Was that good news? Like, how does Jesus show up for, your granddaughter? Especially when Jesus like, hey, I'm weak when, like, you need power. And so just be patient in my

### **Peter Haas**

Well, I think Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and that's, you know, Easter and Christmas can't be separated because one one interprets the other. My, you know, God, if there's any other way. And he's praying so deeply with the angst, he's breaking capillaries and he's sweating blood so under distress. That is the symbol of a man. Confront it against the reality of life.

It is breaking you down. It is cracking. You open. It is, it is. It is taking you to that depth of being where all you can do is just how, how and weep and, and and be undone. And so that's what Jesus showed me is it's okay to be undone. It's okay to be a man. It's okay to be a man who weeps and who lets himself be undone.

And who howls with tears, and who cries out and says, God, if there's any other way, if there's any other way, let it be. And nevertheless thy will be done. That's the beautiful paradox that Jesus shows me. He's here right now. By that, by that, that way that he showed me I'm I'm and along with a lot of other people on this planet, have been touched by that way that Jesus showed us that Garden of Gethsemane moment.

It's here right now on me. I'm willing to surrender in the face of leukemia, to say if there's any other way but thy will be done. And I'm that way today because of what Jesus did and what it's what it says in the scriptures. So he leaves. He left an imprint, a huge imprint on human consciousness on this planet, to show us a way to say, I can't let go of God, but I also can't accept the way things are.

And so what do you do? You weep. And, another story from Jesus' life that I'm very productive. No, but it's healthy and it's free. He's on the cross, you know, and I love the story where he's dying in agony, and he says, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And to me, that's another thing that I take away.

It imprinted human consciousness. It's imprinted in me. So the most thing that he cherished his whole life, what theologians call the hyper static union, that thing where you couldn't tell where Jesus ended and God began, that there was such a oneness there between his humanity and his divinity. He enjoyed that his whole life. We might enjoy that. We might, you know, become that later in life.

But he was born that way. We might reach a unit of experience later in life where we feel that oneness. But he lived his whole life in that state of divine oneness. And at the very end of his life, then he's he's torn asunder. It's like torn. He's losing everything he knows about himself is being sheared away.

And he experienced for the first time, I think, at least in the scriptures, this life of God forsaken is what's it like to be without God, that sense of oneness that he always could count on. And then it was torn away. There he is, facing what's going on, you know. Where did you go? Where did you go? God, what just happened?

The lights just went out. I lost touch, the pairing dropped, the connections gone. Where are you? And, And that's not the end. It's a terrifying moment, but it's not the end. And that, to me, is the message for humankind. You might feel that way, that deep separation, but it's not the end. And he comes back to himself in such a way that even though he felt that terror of separation from God, somehow he recollects himself.

And before he dies, he says, into thy hands, father, I commend my spirit, and it's a place of total trust, of stepping out into the nothingness. Even if he felt that separation from God, he still is able to commit his spirit, his whole being, to God. And that's for me. The ultimate remedy is that's what happens when the remedy takes.

When the cure happens, we're able to face all the God forsaken us that this planet can throw upon us and still say, into thy hands I commend my spirit. And that's the paradox of faith. And it doesn't change that the Holocaust happened. It doesn't change that, you know, millions, hundreds of millions of people died in world wars.

It doesn't change. The billions of people have died and are going to continue to die just because they're born. Nothing changes that God forsaken is something is really wrong with this planet. Something's really wrong and off. Nevertheless, into thy hands I commit thy spirit. My spirit. And, that's what Jesus showed me. The courage to do that in the face of it all.

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## The Christmas Miracle

### Peter Traben Haas

Love is a risk and the opposite of love is fear. And if you look around our culture, fear turns into anger really, really quickly and division and polarization. And so it's a lot for a lot of people. They say they just give up on love. They just say, I'm not going to love them, and I'm going to let my heart be cold and hard and I'm just going to spend the rest of my life fighting with other people.

And, but people really needed the advent remedy to turn their hearts into love again. And that's the miracle of Christmas that we all celebrate.

Love is not something we can ever create on our own. We can't. We can't make someone love us. We can't make someone have a soft heart. And all we can do is be responsible for our hearts and. And to the extent that we're saying yes

to God and yes to the spirit of love. To the extent that we're able to do that in our own lives, little by little, it affects our, our, our friends, our families.

And, love is something that is experienced and felt by us more than it's understood, you know, intellectually and what has changed my life has been encounters with people that were unconditionally loving me, and I could feel that unconditional love through their eyes. It was like the light was coming through their eyes. It's happened a couple of times in my life where I'm like, how did you get like this.

How did you get so full of light and love? And most of them couldn't really tell me, you know, how they couldn't say, well, go read this book or go do this practice or do this? They just were dwelling in the joy of love. And it was infectious. And so I think that's the cure is just let our light and love shine and it's through this possible.

So it's like an aperture, you know, the aperture of the camera lets more light in. It also lets more light out. And so as we're healed from our constrictions by fear and judgment and anger, it's transformed from water into wine, it's transformed into love. And people feel that. And little by little we're just little, you know, messengers of God's love in our lives.

And, you know, in our culture. I think ultimately we would all do well at Christmas and in the season of advent, probably more than ever, just to work on not expressing our anger as quickly. If we could do one thing this advent, this Christmas, just try not to say the angry thing. Try not to say the mean thing. You know, just say nothing.

That's better than saying the angry thing. People are drinking too much and so they say the wrong things to each other. They see the hurtful things. People are busy so much. They say the wrong things. They do the wrong things because they're stressed out. People are overwhelmed because life is hard. And so they act out in all sorts of inappropriate ways that don't really lead to love, but perpetuate the fear and the judgment.

And it's just like this constant ping pong and going on and we're all just bouncing off of each other, and it's making a mess of things. And you know what humans do best is go to war or in the bedroom or in the house. Warren school, Warren on the streets. War in the politics, war in countries. I mean, God's so patient with us.

Why? Why does God's love wait so long for us, you know? Well, there's the example. The divine love is totally unconditional and just keeps waiting and watching and wondering, will we ever wake up? Will we wake up from our useless acting out from fear and our, used to sorting out from our sense of separation from others and ever just say, I'm going to learn the remedy and take it.

What is sin? Sin is absolutely. I mean, it's a lot of things, but it comes from the Greek word harmonia, which is an archery word which means to miss the mark. And so the closest thing in the simplest way of describing what sin is, is sin is living aimlessly, not even having a mark, much less missing the mark.

And it's missing the whole point to sin is to miss the whole point of being here. And so what is the point? It begs the question, you know. Well, from my reading of things, the point of being a human is to become love, to literally be transformed into love. For in the words of Saint Paul, that Christ might be all in all, or theologically that we might experience a process of sanctification and glorification here on Earth.

And we're not ultimately glorified here on earth, but we get hints of it, like Jesus' love. And when you go to heaven right after you're saved, well, we're being saved. I mean, there's this transformation that happens when we're brought into relationship with God through Jesus, by the spirit. We're being saved. We're being healed, we're being transformed. So, I mean, there's big theological words around this justification, redemption, you know, being regenerated.

But then what I'm more interested in is the long journey of transformation, of becoming more and more transformed in the image and likeness of God, having that likeness restored. You know, we're all created in the image of God, and that never goes away, which makes every human being worthy of life and uniquely made in the image of God.

But it's the likeness of God that can be more and more corrected and and more and more, cultivated in our lives, you know, and that's something to live for. That's what the advent remedy does, is it creates the likeness more and more in us of God. And so to live a life of sin is to miss the very point of being alive, to be a child of God, to be more and more transformed into love.

And people become living contradictions to themselves when they give in to the sin of living aimlessly and missing the mark, they become more and more angry and mean and hard hearted. But they love their freedom so much they won't let it go. And so they're living as a total contradiction in themselves. What they need the most is, is to return to the gift of becoming love.

And, Jesus shows us that way. And especially it shows us what happens when love, which is ultimately God, God's love is waiting all along, like the prodigal son's father waiting all along for the prodigal to wake up and realize how aimless they've been living and say, what have I done with my life? I've. I've squandered my whole life.

I'm going to return to my father. And sure enough, even before I began to return to my father, the father is out there waiting for me to return. So you don't know what caused it. What is it? The father's love that's drawing the son or the son who's waking up and saying, I'm going back to my father? Maybe it's both, but ultimately, Shane, right.

The transformation of shame. and I mean, shame is a huge thing in our culture. but, shame is just the underside of fear. I think ultimately. And fear is the opposite of love. So shame is a very negative emotion. It really takes people down. shame gets in the way of being able to receive love. I mean, ultimately, we do feel so ashamed that we will reject love.

And that's that's deep stuff, you know? but ultimately, the advent remedy can handle that. the shame that prevents us from knowing our good and having our good and experiencing the miracles. they're holding onto their shame. They're holding onto their wounds because it's the only thing they know that is. That is shame and fear to transform into love.

#### **Travis / TWOTP**

And what does the manger have to do with that?

#### **Peter Traben Haas**

Well, I mean, Joseph represents the masculine presence and Mary represents the feminine presence. And so, you know, Joseph's Joseph's shame of not being able to take care of his wife and his kid didn't prevent him from, from keeping to, look for creative solutions. So I think that's the first thing for a lot of people as well, is to not let your shame take you down and take you out, but to keep looking for creative solutions forward.

Another thing that comes to mind about shame is the contrast between Peter the Apostle, Peter and Judas. And I've always found them to be a beautiful case study. And the difference between one guy who was totally shamed because he betrayed Jesus and said, I don't know him, I don't know him. I don't know, denied him three times.

And another guy who betrayed Jesus with a kiss for money. And these are case studies in the two ways of shame. How I can go. And we don't exactly know why Peter was able to move through his shame and be reconciled, and why Judas wasn't. They both knew Jesus. They both heard the same things. They both experienced the same thing.

Which is why did Peter experience his shame and allow himself to be reconciled and move through that shame. He was moved at some level, probably to feel conviction or that deep remorse, which is a healthy way of expressing shame. But Judas wasn't able to move through shame. He was. He wasn't able to be free from his shame.

He let his shame take him down to despair and let that despair take him down and to suicide. And I think these are the two paths of shame, that where was God? There? Well, God's in it all in a certain sense. But, there's this awareness that God's freedom and God's absence from the world allows us to experience these things for ourselves.

And though, you know, God is not intervening in all these things, God is not stopping the genocides, obviously. But that doesn't mean that God isn't real or God doesn't have a purpose for it all. In the end. But that's beyond our ability to understand on the day to day level on this planet, in relationships. This power of shame can take us down if we let it corrode our hearts.

And so looking at the model of Peter and say, how did he navigate that shame? How did he experience the advent remedy? He must have at some level trusted his master, Jesus, and known that Jesus forgave him and felt that love from him. And Judas didn't give Jesus the opportunity or something. It so corroded his heart that he couldn't let it in.

He couldn't accept it. And that's, to me, the real, that's the wound of shame, is that it doesn't. It takes you down because it doesn't let you let the grace in. It doesn't let the second chance, and it doesn't let the miracle. And it can't be true for me. It's not possible. I'm not worthy of it. The shame smothers life so much.

It's like blowing out a candle. And, So shame is a huge thing. And it's used by people in very powerful, terrible ways because it is so powerful. you can really ruin a person's life by shaming them and living that shame and perpetuating it. And people, people need that deep healing around shame.

It's what the light does. Ultimately, though.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not understand it can't overcome the light. It warms. It opens its softens. It really is all the qualities of the divine, condensed at a psychological, emotional, spiritual level and a physical level that we can feel, light happens all the time. Light happens. it comes through.

Music comes through reading. Something comes to taking a walk. It comes through an experience you're not expecting. Light happens and it's lightning. It lightens you when it happens. you know, and you know it. You can't explain it exactly. But light is always happening. Even in our darkest moments. It's happening and it gives hope. It gives courage, and it heals little by little.

It takes a lifetime to accumulate a personality and woundedness. You know, a good 20 some years you begin to realize you're full of a lot of stuff and a lot of damage, a lot of baggage, a lot of stuff. Some of it's unconscious, deep in the unconscious, you know, from being in the womb, from early childhood. and that stuff is it can be dark and heavy energy.

It's the issues are in the tissues, as someone says, you know, the body keeps score. So all that stuff's in there. So, talking about the light, it doesn't mean to trivialize the physicality of trauma. And pain and woundedness and brokenness, unconscious suffering. But somehow, the light is a symbol for, what what, wisdom does what words can do, what emotions can do, what feelings can do when they interact with that dark energy in us that's compressed and it can't even be articulated what it is.

I feel the darkness in my belly, you know, anger, jealousy, rage. I felt it in my belly. it then tingles in my body. And the resolution to that stuff in my body has been to move the body to to run or to shout or to dance. And so the light is energy in motion. And that's what emotions are.

They're energy and motion in the body. So you know, we can spiritualize it. We can psychologize it. We can physical as it. But in a sense we're talking about the same thing. And Jesus is the light of the world. That sums it all up. He's the summation of all of it. And so to have to celebrate Christmas is really to celebrate that the Divine Healer has shown up as one of us, with us, among us, for us and our healing and salvation and you know, the light does so much of the work.

We don't even have to sometimes know that it's happening. The light does the work, just like the sunflower is just constantly turned to the sun, you know, throughout the day. It's called the principle of heliotropism. Everything turns toward the sun. Not many creatures turn away from the sun because it's the source of life, but it can be too blinding sometimes.

And ultimately, the church is a lighthouse in the world. It should be a lighthouse. It should be a place for saints in the light to shine their light and not hide it. As Jesus said, don't hide your light. but again, we're all just broken vessels and the light shines through the cracks, you know, so to speak. Because as the song goes, and that's a holy thing to see that we know the light through the cracks of brokenness.

So ultimately the, the, the light of the church is in the union or the fusion of our hearts with the heart of Jesus, the living, the living resurrected, the light of the world, that union of faith and love for him, for the living Jesus Christ. So and kindles our hearts that underneath the structure of the authority of this world, our hearts are burning and they're blazing a light of love.

And that's the message of the gospel. Human beings mean so much to God. Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ. That's the message of Christmas. That's the message of transformation. That's the message of love, healing, all shame and all darkness. so you're the light world in the church. You know, my dog is the light of the world, so to speak.

I'm the light of the world. The more I'm united with the heart of Christ.

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## The Great Exchange

### **Peter Traben Haas**

Every single human being is a human being, not a divine being. Jesus, however, and this is the story, you know, this is the message of Christmas. Jesus isn't just a human being. He's also a divine being. He's two natures in one being. And this one being is the Son of God. The miracle of God's revelation of the living God among us as the second person of the Trinity.

Lots of words to describe this mystery. Jesus is the union of human nature and the divine nature. So why? What is that here for? Why are we seeing this? What is so important that God wants us to know about this?

To me, theologically, this is huge. And a lot of people think that, you know, Jesus was up in heaven to talk about this because it's so confusing. But, and then came down to earth. Well, what they're really talking about is what is known as the preexistence of Christ or the Son of God. But it's clear that Jesus didn't exist before he was an embryo, you know, so something did exist before the embryo of Jesus, the human divine man was conceived and born, and that was named Jesus of Nazareth.

That that's a very unique incarnation, a unique manifestation to the becoming flesh taking on flesh. So the divine takes on flesh. And and so the Caledonian formula was simple, fully human and fully divine in one being, two natures, in one being. So what existed before the birth of Jesus was the Son of God, or the divine nature that united itself to a human nature in the person of Mary?

So Mary's the Theotokos, she's the God Burger, as the theologians talk about it. But what existed before the birth of Jesus is clearly this thing called the preexistent Son of God or the Christ, or, the second person of the Trinity, all sorts of different terms to describe it. The name of God, the Word of God, the Son of God, the law of God.

All sorts of different terms were used to describe this, this thing that existed with God. That's a total mystery. But we can simply call it the second hypostasis, or the second person, or the second energy, or even the second mode of God. This aspect that is, not not God the Father, so to speak, in God's own on movable illness, but God the Son that comes out from the father, the proceeds from the father, so to speak, and then is manifested in physical form as a fully human being.

So here's the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that for the first time, as far as we know, human nature and divine nature were one. And Jesus was born in what we call the Unitive state. Now, we're not born in the unit of state. We're born with one human nature. We're born with a human nature, a particular human nature.

As my my patroness, your Travis-ness. There's also a universal human nature that we're all human. We're all the same class. But we all have that human nature. So. But it's manifested as there's this, this and your this. So my patroness, your Travis-ness. We have a human nature. We don't have a divine nature. We're created in the image of God, but we don't have a divine nature or whatever it is.

We're not divine beings. We're human beings. Every single human being is a human being, not a divine being. Jesus, however, and this is the story, you know, this is the message of Christmas. Jesus isn't just a human being. He's also a divine being. He's two natures in one being. And this one being is the Son of God. The miracle of God's revelation of the living God among us as the second person of the Trinity.

Lots of words to describe this mystery. Jesus is the union of the human nature and the divine nature. So why? What is that here? For what? Why are we seeing this? What is so important that God wants us to know about this? Because apparently, in the heart of God's mission for human beings, that God wants us to experience this, that Jesus had and we experience it not on our own.

We experience it as we abide in Christ. So we don't have to become on our own divine nature. We just have to dwell or abide and rest and trust or believe in Jesus. And in that union, it's like a branch dwelling in the vine and the vine dwelling in the ground. So God the Father, the Holy Trinity, the ultimate Godhead, is the ground of our being.

Jesus is the branch or the vine, I should say the vine that's growing from the ground. And we're all these branches connected to the vine. So it's not my divine divinity that I'm acquiring through conscious efforts or labors on this planet, through meditation or whatever. I'm simply resting or dwelling in relationship with him, through the living Jesus, and through that relationship he gives me.

I become a participant in the divine nature. According to second Peter chapter two. And that transformation does a lot to me. It bears the fruit of the spirit love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, channel self-control, etc. it enables the qualities of the divine nature to flow through me and heal me. And I become a continuing incarnation of the living presence of Christ.

So, it's humongous that the program you're saying is in theory or like that was, you know, are you saying like that, like that power from Jesus? Is that still, like, active? You can still tap into that. Like who? Who could that be for? Yeah. In the mail today. Is it still relevant? This is our proximate and ultimate end as human beings.

Is this possibility of being transformed into the divine nature through our relationship with Jesus? In other words, it's not just becoming, a Christian on this planet. That's our possibility, but it's also becoming what the word is is divine-ized. Christ did a little Christ, a little anointed one, again, always rooted in Jesus as our source, because we're not acquiring this divinity on our own, but the flow of that divine energy of Christ's divine nature is reaching out all to the little branches of the tree that's growing, and it's changing.

Human beings. So the good news of the gospel and the message of Christmas isn't that God joins us. That's just part one. God joins us to lift us up. So the early theologians, like Saint Athanasius talked about it in terms of, the divine became like us to lift us up, to become like the divine and the great exchange idea of God coming down to us to lift us up to God.

And that's to me, the message of Christmas and the vessel of Mary is a symbol for each of us so that we become, you know, locations of the continuation of the incarnation, the Spirit of Jesus, the genius of Jesus, the light of Jesus. he's the source. So, so that union, that relationship is flowing through us.

Obviously it happened in history, through Mary, but now continues through us spiritually or allegorically, even. But even just emotionally. And it's deeply personal for us, we feel that sense of closeness or oneness with God by the power of the Holy Spirit. so I always like to, you know, just connect Christmas and Pentecost because when Jesus did ascend and sent the spirit, it's his spirit that he sent the Spirit of Jesus that cries out in our hearts, Abba.

So in a certain sense, Jesus is very much living in alive through us, by His Spirit that dwells within us and flows through us. And so in that sense, we are continuing the. The body of Christ is how Saint Paul talks about it, that the Body of Christ continues its ministry on this planet through us, very much through us and changing us and transforming us, imperfect and broken as we are.

The purpose of Christmas isn't just to celebrate the union of the divine in the human, in the person of Jesus, and put him in a museum and bow down to him. Although that's appropriate, the purpose of Christmas is to show us how much human nature means to God, what God did with human nature, and uniting itself to the divine.

And then showing us this is the template or the model for our future, of what we're moving toward to praise and glory of God as a communion of saints in union with Jesus, to the praise of God in the holiness of whatever the Trinity is and the mystery of God's profound glory, and that we get a picture of just a slice of that true through Jesus.

And Jesus is doing something that we couldn't do ourselves, nor should we or nor nor could we ever do that ourselves. and that's the dimension of grace, you know, God had to do it for us and landed on this planet in a way that we could never have done. So it does seem like, you know, if you start at the Garden of Eden, the story of oneness is there.

There's a certain, ecological oneness that humans are one with the nature of something that's symbolically innocent. there's a beauty of harmony there. There seems to be shadows lurking. You know, the serpent is there with different words to say, temptations to say, the tree of knowledge and good and evil of great mystery. There, the tree of life and death.

These great possibilities exist in this, this place of innocence. but clearly the purpose of human beings was to experience harmony and oneness with God. That was the purpose of the garden. And so the story breaks out of the mold, kind of almost seems unplanned that they're kicked out of the garden. And then from then on, the biblical story is one of this beautiful relationship of God seeking continuation of what relationship with people through certain individual starts with Abraham, you know, moves out into the great nation of Israel and moves out to prophets and then to kings, and then ultimately to the prophets who announce the coming of the Messiah, and then through the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ, and then through Christ to all the Gentiles, and through all the Gentiles to the whole world.

And why stop at the world? You know, maybe it's not just planet Earth that it's for. Maybe it's for the whole cosmos. God so loved the whole cosmos. It's not just planet Earth. There's a Greek word for the planet, but the Greek word there.

And God so loved the world is cosmos, chaos. So most cosmos, you know. And so now we see cosmos in a totally different way than just our solar system. Like what is the cosmos? Because another sort of cosmology has to do with Christmas. Everything, and the cosmos comes to center, comes to succumb. France, where planet Earth has got to be like at the outer edge of God's cosmos, far place away from God's center, so to speak.

So Christmas is center coming to circumference. Center coming to the far edge of the cosmos, planet Earth. There's the simple little planet in the middle of vast sea of other. You know, galaxies, billions and billions of galaxies and center comes to circumference. This is how one person put it, you know? And so the cosmos is revealing the glory of God in ways that are way more incomprehensible than we could ever have imagined.

And the Christmas story is saying, this is how important humans are to God. Can you hear it? I've come to join you in your faraway nest, to bring you to myself and show you that you're not alone. And that's the story of Christmas. And we can't even comprehend what really the message of Jesus means for other planets or other galaxies.

It should humble us to recognize that we don't have the last word on God, and it should really turn us into deeper worshipers, more free to worship than ever before. Because worship. Worship is getting out of the way in praise of our creator. You know and praise the I am not the center of the universe. I am a circumference.

And the center has come to me, and I bow in total adoration and gratitude to the gift of life that I even know that I'm aware in the life I know that I know. Praise be to God. That should be started. Day one of worship. I know that I'm aware. I'm conscious. Oh my gosh, where did this come from?

Praise be to God. And about the gift of being awake alive. I know that I know, I don't even know how I know, but I know I didn't create my breath. I didn't create my heartbeat. I discovered myself alive. Praise be to God. Now what? How do I offer my life to God? To this one who's give me everything.

And that's. That's the essence of worship. Getting out of the way and returning to. Thanks. returning and bowing, saying thank you for this gift. I don't know how long it will last. I will use it to my utmost. And Mary gives us another example, this Mother Mary, she says, right after, you know, the angel departs from her.

She says her great Magnificat, which is a hymn. Bless the Lord. Oh, my soul, you know, bless the Lord, magnify the Lord all my soul. For you have done great things. You took the lowly and made them, you know, lifted them up. And she just sings a song of praise. It's all you can do. when you've been touched by the light.

When you've been touched by the advent remedy. You just. You're turned into praise and gratitude and worship. That's ultimately a language of the heart. And it's healing in and of itself. And the advent heals. It's worship is in many ways the advent remedy. More than anything else. We're created by God. For God, and we don't know who we are apart from God.

John Calvin starts this beautiful institute saying, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of humankind or man are intertwined. You can't separate the two. And that, you know, this whole notion of what the ultimate end of the human being is, the purpose of our life is to praise God and enjoy God forever. And we enjoy God by allowing God to turn us into itself, to gobble us up, so to speak.

And with this love. And, that's the process of union consuming us, which is a scary thing to say, you know, but what's being consumed as God eats us, so to speak, or as God transforms us from water into wine is our are the aspects of ourselves that that, have been resistant in, that have been wounded and that maybe are a part of our self.

You know, the flesh, as Saint Paul puts it, and it's not like it goes away. It gets it's made passive or in Saint Paul's word, it's crucified. And I like the image of water being turned into wine, that it's transformed. So we get a new nature. We get the nature of Jesus rising in us more and more.

And ultimately, as spiritual maturity unfolds, there is never even an option. It's all it's all God. There's not even a temptation. The needle is true North. There's not even an awareness of anything but God in that place of the unit of state. Most people don't live in the unit of state. They live having unit of experiences of the oneness with God.

But spiritual maturity does lead many people ultimately to that place of the unit of experience or unit of state. And they don't really say it, but they're living in that constant awareness of the presence of God in everything they do, even in even in the midst of hell. They're aware of the presence of God. And that's why a lot of the mystics, you hear them saying, all is well, you know, yes, I'm being beaten.

I'm being tortured. I'm being burned alive. All is well. Well, how is it? Well. But it doesn't look to me too well. But something inside them is untouchable. You know, they've been touched by the advent remedy, and they're. They're feeling that oneness that Jesus felt in his incarnation.

Life is the school of holiness, for sure. And, Yeah, it's the school of transformation.

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## The Hope of Something New

### Peter Haas

Silence is the language of God. You know, it's the first language of God. Before the word, you know, God was dwelling in silence, and, I believe it was Saint Air. And as he said that God's first word is silence. God's first language is silence. And, And then the word becomes flesh. And so from the silence birth the word and then from the word bears all physicality and form.

And that's a beautiful way of thinking about it. So at the heart of every physical thing, of all materiality, of all creation is the word which is kind of the intelligence and the creativity and the mind of God. But behind and within that seed of the mind of God is the silence of God, which is vast, infinite.

You know, stillness really.

So the ancient tradition of the Jesus Prayer that has been held in trust by the Greek Orthodox community, in the Eastern Orthodox community, and particularly the monks of Mount Athos. And of course, the Jesus Prayer has become quite famous these days. But that simple dwelling with the name of Jesus in our hearts cultivates what they call Hezekiah, which is the prayer of stillness.

And you actually drop the chin and the head to bow to the heart. And this, this awareness of the name of Jesus arising with our breath. You know, there's a definite method to it which we can't get into, but it creates and cultivates a vestibule in the human experience of our vestibule, a little, like an altar space.

Like a, like a cathedral space. It creates a little space within the human physical experience here of the body of the heart, where we're still and silent, and we can actually feel that stillness and silence. It doesn't mean that the thoughts always go away completely, but sometimes they do. For a moment, you feel you drop into the body in that stillness and silence.

Kind of like what happens right before you go to sleep. You know, in order to go to sleep, you have to drop into that stillness and silence, and the mind goes quiet. It's a physical sensation of stillness. So stillness and silence really are this embodied experience for many people, which is why yoga is so appealing to people. Shavasana.

I do yoga just for shavasana. You know that last phase where you're just lying there after a one hour workout and it's just like, this is what I need, you know, this total sense of peace and stillness. And, you know, Christianity is a logos religion, a very word based religion. I've been saying a lot of words. Lots of theological books have been written.

It's a logos based religion. The word became flesh, the logos. But it's also a mythos religion, which is, you know, the kind of the allegorical beyond words, the dreams, the unions stuff, the archetypical stuff. And then deeper than the mythos is the pathos. Logos, mythos, pathos and pathos is the inexpressible longing of our hearts that this is the language of the spirit, which is ultimately this groaning that leads to silence, you know, and stillness.

And that pathos is an emotion. It's a heart centered thing that you can't really translate. But people feel it. They feel it when they hear great music and it takes you away. It lifts you up, it creates this. That's why people go to concerts, because it lifts them out of themselves, that pathos. It's in art. Great art has pathos and that deep feeling.

And, children have pathos, you know, when they're playing and in their imaginary world and you just look into their eyes and you love them so much, they have that pathos. It's a deep feeling. It's where the English word passion comes from. Pathos, and empathy. It's related to the same word, pathos. As an empath, it allows you to feel with others and so to be in tune with others.

And, you know, one of the great movies of our time is James Cameron's Avatar movies. And those people, represent to me this image of pairing. They're so connected with their creatures that they fly in the whole forest. They connect up using their physicality. Part of their bodies connect to the forest or to the mother tree.

And it's a beautiful image of, you know, our Western civilization is so logos based, so word based, so science based, so knowledge based. But we tend to lose the pathos. And that's one of the things people love at Christmas and Advent is that it gets them out of their heads and they can feel the pathos again, like they're a child again.

And even just for a moment, you know, they can be touched by the magic, so to speak, and feel that oneness with that we all know deep in our hearts as children, the world is enchanted by our children because we feel the pathos so closely and so clearly.

I feel hope when I get out of my head. And sink down in my breath and quiet. When I sit down in my chair. And look out at the sunrise, I breathe in and I get out of my thoughts. And thoughts are useful. But when I get into my lower belly and my breath, when I read scripture from that quiet place, ancient scripture that still speaks to me, I realize that there's still, hope God is doing new things.

God is doing miracles. This moment is a miracle, and every breath I have is a breath of hope. And if it's happening for me, it can happen anywhere on this planet that as long as there's breath on this planet, there's hope for human beings.

The advent remedy is a remedy of hope really more than anything? The hope of what is possible. And John the Baptist represents that hope. Prepare the way you know something is coming. God is going to do a new thing. And the powerbrokers of the empires of the world don't want to hear John the Baptist's voice.

They'll cut it off. You know, they cut his head off. They don't want to hear that God is going to do something new, or that God's judgment is coming, that this way of doing business on the planet is not workable anymore. You're killing each other. You know God's judgment. God's judgment is ultimately the, the consequences, the normal consequences of our aimless living.

Just like if I don't water the plant, Texas sun is going to kill the plant. It's not. It's not mean. It's just I didn't take care of the plant. And it's not like cursing and drinking. No more of that about. No, I mean, God doesn't have to do a thing. And human beings reap what we sow. And, you know, our way of thinking, our way of being, our way of doing on this planet, is not always wise or benevolent or generous or lead to altruism to, you know, ends is oftentimes very selfish and self-focused and leads to a lot of violence.

It seems to me that what human beings do the most consistently is be violent to one another, emotionally and physically. It certainly is. The history of our planet is a history of violence and war. But, God's so passionate and showing us what, what, how much humankind means to God by joining with us in the incarnation. And so, it is a remedy saying this is what you're supposed to be like.

This, my son, is what you're supposed to be like. We want a template for what we're to become, you know? And when you see what the Son of God is and Jesus and you see what we are, the contrast is pretty significant. And he was able to

communicate telepathically. He was able to heal Noninvasively. He was able to transport himself Nonlinearly the man represented a whole nother level of being that we can say, well, maybe we don't have the last word here.

Maybe we need to learn a little more about what is possible for this species. And maybe love is the way. Maybe forgiveness is the way. Maybe being obedient, worshipful to God is the way, verses exalting ourselves. So John the Baptist represents the prophet and the word represents the prophetic saying, hey, wake up.

Repent. The presence of the Holy is coming. Prepare yourselves. You don't want to miss out. You don't want to miss this. You miss out on what? What are, what new possibilities are they talking about? Becoming the full destiny of what God wants for us? You know, sons and daughters of God in the image of Jesus as co-heirs with Christ.

We don't want to miss out on that evolution, that transformation. And you can't do it yourself. Watch me, follow me. I am the way. And that's what Jesus said, and don't miss out on it. And so the prophets, whether they're Muhammad or Elijah or John the Baptist, all the prophets are basically saying, pay attention. You know, there's something more for you here to become than what you're doing.

And every tradition is trying to wake us up to say, hey, live more wisely, and we're all moving and evolving to recognize the power of love and how important love is at a physiological level. What is, what does blood have to do with new possibilities? Well, love is the energy that feeds life. So without love, you know, nothing is curated or cultivated or born.

And you can't force life. Only love draws it out. So God is love drawing us forward. And we're love. We can become more love. And it draws others the best out in others. Love is the environment in which things flourish. Love is a human being at its best. Love is what human being is meant to become. Love is just another word for divination, really, as far as it matters on a practical level on this planet, that if we could just move from, from, you know, forgiveness to, to love, that shift alone would do a lot, for, for this planet.

But love is ultimately what is released. What does that ship release? Well, it releases a lot of the darkness in our unconscious that's holding us back. You know, our fears, our shames or our guilt? Our repressed desires, things that are junking us up and we don't even know it. Our woundedness. And so. So that stuff prevents us from the freedom of love.

The divine love that frees us to live in the fullness of the joy of the Lord in the, the, the joy of our salvation is, that we are loved and that we can love. And that is the highest energy that is, that we're aware of on this planet. Love soaked in wisdom creates joy, peace, harmony.

And it does new things in unexpected ways. So freedom to that in story and etcetera. Reach out now because it's just a fruit. It's a consequence. It's a byproduct, so to speak, of what love does among us. It does create freedom. And the most free people are those who know they're unconditionally loved. And they're they they don't abuse their freedom because they cherish the one they love and who's who loves them.

That's why, you know, healthy marriages have so much freedom because they love each other so much. It's the love that creates freedom. Same thing with parents and children and animals. You know, love creates freedom. True love creates freedom.

**Travis / TWOTP=**

What breaks your heart apart and what breaks it open?

**Peter Haas**

What breaks my heart apart? Is anytime I see violence and feel violence in people's words or demeanor, it scares me. And I see that from national leaders using violence and I. What hurts, what hurts the most is I can see their woundedness and their shame and their it's coming out as anger and it generates other people to have anger and it just creates fighting.

And, a country can't stand divided like that, that it just shows how how people spiritually and psychologically who are not healed can become in their 70s and 80s, they walk around like grown, powerful men, but they're little children, the little boys who haven't been healed from their wounds, and they act out with fear and they act out from anger, and it's as if it's living them.

They're not living life. They're being lived by a power or by an energy that is emanating and igniting in other people who get retraumatized. And it doesn't bode well for humankind when leaders speak from places of the lowest common denominator at the cesspool of anger and rage. And it's powerful, but it's ultimately Lucifer. Eric and very effective, but does not end well for anyone.

The intensity of love is so powerful that it moves through walls, you know, moves through buildings, moves through the planet. It's faster than the speed of light. Love is faster than the speed of light. It has an intensity that nothing else can match, and people feel it in an instant. You know they can feel it from you physically, energetically.

So God's love through the story, through the language, through the word, through the mythos of the pathos, is coming to us as an intensity to awaken us, to liberate us from ourselves and to, unite us back to him, to himself. So it's a powerful intensity. And it turns everyone into a lighthouse, so to speak.

You're a bearer of the intensity of God's love. And it flows out through you, through what you say and what you don't say. And your affect, your moods. Everything about you is a light, light source, you know. And what are you? What energies are you emanating to other people? And because people can feel it.

I see creation is this great universe that we get to live in, and planet Earth is just this beautiful part of it. That is the amphitheater of God's creative energy and love that we can't understand it. But, creation, the creation is the theologians talked about it as being recapitulated in the birth of Jesus, and Jesus is the icon or the image of the father in every way, and the firstborn of all creation.

So, the story of Christmas is in one sense, the, the, the manifestation of the new creation of what? What God's doing with human beings, in his larger creation. And, it's symbolic, you know, the shepherds show up the, the, the wise men show up, the stars that align to show the way. Lots of things about the creation are conspiring to reveal that this recapitulation of what God's doing, on the planet and perhaps even with the cosmos is such a beautiful mystery.