

## 'Dwelling in the Problem': An Exploration into Authentic Flourishing

From Monday 7<sup>th</sup> to Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024, St George's House will hold a Consultation entitled 'Dwelling in the Problem': An Exploration into Authentic Flourishing. This has been designed for Clergy with at least five years' ministerial experience. Three Doctoral Researchers from the University of Aberdeen will lead it – Cody Crawshaw, Iona Curtius and Zoe Strong, assisted by St George's House Staff.

Seeking immediate solutions to problems is often a first instinct in the face of challenges. People depend on those engaged in ministry and pastoral care to provide timely solutions when problems arise. But what if, through our desire for efficiency, we do more harm than good? The programme this week explores what it might look like for us to 'dwell in the problem.'

Beginning by exploring the concept of 'dwelling in the problem,' we will examine existing structures that create barriers to individual flourishing. We will then consider the role of the Church and individual congregations in enabling flourishing, with an eye to neurodiversity and mental health challenges. Emphasis will be given to the potential harm caused by limited engagement with the voices of those who are struggling. Throughout, we will engage with theories from various theological disciplines. This will include theories from Practical Theology, such as neurodiversity, mental health, and feminist and womanist theologies, as well as a systematic exploration of the dynamics of culture and the Church's place within it. Finally, we will explore practical ways of implementing these concepts. How can we be attentive to people's stories and experiences, genuinely engage with our cultural moment, and dwell in the problem without getting stuck there? This week of lectures, shared conversations, practical workshops, and individual reflection will equip those engaged in ministry to dwell in the problem, creating space to authentically engage with diverse experiences in a way that enables flourishing.



**Cody Crawshaw** is a postgraduate researcher examining the interaction between faith and anxiety in the lived experience of Christian women, utilising qualitative methodologies to engage with individual stories. She has also written and presented on climate anxiety and eco-theology, appeared as a guest on John Swinton's *Conversations in Mental Health and Theology* podcast, and has assisted on a research project titled *Sensescaping the Liturgy*. Previously, she has served as an assistant convenor of Sophia - the theology and religious studies women's network at the University of Aberdeen - and as doctoral student representative on the British and Irish Association for Practical Theology's committee.

**Iona Curtius** has a background in Theology and English Literature. While Systematic Theology is now her homeland, she enjoys occasional excursions into other areas of Theology. Her thesis studies are concerned with truth and embodiment, stories, and cultural developments. She has written on topics as varied as metaphors in purity culture and science fiction's depiction of embodiment. Most recently, she has contributed an essay on Christian hope in a metamodern context, to *Awake, Emerging and Connected*, a collection including meditations on justice from young theologians around the world. She is a founding member and convenor of the Aberdeen Dogmatics Society, a monthly colloquium of the university's systematic theologians.

**Zoe Strong** is an AHRC-funded doctoral researcher exploring dyslexia and engaging with the Bible. Her work explores the experiences of dyslexic Christians, and the challenges they face in communities where engagement with the Bible is seen as a central practice. Her research aims to shape a theology of dyslexia and to propose strategies to enable flourishing. Zoe has published on dyslexia and reading the Bible, as well as on music, autism, and public worship. She is also a Cumberland Lodge Fellow, heads up the University of Aberdeen's *Autism and Theology Podcast*, and is the neurodiversity topic editor for Practical Theology Hub.

If you would like to join us from 7-11 October, please email St George's House – [patricia.birdseye@stgeorghouse.org](mailto:patricia.birdseye@stgeorghouse.org) – or telephone 01753 848886 for an application form.

*Places will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis.*  
[www.stgeorghouse.org](http://www.stgeorghouse.org)