

## **\*Who Do I Say That I Am?**

**By Jennifer C.W. Gillyard**

I am a theologian,  
A Martin Luther running from the shadows of shame,  
constantly calling on God's name  
asking, "When will I sin no more?"  
Chasing the gift of God's grace and  
leaning not on my own understanding  
not even faith, for it's a gift.

I am a philosopher,  
A Karl Marx, vigorously I fight for the uprisings of the poor  
and the tearing down of political chains around our feet.  
I write about a true democracy, where all are free.  
Where different ethnic groups can enter schools and be able to compete  
with equal opportunity.

I am a social worker, a teacher-  
A Jane Addams, one who says- come immigrants, come children, come poor,  
come illiterate, come jail birds, come whores-your labels mean nothing to me.  
Here's your shelter, here's your bread,  
here's a safe place to lay your head.  
And when you wake up, let us practice reading to one another  
about a God who is our father and our mother.

I am an advocate,  
A Martin Luther King, one whose voice rises  
with every firm step towards integration and inclusion.  
Nonviolent admonition to change your ways and social status delusions,  
redirecting your efforts for the good of others.

The scripture said-Let this mind be in you...  
Whose mind?  
The mind of the righteous or the mind of the sick?  
But are the sick really sick when they hold the gay teen's hand from committing  
suicide and accept him as a human life force?

Are the sick really sick when they cry  
for the pregnant women excommunicated from the church?  
Are the sick really sick when they save the front pews of the church  
for street walkers, orphans, pimps, widows, and homeless persons?  
Are the sick really sick when they request enculturation in a worship service?

You preachers, why do you remain inside?

Why do you say that's not your calling?  
Your ministry is at the door, in the street  
from which you were first called at Calvary.  
It is not on the front row appearing amicable  
and holding a Bible,  
which by the way looks too neat.

Exuding compassion, I stand alongside the marginalized  
and I will lead them across the border of the Church.  
Will you accept them?  
One can argue that care is relative,  
but Jesus, not Paul or the disciples, was clear.  
Who will you choose to follow?  
I embody servitude... service is what I do...service is who I am.

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