

Chapter Five

Christian Privilege, Christian Fragility, and the Gospel of John

Amy-Jill Levine

The critical exegeses regarding how to address “the Jews” in John’s Gospel provided by biblicists and historians generally fail to make the transition from classroom to pew. The reasons for this failure are various: the issue of anti-Judaism rarely shows up in homiletics syllabi; the Association of Theological Schools does not require its member schools to address anti-Jewish preaching or teaching; homiletics faculty leave it to the biblical studies faculty to deal with “the Jews” or the hostile texts; seminaries hire rabbis to teach the elective course on Judaism and then suppose that the rabbis will address anti-Jewish preaching (most cannot, because most do not spend time listening to Christian sermons); and so on.¹

There is also, I propose, a deeper reason why the problem of anti-Jewish preaching, whether by commission or omission, remains: the coupled phenomena of Christian privilege and Christian fragility. These phenomena are analogous to, and are often reinforced by, white privilege and white fragility. In her 1988 essay, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” Peggy McIntosh extended her studies of male privilege to questions of race: “I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege.”² Drawing on her experiences in women’s studies, McIntosh states, “I remembered the frequent charges from women of color that white women whom they encounter are oppressive. I began to understand why we are just seen as oppressive, even when we don’t see ourselves that way. I began to count the ways in which I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence.”³ Until she could understand her own position from the perspective of others, as best as such understanding can be achieved, and until she could listen to people who had different experiences colored by race, McIntosh could not see or hear her own privileged status. After an extensive list of her own

privileges, she notes, "For me white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy."⁴ To do this requires both self- and community awareness, which can then lead to action.

This "elusive and fugitive" status finds one of its origins in what Robin DiAngelo identifies as "white fragility." DiAngelo defines white fragility as "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium."⁵ The self-protective responses to the direct evidence not only of racial oppression but also of white privilege find their origin in socialization. DiAngelo continues, "whites are often at a loss for how to respond in constructive ways. Whites have not had to build the cognitive or affective skills or develop the stamina that would allow for constructive engagement across racial divides."⁶ Finally, DiAngelo describes the "factors that inculcate white fragility": they include segregation, both representational and informational, the assumption that the situation of white people is normative, indeed universal (comparable to the universality of the identity "man"), and therefore the sense that all people share common experiences, values, and needs.⁷

All systems of oppression are distinct, but, just as McIntosh extrapolated from work in women's studies to theorize racial issues, so can we extrapolate from studies of racial privilege and fragility to interrogate the structural systems of Christian privilege and Christian fragility. It appears to me that Christian privilege undergirds harmful preaching about Jews and Judaism and prevents recognition of anti-Judaism across the Christian spectrum. Christian fragility prevents harmful preaching, including the use of anti-Jewish stereotypes and theology, from being addressed.

Despite institutional condemnation of the churches' historical anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic statements and actions, the problem remains, due to the (often unrecognized) toxicity of homiletical language. To see what internet resources are available to pastors, I engaged in an illuminating, if unscientific, exercise: I plugged "John 19:1-16" and "sermon" into Google, and found sixty-nine self-uploaded sermons and sermon-outlines on SermonCentral.⁸ A few of the sermons dated back to 2004 and focused on Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*. Most of these carefully treated the so-called "hostile verses." Jay Robinson, in "Who Really Killed Jesus?" (*Baptist*, March 31, 2004), tackled the issue directly:

Throughout history [the Jews] have been most likely suspects. Church leaders have misused/misinterpreted the bible to promote theological justification for

Christians to hate Jews. . . . Christians like Augustine, Chrysostom, Aquinas, and Luther, have accused all Jews as being Christ haters and Christ killers. Even today there are those who have distorted views of story to believe Jews alone responsible. Are the Jews guilty? Question has to be answered Have I PLOTTED AGAINST OTHERS? Have I misused my power? Have I been part of tearing down . . . ?⁹

This is a good start.

However, apart from the Gibson commotion, the question of how to talk about Jews is largely absent. A few sermons spoke about "the Jewish leaders," "the religious leaders and the political leaders,"¹⁰ or an unnamed "they" who sought to kill Jesus.

Other sermons epitomized the problem itself. Three examples should suffice.

1. In "Selling Self to Caesar," Phil Morgan (Pentecostal; April 2, 2002) proclaimed:¹¹

This declaration (John 19:14-16) by the Jews. You might miss it quite easily because of the pace of the account—the noise of the throng—but this is a DEFINING MOMENT.

Here is the SEED of Israel's blindness right down to the present day. The Apostle Paul wrote, in 2 CORINTHIANS 3:14 . . . "For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ." To this very day, when the Old Testament prophecies of Messiah are read in Jewish synagogues, there is no comprehension of the glorious way in which God has fulfilled it—and is fulfilling it—in the earth today. The mighty plan of God is lost in the haze to them—there's a veil over their eyes. Why? Because they "MISSED the day of their visitation." Jesus came, and God attested Him before their very eyes and ears with His own voice from Heaven, and with signs and wonders and authoritative teaching—and they rejected Him. The Light of the World came and shone before them—but sinful men prefer the darkness—and so they disowned Him, and let the haze of confusion and uncertainty descend and cover their minds once more.

2. The second is "Punishing the Innocent and Powerful" by Ron Tuit ("independent/Bible," July 6, 2016):¹²

In essence, Pilate was not even "true" to himself when he relented to the pressure of the Jews and proceeded to punish the innocent Lord Jesus. . . .

Ironically, Pilate referred to Jesus as “the King of the Jews” to the end. This is unusual, and we can only surmise that he was trying to persuade the Jews to change their mind concerning Jesus’s demise, but according to God’s Divine Plan, they would not change their minds because their hearts were hardened toward God’s promised Messiah, even though the evidence was undeniable that Jesus was the Christ sent from Heaven to redeem them. . . .

They do not believe the WORDS of Jesus, they do not accept His sacrifice for sin on their behalf, and they have not relinquished the rule of their hearts and lives to Him; even as the Jews said in verse 15: “We have no king but Caesar!” People look to rule of earthly kings but not to the Heavenly King.

3. Derrick Tuper’s “What Will You Do With Jesus?” (Christian/Church of Christ; Oct. 14, 2013) proclaimed:¹³

Pilate thought the Jews would see his tortured body and be satisfied with that and then have pity on him and drop the whole matter of crucifixion. However, the Jews were relentless in their pursuit of death for Jesus (6). We can’t negotiate with those who are bent on evil. We can’t compromise on Jesus to try to appease non-Christians; it won’t work. “You take him and crucify him.” Pilate didn’t want to deal with Jesus. He tried to pass him back off to the Jews. “You’re the ones who want to kill him so badly, go and do it yourself.” But that wasn’t going to work (7–9). “He was even more afraid.” He was already afraid of what these angry Jews would do if he let Jesus go. Now, upon learning what specifically the Jews were charging him with and that it was the worst crime imaginable to a Jew, Pilate became even more afraid. . . .

Time after time God gives people chances to change their hearts toward him. Some people are like the Jews who refused to give up their hatred . . .

They rejected King Jesus in favor of a pagan king. They crucified the Holy One and accepted Barabbas the murderer in his place. This reveals the depth of their hatred and depravity. Really this wasn’t about blasphemy; that was just a convenient charge to bring Jesus to Pilate. This whole incident was going on because Jesus went after Jews time and again about their own sinfulness and instead of humbly accepting Jesus’ input they despised him for it. Their pride caused them to hate Jesus and send him to the cross. In our pride and sinfulness we will always reject Jesus. . . . To reject Jesus is to embrace Satan.

Such sermons draw upon one vein of reception history and Christian theology: the Jews rejected Jesus, whom they *should have recognized*. The recognition is obvious to the Christian. Speaking from their privileged position, the pastors presume the Christian worldview (here narrowly defined) is

the only appropriate one. And, since this view is true, other views must, by definition, be false. That which is false is the anti-Christ; by this reasoning, then, the Jews become the anti-Christ. The message is not simply one they find in John’s Gospel. As we see in these sermons, the “hostility” is threaded throughout the New Testament: sermons on John turn to quotes from Paul and allusions to Peter’s speech in Acts 3. Were the term “Jew” to be removed from John’s Gospel, were the character Judas to be erased, the problematic teachings would still continue.

Rosemary Reuther suggested decades ago that “possibly anti-Judaism is too deeply embedded in the foundations of Christianity to be rooted out entirely without destroying the whole structure.”¹⁴ This would be tantamount to saying that racism and sexism are so deeply rooted in American society that the entire edifice should be pulled down. I’m not there yet. I still see the American dream of “all created equal” as a worthy goal, just as I see Jesus’s concern for love of God, love of neighbor, and love of enemy to be possibilities. But both American society and the Christian church face structural problems, and those problems need to be acknowledged. More than this, they need to be addressed head-on. The dominant society wants to think that the system is at least pretty good; they do not want to acknowledge that social sins are a structural component of their existence. Perhaps Christian fragility functions the same way: “Don’t tell me that there is something deeply embedded in my text and my theology that might be sinful or rotten. Just let’s cull out a few problems in the lectionary and we’ll be fine.” If removing symbols of the Confederacy from places of public honor is one way of recognizing and engaging white privilege, what symbols might the church address, and how might it do so?

MOVING FROM WOKE TO WORKS

For many liberal congregations and, I suspect, for most readers of this volume, such anti-Jewish sermons as cited above are reprehensible. The aware Christian reader, to use the currently popular term, is “Woke.” Being “woke” is explained dryly by Amanda Hess in the *New York Times*: “Think of ‘woke’ as the inverse of ‘politically correct.’ If ‘P.C.’ is a taunt from the right, a way of calling out hypersensitivity in political discourse, then ‘woke’ is a back-pat from the left, a way of affirming the sensitive. It means wanting to be considered correct, and wanting everyone to know just how correct you are.”¹⁵ Hess concludes,

When white people aspire to get points for consciousness, they walk right into the cross hairs between allyship and appropriation. These two concepts seem at

odds with each other, but they're inextricable. Being an ally means speaking up on behalf of others—but it often means amplifying the ally's own voice, or centering a white person in a movement created by black activists, or celebrating a man who supports women's rights when feminists themselves are attacked as man-haters. Wokeness has currency, but it's all too easy to spend it.

The homilist who mentions the problem of hostile texts is “Woke” or, to use Jesus's terms, has “stayed awake” (e.g., Matt. 24:42–43; 25:13; 26:41; Mark 13:35–37; 14:38; cf. 1 Thess. 5:6; Rev. 16:15). But to be “woke” or “awake” is not enough. The next step—*doing something* about the problem once it is acknowledged—presents the challenge. Shifting discourse to “Jewish leaders” in the homiletic moment does not resolve the problem. Despite the best intentions of the pastor—and they are good intentions—the substantive problem remains: the congregation still hears, from the Gospel itself, the message that the only good Jews are those who follow Jesus; Jews remain the negative exemplar.¹⁶

Once Christian privilege is named, Christian fragility kicks in. Calling out the harmful impact of invoking such Johannine material usually triggers defense mechanisms: I didn't mean to sound anti-Jewish; I'm just reading what the text says; I surely don't mean *all Jews*; the text is the word of God and therefore cannot be anti-Jewish, racist, sexist . . . and so on. In her chapter in this volume, Eileen Schuller speaks of conversations with Catholic parishioners about anti-Jewish preaching, where the common refrains are “what really is the problem? Things aren't that bad. . . . Don't make a mountain out of a molehill.”¹⁷ The responses assert Christian privilege and betray Christian fragility: ignorance coupled with denial.

People who make antagonistic statements or who deny the problem are not *ipso facto* bad people. I'm delighted when pastors and academics are “woke,” because the alternative—ignorance—is not a good one. People should be neither blamed nor shamed for not recognizing problems in their own tradition. We are all embedded in various structures of inequity. We do not hear the hate. We cannot see it. And when we are confronted with it, we usually go into defensive mode. That is a normal human reaction.

Yet it is this defensiveness, born of privilege and fragility, that undermines the standard homiletic approaches to the hostile texts. Application of the general guides—acknowledgment of the problem; changing the wording; placing texts into historical contexts; sensitivity to John's language, and so on—is insufficient; they may in the end reinforce both the privilege and the fragility if the response of the congregation (let alone of the pastor) is, “We've acknowledged the problematic texts; we've acknowledged the harm they do; we are sorry [although our apology is for the church over the centuries and not from us personally],” then the congregation is absolved of the problem.

It is “woke” in the sense of “look at us—we are good people because we acknowledge a systemic problem.” Acknowledging the problem can create a nice catharsis: look at how righteous we are, because we name our anti-Jewish texts (although historical-critical work tells us that they really weren't anti-Jewish to begin with) and because we decry anti-Semitism.

We can see the ineffectuality of the standard approach by replacing Christian fragility with white fragility. For people with racial privilege to say, “Yes, we did terrible things in our history and we are sorry” is insufficient. The insufficiency is made manifest when the apology has corollaries: “I personally was not involved in racist acts; I personally do not see how I benefit from my racial identity; I am in fact penalized by affirmative action programs. . . .” Further, acknowledgment that is not followed by action, or even by deeper discussion of how white, or Christian, privilege works, is a sign of complacency; it is not a sign of reconciliation or correction. The following discussion shows both why some current homiletic guides are insufficient and how Christian fragility functions.

THE LIMITATIONS OF HISTORICAL-CRITICAL WORK FOR HOMILETICS

I'm all in favor of teaching the historical contexts of Jesus and his earliest followers. I do not think, however, that this approach works particularly well when preaching on passages mentioning “the Jews” in John's Gospel. Most sermonic appeals to history presume that we can identify the setting and motivations of the author. Worse, the homiletic short historical note provides the satisfaction of signaling “we're woke; we know there's a problem here,” but it does not resolve the problem.

We Do Not Know the Context

We do not know with certainty whether the author of the Fourth Gospel was a Jew, a Samaritan, or a gentile. We do not know if the author had a target audience in mind or was writing for what might be called the church universal. We have no evidence to support J. L. Martyn's theory of a two-stage narrative, and we have no evidence of any Jewish-worldwide effort in the late 90s (the ostensible period in which the Fourth Gospel was composed—another hypothesis) to expel Jesus's followers from their congregations.¹⁸ To the contrary, Paul suggests internal discipline (2 Cor. 11:24) rather than expulsion was likely the approach to Jesus's followers in multiple synagogue settings.

Culpepper proposes, "The preacher can explain that the Gospel is rooted in a setting of dispute with the Jewish authorities at the time the Gospel was written. This historical setting accounts for its hostile references to 'the Jews.'"¹⁹ The claim is based in hypothesis. We do not know if John's Gospel is reflecting history as it happened, or how John envisions it and wants readers to envision it. Therefore, I am wary of the efficacy of history for addressing the homiletic problem.²⁰

Academics assert, frequently, that John is responding to the synagogue decision to evict Jesus's followers. Yet, not even the Gospel itself displays such ejection. Nor does this approach explain why Jews might want to evict Jesus's followers; is it because these followers are proclaiming that all are damned apart from those who follow their views? Because these followers are encouraging gentiles to stop worshipping the local gods and so, according to local religion, putting the state in danger?

When we hear John's claims about how "those Jews' want to throw us [Christians] out of our institutions" with ears attuned to privilege, a different set of conclusions necessarily emerges. For example, white privilege, especially coupled with class privilege, gives rise to comments such as "the immigrants are taking all our jobs" or "those Black women are living off our tax dollars." When we hear John's narrative with "woke" ears, the easy move to "Here's what *some* Jews were doing at the time" should become more difficult.

"Jewish Authorities"

The language of "Jewish authorities" does not help much in the homiletic setting. First, these authorities are still Jews. Second, had the Jewish population wanted to combat their leaders, they had the power to do so: revolution is the flip side of authoritarianism, as the Gospels themselves indicate. Herod Antipas wanted to kill John the Baptist, but "he feared the crowd, because they regarded him as a prophet" (Matt. 14:5); the authorities "wanted to arrest [Jesus], but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet" (Matt. 21:46, cf. Mark 12:12). Third, the congregation has no clue how these "Jewish authorities" gained their position. If the congregation thinks of "religious authorities," some may well make the logical move to their own "religious authorities": bishops, elders, etc.—i.e., people generally just like them, even people elected by them. I worry that people in the pews might believe that Jews are involved in an international conspiracy, as the forged *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* suggests.²¹

Less helpful is the term "religious authorities," which reduces the Jewish population to a "religion." Congregations are likely to invest this term

with creedal meaning, and thereby view Jews as comparable to Methodists or Lutherans. The Jewish sense of peoplehood, involving language, land, genealogy, and so on, goes missing. Nor is "religious authority" quite correct: the high priest does not control belief systems, local practices, and so on; he is not comparable to a bishop, pope, or even district superintendent. References to "religious authorities" would also remind the biblically literate person in the pew of John's emphasis on theological concerns, for the Fourth Gospel makes the death of Jesus a theological issue: "the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the Sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God" (John 5:18).

Using "political authorities" as an alternative also creates problems, evoking the idea of elected, political authorities familiar to North Americans. "Political authorities" may in fact be more accurate, given that the high priest held his appointment by Roman consent. Yet to speak of the authorities, of whatever sort, without addressing *who they are* and *how they gained their authority* will not resolve the problem. Finally, if we take out "Jewish," do we risk removing Jesus from his Jewish context?

What then is the priest or pastor to do? Follow the rules some churches make regarding translation (here, Professor Schuller's observations on the Catholic lectionary are especially relevant), but take the time to explain them? Reject them? Skirt them just slightly? Provide a disclaimer (passing as historical information) right before the Gospel reading? Gather a group of fellow travelers and write to the powers-that-be in the attempt to change the translation, or the lectionary? When is the time for action and what should that action be?

Standard Invective

Another historical take is to announce that John is using standard ancient polemic, whether the categories found in Prophetic literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls, or in Roman polemic.²² The first problem here is that the mere fact that a type of polemic is conventional does not thereby rob it of its capacity to do harm. It has become conventional in American political discourse to echo, for example, Donald Trump regarding Mexican immigrants: "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."²³ The conventionality of it just makes it worse.

The second problem with the analogy is that the Jewish community preserved the prophetic literature, not the Gospel of John. To tell the congregation that John is simply speaking the way Jews speak with each other, as Jeremiah or Ezekiel spoke to the children of Israel is, in effect, to state that "the Jews"

are to blame for John's rhetoric. Even those who would insist, with some warrant, that the authority behind the Fourth Gospel is the (Jewish) Beloved Disciple, should be able to take the next step: we do not have his exact words; what we have are words imputed to him (so John 21), recontextualized into the Gospel. Nor do we know if he saw himself as still within the "Jewish community" *per se*.

History vs. Literature

Texts take on meanings within their historical contexts. They also take on meanings when read as narrative wholes. At times, the historical "fact" and the narrative impression collide.

For example, commenting on Pilate's question to Jesus, "I am not a Jew, am I?" (John 18:35), Culpepper asks: "What answer might the evangelist have expected the reader to supply? Of course, Pilate is not a Jew, but that does not mean that he does not have to make his own response to Jesus. The revelation through the Son came to the Jews, but it is also for Gentiles—indeed, the whole world."²⁴ Yes, and, of course, Pilate is not a Jew; he is a Roman governor. *Nevertheless*, John's hearers may well conclude, based on the Fourth Gospel's numerous references to the "Jews" and its dualistic worldview, that Pilate, once he decides to condemn Jesus, is in fact a Jew; he is the *quintessential* Jew: He sends Jesus to the cross. Reading is an art, and at times the effect of the narrative can override the historical context.

John is not Jewish but Is Reflecting Internal Jewish Issues

Finally, related to this historical-critical approach is the claim that John cannot be anti-Jewish because John is a Jew speaking to other Jews. This conclusion about authorship and readership is, again, a hypothesis. When I hear this thesis of locating the author within an original Jewish context, *which may in fact be historically accurate*, used to explain or, more accurately, to justify the negative rhetoric, I find the argument unhelpful. It reminds me of a comment I heard a white student make in a discussion of the social effects of slavery: "African slavery started with Africans selling Africans." The point has merit, but it winds up displacing the responsibility of non-Africans in the selling and buying of millions of people.

The conversation then must move to the homiletic setting, where John is not a Jew talking to Jews; to the contrary, John is a saint of the church talking to the Christian faithful. The Gospel of John is not being proclaimed to Jews; it is being proclaimed at First Baptist, Westminster Presbyterian, and Aldersgate United Methodist. That audience is not an abstract concept; it is

rather a congregation comprised of Joe and Shatika and Manuel and Keiko and others sitting in the pews.

It's the Homily!

In the attempt to avoid hostile messages, historical contextualization can work—and work well—in a classroom. It is less effective from the pulpit, where the focus is not on the historical context of a particular reading, but on what the congregation needs to hear that morning. The sermon is not an ideal time for a history lesson. The congregation may not need a message about anti-Semitism, especially in a six-minute homily (Protestants typically have more time than Catholics for scriptural reflection in a liturgical setting). William Brosend defines "the fundamental homiletical question" as "What does the Holy Spirit want the people of God to hear from these texts on this occasion?"²⁵ What the people need to hear will vary: encouragement, consolation, reconciliation, celebration, exhortation, and so on. At times, topics such as racism, sexism, homophobia, poverty, and the like can get in the way of what *this church at this time* needs to hear.

The Historical Context Argument in Brief Conversation with Privilege

Doing history is necessary for overcoming structural imbalance. We need to know how we got to where we are. But the doing of history is already compromised by the very structural problems it seeks to undermine (I am reminded of Audre Lorde's famous claim, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house"²⁶). When we tell history in the United States, we tell primarily white Protestant male history, with the non-normative subjects (women, slaves, the indigenous population, Catholics, Jews, Muslims . . .) mentioned on occasion. Normativity is most easily found in indices. We have Black History Month and Women's History Month; we do not have "white male history month" because that perspective is normative. People on the alt-right who complain about this lack miss their own privilege: every month is their month.

The historical-critical work on John's Gospel, particularly as it is taught in seminaries and divinity schools, is not often *Jewish* history. It begins with questions about John's Gospel, and then it seeks for connections within broader Jewish historical data as best as they can be recovered. It rarely asks the question of identity: What do Jews make of this text?²⁷ How would a Jewish person, then or now, respond to John's preaching? On the rare occasions the question is asked, the response is likely to be something along the lines

of seeing John as a missionary text addressed to Jews.²⁸ The response is not helpful, especially on the homiletics front. Historical-critical work done in service to the church is a necessary first step, but the steps cannot stop with reconstructing the past. The historians' tools are not going to dismantle the structural anti-Judaism built into the proclamation if not also into the text itself.

FRAGILITY AND DEFLECTION

My students will sometimes wonder why I warn them about anti-Jewish preaching. It's not a question that often surfaces in their homiletics classes. For them, society's problems are racism, Islamophobia, anti-immigrant stances, homophobia, and rejection of the trans population. Jews frequently code them as "white";²⁹ the students have no notion of the discriminatory codicils explicit as well as tacit that are still operative in education, housing, and club membership. For a few, I'm the only Jew with whom they've ever spoken. Or, as one Vanderbilt student expressed (not to me, so I admit to passing along gossip, but it's good gossip) after I lectured on anti-Jewish rhetoric in forms of liberation theology, "Why is she so concerned about the Jews? The Middle Passage was worse than the Holocaust." The game of comparative victimization in which the last one on the bottom wins never helped anyone in the long run. Meanwhile, the existence of Jews of color is denied.

The Christian fragility model holds that I, and others who find John's language problematic, am overreacting, ignoring the causes of John's rhetoric, deflecting attention from pressing social concerns, and so on. And in all these cases, fragile Christians deny the problem. Denying the problem of anti-Jewish proclamation, let alone their own complicity in it, also denies Christians a direct opportunity to work against intersectional bigotry. Eric K. Ward observes:

antisemitism has been a throughline from the Posse Comitatus, which set itself against "anti-Christ Jewry"; to David Duke's refurbished Ku Klux Klan, which abandoned anti-Catholicism in the 1970s in order to focus on "Jewish supremacism"; to the neonazi group The Order, inspired by *The Turner Diaries*, which in the mid-1980s went on a rampage of robberies and synagogue bombings in Washington state and murdered a Jewish radio talk show host in Denver; to evangelical leaders like Pat Robertson who denounced anti-Semitism but used its popularity among their followers to promote an implicitly White supremacist "Christian nationalism"; to the contemporary Alt Right named by White nation-

alist Richard Spencer, which has brought anti-Semitic thought and imagery to new audiences on the internet—and now at White House press conferences.³⁰

This throughline can also be found within sections of churches not primarily defined by whiteness: in some traditionally black and Hispanic congregations the "Jew" is recognized as the "other": the money-changer becomes the money-lender. Minoritized communities can imbibe the bigotry of the majority: to hate those my enemies hate is to become part of the larger whole.

To see how the structural problems of white fragility correlate with Christian fragility, the following four examples put the standard general guides for addressing the so-called hostile texts in John into conversation with additional symptoms of white fragility.

Not All Jews Are Bad

Addressing the "fear of the Jews" (John 20:19), a phrase that is heard as many as six times over a three-year lectionary cycle, Culpepper suggests, "Here 'the Jews' probably refers to the authorities who collaborated with the Romans in Jesus' death. The preacher can refer to 'the authorities' with no loss of meaning when retelling the story. Secondly, John's account may evoke the fear of the civic and religious leaders among adherents of the Johannine community later in the century. One of the themes of this appearance story is Jesus' reassurance to the believing community when it encountered opposition, as it has at various periods in Christian history and still does today in various parts of the world."³¹

John's Gospel, from a literary-critical perspective, may at this point not be speaking about "the authorities" but about anyone outside Jesus's followers. The redefinitions by Urban C. von Wahlde and Paul Anderson (e.g., "religious authorities," "temple functionaries") are lovely exercises in taxonomy, but they have, as far as I can tell, nothing to do with what the redactor planned, the original audience heard, or how the text functions as literature today.³² The various definitions provide (in my own admittedly cynical readings) a mechanism of exculpating the text for its general presentation of Jews. I doubt Marcus turned to Livia, or Ferdinand to Isabella, and asked, "Do you think that one was about Judeans, Jews in general, or Jewish leaders?" Readers, too, I fear, will look at the various lists and then quickly turn the page. Lists fill word counts, but they do not, often, resolve problems. Those readers, then and now, will hear about an undifferentiated and generally unpleasant, damned, and nasty group of "Jews."

The Johannine world is divided into “us” and “them,” and “the Jews,” generally, are “them.” To speak of “authorities” in some cases is a viable move, but a tricky one that might strike some readers as dishonest. Moreover, the text does not read “the authorities”: more than seventy times, it reads “the Jews.” Second, given that the text does say “the Jews,” the move to contemporary civic and religious leaders, while plausible, threatens to reconstitute the idea that “the Jews” are really the ones with the power and the money. Finally, claims such as “When the Gospel uses language in this way, as it does, we must be very careful about making general references that judge all Jews, either then or now”³³ do not work for the same reason that responses to white fragility do not work. Although well-intended, the result of this message is, “we know that not all Jews are like this,” just as “we know that not all Mexicans are rapists and not all African-American women are welfare queens.” And so, we wind up excusing the language, not confronting it.

All Lives Matter

In responding to the challenges that Black Lives Matter poses to white supremacy, with attention to the dangers of what has been called “driving while black,” numerous people insisted that all lives matter. This is a response of white privilege in that it universalizes a notably distinct experience: the person of color does not receive the same treatment from the police or the courts that white people do. The dominant population fails to recognize that in our society black lives often do not matter as much as white lives. The statement “black lives matter” does not mean that black lives matter *more* than white lives; it means that black lives matter as much as all lives should matter. The “all lives matter” approach is what underlies the universalizing of the homiletic pronouncement that “we, the members of the congregation, are the Jews” whom Jesus castigates. “We”—that is, we Christians—are in the same line as those rebellious Israelites in Exodus and those rebellious Jews in John’s Gospel. We are all sinners. The role of Israel is universalized to “us” and to “our experiences” even as it is both taken away from the Jews and functions to reinforce the connection of Jews with sin.

Extending the references to all people does not erase the problem of the rhetoric; rather, such universalizing language co-opts the rhetoric. We see this type of co-opting and universalizing reading in the third sermon cited above: “*Their pride* caused them to hate Jesus and send him to the cross. In *our pride* and sinfulness we will always reject Jesus.” Yes, all lives matter and all people are sinful, but in circumstances where racism is present (i.e., always), black lives in particular matter because they have not “mattered” in the same way to the dominant society. In the church context, Jewish lives matter.

They Deserve It

White fragility manifests itself in claims that “they deserved it”: the incarceration rate for African-American men is disproportionately high because, it is assumed, African-American men commit disproportionately more crime. Missing from this diagnosis is any awareness of the structural inequities of the US judicial system.³⁴ Similarly, Christian fragility manifests itself when suggesting, regarding Jews: “they deserve it.” In both cases, the majority recognizes the problem, but rather than addressing it, explains it as beginning with the very people whom the problem impacts. One version of this approach claims that, because John’s rhetoric is reactionary, the Jews brought it upon themselves. Had the synagogue been more welcoming of John and his perspective, the negative rhetoric never would have surfaced. The easiest way to counter this view is to ask congregants if they would be warm and welcoming to those who not only preached a different Gospel but who insisted that their view was the only correct view.

A second response, which I have heard said by more than a few people who were themselves struggling with the question of anti-Judaism in their canon, is that “the Jews” right from the beginning persecuted the church, with Paul serving as the primary example. Therefore, they wanted to know: Did Jews really plan the horrific events of 9/11? Do Jews control all the banks and the media? Did Jews invent AIDS to kill people of African descent? Did Jews plan the Holocaust in order later to receive monetary reparations and a state? And so on. The people who asked these questions, both white and people of color, both born in the United States and immigrants, were genuinely curious. Surely, they thought, some of these rumors must be true; otherwise, why do they have so much traction?

Such arguments have traction in Christian contexts because modern political and racial anti-Semitism is necessarily related to the dualism of John, coupled with other such hostile texts as, especially, Luke 16:14: “The Pharisees, who were lovers of money. . . .” I cannot count the number of biblical studies texts and Christian sermons I’ve read that insist Jews equate wealth with piety and poverty with sin, whereas Jesus undermines this teaching. John’s Gospel elevates the evils of Jews and Judaism to the cosmic via the Satanic. If John thinks “the Jews” are *that bad*, then any contemporary nonbiblical stereotype will find reinforcement in the biblical text.

We Live in a Post-Problematic World

Until the last US presidential election, many people cocooned in white privilege believed that we were living in a post-racial society: America elected a

black president; African-Americans serve on the Supreme Court, as CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, make money in the entertainment and sports arenas, and are “some of their best friends.” The same argument, in trump suits, fits the Christian privilege view concerning Jews: Jews are smart, wealthy, well-connected. What are those Jews then whining about?

A quick listen to one of the sermons cited above might surface the problem. An honest chat with a Jew about anti-Semitism might help. Attention to the anti-Jewish rhetoric on the right as well as on the left should shatter the post-whatever worldview. If that doesn’t work, perhaps attention to shootings in Kansas City, bombings in Brussels, assassinations in Argentina, or the occasional swastika that shows up on my office door would make the case. My point is not that America in the summer of 2017 is the equivalent of Munich in 1932. Again, the game of comparative horror is not one I care to play.

My concern is that Christians are more inclined to dismiss acts of anti-Semitism and to focus instead on acts of racism. The Charlottesville example serves again to demonstrate the issue. In its aftermath, the sermons focused on white supremacy; the US Conference of Catholic Bishops on August 23, 2018, announced the formation of a new ad hoc committee to address the “sin of racism.” That is all good. Where is the notice of the Charlottesville synagogue, Congregation Beth Israel, that had to hire security because the police refused them protection from the Unite the Right folks, who proceeded to march past the synagogue shouting “Sieg Heil” and “Jews will not replace us”? Where is the attention of the bishops regarding anti-Jewish preaching or teaching, since that sin is more likely to surface in US churches than any racist remarks?

Again, I am not claiming that anti-Semitism functions the same way racism in the United States does. As an Ashkenazic Jew, I have more daily privileges than my counterparts of color, right down to the student who wondered whether he landed his own job because he’s black.

I Feel Like an Honorary Jew. . . .

“I invited an African-American to my church”; “We sing African hymns” (as if all of Africa speaks the same language or shares the same traditions); “We have an African mask in our living room”; “My daughter learned African drumming in middle school.” These various moves reinforce white privilege even as they attempt to combat racism. The problems enter when African and African-American materials are contextualized according to white categories; they serve as tokens. This is why addressing the structural problems are so difficult. The same double bind impacts Christian privilege. It manifests in the argument that John *loves* the “Old Testament,” *loves* the Jewish feasts, the

Jewish traditions, sees Jesus in terms of the temple, and so on. John loves all things Jewish; it’s just “the Jews” who are children of Satan.

I’m not feeling the love in John’s Gospel. I am, rather, seeing an appropriation of all things Jewish—history, ritual, temple, text. John offers no love of Jews; at best, John sees the *Ioudaioi* as having preserved the correct tradition vis-à-vis the Samaritans, but not only as lost but also as damned apart from Jesus.

They Do It Too

Minoritized people sometimes make hateful statements about the majority. In some cases, the minoritized individual becomes radicalized, and the response is one of violence. When such events occur, white privilege kicks in as a response: “they’re animals; they hate us; we’ve done everything we can for them (e.g., welfare, integration) and this is how they respond.” I’ve heard the same claims regarding anti-Christian polemic in Jewish sources: “Yes, John has some hostile things to say, but so does your Talmud.” And indeed, the Talmud does.

The difference here is the context in which the pronouncements are made. The Talmud is not known or read by the majority of Jews. Those who do read and study it debate its meaning. The Talmud itself is not a monolithic work but rather contains within it a multitude of often contradictory views on any given topic. In other words, a passage from the Talmud is not the same thing as a passage of Scripture proclaimed to the congregation from a pulpit during a worship service. Not all polemic is equal.

IF THE PROBLEM IS STRUCTURAL AND SYSTEMIC, WHAT CAN I DO?

Church programs

Churches today run programs on addressing white privilege and white fragility. They might do the same with their relationship to Jews and Judaism. A single line before a sermon or the once-a-year “Jews are our friends” sermon becomes boring at best, or produces a negative reaction at worst. The congregation perceives itself to be scolded, and then fragility kicks in. Or, the congregation sees itself as progressive, but the structures of anti-Judaism remain in place.

For congregations on the lectionary, there are several possible moves, from the Band-Aid (they do not resolve the problem, but at least they cut back on

bloodshed and help prevent infection) to the ideal. The Band-Aid: put warning notes, each designed for hostile texts to be read, in the order of worship and announce it before the reading itself. The major change: petition the powers that be! Churches are the churches of the people: tell the organizers that what is currently in place is a deformation of the Gospel. Professor Schuller notes changes made in the readings for Canadian Catholics. How wonderful if Catholics could be mobilized to change the lectionaries, eliminating negative verses concerning Jews or Pharisees and including positive verses concerning women's roles and representations.

If the approach to white fragility and white privilege requires several hours over several days, so too does the study of the presentation of "the Jews" in canon and church. Since the problem is systemic, the response has to be more than a single comment.

Clergy Training

The 2015 Episcopal General Ordination Open-Resource Exam question on "Holy Scriptures" prompted my targeted search on SermonCentral. The examination question reads:

John's Gospel, as a whole, has been criticized because of its perceived attitude toward the Jewish people. Some believe that as the inspired and infallible Word of God, the Fourth Gospel condemns the Jewish people as those who rejected and ultimately put Jesus to death. Others believe that the language used to speak of the Jews in John is inherently anti-Semitic, and as such the use of John's Gospel by the modern church is at the least anachronistic.

Each year your parish reads John's Passion account (John 18:1–19:37) as part of the Good Friday Liturgy from The Book of Common Prayer. Now a member of your parish Worship Committee has questioned the lack of sensitivity toward the Jewish people in continuing the practice of reading John's Passion narrative on Good Friday, asking that John's Passion be eliminated and another Passion narrative be read in its place. You have chosen to address this in a major article in your parish newsletter.

Using your knowledge of Holy Scripture, grounded in an exegesis of John 19:14–16 [John 19:14–16 reads (NRSV): Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus . . .], in 1,000 words create your parish newsletter article, explaining the practice of reading John's Passion as part of the Good Friday Liturgy.

Your article should be based on an exegesis of John 19:14–16.

Your article should incorporate an understanding of John's use of the term "the Jews." Your article should be accessible to a lay person while demonstrating your ability to interpret Holy Scripture accurately.

Your exegesis should utilize material from the Old and New Testaments.

Your article will be evaluated on the clarity and accuracy of your argument and its conciseness in providing Scripture-based resources for your congregation when addressing this situation.³⁵

A clergy person forced to reflect on this question is better able to preach from the pulpit, guide bible study, and lead congregational discussion. I suspect such clergy are also better prepared to address intersectional issues, make alliances with local Jewish communities for justice work, and prevent the easy anti-Semitism that passes for common discourse in some halls of Christian privilege.

Call Out and Call In

When anti-Jewish comments are made, or read, *say something*. Recently, for example, I found on the Patheos site an article dated August 15, 2017, and entitled, "9 Reasons You Need to Preach about Charlottesville, White Supremacy, and Racial Justice." The posting, which had numerous helpful selections based on that Sunday's lectionary readings, also wound up scapegoating Jews. In addressing Matt. 15:10–20, the original posting stated, "Jesus' words would not have been shocking or offensive to the people around him in the story, nor to the original readers of Matthew's gospel. Personal insults and harsh exchanges were part and parcel of First Century rhetoric, and Matthew would never have intended to portray Jesus as being a bigot. So we can't blame Jesus for this kind of speech. The point was to show Jesus healing a Gentile, which actually would have been more shocking for Matthew's Jewish readers."

I wrote to the author: "Your message therefore is 'Matthew's Jewish readers are bigots who would be shocked that a Jew healed a gentile and we (Christians) should do better.' There are several points problematic here," and then delineated the issues. The author, a scholar of grace and courage, wrote back, and shortly thereafter posted "8 Ways to Preach about Charlottesville, White Supremacy, and Racial Justice—Revised."³⁶

This was not the first sermon for which I've sent a note; it will not be the last. Most pastors are warmly receptive, even thankful, to learn how their

words sound in other people's ears; most also appreciate my backing up my claims with historical as well as hermeneutical points. What would happen, I wonder, if clergy, faculty, and students—so well attuned to anything racist and so immediately delighted to call that racism out—would also attend to anti-Jewish preaching? The approach is not simply to call out, but to “call in”: to point out with friendship what the problem is, and not to see the author as, well, deplorable.³⁷

Imagining Otherwise

Not everyone sees a problem with the so-called “hostile” verses, as the sermons quoted above demonstrate. Just as many who code as white are oblivious to present-day practices of racism, so too are many Christian preachers unaware of how John's Gospel is implicated in anti-Jewish thought and action or how John's Gospel may sound to Jewish ears. Acknowledging the problem is not an easy step, given the barriers created by Christian privilege.

One practical step is for the pastor or priest to pretend there is a Jew in the congregation: if one would not say something in the presence of a Jew, then that same something should not be said in the presence of anyone. The model here is the in-house racist comment: the comments we make in the privilege of being among our own.

A second approach is to learn about how anti-Jewish preaching functions in places and times where anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic action also occurs. What is said about Jews in the churches attended by those who shouted in the Charlottesville “Unite the Right” rally and “Jews will not replace us”?

A third is to recognize the intersectionality of racism and anti-Semitism. Here, pastors in the black church traditions need to recognize their own Christian privilege even as they need to be aware of how their preaching might lead to anti-Jewish attitudes. If we move into silos, and so fail to recognize the intertwined nature of racism and anti-Semitism, the problems magnify. Worse, if black preaching accepts the dominant culture's anti-Jewish agenda, which is a possible part of Christian privilege, then potential allies will be lost in the struggle against racism.

Christian privilege on the left, the sector of the church that is already aware of the problems in the text, allows church members to silo forms of oppression. In a searing article in the *Atlantic*, Emma Green writes, “The identity politics of the intersectional left are radically different from the generalized bigotry of the far-right fever swamps. And yet, they are in relationship: Universalized movements that aim to fight oppression against all peoples in all of their identities necessarily invite backlash from those who feel that they're

losing their place in society.”³⁸ She then quotes historian David Nirenberg: “It would really reduce and impoverish debate to see this example [in Charlottesville] as primarily an anti-Jewish rally . . . [or] as entirely an anti-African American rally. It's all those things,” said Nirenberg. “To the extent that we separate those and claim, ‘No, it's only about my identity,’ we fail to understand basic aspects of identity politics in the present.”³⁹

When Charlottesville surfaced in sermons the following Sunday, the focus was on race. Unless the intersectional aspects of bigotry are flagged, the roots remain in place. As best as I can tell from anecdotal evidence, both black and white pastors took to their pulpits the following Sunday to condemn the sin of racism. The target was “White supremacy.” The response, on occasion, mentioned the sin of anti-Semitism,⁴⁰ but most, as far as I can tell, did not. If our social issues are framed *only* as “white supremacy,” then Christian privilege, manifested with noxious pride among KKK members, goes unchecked. Yes, the church should proclaim “Jesus saves”; Christians should not, however, disregard how their proclamation of a limited soteriology impacts those outside their walls.

I wonder how those pastors, who on the Sunday morning after Charlottesville insisted that they “categorically reject the myth of white supremacy,” would react if asked also to “categorically reject the myth of Christian supremacy?” Many churches are celebrating the removal of Confederate flags, statues of heroes of the Confederacy, and other symbols that have multiple meanings, from Southern Pride to Racist Hate. The evils of slavery trump the promotion of Southern pride. Would these same churches consider that the evils of anti-Semitism trump the promotion of select lectionary texts? Some of these flags and statues will be relocated to museums; should some of those Gospel readings be relocated away from Sunday morning proclamation as “good news?” To ask the question would advance the discussion on the homiletic front.

NOTES

1. For reflections on the failures of theological education regarding the subject of Jews and Judaism, see Amy-Jill Levine, “*Nostra Aetate*, Omnia Mutantur: The Times They Are a-Changing,” in Elena Procaro-Foley and Robert Cathey (eds.), *Righting Relations after the Holocaust and Vatican II: Essays in Honor of John Pawlikowski* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press/Stimulus Foundation, 2018), 226–252. For a study on how homilists address “the Jews” in light of official ecclesial teaching, see Amy-Jill Levine, “Proclamation, Translation, Implication: Addressing the Vilification of ‘The Jews,’” in James W. Barker with Joel N. Lohr and Anthony Le Donne, eds., *Found in Translation: Essays on Jewish Biblical Translation in Honor of Leonard J.*

Greenspoon. Shofar Supplements in Jewish Studies (Purdue: Purdue University Press, 2018), 268–288.

2. Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” reprinted from the Winter 1990 issue of *Independent School*; an excerpt from Working Paper 189. “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women’s Studies,” Wellesley College Center for Research on Women; text posted at <https://www.csusm.edu/sjs/documents/UnpackingTheKnapsack.pdf>. The study of male privilege, white privilege, and the various applicable terminologies, has substantially advanced; it has also broadened to issues of sexuality, gender identity, American identity, etc.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. Robin DiAngelo, “White Fragility,” *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* 3.3 (2011), 54–70 (54).

6. *Ibid.*, 57.

7. *Ibid.*, 58–63.

8. Kevin Ruffcorn, “Deceptive Looks,” sermon posted to Sermoncentral.com on April 17, 2018, <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/scripture/sermons-on-john-1914-1916?passage=john%2019:14-19:16>, accessed August 20, 2017.

9. Jay Robison, “Who Really Killed Jesus?” sermon posted to Sermoncentral.com on March 31, 2004, <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/who-really-killed-jesus-jay-robison-sermon-on-easter-good-friday-67251?ref=SermonSerps>, accessed August 20, 2017.

10. Freddy Fritz, “Jesus on Trial: The Sentence,” sermon posted to Sermoncentral.com on March 24, 2016, <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/jesus-on-trial-the-sentence-freddy-fritz-sermon-on-son-of-god-200893?ref=SermonSerps>, accessed August 20, 2017.

11. Phil Morgan, “Selling Self to Caesar,” sermon posted to Sermoncentral.com on April 2, 2002, <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/selling-self-to-caesar-phil-morgan-sermon-on-easter-good-friday-45218>, accessed August 20, 2017.

12. Ron Tuit, “Punishing the Innocent and Powerful,” sermon posted to Sermoncentral.com on July 6, 2016, <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/punishing-the-innocent-and-powerful-ron-tuit-sermon-on-jesus-trial-202868?page=2>, accessed August 20, 2017.

13. Derrick Tuper, “What Will You Do with Jesus?” Sermon posted to Sermoncentral.com on October 14, 2013, <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/what-will-you-do-with-jesus-derrick-tuper-sermon-on-jesus-christ-179820>, accessed August 20, 2017.

14. Rosemary Reuther, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury/Crossroad, 1974), 228.

15. Amanda Hess, “Earning the ‘Woke’ Badge,” *First Words*. *New York Times Magazine*, April 19, 2016, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/24/magazine/earning-the-woke-badge.html?mcubz=1>, accessed August 20, 2017.

16. See Levine, “Proclamation, Translation, Implication.”

17. Eileen Schuller, “Reading the Gospel of John in the Catholic Lectionary,” this volume, 78.

18. See Adele Reinhartz, “The Johannine Community and Its Jewish Neighbors: A Reappraisal,” in *“What Is John?”* ed. Fernando F Segovia, vol. 2 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 111–38.

19. Culpepper, “Preaching the Hostile References to ‘the Jews’ in the Gospel of John,” this volume, 66.

20. See Amy-Jill Levine, “Matthew, Mark, and Luke: Good News or Bad?” in Paula Fredriksen and Adele Reinhartz (eds.), *Jesus, Judaism, and Christian Anti-Judaism: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 77–98.

21. See the classic study by Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967); Stephen Eric Bronner, *A Rumor about the Jews: Reflections on Antisemitism and the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* (New York: St. Martins Press, 2000); Benjamin W. Segel, *A Lie and a Libel: The History of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, ed. and trans. Richard S. Levy (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

22. The standard argument can be found in Luke Timothy Johnson, “The New Testament’s Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108, no. 3 (1989): 419–41. See Michael G. Azar, “The Eastern Orthodox Tradition, Jews, and the Gospel of John,” in this volume, n. 16.

23. See Katie Reilly, “Here Are All the Times Donald Trump Insulted Mexico,” *Time*, August 31, 2016, <http://time.com/4473972/donald-trump-mexico-meeting-insult>, accessed August 20, 2017.

24. Culpepper, “Preaching,” 63–65.

25. William Brosend, *The Preaching of Jesus: Gospel Proclamation, Then and Now* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 2010), 48.

26. Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” in Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (eds.), *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983), 94–101.

27. Adele Reinhartz’s *Befriending the Beloved Disciple: A Jewish Reading of the Gospel of John* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2002) is a notable exception.

28. Suggested by Adele Reinhartz, personal correspondence.

29. See Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998); See also Emma Green, “Are Jews White?” *Atlantic*, December 5, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/12/are-jews-white/509453>, accessed August 20, 2017.

30. Eric K. Ward, “Skin in the Game: How Antisemitism Animates White Nationalism,” Political Research Associates, June 29, 2017; forthcoming in *The Public Eye* (Summer 2017), <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2017/06/29/skin-in-the-game-how-antisemitism-animates-white-nationalism>, accessed August 20, 2017. On the far-right group Posse Comitatus, see Daniel Levitas, *The Terrorist Next Door: The Militia Movement and the Radical Right*, 1st ed. (New York: Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin’s Press, 2002).

31. Culpepper, "Preaching," 64.
32. Culpepper, "Preaching," 51–53.
33. Culpepper, "Preaching," 58.
34. The classic study is Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2010/2012).
35. In his blog on this examination, "Crusty Old Dean" (January 15, 2015), Tom Ferguson, former dean of Bexley-Seabury Seminary and currently rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Sandwich, Massachusetts, writes, "We lose credibility with our inter religious partners if we simply ignore or pretend we do not have inherent anti-Jewish tendencies in our Scripture, liturgy, and theology; like white privilege, it's a form of Christian privilege to presume we can forget or ignore or explain away aspects of our past," <http://crustyoidean.blogspot.com/2015/01/blogging-goes-questions-1-and-2-let-goe.html>, accessed August 20, 2017.
36. Leah D. Schade, "8 Ways to Preach about Charlottesville, White Supremacy, and Racial Justice—Revised," August 15, 2017, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/ecopreacher/2017/08/8-ways-preach-charlottesville-white-supremacy-racial-justice/#FWp2akcocjdWOafl.99>, accessed August 20, 2017.
37. I first heard the "calling out" vs. "calling in" distinction from my late colleague, professor of homiletics, Dale P. Andrews.
38. Emma Green, "Why the Charlottesville Marchers Were Obsessed with Jews," *The Atlantic*, August 15, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/nazis-racism-charlottesville/536928>, accessed August 20, 2017.
39. Ibid.
40. Summarizing United Methodist preaching, Heather Hahn noted that the United Methodist Women's group issued a statement against "racism, anti-Semitism and bigotry." See her "At Sunday Worship, Pastors Decry Racism" United Methodist News Service, August 14, 2017, <http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/at-sunday-worship-pastors-decry-racism>, accessed August 20, 2017.

Part III

RE-PRESENTING JOHN