

**February 9, 2021**

Hello group,

Chapter Three: "High Lonesome: A Spiritual Crisis" offers an abundance of possible Breakout Room discussions. Although written following the 2016 election, the spiritual crisis documented in the chapter has even been more intensified by the 2020 election and this morning's beginning of the second Impeachment trial for former president of the USA, Donald Trump. "High Lonesome music selection, personal roots, gerrymandering in USA politics are but a few of the possibilities for breakout discussion.

Last night's sharing on paradox in our lives would have made Carl Jung happy that his foresight so many years ago (1944) would be the focus and tool used by a group of searchers three/quarters of a century later.

John Whidden's contribution to our study last night: Lyrics: Christus Paradox  
Sylvia Dunstan (1955-1993)

You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shepherd. You, Lord, are both prince and slave.  
You, peacemaker and swordbringer Of the way you took and gave.

**You the everlasting instant;**

You, whom we both scorn and crave. Clothed in light upon the mountain,  
Stripped of might upon the cross, Shining in eternal glory,

Beggar'd by a soldier's toss, **You, the everlasting instant;**

You, who are both gift and cost. You, who walk each day beside us,  
Sit in power at God's side. You, who preach a way that's narrow,

Have a love that reaches wide. **You, the everlasting instant;**

You, who are our pilgrim guide. Worthy is our earthly Jesus!

Worthy is our cosmic Christ! Worthy your defeat and vict'ry.

Worthy still your peace and strife. **You, the everlasting instant;**

You, who are our death and life.

Thank you for the courageous song to close! Help us accept each other as Christ  
accepted us; teach us as sister, brother, each person to embrace.

Be present, Lord, among us and bring us to believe  
we are ourselves accepted and meant to love and live.

Thank you, John **AND** be sure to check out Mike Grammer's Notes on Chapters One  
and Two. [sduc.ca/](http://sduc.ca/) **MINISTRIES/ADULT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY / file  
attachment**

**Chapter Three: High Lonesome: a Spiritual Crisis**

**Possible ideas/concepts that are worth pausing to consider:**

1. Brown's definition of High Lonesome: "It's a holler that's thick with both misery and redemption. A holler that belongs to another place and time... a sound or type of music in the bluegrass tradition." p. 44

2. *“Art has the power to render sorrow beautiful, make loneliness a shared experience and transform despair into hope.”* p. 4
3. *“It’s the sharing of art that whispers, ‘You’re not alone.’”* p. 45
4. *“Our world is in a collective spiritual crisis.”* p. 45
5. “Spirituality is recognizing and celebrating that we are all inextricably connected to each other by a power greater than all of us, and that our connection to that power and to one another is grounded in love and compassion.” p. 46
6. “Cynicism and distrust have a stranglehold on our hearts.” p. 46
7. “The choices we’re making to protect our beliefs and ourselves are leaving us disconnected, afraid and lonely.” p.46
8. (we live with... )“balkanized communities whose inhabitants find other Americans to be culturally incomprehensible; a growing intolerance for political differences that has made national consensus impossible; and politics so polarized that Congress is stymied and elections are no longer just contests over policies, but bitter choices between ways of life.” Bill Bishop p. 47
9. “we now live in a giant feedback loop, hearing our own thoughts about what is right or wrong....” p. 47
10. “...stereotyping that dehumanizes.” p. 48
11. “Faction before blood.” Veronica Roth p. 48
12. “Family is the one group that most of us choose to negotiate rather than ‘sort out of our lives’.” p. 48
13. “Wouldn’t you think that all of the sorting by politics and beliefs we’ve been doing would lead to more social interaction?” p. 50
14. “At the same time sorting is on the rise, so is loneliness.” p.51
15. “At the heart of loneliness is the absence of meaningful social interaction — an intimate relationship, friendships, family gatherings, or even community or work group connections.” p. 52
16. “We don’t derive strength from our rugged individualism but rather from our collective ability to plan, communicate, and work together.” John Cacioppo p. 53
17. “and loneliness tells us that we need social connection — something as critical to our well-being as food and water.” Maslow’s Pyramid.
18. “Living with air pollution increases your odds of dying early by 5 percent. Living with obesity, 20 percent, excessive drinking, 30 percent and living with loneliness, 45 percent.” p. 56

19. "Fear is how we got here... fear of vulnerability, getting hurt, pain of disconnection, criticism, failure... conflict" p. 56
20. "Terrorism is time-released fear." p. 56
21. "As fear hardens, it expands and becomes less of a protective barrier and more of a solidifying division... race, gender and class — three greatest fault lines in the USA.
22. "We have to acknowledge that our lack of tolerance for vulnerable tough conversions is driving our self-sorting and disconnections." p.58
23. "It will take only a critical mass of people who believe in finding love and connection across difference to change everything." p. 59
24. "We'll have to get through, or even better, learn how to become the wilderness...High lonesome can be a beautiful and powerful place if we own our pain and share it instead of inflicting pain on others." p. 59

**Ideas for our next Break out session:**

- a. Share examples of 'high lonesome' music in our lives; share our common roots; how introversion/ extroversion impacts loneliness...
- b. Share your suggestions by replying to this email. Enjoy!!